

EXPERIENCE IS NOT AUTHORITATIVE

There is a brand of last days' Christianity that eschews critical thinking and all things doctrinal. These people don't concern themselves with what the Bible actually says in context. For them, discernment is all about subjective feelings and personal experience. It's not about what pleases God, but rather what pleases them. These people, although professing to be Christian, do not feel it necessary to back up their beliefs or practice with the Word. Their convictions are based on subjectivity instead of an objective study of the Word. This mentality is rampant even in the professing evangelical church.

People love to hear about what God is going to do for them in terms of miracles, healing, prosperity, and experiences. Often, they are not interested in taking up their cross and following Jesus.

This is an "inverted" form of Christianity that makes God the servant and people the Master. Sometimes they are involved in immorality and have the mindset that "it feels so good, it can't be wrong." No matter what the Bible says, their subjective feelings trump God's Word. A man gets involved in adultery and leaves his wife, because he is convinced that now he has found his "soul mate". He reasons that if it was really wrong, he wouldn't feel this way.

Sometimes I meet unreasonable people who claim to be Christian. These people insist that I am limiting God because I don't hold to their charismatic theology. Most often they don't really know much theology, but they do know their EXPERIENCE. It doesn't matter to them that they can't defend their practice from the Word. They only know what they have experienced, and therefore they dogmatically assert that I can't argue with their EXPERIENCE. But the Bible says we should be DISCERNING.

We are to "test all things" and hold fast to what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21). Everything, whether it be doctrine or practice, is to be filtered through the Word. We must follow only that which is biblically solid. Experience is fine as long as it lines up with the Word!

The Emergent Church Movement (now thankfully mostly DEAD), in general, sought to question most all things doctrinal. The emphasis was not on doctrine, because they claimed there isn't much we can be certain about. They majored on asking skeptical questions and seeking to poke holes in orthodox theology. They seemingly had no solid answers, but were full of questions. Instead, they turned to traditions, rituals, experiences, and

a social gospel that highlights subjective feelings. They were into candles, icons, incense, mysticism, etc. They were into the “ancient future”. They wanted old (yet not as far back as the apostles) and yet at the same time novelty. However, in the end, it was often largely about “sensory worship”. But “experience-governed” is not necessarily “Word-governed”!

I am convinced that one of the greatest concerns in our day is the dumbing down of sound doctrine, and the saturation of the church with a “feel good” experiential theology. It has many forms, but it always compromises sound doctrine. To preach sound doctrine verse by verse just doesn’t do it for MANY professing Christians. They are not interested in TRUTH, but in what makes them feel good. Our largest churches and our most popular preachers are for the most part “prosperity gospel” advocates, who are great at telling stories, but terrible at exegesis. This is the stuff of last days’ apostasy, and the tragedy is that most people locked into this mindless “Christianity”, don’t even realize there is a problem. They think it is my ilk that has the problem!

“You are your own light.” – The Buddhist Dalai Lama (Don’t FOLLOW this spirit!)