

Why can't I believe?

If you have navigated to this page because you are seeking the truth and find it hard to really believe and fully know that the Christian Faith is real, you have my strongest empathy. I was there during my teens, and until God revealed the realities to me, I felt that it wasn't possible to fully know what I suspected was true. This is mentioned in my testimony, and I think this website is more for your benefit than for most others. I encourage you to keep seeking and to maintain your integrity. Be open and honest about your difficulties, and in due course, by the grace of God, the eyes of your soul might be enlightened.

A line does need to be drawn between those who are seeking for mere intellectual interest or idle curiosity, and those who are seeking out of a real concern for the welfare of their soul and a wish to know God. The first are basically approaching in a condition of disbelief, while the latter already have an elementary belief which is mingled with a degree of uncertainty. From a human point of view, those within the second group are better placed to meet with God than the first. Having said that, those who have become familiar with the ways of God know that nothing is beyond His power. God works miracles far beyond our poor predictions and expectations.

Let us now tackle the reasons why a person might still be seeking rather than believing. The gospel message urges us to repent, have faith and to be baptised. We know the meaning of the words, and might even have an inclination to obey, but somehow we just can't do it. There is a perfectly good explanation for this problem – it is impossible for a man or woman of their

own volition to repent and believe. Now, does that seem a bit odd?

The Bible tells us that there are a number of ways that are not going to bring us to repentance and faith. Some may think that being born into a Christian family is adequate, as repentance and faith can be inherited from parents. The Bible says that is not possible. Some may think that you can make up your mind to become a Christian, but the Bible says that it is not a matter for a person's will. Some may think that if you do enough good deeds that you will earn your place in Heaven, but the Bible says that works alone will not get you there. What hope is there, then?

Mercifully, the negatives of the previous paragraph are followed in the Bible by the positive. If we are seeking salvation from our sins, we are told that faith can be ours by God's grace, it is a gift from God which cannot be earned. It is God showing His mercy towards us. Repentance is likewise a gift from God. The Bible speaks of the goodness of God leading people to repentance, and Paul instructing the young Timothy says that perhaps God will give those that are confused repentance through Timothy's ministry. Similarly, the leaders of the early Church observed that God had granted to the Gentiles 'repentance unto life'. Thus, while we are told to repent and have faith, we can only respond to the call when God enables us to do so. This is achieved within our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit as part of His work in our lives.

There is no way that we humans can control or manipulate God. No person can do the work of God's Spirit, nor can we exert any pressure to make the Holy Spirit obey our wishes. But we are not totally powerless, because we do have the power

of prayer. If we are seeking God in earnest, and approach Him in prayer with all proper humility, in God's good time He will answer that prayer. He has promised that those who seek Him will find, and there is nothing more dependable than the promises of God.

Knowing that repentance and faith can only come through the work of the Holy Spirit and is completely dependent on the will of God, those who are only seeking as a mental exercise or out of curiosity will just shrug their shoulders and pass on. Those to whom finding God is a matter of real importance because they care about their souls, and wish to do what is right, will show their determination to God by their actions.

We cannot control God, but we can plead with Him, and show Him that we mean business. The value of prayer has been indicated above, but there are other things that the real seeker can do. The most important of these is to read and study the Bible. One of the four Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament is a good place to start, though there is one little historical event in the first book of the Old Testament which might prove helpful. It can be found in verses 24-32 of Genesis, chapter 32.

Another important help in these circumstances is to find and meet with other people who have had a living experience of the power of God. You will know them when you meet them because they will have a distinctive air of peace, security and confidence about them regarding spiritual matters. Ideally, you should find a concentration of such people at a nearby Christian Church, but this is not always the case. Incidentally, never make the mistake of judging God by the people

who make up the Church. God is perfect and humans, however hard they try, fall short of perfection. Some churches are in the nature of a cult rather than being Christian, and some that are nominally Christian have but little spiritual life in them. Having made that point, there are a great number of Churches of all the major denominations which really buzz with Christian life. Try to find one of these if you haven't already found one.

Another great help related to the one in the preceding paragraph is to find a Christian minister whose preaching is enlightening. Under such, it is possible for spiritual knowledge to grow, and there is always the possibility that the Holy Spirit will apply a particular word spoken to the heart, thereby unlocking it.

It may be that there are particular sins in a person's life which act as a barrier to facing God. If these are in the past, no matter how bad they are, repentance and faith can blot them out completely. There is no limit to the power of Christ's blood in washing away dirt and filth from the sinner. If the sins are ongoing and seem almost impossible to resist, God can supply the power for proper repentance and faith if you plead for them. The point I am trying to make is that while salvation cannot be earned by efforts to live a better life, trying to do so shows God that you really care about receiving the ability to truly repent and believe.

To sum up, if you are really seeking, show God that you are in earnest by trying to pray, reading the Scriptures, keeping company with God's people, placing yourself under the sound of a faithful minister, and attempting to please God by the type of life you lead. By so doing, and if you persevere, you will assuredly be

rewarded by God revealing Himself and the Cross of Christ to you in His own good time. At that point, you will find yourself capable of repenting in true faith that is not just in the head, but in the heart. We may not have the power to do this of ourselves, but the power of the Holy Spirit working within us is more than adequate. May God bless you with the richest of His blessings.

Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.”