



Abstract Christianity

p.e.p. talk

The world in which we live today is filled with many variations of thought. One will use logic, one experience, while another uses emotion. Please do not misunderstand.

Emotion plays a necessary role in life, but, to separate emotion from experience and logic will bring us into an area of grave danger. To exist primarily in emotion opens up the acceptance of any and everything because "it feels good." I see this aspect in the realm of the arts. Is art useful? In some areas yes. Is art meaningful?

Well, there begs the question. The necessity of art is open to the eye of the beholder. One may observe a 17th Century painting and see, for example, an intense anger or overwhelming sadness that the artist was "attempting" to relay. Some would call this mindset "abstract." Abstract means existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence (www.dictionary.com). In this case, 400 years removed from the artist, we attempt to know the artists mind.

For all we know he could have just thought to himself, "this is pretty, I want to paint it."

Unfortunately this is also the mindset that many exhibit towards Christianity. Some will believe it without proof. All that is needed is to tell someone that it is real and others will believe what is said. A popular statement is, "if someone is willing to lead, someone else is willing to follow." No matter how foolish an idea may seem, or be in actuality, some will allow themselves to be overcome by emotion and fall prey to the poison. This mentality accumulates due to a lack of separation of fiction from reality. Taking the experiences of life and removing them from their logical outcomes, producing in and of themselves a "new" idea, otherwise known as

emotional overload. This is what I mean by "Abstract Christianity." Ask yourself this, "am I a Christian because I have the proof, or, am I a Christian because someone else is." If your answer is proof, good. Because that is exactly what God wants us to understand. Evidence. Heb 11:1- "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Rom 10:17- "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." With His own words God has opened Himself up to investigation. Some will approach His Word with a skeptical mind filled with abstract emotion. Others will approach His Word with open ended belief because their abstract experiences from the influence of others. While others will observe the abstract logical side of His Word in constant search of $2+2=4$.

All three are important aspects of understanding God's will for us and should not be separated. Let us be as the noble Bereans, Acts 17:11- "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." May we receive it, and SEARCH it daily, so as to remove any abstractness from our Christianity. This is the only way, 1 Pet 3:15- "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." Be ready brethren, not only to give an answer to everyone else, but to give an answer to yourself. Why is this hope in you? Can you give yourself the evidence you need to support your conviction? Allow the logic of the evidence, to guide your experience (knowledge) of truth, into the proper emotional application. Replace the abstract, with wisdom.