

"It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

—Edmund Burke

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Dealing With Change (Part Three)

Despite the Bible's repeated injunctions to put God's commands into practice, doing God's sayings cannot justify us—only the blood of Christ has that power. Doing God's sayings, even if we were able to do so perfectly, could not make us faultless before Him because that is not their purpose. The psalmist writes in Psalms 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." [Proverbs 6:23](#) says something similar: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The purpose of God's sayings—God's Word, God's law—is to show us how to live. They show us how to be in alignment and agreement with Him, which we do by living as He does.

They show us how to live, not just in this life, but for all eternity. The only Beings with that knowledge are the Father and the Son, and They are imparting it to us through Their sayings. What They say becomes a lamp to our feet because they show us where to step. They light up the path we are on and show us how to walk. The sayings of [God](#), the knowledge and

understanding that He makes available to us, give us illumination while all else is dark, and that illumination helps us to see so we can walk correctly and eternally.

It is not enough just to know how to live in this life. Some people in this world are quite successful, yet they do not know how to live beyond the material world. But the wise builder in [Luke 6:46-49](#) and [Matthew 7:24-27](#) considered his circumstances with the future in mind, and the future that [Jesus Christ](#) is most concerned about is eternity. His sayings, when we submit to them, are what teach us what is truly best for all people, for all time.

They prepare us because they continually cause us to consider the end. They make us contemplate, "What might happen if I do this?" If we have dug into His sayings, the words and examples spring to mind, and if we do not quench them, they become the light that shows us the way to walk that is best not only for this life, but also for eternity.

A little later in [Psalm 119:165](#), we have a one-verse summary of Jesus' parable about building on the rock: "Great [peace](#) have those who love Your law [instructions, sayings], and nothing causes them to stumble." Nothing causes ruin to their spiritual house. They most likely do not have external peace, as it is a given that someone truly following God will face persecution ([John 16:33](#)).

Overall, though, they have internal peace, stability, and calm because they continually do what is contained within God's sayings. Their love of His instructions is equivalent to a man caring enough about the future—the eternal future—that he will dig as deep as he must to set the right foundation. He desires underpinning that will keep him from ruin when outside forces would normally overwhelm him. Jesus' parable indicates that only those who do His sayings will have that sure foundation.

How we react to events, trials, and change demonstrates what our foundation is. If we have internal peace—if we can keep our head while all around are losing theirs—it is because we love God's sayings enough that we continually practice them. But agitation, inner turmoil, deep-seated anxiety, pessimism, or instability indicate that in some area of our lives we are not

doing God's sayings, and the flood—whatever form the destructive outside force takes—is threatening our spiritual house with ruin.

"[Faith](#) comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Romans 10:17](#)). The heroes of faith heard God's Word, His sayings, and believed what they heard. It was real enough to them that they lived their lives by it. That is, they acted on what they heard. Their belief in God's Word, in Christ's sayings, was reflected and obvious in their lives.

What about us?

- » Do we believe Him when He says that He will never leave us or forsake us ([Hebrews 13:5](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear ([I Corinthians 10:13](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says that the Father loves us as much as He loves the firstborn Son ([John 17:23](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says that all things work together for good to those that love God (and His sayings), and are called according to His purpose ([Romans 8:28](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says, "All things are delivered to Me" ([Matthew 11:27](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says, "But seek first the [kingdom of God](#) and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" ([Matthew 6:33](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says that He has already overcome [the world](#) ([John 16:33](#))?
- » Do we believe Him when He says that He will build His church on Himself—He is that Rock—and that the gates of the grave will never prevail against it ([Matthew 16:18](#))?

If we believe Him, our belief will be evident in the way we conduct our lives. Such belief cannot be faked—it can only be lived and in time proved by adversity.

The men and women of Hebrews 11 endured fantastic circumstances. For a number of them, God even required their lives. Nevertheless, their houses did not suffer spiritual ruin because they were secured to the very core of

eternal stability, God Himself. They were surely founded because they dug into His sayings and did them. That same unshakable foundation is available to us, and the means of being firmly established in Christ is exactly the same.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[How Much Does God Love You?](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

I John 4:17 reveals the depth of love God the Father has for us as unique, special components of His creation, loving each of us as much as He loved Christ. The Father and the Son have worked cooperatively, harmoniously submitting to one another, in the planning and creation of this vast awesome universe- right down to the last tiny, minute detail. Our faith should have progressed far beyond the rudimentary question of whether God exists to the more mature iron-clad trust that God loves us, and would not put us through anything He didn't consider necessary for our spiritual growth and development. God freely gave us His Son, His calling, His Spirit (giving us the enduring love as well as the will and power to do His will), and trials to shape and fashion our character. For God's called out children, there is no such thing as time and chance. The events which seem random to us are totally purposeful to God, having artfully designed them for our ultimate good.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Living By Faith and God's Sovereignty](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The serious Christian looks on this ever-declining world—a world that reflects the rebellious, anti-God attitudes of Satan the Devil—and wonders how anyone can truly live by faith. Some may even begin to doubt that God is in control of events here on earth. John Ritenbaugh, however, contends

that God's sovereignty over His creation is complete, and the course of world events are moving according to His will.

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