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R. C. SPROUL

How Can I Live by Faith?

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Chapter One

The Faithful God

The Christian faith is a reasonable faith. When we speak of “the Christian faith,” in one sense, we mean the body of teachings that has been passed down by the prophets and Apostles and set authoritatively in sacred Scripture (Jude 3). But we also mean the center of a life based on that body of teaching, for at the center of the Christian life is faith. The essential meaning of faith is trust. To believe is to trust something or someone. This means that our personal reliance, what we hold on to, what

How Can I Live by Faith?

we base our life on, is based on trusting something. Trust in God, faith in Christ alone for salvation, is at the center of the Christian religion, and it is a key part of the Christian life to learn how to live out that trust in a life of faith.

Since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, faith as a virtue has come under assault. The guns of intellectual criticism have been trained on our faith as the self-anointed intellectuals have positioned faith as utterly opposed to rationality, as inherently irrational. As a result, many Christians have retreated from the arena of debate. Not only that, they've gone further and concluded that rationality and reason are tools of Satan that contradict the truth of Christ.

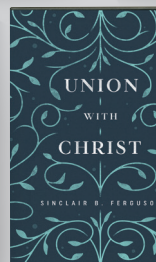
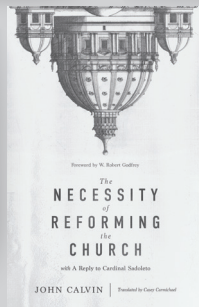
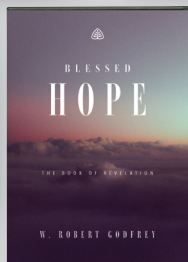
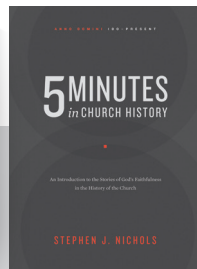
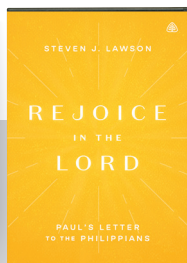
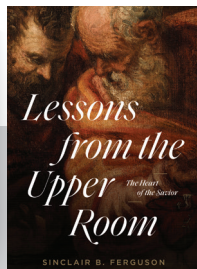
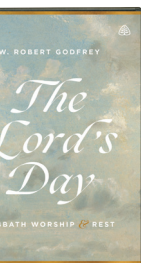
The pernicious influence of Enlightenment-era rationality has even worked its way into the church. The theological liberalism of the nineteenth century brought an assault against the basic foundational views of the Christian faith. This theological movement progressed into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to basic unbelief and has taken hold of many church institutions. Some Christian parents have even found that upon sending their children off to ostensibly Christian colleges and universities, their children come back filled with doubts and

skepticism propagated by the very professors the church had entrusted to teach and explain the faith.

In our day, thanks to the influence of the Enlightenment and the attacks of theological liberalism, many people see a sharp divorce between faith and reason. In fact, we are living in the most anti-intellectual period in the history of the Christian church. What noted biblical archaeologist William Foxwell Albright called “a baleful influence of existential philosophy” has permeated not only secular culture but also Christian culture so much that we have now become suspicious of reason. As a result, many people today believe that rationality and intellect have little to do with religion or faith. Some feel uncomfortable even talking about categories of logic because they have been steeped in the idea that Christianity is to be embraced by faith and not by reason.

The reaction against this tendency was to move away from intellectualism under the dual false assumptions that intellectualism leads to unbelief and that Christians must live by faith and not by reason. As a result, the concept of faith that has emerged is often prefaced by the word *blind*. How many times have you heard people say that we must accept something by faith? Perhaps you’ve said something

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