

So, if we're supposed to get understanding, why are we not supposed to lean on it? What we're told not to lean on is our "own understanding," meaning conclusions based primarily on our own perceptions. Because our own understanding simply will not bear the full weight of reality. It was never intended to.

"All Truth Is God's Truth"



Faith And Reason Are Like Two Wings On Which The Human Spirit Rises To The Contemplation Of Truth.

Most of the contemporary discussion about the supposed conflict between faith and reason has arisen in the context of discussions about science and religion. Space constraints prohibit a full discussion of this issue, but a few general points should be

made in order to help us understand how to think about any alleged conflicts that arise. In the first place, we must acknowledge that all truth is God's truth. That which is true is true because God revealed it, created it, or decreed it. HE REVEALED IT: All that God reveals, whether through general revelation in His creation or through special revelation in Scripture, is necessarily true. It is impossible for God to lie.

HE CREATED IT: When we learn something about creation that corresponds with what God actually made, we have learned something true. God is the source of these truths by virtue of the fact that He is the Creator.

HE DECREED IT: God is the one who has decreed whatsoever comes to pass. When we learn something about history that is in accordance with what actually happened, we have learned something true to the extent that our knowledge corresponds with what actually happened, and what actually happened only happened, ultimately, because God decreed it.

"Faith And Reason Leads Us To Trust And Obey"

God created us in His image as rational creatures. Our cognitive faculties were distorted by the fall, but they were not destroyed, and even unbelievers can use these faculties to discover truths about earthly things—as opposed to heavenly things, about which they are completely blind. We do not fully comprehend God, but this is because we are finite and God is infinite. Faith and reason, rightly understood, cannot be and are not in any real conflict. Biblical faith, therefore, is not a wispy, leap-in-the-dark, existential experience. It is a quiet confidence, based upon the evidence that relates to the case, appeals to the reasonable mind, and results in trust and obedience.



It is often assumed that faith and reason are enemies. It is often assumed that faith and science cannot get along. Based on these assumptions, the Bible seems to take on the role of a book that holds people back from the present century and makes them somewhat backwards in their

thinking and irrelevant in their contributions...but is this really the case? Are faith and reason incompatible – unable to co-exist and contribute to someone's life? Stay with me as we look into the relationship between faith and reason.

"Defining Reason And Faith"

\* MERRIAM WEBSTER DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF REASON

- 1: The Power Of Comprehending, Inferring, Or Thinking Especially In Orderly Rational Ways:
- 2: Proper Exercise Of The Mind
- 3: Sanity

\* A BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF FAITH

The Bible itself tells us what faith is. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." So biblical faith is not blind but is strongly warranted confidence. The phrase "hoped for" does not imply a mere wishful thinking as in "I sure hope the weather is nice next week." Rather, the Greek word indicates a confident expectation: the kind of confidence we have when we have a good reason to believe something. Biblically, faith is having confidence in something you have not experienced with your senses. Biblical faith is not "blind"; it's not the act of "believing without a reason." Just the opposite; Biblical faith is the act of believing in something unseen for which we do have a good reason. For example, when we believe that God will keep a promise, this constitutes faith because we cannot "see" it and yet we have a good reason for it: God has demonstrated that He keeps His promises.

"The Place Of Reason"

As many people have misunderstandings of faith, they also have misunderstandings of reason. Reason is a tool that God has given us that allows us to draw conclusions and deductions from other information, such as the information He has given us in His Word.

We are to reason from the principles of God's Word. People misuse reason when they frame their worldview apart from God's Word. This can involve either treating reason as its own ultimate standard (in other words, a replacement for God's Word) or tossing it aside as irrelevant to faith.

**"Neither Of These Positions Is Biblical"**



We are never to attempt to reason in opposition to the Word of God. That is to say we are not to treat God's Word as a mere hypothesis that is subject to our fallible understanding of the universe. This, after all, was Eve's mistake. She attempted to use her mind and senses to judge God's Word (Genesis 3:6) **"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."** This was sinful and irrational; she was trying to use a fallible standard to judge an infallible one. We are never

to "reason" in such an absurd, sinful way. Instead, we are supposed to reason from God's Word, taking it as our ultimate unquestionable starting point. Any alternative is arbitrary and self-refuting. Reason is not a substitute for God; rather, it is a gift from God.

**"On The Other Hand "**

On the other hand, we are not to reject reason. God is rational, and so we should be, too (Ephesians 5:1) "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children..." We are commanded to seek wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 4:5,7) "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." God wants us to use the mind He has given us. But He wants us to use our minds properly, in a way that is honoring to Him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:" (Isaiah 1:18)

**"Misconceptions Of Faith"**

Mark Twain once defined faith as **"Believing what you know ain't so."** Perhaps this is what many people have in mind when they think of the word faith. Indeed some people seem to pride themselves in their belief in the irrational—thinking that such **"Faith"** is very pious. **"Why do I believe in the Bible? Well, I guess I just have faith."** But is this what the Bible means when it uses the word faith? Not at all.



**"Faith Is Needed To Complete The Bridge And Reach The Other Side"**

The Bible does not promote a belief in the irrational or any type of unwarranted **"blind faith."** Some people have said, **"Faith takes over where reason leaves off."** Taken this way, rationality is

seen as a bridge that reaches only partway across a great chasm; faith is needed to complete the bridge and reach the other side. People who take this view would say that Christianity cannot be proven, that reason leads us most of the way to God and then we must make a "leap of faith" in order to say that Jesus is Lord. This is a very common view among Christians. But this is not what God's Word teaches about faith.

**"Faith Is Necessary for Reason"**

Biblical faith and biblical reasoning actually work very well together. In fact, faith is a prerequisite for reason. In order to reason about anything we must have faith that there are laws of logic which correctly prescribe the correct chain of reasoning. Since laws of logic cannot be observed with the senses, our confidence in them is a type of faith. For the Christian, it is a reasonable, justified faith. Since laws of logic are necessary for reasoning, and since the Christian faith is the only faith system that can make sense of them, it follows that the Christian faith is the logical foundation for all reasoning ; (Colossians 2:3) **"In Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."** This isn't to say, of course, that non-Christians cannot reason. Rather, it simply means they are being inconsistent when they reason; they are limited to a worldview. So the Christian has a good reason for his or her faith. In fact, the Christian faith system makes reason possible.

**"Our Own Understanding Simply Will Not Bear The Full Weight Of Reality. It Was Never Intended To."**

**"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths."** (Proverbs 3:5-6) When the Bible tells us in this verse not to lean on our own understanding, it is not encouraging us to be irrational. The Bible puts up no wall of separation between our intellect and faith. In fact, the book of Proverbs speaks very highly of understanding: **"Incline your heart to understanding"** (Proverbs 2:2). **"Understanding will guard you"** (Proverbs 2:11).