

I said, "Well, that's what it says in the Bible." He replied, "No. I was **there** and I can tell you there **is** a difference between heaven and hell."

To be fair, he probably did not intend to diminish or discredit the Bible. But that is precisely what one does when more credence is given to experience than to what the Bible says.

A dramatic experience is not needed to know the truthfulness of anything the Bible says. Bumper sticker theology says, "The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it." Actually, it is settled simply because the Bible says it! My believing it doesn't verify its veracity. My experience confirms the Bible, but is not needed to validate it.

A common malpractice of biblical interpretation is to make the Bible agree with our feelings and experience. This can be eternally fatal. Just like my friend, whose personal story was offered as carrying more weight than the Bible, many people are choosing to face judgment on the basis of what they feel or have experienced.

More incredible than expecting me to believe their story is that they actually expect God to accept it, despite the fact that it does not agree with what He said explicitly in His revelation.

An interesting, yet pertinent side note is the fact that my friend who had this dramatic experience has not been noticeably affected by it. He may be more spiritual, but there isn't any evidence that there has been a change in his life. Always the big talker, he now has something new and sensational to relate to any who will listen. That he had some experience I cannot and would not deny. But I do not give nearly as much credence to his experience as I do the inspired revelation of God's will.

Others not having such a dramatic story are just as guilty. Included are those who will refuse to accept what the Bible says because it does not correspond to something they have experienced or felt. An example is the person who told me (I wish it was actually just one person.) that what the Bible says with regard to receiving salvation does not enjoy the same level of authority as his personal experience.

This kind of subjective theology gave birth to the meaningless circular expression, "I know that I know that I know." That is a lot of "I" and none of God.

The confidence or assurance is based upon what I know as opposed to what God said. Those whom I have heard using this expression were conveying a confidence based upon their interpretation of some religious experience. In other words, their "knowledge" is not of objective truth derived from the Bible, but rather their subjective interpretation of a spiritual experience to which they assign divine significance.

In all candor we must also point out that even those whose theology is founded upon what Scripture says may be just as guilty of saying "no" to the Bible. The practice of many people does not correspond to their knowledge of what the Bible says. In effect they are saying "no" to the Bible.

Our language and our lives should reflect an appropriate respect for and submission to what the Bible says. Our testimony and assurance of salvation should be based upon what the Bible says as opposed to our interpretation of an experience. Our teaching should employ the words, "The Bible says," as opposed to "I feel," "God told me" or "God showed me."

In every way we must communicate that the Bible is the only reliable source of information resulting in a right relationship with God. The Bible is not merely the primary basis for knowing God's will, but it is the ultimate authority relating to all aspects of fellowship with God. Our feelings and experience must always remain secondary to the Bible.

He said, **NO** to the **BIBLE** by Gene McCoy

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Gene McCoy wrote this article while serving as the preacher at Christian Church of Mountain Home in Mtn. Home, AR. It first appeared in the August 2012 **CONTACT**, the church's monthly newsletter. Other articles and newsletters are posted on the church's website, which is www.ccmhar.com.