

Foundations of Our Faith 2 of 4

#0094

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 15, 1973

You know, people hope for a lot of things. In a little while, a lot of people are going to begin to hope for what they'll get for Christmas. But just hoping for something can be quite meaningless. But faith is the foundation. Faith is knowing that what God says is so.

In our study last evening, we noticed three great lines of evidence that God uses to build faith in our hearts. He's not unreasonable. He says:

"Come now, and let us reason together..." Isaiah 1:18.

And He speaks to us first of all through His created works. In all that He has made from star to atom, He is speaking to us of His attributes. The things made tell us of the Maker. And they show us that He is a God of order, a God of law, a God of wisdom, a God of design, a God of power, mighty, infinite, and a God of love, thinking of our needs, of our desires, of our happiness. Oh, I'm thankful for the message that nature brings us concerning our Creator, Friend. What do you say?

But on beyond that, think through this with me for a few minutes. If the universe is the result of the working of a great Creator—Planer, and if, as is evident, He has given you and me the power of choice (for if we go one way, we are healthier than if we go the other way. If we go, what we think of as the right way, we're happier, than if we go the wrong way), wouldn't it be in harmony, with what we see of His wisdom and love in nature, if He would give us a personal revelation of His will to guide us in making those choices which affect our health and happiness? This is exactly what we find in the Bible. Here in clearer lines, we find the revelation of the One who made the heavens and the earth and all in them. So nature and the Bible shed light each on the other. It is as we study them together that we receive the most from either one.

For example, the student of nature who knows nothing of the Bible will often be perplexed. For while he finds innumerable evidence of order and of beauty, he also sees the working of disorder, chaos, ugliness. While he sees the manifestation of love in that which is beautiful and which ministers to life, what shall he do as he comes face to face with death and with the disease that leads to death and torture that we often see in the natural world leading to death? How can he explain that? It is the Bible that draws aside the veil and helps us to understand what's going on. Jesus put it this way as He spoke of the tares that were sowed in the field where the grain had previously been scattered, "An enemy hath done this."

So everything in nature which is beautiful, which ministers to life, which is

good, that we understand in the light from the Bible is the original work and plan of the Creator. But that which ministers to pain and anguish and disease and death we know is the work of an intruder—the Devil. The Bible tells us this.

And when we get that key, it unlocks a thousand things in the natural world. We no longer have to gaze upon one bird preying upon another, one animal eating another sometimes with torture and say, “What kind of God is it that runs this universe, anyway?” No, no. When we see the cruel, the ugly, the heartless, we say, “This is what the Devil is like. This is what he is doing.”

And then do we ask the question: Why would an all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving Creator permit such an intruder?” Again the Bible gives us the answer. It tells us of a time when everything was lovely and in order in this universe. It tells us of the time when one being chose to misuse his power of choice and launch a career of rebellion against God. This Book tells us of a merciful, loving, wise God who allowed rebellion to flower and fruit in order that all intelligent creatures might have the opportunity to understand how good God is and how bad rebellion is.

When this Book reveals to us in prophecy and in history that great plan and purpose and when we see it culminate at the cross, and when we see the great Creator, Himself, giving Himself to die, oh, then we understand, friends, something of the mystery of love, and we say, “Dear Lord, if You who planned this universe, if You who made this world, if You who made me, if You gave Yourself for me in order to redeem me and give me a chance to choose, Lord I choose.”

And then we enter into that realm of that third line of evidence that we noted last night, the evidence of experience. We taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 32:8). We begin to know for ourselves something of the character of God. We see His working in our daily lives. We listen to His Word. We observe His works. We watch His providence in our daily affairs. We learn to come to Him in prayer and pour out our hearts to Him and ask Him for help in our conflicts. We learn the science of prayer. We learn how to take His promises and claim them.

And as I mentioned at the close of our study last night, dear friends, this work of learning to know God in personal experience is highly individualistic, definitely personal. The Bible is for everybody. Millions of people have read this Book. But your book, your book of life, your book of experience is like none other's.

Many of you students have taken courses in which there are a textbook and a laboratory book. I remember at Loma Linda taking a course in chemistry. Dr. Risley used to lecture to us, and we had a certain textbook on chemistry. But when that class period day by day was over with, then we went across the campus to the laboratory, and there Dr. Gardner initiated us into the mysteries of acids and bases and reagents of various kinds. We experimented and we had certain things that we were supposed to put together and see what happened and all that sort of thing.

So, my dear friends, if you and I are to have an experience in faith, if we're to build foundations that will survive the shock and storm of the future, we must do

more than look at nature. We must do more than study the Bible. We must take what we learn in nature and take what we learn in the Bible into the laboratory of our own life's experience, and prove these things so in our own lives.

And how is that done? By taking God's promises, for example, meeting the conditions, and seeing how they're fulfilled.

"But," somebody says, "Brother Frazee, you know I tried some of these things, and so far for me, the results have not always turned out."

Well, that could happen. It does happen. Let me use an illustration with which many of you are familiar, and all of you know about. How many of you ladies ever did any experimenting with cooking in the kitchen? May I see your hands? Oh, yes. I hope any of you that have been missed on that will get into those mysteries. And I said the ladies, but it is good for men to know how to cook, too. I had a course in cooking once. But now tell me something. Did any of you, men or women, ever take a recipe and put the ingredients together, and put it in the oven or on the stove or whatever according to the recipe, and when you got through came up with a disappointment? Did any of you ever do that? Have you ever had that experience more than once in your life?

Now, what have you concluded? Well, if we should apply to cooking the attitudes that some people take toward the Bible, I'll tell you what we would do. You know, some people, under those circumstances, would come to the conclusion that it is all bosh, that whatever is in the textbooks, that is just somebody's imagination. Whatever is in the cookbooks, "Well, somebody just wrote that down, you know, but as far as it actually working, why no. It doesn't work."

How do I know it doesn't work?

"Well, I tried it and it doesn't work." So my failure is set up to prove the cookbook wrong. Is that a sensible reaction? Is that a wise conclusion? Oh, no.

Now, let me give you a variant of that, which is far more common. I try the recipes, I read the textbook, and I take it into the kitchen, but it doesn't work. And after I've tried that a time or 2 or 3 times, my conclusion is this: "This may work for other people. It undoubtedly does, but it doesn't work for me. It doesn't work for me. Now, Mrs. So and So, she's a good cook. And the girl next door, she's a good cook. And Mr. So and So, the chef over here at such and such a place, he's a good cook. But I have tried it and it just doesn't work for me."

Now, as I say, this is more common than the first reaction.

I wonder if there's anybody here that is bothered with this temptation when it comes to spiritual things. I wonder if there's anybody here that says, "Well, maybe religion works for other people. In fact, I think it does for some, but somehow or another it doesn't work for me."

I want to tell you, my dear friends, anybody can learn to solve an experiment in chemistry that will go according to the directions, and keep trying over and over being careful to do exactly what the experiment directions say. Do you agree with me? Another thing, anybody who will follow directions can learn to cook. Oh, I'll grant, some people are more successful than others as we've all tasted the results here and there. But listen. Anybody can learn to cook and cook acceptably if he follows directions.

Sometimes and often, it is a helpful thing to be an apprentice for a while. This is why God gave children parents so that they can learn some of these lessons as they grow up in the home. And the prophet to the remnant recommends that even a grown woman, a mother of children, who herself wakes up to the fact that she is not a good cook should go to somebody who is a good cook and apprentice herself to that person until she learns to cook.

And so we get help sometimes from fellow human beings in learning how to follow directions; learning how to carry out recipes; learning how to get results. But my point is this: In the laboratory of your life, these things that you find in nature, these things that you read in the Bible must be found experimentally true in your own life. Unless that is so, it is theory, just theory.

Oh, I plead with every one of you tonight, learn to know God personally. Learn for yourself that God is true. Learn for yourself His wonderful attributes, His mighty power, His infinite wisdom, His eternal love, His tender thought of you. Settle it in your mind that nothing is going to keep you from mastering this wonderful science of knowing God.

Now for a little while this evening, I'd like to study with you some directions on how to use these three great avenues of evidence.

Perhaps I can illustrate it by using the muscles of the body as examples. Here's this muscle in my arm. What do I need to do to make that muscle grow and develop? There are three things I need to do. First, I need to eat food, good food, muscle-building food, for food is the material out of which the muscle is built just as blocks and lumber and glass and steel are the material out of which a house or a church is built. So if I want to build muscle, I must eat food.

The second thing I must do is digest the food. Did you ever hear of people who ate food but weren't able to digest it? And it isn't what we eat that builds the muscle. It's what is digested and gets in there. That's what builds it. The eating is preliminary, preparatory. Do you see? The food must be digested, assimilated.

But there's a third thing that I must do if I really want to build muscle. And all the eating in the world and the best digestion in the world will not suffice to build the muscle unless I do what? Well, you all knew the answer, didn't you? Yes. I'm so glad, friends. By the way, I hope you're all demonstrating that every day—Using these physical muscles, along with eating and digestion.

Tonight, let us notice how these same laws apply as we seek to build a spiritual muscle, the muscle of faith, the muscle of assurance, the muscle of confidence. Oh, it's a wonderful thing to know, as the men sang for us, "I Know Whom I Have Believed." That utterance comes from good, strong spiritual muscle, strong faith, settled faith. How to get it?

First of all dear friends, we must eat. What does that mean? That means that we must take time to read the Word of God:

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4.

We live by this. Just as we live by food physically, we live by this Word spiritually. And so it is with the great fund of help available for us in nature. We must take time to look at, behold, view the things that God has made. And so Christ said, to those who listened to Him:

"...Consider the lilies of the field..." Matthew 6:28.

"Behold the fowls of the air..." Matthew 6:26.

We are not merely to take what somebody else has said about nature. We ourselves are to go to the book of nature and open it—not some bound volume, but the unbound volume, the vast library of God's created works. We are to become acquainted with the things that God has made in the earth and sea and sky. We are to know in tree and flower, in bird and mountain, in ocean and river, we are to know the Creator as revealed in His works.

So this takes time: time to feed on the Word, time to feed on the things of nature. And so in this book of experience, we must take time to look at our own lives and study how God has led. You remember that oft-repeated passage:

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, page 196.

So as God said to Israel through Moses:

"...thou shall remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee..." Deuteronomy 8:2.

And your book of remembrance is different from anybody else's. God has led you over a special path.

We are to read and study then, these three books—nature, the Bible, and the book of our own experience. But just as eating is not enough, there must be digestion, so it is not enough to read. It is not enough to observe in nature. It is not enough to think about what has happened. We must not only think, we must think

through. We must arrive at certain conclusions.

Do you know, friends, there's much reading of the Bible that is without any special benefit? Unless the reading of the Bible leads us to certain definite conclusions, we have not digested the meal that we have eaten. And if food is not digested, it is not available to build muscles. It may pass through us without ever really entering the body itself. And so there are multitudes of people that read the Bible, and as some of them say, it goes in one ear and out the other.

Oh, that God may help us not only to eat but to digest; not only to see in nature and in the Bible certain things but to think through what those things mean. And so Paul says to Timothy:

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them...” 1Timothy 4:15.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God...”
2 Timothy 2:15.

The digestive process is vital. This is what many people are missing. This is why they do not get out of Bible study or out of contact with nature what God intended. Equally so in your own experience, merely to remember things that happened years ago or yesterday, merely to recite them is not enough. We must, under the searchlight of the Holy Spirit, scrutinize our lives examining our motives. We must ask God to help us to understand His leading in our lives. What happened? Why did it happen?

Well, you say, “I try that, but I don't come up with the answers.”

Don't forget what I said about the cookbook in the kitchen. Are you going to give up because one batch of bread falls flat? Maybe you forgot the yeast. It could make a difference. Oh friends, let's get back to the book and check. What do you say? Let's go into the kitchen again and try over again. As Kettering once said, “The only time it is fatal to fail is the last time you try.”

And so if in your endeavor to have a deeper Christian experience you seem to have failed, take courage, my friend, start again. Eat. Ask God to help you to digest

But now there's a third thing. What was that third thing in building physical muscle? It's to exercise. So it is in the realm of the spiritual in building faith. When we have, in our study of the Bible, in our study of nature, in our study of our own experience, when we have come to some conclusion about something that God wants us to do, when we have arrived at a clear revelation of His will, then we're to do something about it, my friends. And oh, this is the place where many people fail. They either do not arrive at that conclusion or having arrived at it; they stop there.

Think back, my brother. Is there anywhere along the line in your past experience that God brought you to a certain point and made clear to you something

He wanted you to do, and it hasn't been done yet? Was that yesterday? Was that last week? Was that 10 years ago, 40 years ago? Oh, my friend, listen. Jesus says:

"If any man will do his will, he shall know..." John 7:17.

And let me tell you something. What we're dealing with in this is more than mathematics. It's more than mere human science. We are dealing with the divine science of truth. And truth, in order to know it, requires more than mere study and recitation. It requires the exercise of putting into practice that which we learn. And unless we do that, we do not truly know it. What did I just quote you here (and you can look at it there from John 7:17)?

"If any man will do his will, he shall know..." John 7:17.

Listen as I give an echo of that in the inspired words of the Spirit of Prophecy, just a short sentence:

"If we ever know the truth it will be because we practice it"
Counsels to Teachers, page 97.

Oh friends, is this the way God operates? Is this the way He has made us? Can you see then why so many people advance so slowly in getting an experience that is impregnable, unshakable, absolutely full of confidence and hope? Oh, listen, no matter how much we read and study in books, good books, inspired books, until we come to the place of digesting that and then exercising, doing something about, doing the thing that we have read and we have concluded belongs to us, until we come to that, we have not fully know the thing. We do not fully know it until we do it.

Now let me give you this same principle from another statement. This is the prophet speaking at the General Conference in 1901:

"But truth is not truth to those who do not practice it"
General Conference Bulletin, April 3, 1901.

Maybe you'd like to say this one with me? I'll read it once again:

"But truth is not truth to those who do not practice it" *Ibid.*

Together:

"But truth is not truth to those who do not practice it" *Ibid.*

Again:

"But truth is not truth to those who do not practice it" *Ibid.*

That is it, folks. The only way those amino acids, those proteins that you take

into your stomach in whole wheat bread, in lentils, in milk, in this or that, the only way that those food elements can be built into muscle is not only that you eat and digest them, but what? Exercise, exercise. Now, exercise alone will not build muscle. You've got to eat. But eating alone won't do it. You must digest and exercise.

And right here, I repeat for emphasis, right here is where millions fail. They are content to learn. That is, they think they're learning. They're learning in a class. They pay their tuition. They study the Bible. They study nature. They study physiology. But instead of allowing that to change their life habits, they go on doing as they were before.

Do you remember how Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees where? They say and do not. He said to His disciples:

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”
John 13:17.

Listen. Tell me something, can you think of anything right now, that you once learned of God's will as brought to you through nature, physiology, anatomy, hygiene, or through the study of the Bible or the conviction of the Spirit in your own experience, can you think of anything that God ever brought you to and that is still undone, unchanged in your life? Do you want to enter into a new experience of confidence and courage? Ask God to forgive you for your delay, and make up your mind this moment, “I will. I will. I will.” This is the pathway to true learning, my friends. This is the pathway of confidence.

But may I tell you the reverse of that, the converse of it, what goes with it? If I fail to do that which I know, eventually, I lose even that measure of assurance that I have concerning the truth of it.

Tell me, did you ever meet some man who had once been in this message, perhaps even taught these truths, who now is outside; maybe smoking, drinking; maybe on the other hand in some offshoot or some apostate, or some enemy movement fighting what he once championed? Are there such people? What happened?

Ah friends, the man who fails to do what he knows will eventually lose the knowledge that he once had. If you don't use it, you lose it. Believe me, my friends. Don't think that you can keep up here all that knowledge of truth, which God has blessed you with and put it away in a deep freeze, hoping sometime to open it up in case you need it. No, no. The only way you can store protein in the body to any extent is to build muscle, more muscle. How, by what? Exercise. So if you want a greater knowledge of truth, take heed to what you do know and put it into operation.

By the way, what is the purpose of learning truth, anyway? Isn't it to build it into our lives? Or is the purpose of learning things merely to pass an examination and get a credit, a piece of paper that says, So and So?

Ah friends, what a picture! A piece of paper that says that I'm educated, but I go on smoking cigarettes. A piece of paper that says that I'm educated, but I go on doing things in eating and drinking and dressing and living that tear down my health and weaken my spirituality. A piece of paper that says I'm educated, but my mind is a sea of doubts instead of being a rock of confidence. What a travesty!

But thank God, we don't have to go that way. No. Let's eat. Let's digest. Let's exercise. What do you say? Let's study with prayer. Let's not only observe but let us meditate. Let us come to conclusions. And then let us put into practice every conclusion we come to.

Somebody says, "But this takes time, Brother Frazee."

Indeed it does. But thank God our time is already bought and paid for and delivered to us moment by moment where we can't lose it. Let's use it for what it was paid for. What do you say?

Now, I want to give you a little way of expressing these three things. I wish you'd write them down. Most of you are taking notes. I'm sure all you students are. This is a class, but everybody is invited. So I have six words, three lines that I want you to write down.

Number one, first line: Come, view. In other words, come and look at things. Look at the stars. Look at the flower. Look at the Word of God. Listen to the prophecies. Look at your life. Examine it under the searchlight of the Holy Spirit. Come, view. That's the eating. That's the observing. That's the reading. That's the nature walk.

Number two: Think through. That's the second line. In other words, not only think, but think on to a conclusion. Ask God to give you His Spirit as you study His Word to not only get some information but get a conclusion about what His will is for you. Find out what God has put into that verse for you.

Now, what's the first line? Read it with me. "Come, view."

The second one: "Think through."

And the third line is: "Then do."

That's the time to do and not before. Don't go off half prepared. Don't put the bread in the oven when it isn't ready.

Come, view; think through; then do.

And do it at once, my friends. While on the one hand, there is danger of rushing into action without due preparation; on the other hand, there is danger of unnecessary delay, perilous delay. When is the time to do something? As soon as you're sure that's what God wants you to do. And for this the Holy Spirit is available.

He's ready to help us view. He's ready to help us think. And He's ready to help us do. Isn't He?

This is why Jesus died, to make available to us these great fields of knowledge. He died to take away the guilt which comes to us as the result of ignorance and disobedience. He died to make possible light on our pilgrim pathway, and strength to help us to walk in the way of His commandments.

Now, will you read the three lines with me?

Come, view; think through; then do.

Shall we do it, friends? How many of us would like tonight to send Jesus the word that we appreciate His love, His light, and His sacrifice for us, and we're with Him to get a solid experience? May I see your hands? Thank the Lord.

Now we're going to spend just a few minutes in witness. And those who spoke last night can listen tonight. And you who didn't get to speak last night, if you'll press your way right up here. (Would you two men sit right over there, please? I'll have this seat empty over here) and you who would like to say a word, I'm asking tonight that our witness be short. Each one put your words of faith and decision in just a few words. You may come now and take your places here in this front seat. Come up here as you are called and give your witness. Now, let's see what was that last word of the third line? Do, all right.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org