



## A Real Faith

*“...have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness...”* 1 Timothy 4:6-7

The scriptures warn us in several places about myths, fables, and philosophies of men. The contrast is between these things and the words of sound doctrine which are God-given. Our faith needs not to be based upon the quicksand of untruth or the shifting sands of men’s ideas. Our faith needs to be based upon the evidence of truth. Only a sound, solid, true, healthy faith is able to deal with reality and bring us toward a better understanding and relationship with God.

What is a healthy faith? A healthy faith is a faith that can admit the presence of fear and death. The one who wrote specifically of the “shadow of death” also wrote Psalm 40:12: “For evils beyond number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head; and my heart has failed me.”

Shadowy valleys and troubles without number are part of life. Discomfort, pain, and conflict are reality. A healthy faith says we live in this world by grace and in several places Christians are told to encourage one another and care for one another. Why? Because there are going to be difficulties from time to time. We will need help.

The one who buys into a philosophy that says we are sanctified and cease from sin; or, Christians are sheltered and will not suffer; or even, my faith is strong enough and will not fail... That person actually has believed a lie—not truth. Their faith is not nourished on sound doctrine, but instead on a teaching of man. This kind of unhealthy faith sets one up for serious disappointment when the fall inevitably comes.

The myth of problem free living and the fable that everything that happens is a good event sent from God are manipulative teachings that need to be dispelled in the light of God’s word. God’s power is available to take us through problems, not make our lives pain free. We learn of God in hardship (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). So hardship denied is learning lost.

Let’s not become such “pampered children” that our itching ears lead us to a shallow self-serving faith that crumbles in the face of trial. Instead, let us encourage a real and true faith that assures us that God never deserts us, even in the face of “troubles without number.” Knowing too that greater things await the one who goes through difficulties, never losing step with a loving Savior.

**Carl McMurray**

