

Unit Three

I Believe! Help Me to Believe More

Lesson 1

Living a Life That Matters

heart to Heart

Prayer to Follow the Saints' Example....

Here I Am, Lord, p. 71



Verse Master

"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

James 1: 22

Read more! James 1:23-25; 2:14-17



What I'm Thinking....

Vote with your classmates

I think that

God is real and the stories I grew up with in Sunday School and the church help me to understand him.

I have a good relationship with God.

You can be a good Christian without necessarily serving others since you might not be comfortable doing that.

Faith has nothing to do with science.



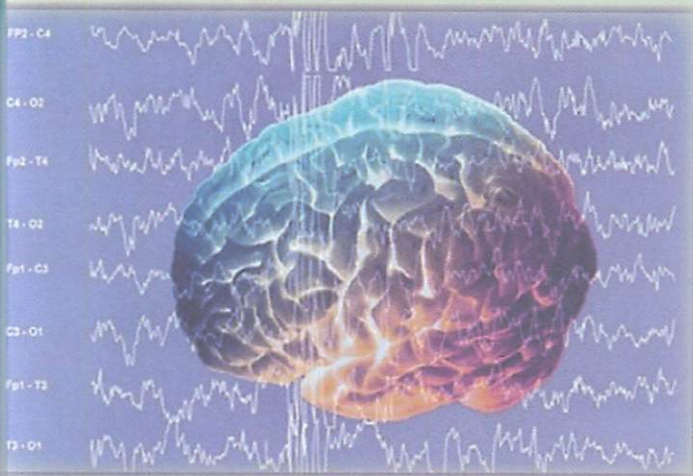
Remember

All our faith knowledge means nothing if it does not change how we live.

And You Thought It Was Just “Old Time Religion”!

In *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*, scientist-authors Newberg, D'Aquili and Rause describe the state of mind of Franciscan nuns in prayer. The nuns claimed that at these moments, they felt a great closeness to God and a mingling with him. To the traditional scientific mind, of course, these words are useless. Science concerns itself with what can be weighed, counted, calculated and measured. And yet, these women discovered that prayer – that most spiritual of experiences – might be something that actually can be measured and verified by solid science.

In well-documented experiments, people about to pray were injected with a tracer that would remain in brain cells for hours. A scan of the brain showed that during prayer there was activity in one specific part of the brain – a small section in the top rear of the brain called the – okay, get ready for this – “posterior superior parietal lobe.” This is the part of the brain that helps us draw the distinctions between ourselves and everything else. People with injuries to this part of the brain have great trouble, for example, walking or getting into bed.



Now, at the *peak* of prayer, activity levels were sharply reduced. So what happened? If this is the place that helps us find the borderline between ourselves and the outside world, why was it that suddenly the brain was not doing that job?

After many experiments and much study, the conclusion seemed clear. The state of prayer triggered a function in the brain that actually *allowed us to feel at one with God*.

That special union with God and all of creation that comes with deep prayer might not be wishful thinking or an illusion but scientifically real.

Newberg concluded that there was a brain process that allowed humans to go past material existence and connect with a deep, more spiritual part of themselves. Translation: we're *physically* wired to commune with God!

Some scientists have suggested that religion is based on superstition and fear and that we cling to God because we lack the courage to face the real world without him. And yet, in reality, science seems to be finding out that religion is still around because the wiring of the human brain continues to provide us with a connection to the Divine – a God that exists!



When we read in Genesis 1:27 that “God made us in his image,” we can understand now that he gave us a brain that would help us know and communicate with him.

So instead of dreaming up a powerful sky god because we were afraid of life's dangers, scientific experiments show that we get to know God in a way the brain makes possible.

A Cloud of Witnesses

In Hebrews 12: 1, we read that “since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses” we can be even stronger and more persistent in our faith. Who were those “witnesses?” Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the Hebrews who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and many, many others who *lived by faith*.

How does the writer of Hebrews define faith?

Look at Hebrews 11:1 for that definition. Write it here:

Faith is _____

If we explore Hebrews 11, we discover what it is that so many did in response to their faith. Find out for yourself by looking up each verse and describing what it is the person did out of faith:

Noah (v. 7)

Abraham (v.11)

Jacob (v.21)

Joseph (v 22)

Moses (v. 27)

The Hebrews (v 30)

Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew

St. Gregory

A Call to Service

Matthew 25: 31-40



Scenic Overlook

Religion is as old as our Stone Age cousins, the Neanderthals. They were the first human beings to ever bury their dead with ceremonies, equipping them with tools, weapons, clothing and other essential supplies. They clearly believed that their world was not chaotic, but governed by powerful forces they could come to know. They believed they could appeal to them with proper practices. This is further confirmed by the discovery of Neanderthal shrines and crude altars from as long ago as 200,000 years!

