

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG23 – Fact-Check Your Faith

Babies are fed by someone else. The process of being fed as a baby created how you think about food, what is food and what is not food, what tastes good and what does not taste good. These food paradigms can stay with you all of your life and dictate how and what you eat. And yet they were imposed on you by the beliefs of somebody else. When you think about it, you remember the little child sitting in the highchair and the parent with the spoon pretending it is an airplane and zooming it into your mouth to get you to eat it. But as you are doing that process, the baby is not thinking about it. It is not judging necessarily what it likes and doesn't like. It is sort of being made to eat what is being given to it. And yet that is creating what we taste and what we like and what we don't like.

I'm talking today about the commandments of God versus the traditions of men. And we find this same principle is at play in what a lot of times we believe and our faith is built around. And that is what someone else has fed us at a certain time in our life. Maybe we were babes, and we were too young to feed ourselves, but we know that we must come to a point of maturity and take the responsibility. When we do take that responsibility, however, we understand that what we were influenced by in our youth as babies, just like with the feeding, what we ate does affect how we think about food and what is food to us.

I remember a program that I used to watch, it was like a contestant show, and part of what they did was they made people eat things that they didn't like to eat because to them it wasn't seen as food in the culture they were raised in. So you would watch these people begin to eat and they would have a hard time keeping it down. And they would go through all kinds of gyrations over what it was they were being fed because their conditioning said, "This is not food."

So we understand how this conditioning works and it takes place when we are children, when we are babes. So even once we grow up, we are affected by those conditionings, those mindsets, those paradigms that have been created in us. And those paradigms have been created by others because those paradigms were created in them by someone else. So they are passed on from generation to generation down through any culture.

We find that today we live in an information age, and we find ourselves surrounded by news and information. And when we don't fact-check that information, we are actually allowing someone else to feed us, just like we did as babies with our food. Unfortunately, today almost no one having matured and grown up takes responsibility, personal responsibility, to research what they believe are truths or facts. Yet the ability to personally research what we hear and to fact-check what we are being fed is more available to us today than it ever has been in history. Yet there is this conditioning that we have that we don't do that.

Instead, a majority of people feel like, "Well, I read it on the internet, so it must be the truth. I heard it on the news; it must be true. If I heard it from the pulpit or the synagogue or in the mosque, it's the truth." No, wait. Stop! Stop! You are what you believe. Your mindsets control what you think, what you say, what you do. And I hope you'll fact-check that statement and find out how true that is.

The process of maturing is the process of becoming personally responsible for each and every area of our lives: all that we think, all that we say, and all that we do. Likewise, as we grow and mature in God, this means that we are becoming personally responsible for understanding the Bible, developing beliefs and doctrines that reflect the truth of the Word of God because our beliefs and doctrines are mindsets that will dictate our practices and relationship with God and with His Messiah.

We are going to look into the Scriptures and see how this actually works and what Yeshua (Jesus) had to say about it. In Mark 7:1–10, it reads,

The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the <sup>1</sup>washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,  
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.  
'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,  
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

So this is a very, very important discussion going on here. The Pharisees come and they challenge Him saying, "You guys are not following the traditions. You're not obeying" in what they were conveying are the commandments. When you read the prayers about the washing, it talks about the commandments of God. And so they come and challenge Jesus, Yeshua, about His disciples: "Why aren't Your disciples washing their hands like we all wish our hands? They're not following the traditions. If You're a rabbi, if You're a teacher, if You are a leader of these people, You need to be teaching them what we've been taught to do." And Christ comes back and really lets them have it. He quotes back this Scripture in Isaiah that talks about the fact that "their hearts are far from Me" (Isaiah 29:13).

And what is it that they are doing? They are teaching as law or instruction what are the precepts of men. And that was something that He was absolutely opposing in the religion of the day. Now this to me goes back to this example. These Pharisees and these scribes like babes when they were children had been fed these things themselves. Now that they are leaders. They are feeding on to those listening to them and those that they are instructing all of these precepts that they had learned. But these are precepts of men that have now come to replace in the practice of religion what the Bible is actually instructing or what the Law of Moses, the instructions of Moses, the Torah, what those words from God actually say and actually teach people to do. And Christ was opposed to this.

And I want the feeling of Christ's anger about what He's discussing here to really grab us because we, likewise, when we were children growing up in Sunday school or just growing up in Western civilization and culture that is very much following the Christian-Judaic practices of morals and everything else about church and God, we have been told and taught many things. Now that may be fine at some point in your life when you're a child. But when we begin to mature, we need to take the responsibility for what we have been fed and what we have learned and what we understand instead of continuing to go on having things brought to us or told to us or directed to us, and we follow those things actually

understanding or believing that they are from the Bible or they are from the Word of God or they are what we are supposed to do according to what the Lord wants us to be doing.

Once we become mature, we need to fact-check just like we should be doing with our news. One of the things we hear a lot today is fake news, false news. And it is true, there are many things being broadcast and said on the internet or other news media that just simply are not the truth. And if we're taking those facts and if we're taking what's being said as though they are the truth, then we are letting someone else feed us and create our mindsets and to create our belief systems. And we are going to respond by that. We're going to vote according to what we believe and according to what we understand. But what is the truth behind what we are hearing? What is the truth in society today? We should care. We should go in and find out. There is the accessibility. You can look up the actual facts behind what is being said. You don't have to believe just what someone else is talking about. And you don't have to do it from the standpoint of being unbelieving or being angry about it. But it is a matter of taking the personal responsibility for yourself.

We need to do this. This is maturity that we are responsible for ourselves. As we grow up from being children, we take more and more and more responsibility for every area of our lives until at some point we are buying our own homes and we're doing our own finances and we're taking care of our own insurance and all of the things that need to be done surrounding our life, we must be responsible to do. Then at some point if we have family, we begin to impart and take care of others. And again as we're taking care of others, there should be a concern in our minds and hearts that we are passing on and we are imparting what are true values and truths, both societally as well as just facts about our life and our culture. And especially about our beliefs in God. What are the true biblical teachings that the Bible gives us and hands down?

So Christ is really confronting these guys, and He is doing it publicly so that everybody around can hear. And He is going back to Isaiah and quoting Isaiah and saying, "Isaiah said this that you're teaching as doctrines." In other words, "You're teaching as biblical truth the precepts or the concepts or the ideas of men" (Isaiah 29:13). And there were reasons, there were motivations behind why these leaders were doing that. And it is because it kept people in submission to them. It kept people dependent upon them. The people were dependent upon them to learn these things and follow them. One of the reasons they were dependent was because they couldn't find it in the Scriptures; it wasn't there to be found. So they became dependent upon the scribes and the Pharisees, upon the priests and followed their instruction. And Christ is coming forth saying, "That day is over."

We should be taking responsibility now. People should take responsibility for what they believe. When we go to Jeremiah, we know one of the great covenants that is yet to be made between God and the Jewish people is in Jeremiah 31:31. And part of that says that no longer will they teach, each man his neighbor, saying, "'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me. Everyone is going to know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them." We are going to not need someone else to spoon-feed us and to create our paradigms, to dictate our mindsets, and to establish our beliefs and our doctrines for us. We are going to know those things ourselves by virtue of our knowledge of God and our knowledge of the Word of God.

This is where Christ was taking us to is to come out of this sense of being children and being influenced and imparted to by others. Again it is not a problem to hear teaching. It is not a problem to go to church and listen to the sermon or to read the doctrines or the established belief systems of the church that you are attending. But it also doesn't mean that you shouldn't take those things and sit down with your

Bible and learn and study and ask questions and challenge it. Christ Himself when He was twelve years old was found by His parents back at the Temple sitting among the scholars and the elders and the wise men. And He was talking with them and asking questions (Luke 2:46). So this is what we must do. He goes on in this to say to them that “nicely you have set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your traditions.” This is in Mark 7:9. What does He mean? When you follow the traditions of men and you're following the practices of men that have been developed over time, it actually makes you set aside the true commandments of God and what the Scriptures are actually saying.

One reason that happens is because we stop learning what God has instructed and we simply go with what the teachings of men are. And we have to recognize at this age that we live in, we are some two thousand years away from the beginning of the Church Age. And there are many teachings. There are many doctrines; there are many creeds that have been developed over these thousands of years. And they just come to us as, “Well, this is the way to believe. This is the truth. This is what the Bible says.” And it is presented in that context that these are biblical truths. Probably the men who created them believed they were deriving them from the Bible. But many times they were not. And you need to feel free to take something like the Nicene Creed and sit down with that with the Scriptures and check it and say, “Is this true? I don't want to just go to service on Sunday and recite this along with the congregation and believe these things if they are not biblically accurate.”

It is the same with every dogma. It is the same with every doctrine that we have because these things we accept at some point as biblical truth, as the Word of God, and therefore they affect how we practice our faith and how we relate to the Lord Himself. It can become something where the Lord comes along like the program I was talking about where the contestants are made to eat something that their paradigm and their conditioning of what is and what isn't food has made them feel like, “Uh oh, what I'm being fed is not food.” And their body literally reacts violently to regurgitate that and reject it.

This is what we saw when Christ came. He would say things and bring teachings that were from God that people were not able to receive because of these traditions and conditionings that they had received from men. We must be careful in our generation not to have set in our minds, set in our hearts, set in our belief system things that we absolutely are convinced are biblical or doctrinally correct and the truth of God and the truth of the Word of God—only to find out God Himself tries to come and adjust our thinking or to give us a different way of relating to Himself or to His Word, and we find ourselves rejecting it and regurgitating it because to us that doesn't seem like truth, that doesn't seem like Scripture.

We must open our hearts. We have to realize that we still live under really the curse that was brought by Isaiah saying, “Having eyes they see not, having ears they hear not” (see Isaiah 6:9; Matthew 13:14–15). There is much that we have a difficulty understanding. We saw that the disciples had that. Christ would bring a teaching to them and then He'd have to say, “You're slow of heart to believe.” They couldn't grasp—as many times as He said what was going to happen to His disciples, they still after the crucifixion and resurrection did not understand what He had said to them. It was so in opposition to what they had learned as children growing up in a biblical teaching of Judaism of the time that it was contrary in their minds, and their mindsets outweighed the teaching that Christ was giving to them at the moment. So they couldn't hear it; they couldn't understand it.

We exist in the same reality. We, like those little children sitting in the highchair, have been fed things that have conditioned us, created mindsets, created ways of thinking or being in us and in our minds. Yet God is coming in this generation I believe to take the seals off of the Book. In the days of Daniel, He

said, "Seal up the book and go your way" (see Daniel 12:4). But at some point, the seal is going to come off the Book. My concern is, when the seals come off the books, and the truths really begin to unfold right before our eyes, are we going to be able to accept what God is saying? And as the Bible opens itself up? Because many times the things that are the teaching of the Scripture are hidden in plain sight. But because our eyes are unable to perceive, our ears are unable to hear, then we can read through it and not understand it. We're in a day when the spirit of revelation must come upon the Body of Christ. And we must see and find and believe, be able to believe, be able to walk in the truths that have been hidden maybe for thousands of years that God is going to unfold to us now.

And we cannot be in this place that Christ was Himself trying to bring them out of to say, "You have learned the traditions of men. You have not studied the Word." You have not gone in and fact-checked what you have been told. You are now mature. You're grown up. You need to be going back to the Word of God. You need to be studying. You need to show yourself approved by that study. And you need to understand what are the commandments of God versus the traditions of man. You need to be able to adjust your beliefs and your mindsets to throw off conditionings and paradigms that just simply are not the truth. They're not what God is saying and speaking to this generation, and we need to be free from those conditionings. And we need to be released now into the ability, as mature sons of God, to hear, to see, to understand what it is that God is saying and bringing to us in this generation.

In the book of Acts when Paul went to Berea, it talks about those people in the Berean congregation and it says that "these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). And it's important. I'm not trying to say be unbelieving and when you're listening, be doubting everything that you're hearing or be rejecting what you're hearing. No, these Bereans, they received the teachings of Paul and the apostles with eagerness, earnestly listening to them, hungry to know the truth of God. And yet, at the same time, after the service and after the sermon and after the teaching, they would go sit down with the Scriptures. And they would search the Scriptures out themselves to see if these things were so.

And I encourage us today to be a people who can be open. We can hear; we can receive. We're not closed off. We're not closing off to what's being told to us. But at the same time, neither are we failing to fact-check in immaturity what we're hearing. We need to go back and take the responsibility as mature sons of God to look into what we're hearing, look into what we've been taught from the time that we were children. At some point those children may have been conditioned to not eat something that turns out to be the most wonderful, flavorful food that they possibly could have enjoyed through their whole life. And we don't want to be closed off to some of the feeding of the Word of God that comes to us that is life and health and is creative and it brings us into the place that God wants us to be.

So I encourage you. Take the responsibility. Study the Scriptures. Seek out. Find if these things be true. There are actions that we can take from this podcast today. And I encourage you to do that. I encourage you to love the Lord so much that you're driven to keep His commandments, not the commandments of man. We know that Christ Himself said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Let's not be diverted away from our love of Christ, our love of God, by the teachings of man and the traditions of man but let us be driven in our hearts because of our love of Christ to study His Word so that we can keep His commandments.

Another thing that we can do is to feel free to check our belief systems, to check our doctrines and our practices against the Scriptures. Go into the Word and find out: "These things I hold as truth. Are they

the truth? Can I bear them out in the Bible? These doctrines that we hold to, can I find them in the Scriptures?" Search them out; search them out, I encourage you.

And if you are responsible to study and to research the Scriptures, I know one of the impasses that we can face is we feel like we're not competent. We feel like we're not qualified to understand the Word of God: "It's too much; we need to listen to the scholars and the theologians and just do what they are telling us to do because we can't do it." And I'm telling you, you can. You can take the responsibility. You can study. You can research the Scriptures. There are all kinds of tools available to us today through the computer and biblical studies software that will allow us to search out the Scriptures and see if these things be so. We can take the understanding of the Word. You are capable of understanding the Scriptures.

Again in John 7, "Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.'" Christ only taught the commandments of God, not the traditions of man. And He goes on to say, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there's no unrighteousness in Him" (John 7:17–18). So we are capable. If we have this drive in us to know the truth, to do the will of God, we will know the teaching; we can know the teaching. I encourage you, study with faith. Study knowing that the Holy Spirit can open the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to you (Ephesians 1:17). And begin to speak the truths of the Word of God so that you can understand and know—that your heart can be formed into the mindsets that God wants us to have and have the beliefs that we should follow in order to walk in that deep relationship with God that we are looking for.