



PNEUMATOLOGY: THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE THRILL OF ORTHODOXY | SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

THIS I BELIEVE

The church faces her biggest challenge, not when new errors start to win, but when old truths no longer _____. Familiarity is the enemy of wonder.

The Christian life begins with astonishment at the glory of the gospel and the goodness and beauty of _____, with the wide-eyed surprise of the infant brought into a new world of grace. But over time, our eyes grow heavy and our taste buds dim — and that’s when errors creep in.

Overfamiliar with the truth, we gravitate toward “exciting” new teachings or practices that promise to awaken us from spiritual slumber. And _____ — always dressing itself up as more attractive than truth — seizes opportunity when we are most prone to wander.

WHY WE LOSE OUR WONDER

Assumptions shared by nearly everyone a few decades ago are suddenly beyond the pale. No longer can we expect religiosity to be respectable. Long-held beliefs and values drawn from Christian doctrine are now “_____.”

_____ has bolstered the anti-institutional sentiments of many toward the church, leading to an explosion of new religious options and narrowly tailored spiritual experiences.

Complacent Christianity causes compartmentalization — a convenient separation of Christian truth from the beliefs that frame our day-to-day activities. Christianity becomes just one aspect of a busy life. What we _____, we’re told, isn’t as important as how we live.

One of the primary causes of spiritual malaise is our loss of _____ in the truth and goodness of the Christian faith. In every generation, we risk losing our wonder at the glory of Christian truth and the enduring witness of the church.

It’s as if we have inherited a vast estate — sprawling grounds surrounded by beautiful buildings filled with priceless heirlooms — but we stay cooped up in a broom closet, complacent and bored, with no desire to _____ all that we’ve been given in Christ.

_____ is an ancient castle with spacious rooms and vaulted ceilings and mysterious corridors, a vast expanse of practical wisdom handed down from our forefathers in the faith.

In every generation, God raises up those who see the _____ in the treasure, people who maintain a deep and abiding commitment to recognize and accentuate the unique beauty of Christian truth so that future generations can be ushered into its splendor.

DRIFTING FROM ORTHODOXY

If we don't accept the reality of drift and actively oppose it, we will inevitably move away from certain beliefs and practices. Drowning in heresy begins with _____ toward error.

Assuming orthodoxy is the path to abandoning orthodoxy. As soon as you put fundamental Christian truths in the "of course" category and then move on to something else, you make yourself vulnerable to currents that would pull you away from the truth. We _____ when we lose our wonder.

(1) Many Christians go through a spiritual drought at some point, a time when God seems distant, sometimes because of sin or suffering. Sin hardens the heart and dulls our senses so that we no longer respond appropriately to the Word of God. To "jumpstart" their faith, they might respond by looking for new beliefs or innovative practices that promise _____.

(2) Other Christians focus solely on "doing good" or "living the faith" without a corresponding emphasis on the truths they confess. Over time, actions without explanatory words and deep-rooted _____ do not perpetuate the faith. For some, shrugging off sound teaching makes them vulnerable to false teaching.

(3) Some Christians with a heart to introduce others to Jesus avoid the challenging teachings of Christianity to gain more of a hearing with unbelievers. When encountering doctrinal or ethical barriers that make accepting the gospel difficult, they might assume that the best way to ensure that Christianity has a future is to free Christianity from the _____.

(4) Still other Christians make a good _____ more central than the gospel. Admirable passion for seeing the fruit of Christianity in politics or social work can draw us away from the work of the gospel that brings forth the fruit in the first place, and the misdirected passion can sweep us out into a sea of service where Jesus is incidental to all the good deeds we do.

REDISCOVERING THE ADVENTURE

The best way to counter the drift toward heresy is with the thrill of orthodoxy. We need *better* excitement, a more lasting passion. The best way to avoid new errors is to love _____ truths.

The ancient truths of Christianity expressed in Scripture and summed up in doctrinal statements are not only a map for our journey, but also a grammar to help us speak the _____ of faith in ways that exalt the Savior whose name we bear.

Words like *theology* and *orthodoxy* and *doctrine* may sound about as exciting as reviewing a map or studying a grammar book — big words that sound boring, as if to suck the drama out of the Christian life. But the truth is, learning the map sets us free to explore the wonders of the world, with a _____ always pointing us to God.

Theology isn't the point, just like knowing the map isn't the point of a journey and studying a grammar book isn't the point of a language. Theology shows us the lay of the land and gives us the words to better understand and express the great _____ of the gospel. He is the point!