

Easy Come, Easy Go

Justin Turney

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Stand Alone / Faith; Genuine; Idolatry; Self-love; Self-Righteousness; Pride / Judges 17:1–13; Judges 18:14–26; Hebrews 12:1–2

Many today are having faith robbed from them, but what is the substance of their faith? Why are people "abandoning faith" in God or turning to different, false ideologies of faith in God? This message looks at one of those reasons and challenges us to examine our lives and examine our faith to make sure that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith.

INTRO

- Have you ever known someone who seemed to be very committed to Jesus but then one day just stopped?
- Have you ever struggled with your faith and wondered if this whole following God thing was really worth it?
- Crisis of faith naturally happen in our lives. It can be a part of spiritual warfare but it can also be a proving ground for examining the substance of our faith. It is healthy to examine our lives and see if our faith is really from the Lord and in the Lord or if our faith is self-made and self-seeking.

Judges 17:1–6 ESV

¹ There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. ² And he said to his mother, "The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it." And his mother said, "Blessed be my son by the LORD." ³ And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, "I dedicate the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image. Now therefore I will restore it to you." ⁴ So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into a carved image and a metal image. And it was in the house of Micah. ⁵ And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods, and ordained one of his sons, who became his priest.

⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

1) SELF-ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY LEADS TO SELF-MADE FAITH ([Judges 17:1-6](#))

- Theft met with blessing instead of accountability (self-established authority)
 - Rejection of the Lord's law
 - Only focused on "did the right thing eventually...that's all that really matters"
- "I dedicate the silver to the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a carved image..."
 - Self-established idol = self idolatry
- In an act of self-established authority, self-made faith is born.
 - Carved image (idol)
 - Shrine
 - Ephod (garment symbolic of priestly authority)
 - Ordained a son to be his priest
- This entire scene gives an appearance of recognizing the LORD, but it is in name only. The Lord is absent in reality.
 - This situation has broken the first three of God's 10 Commandments
 - 1) You shall have no other God's before me.
 - 2) You shall make for yourself any carved images.
 - 3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - This is far more severe than just using God's name as a curse word! It is ascribing anything to or associating God with anything that is wicked, worthless, or is wrong in purpose.
- If anyone declares faith in Jesus or God, yet does not recognize His absolute authority over their lives their faith is self-made and is just as empty as this scene in [Judges 17](#).

2) SELF-MADE FAITH LEADS TO SELF-SEEKING BLESSINGS ([Judges 17:7-13](#))

Judges 17:7–13 ESV

⁷ Now there was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. ⁸ And the man departed from the town of Bethlehem in Judah to sojourn where he could find a place. And as he journeyed, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. ⁹ And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I am a Levite of Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to sojourn where I may find a place." ¹⁰ And Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and a suit of clothes and your living." And the Levite went in. ¹¹ And the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and the young man became to him like one of his sons. ¹² And Micah ordained the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. ¹³ Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest."

- Manipulation for the sake of blessing.

- Levites were set aside by God to be His servants. ([Numbers 8](#))
- With the establishing of the levite as his priest, Micah's whole self made faith was now complete and ready to receive the blessings of God.
- This is a perfect picture of what happens to our lives when we have a self-made faith.
 - We try to put into place the pieces of what we think God wants and then expect the Lord to prosper us because we have went through the trouble and "sacrifice" to put religious things in place.
- Self-made faith is self-centered on blessings.
 - This is why many struggle with faith when bad things happen.
 - This is why many want the riches of Solomon yet want to avoid at all cost the trials of Job.
 - This is why many will "name it and claim it" but won't "confess it and repent of it"
- Self-made faith is nothing more than Jesus decorated self-idolatry...and it is completely unsustainable.
 - True faith understands that we don't dedicate our time, talents, and treasure to God to see what we can get... we surrender all to Him because of who He is.
 - A person with self-made faith doesn't get that because they only recognize God's authority over sin and not God's authority over them.

3) SELF-MADE FAITH IS EASILY LOST ([Judges 18:14-26](#))

Judges 18:14-26 ESV

¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to scout out the country of Laish said to their brothers, "Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod, household gods, a carved image, and a metal image? Now therefore consider what you will do." ¹⁵ And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite, at the home of Micah, and asked him about his welfare. ¹⁶ Now the 600 men of the Danites, armed with their weapons of war, stood by the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷ And the five men who had gone to scout out the land went up and entered and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, while the priest stood by the entrance of the gate with the 600 men armed with weapons of war. ¹⁸ And when these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" ¹⁹ And they said to him, "Keep quiet; put your hand on your mouth and come with us and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?" ²⁰ And the priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod and the household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. ²¹ So they turned and departed, putting the little ones and the livestock and the goods in front of them. ²² When they had gone a distance from the home of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house were called out, and they overtook the people of Dan. ²³ And they shouted to the people of Dan, who turned around and said to Micah, "What is the matter with you, that you come with such a company?" ²⁴ And he said, "You take my gods that I made and the priest, and go away, and what have I left? How then do you ask me, 'What is the matter with you?'" ²⁵ And the people of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows fall upon you, and you lose your life with the lives of your household." ²⁶ Then the people of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home.

- While the tribe of Dan did have an allotment in Israel, this particular group of Danites had either not yet settled or, most likely, had rejected that allotment and was looking for something else.
 - This is most likely why they traveled ready for war and there was such a great number of them despite the tribe of Dan already having two major cities established by the time of Micah.
- This group who has rejected God's provision interacts with Micah's self-made faith and leaves him with nothing.
 - Something more interesting and influential comes along and takes Micah's priest, his idols, and essentially his religion.
 - Under crushing odds, Micah loses his faith.
 - When the circumstances facing him were too strong, he didn't turn to the Lord, because self-made faith has no other lord to turn to.
- Why is it that someone can seem committed to faith in Jesus yet seemingly just walk away? It's because only true faith in Jesus perseveres while self-made faith is easily lost.
 - We don't really know what happens to Micah. The last we know of him is this scene where he turns back home.
 - We can safely assume that Micah lived out his days in one of three ways:
 - 1) He rejected God all together and lived out his days as an atheist.
 - 2) He continued to live with the Lord on his lips but not his life.
 - 3) He realized the futility of self-made faith and came to genuine faith in the Lord.

CLOSING

Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

- MANY HAVE WALKED AWAY FROM FAITH DUE TO THEIR FAITH BEING SELF-MADE OR SELF-DRIVEN.
- COMMIT TODAY TO REALIZING THE FULL AUTHORITY OF GOD OVER YOUR LIFE AND LET HIM BE THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF YOUR FAITH!