

Is "What I Feel It In My Heart" A Safe Standard Of Measure?

When discussing the topics of forgiveness of sins or eternal salvation or being saved, some will make comments like, "I know how I feel", or "I know what's in my heart", or "I just feel it right here" (while pointing to the heart)? Maybe you have said or believe something similar. Those statements and similar ones beg the question, "How do we know that those are safe guidelines"? Is it safe to believe, because I "know something in my heart", or because "I feel" a certain way about something, that my feelings are in line with God's will, His thoughts or His commands?

Let's examine the answers to that last question by looking at some other examples of how people have "felt" in their hearts. Do you think that the young man in Arizona "felt in his heart" that it was right to shoot those people at the Safeway store a few weeks ago? Do you agree that someone who steals from others "feels inside" that it is right to take their stuff? What about that repulsive group from the Westboro Baptist church that has been making the news lately? Do you think they "believe in their hearts" that they should picket funerals of slain service men and women and nine year old gunshot victims and that screaming out derogatory remarks and causing a terrible scene while a family is burying a loved one is the right thing to do?

Surely the point is made in these situations that what we "believe in our hearts" to be right may not be, and can even be totally wrong. The prophet Jeremiah said, *"I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps"*; (Jer. 10:23). The jest of Jeremiah's words is this; that man even at his best, will guide himself wrongly if he is left to his own will, wishes, desires, or thoughts. We have already seen that what people may "feel" or "know in their hearts" can be totally off base, wrong, and even evil. Well then, what is the standard of measure? How can we validate that what we "feel" or "know" in our hearts is right or wrong?

When it comes to forgiveness of sins, salvation, pleasing God, being saved or any other topic of scripture, we must of course go beyond what we feel or think we know. We must examine all that God has had to say on any such issue. It is much safer, in the eternal sense, to rely on God's mind than on our own. It will not be you or me or any other human that will be the judge of such things when we all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, (2 Cor. 5:10). It will be God's standard, the words of Christ, by which we will all be judged (Jn. 12:48).

If I "feel in my heart" that my eternal salvation is secure, and if my feelings are contrary to God's word, then I am wrong. If I "know in my heart" that God has saved me from my sins, but I have not responded properly to God's ways of salvation, then I am wrong. If I am wrong in my thinking or understanding about eternal salvation, then what I think, feel, or believe, will only give me a false hope and a false sense of security. If we examine the words of John in such verses as Jn. 20:30-31; 1 Jn. 5:13; and 1 Jn. 2:17, we find that we are not left to merely guessing, feeling, or thinking when it comes to salvation. God has given us His word, the Bible, that we may "know we have eternal life". Yes, God has given us the ability to think and feel the way we choose to about things, but obviously He doesn't expect us to base our eternal salvation on such limited human traits.

If you have any doubts or questions regarding your salvation, don't just "feel", but search the word of God for the real answers and for His guidance, and if we can assist you in your search for the true answers, please let us know.