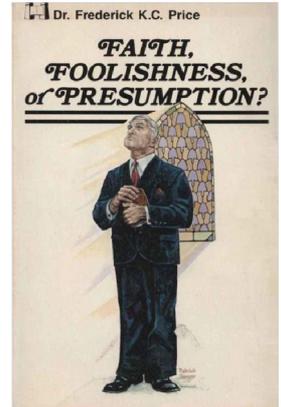




Faith, Foolishness & Presumption

In 1979 Fred Price released his book, 'Faith, Foolishness, or Presumption?'¹. Price wrote the book in response to the Word of Faith Movement² which was prevalent in the pentecostal system of his day, and of which he was a critic.



I read the book sometime in the 1980s when I was in the pentecostal system and it had a significant effect on me. The content caused me to rethink how I operated in the Spirit, and what I really should be speaking and praying. It rescued me from deviating into the confess-it-you-get-it theology.³

Let me begin this lesson by defining the 3 words in my title:

- **Faith:** Believing what God has said and stepping out and acting on it.⁴
- **Foolishness:** To lack good sense or judgement; to act with stupidity.⁵
- **Presumption:** Behaviour that is perceived to be arrogant, disrespectful, and transgressing the limits of what is permitted or appropriate.⁶

In regard to anything we say or do in the Kingdom, we can operate out of any one of these three modes.

Faith

This not referring to 'the Christian faith'. It is referring to acting with faith in accordance with what God has said (as defined above). This could be personal *rhema*, prophecy or what is recorded in scripture.

Paul wrote that we are to live by faith.⁷ Faith is a lifestyle, a way of living, not something we just use when we have a problem. The OT may give us the idea that faith is activated when there is a problem, but this is a misunderstanding of how God expects us to operate. Faith is like breathing – a 24/7 activity.

We all have a measure of faith given to us by God⁸ so we can live in the Kingdom his way.

IMPORTANT: The amount of faith we receive is stated in Romans 12:3. But the verse can be translated as either “a measure of faith” or as “the measure of faith”. The original Greek is written like this:

ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως
to each as God divided measure [of] faith

There is no Greek word for “a” or “the” preceding the word “measure”. These prepositions were added by translators to make the sentence meaningful. Translators determined whether it’s “a” or “the”.

Only 15 of the 59 translations in BibleGateway.com use “a measure of faith”. The rest all use “the measure of faith” or some variation of that.

So, it's foolishness to dogmatically teach that it must be “the measure of faith”, or vice-versa.

1 – Dr Frederick K.C. Price

2 – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_of_Faith

3 – For a modern example, read this: www.spokenwordchurch.com/index.php/quotes/88-confess-it.html

4 – Standard interpretation of NT teaching

5 – Google meaning

6 – Google meaning

7 – Romans 1:17

8 – Romans 12:3



The difference between believers' levels of faith is how they use or operate in it. Our faith grows, or should grow as we activate it and as we hear from God⁹. A person of great faith means they have learnt to live by faith.

As stated, faith in the Kingdom is acting on what God has said. This is evident from the life of King David, Moses, Joseph, Abraham, Paul, etc. They achieved great things because they did what God told them. Likewise, Jesus did great exploits because he trusted and obeyed Father.

Faith for us today is no different – we operate in faith when we do what God tells us to do, go or say through his Spirit. Of course, we can also act in faith when we believe what God said through the writers of the NT¹⁰ and we align with what they wrote. BUT, the genuine life of faith is the daily, moment-by-moment alignment with what the Spirit is saying to you personally. This is what Abraham was commended for.¹¹

Foolishness

'Foolishness' is the noun that comes from another noun, 'fool'. To act as a fool is to use poor judgement.

Probably the best NT example is the sons of Sceva¹² who foolishly tried to exorcise a demon from a person. They got beaten-up in the process because they went about it the wrong way. They were foolish.

Presumption

'Presumption' is the noun that comes from the verb 'presume'. When a person presumes, they do or say something without authority, or they claim something without permission. This is just one of the meanings of the word.

Here's an example of presumption: A non-believer thinks they are a child of God.

A person who believes they are a child of God and hasn't been born of the Spirit is no such thing. They cannot appropriate anything from God that is reserved for his sons (his authentic children), just because they think they are a child of God. Sons (God's *bona fide* children) are those who trust in Jesus the Messiah and his act of redemption. No one else can be a genuine son (child of God), as John states:

John 1:12-13 (AMP) – *But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the right [the authority, the privilege] to become children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name—who were born, not of blood [natural conception], nor of the will of the flesh [physical impulse], nor of the will of man [that of a natural father], but of God [that is, a divine and supernatural birth—they are born of God—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified].*

A non-believer 'assumes too much'¹³ – i.e. they operate in presumption – if they think they are a son of God and want his family benefits. Get the picture of what presumption refers to?

Similarly, presumption is the unfortunate basis of those who think 'all roads lead to God' – they don't. Jesus is the only way to Father.¹⁴

9 – Romans 10:17

10 – This is what most Christians call the Word of God. See "The Word of God is What the Spirit Gives Us to Speak" (canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The-Word-of-God-is-What-the-Spirit-Gives-Us-to-Speak.pdf)

11 – Romans 4:12, 16; Hebrews 11:8, 17

12 – Acts 19:13-16

13 – To quote Nute Gunray to Queen Amidala in 'Star Wars episode 1: The phantom Menace'

14 – John 14:6



Life Application

Now, this topic is important.

As Kingdom citizens, we are to operate in faith – it’s supposed to be our signature action. However, at any time we can be out of alignment with Heaven and do things foolishly or with presumption. Sounds ridiculous, but this is definitely the case for each one of us. No one is immune from slipping out of faith.

Probably the most common way we slip into foolishness and presumption is when we do things our way. This selfish activity is manifests from 3 sources:

1. We do or say things because the Bible says so, not because God’s said it to us.
2. We don’t listen to God. We don’t hear what he’s saying to us right NOW.
3. We don’t get God’s mind before we start doing what he’s said to us.

(1) This can be the chief failure of Bible-believing Christians as they operate by faith – I used to be one. They believe that the English Bible is the infallible Word of God and because of this, and the teaching they receive, they can treat all of what’s written in it as God speaking directly to them. True, he may speak to them through it by giving them a *rhema* message when they read a particular verse, but acting on any and every verse presumes too much and causes the person to act or speak foolishly.

(2) With the spirit of Christ in us,¹⁵ it is normal to have spirit-to-Spirit communication going on all the time. If we can’t hear what the Spirit is communicating to us, we can’t live by faith as life in the Kingdom was meant to be. The default way of operating without this 2-way communication – i.e. the normal Christian way – is to presume what God wants them to say or do. Believe it or not, this is presumption. Presumption is doing something or saying something without the superintendent’s permission, and in our case Jesus is the superintendent (the “head”¹⁶). When we don’t know what we’re supposed to be doing, we presume knowledge and approval, and many times it turns out that we are foolish.

(3) Just as nonsensical as acting without hearing from God is acting without all the details – it makes no sense to do that. If you don’t know when, where and how, you can presume these erroneously and end up being foolish. It beggars belief that believers can want to hear, but skip the details. Try that in the workplace and see where it gets you.

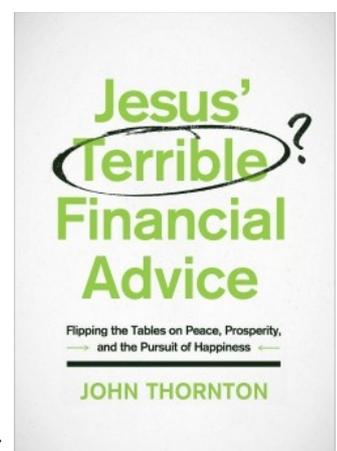
Here are some examples of foolishness and presumption from believer’s lives:

(1) “Abundant life”¹⁷

To many believers, an abundant life means peace, wealth and happiness – This is presumption. They presume nothing will go wrong with their lives. Paul’s experience says differently.¹⁸ Check out the book, “Jesus’ Terrible Financial Advice” for more insight to this. (I’m not endorsing the book, but it is quite eye-opening.)

(2) “All things work together for good”¹⁹

If everything works for our good, then just do your own thing because it’ll work out alright – this is foolishness. Those with this philosophy fail to read the rest of



15 – Romans 8:9

16 – Ephesians 4:15

17 – John 10:10

18 – 2 Corinthians 11:24-26

19 – Romans 8:28



the scripture verse:

- “those who love God” – This is presumption. They presume that they actually love God; &
- “those who are the called according to *His* purpose” – This is presumption. They presume they have been called by God. They may not have been.

(3) Formal Prayer

In the protestant church system where I grew up, Christians are taught to pray, but not how to do it God’s way. With ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ as a model, they are taught to bring all their needs and desires to the Lord in prayer and he will answer them – if they pray in faith. The Kingdom way is to pray as the Spirit leads, whether it is for yourself, for others or for the Kingdom. It is presumption to formally pray anything that comes into your head. (This is not referring to intimate conversation with the Trinity.) It is presumption to pray what you think God wants. It is foolish to pray like this: “God bless everyone in the world” or “God heal all the sick people in our city hospital right now”. It is foolishness to pray for God to remove a President or Prime Minister if he has placed them there to do his work in the nation. Much praying – which I call “God bothering” – is based on foolishness and presumption, instead of as a son partnering with Heaven.

(4) Healing

There is so much foolishness and presumption in the area of divine healing that it’s quite shocking. I was at a revival conference in Melbourne in 1986 where the speaker prayed for healing for a lame person and promptly broke their walking cane over his knees – presumption and foolishness. Many ‘healed’ people have been told to come off their medication by the healer, only to relapse and even die – presumption and foolishness. We must understand that a person’s healing from God involves the patient, the healer and God. This trio of members needs to be in alignment in everything for healing to be effected. Anything outside of the complete alignment of these 3 is to operate in presumption.

(5) Enthusiasm

Many have been taught that the word enthusiasm means ‘in God’. The follow-on from that is the injunction that all Christians must be enthusiastic. Unfortunately our modern understanding of enthusiasm is more like ‘wildly enthusiastic’, similar to a fan of a singer or a football team who goes ‘nuts’ at an event. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek *enthous* which means ‘possessed by a god, inspired’ and refers to pentecostal manifestations²⁰. So to extrapolate a 17th Century word to what the word means today, and out of context, is foolishness. AND...it causes young Christians to operate foolishly by overstepping the mark with respects to the work of the Spirit.

Then there are those who, like me, have been taught that ‘zeal’²¹ means ‘white hot’²², inferring that NT ‘zeal’ means that we have to be “white hot” in our attitude to everything.²³ This causes young and immature believers to overstep the bounds of Paul's statement: “Let all things be done decently and in order”²⁴. Their outlandish attitude steers them many times into foolishness and presumption while they fully believe they are acting by faith.

20 – Enthusiasm: Religious fervour supposedly resulting directly from divine inspiration, typically involving speaking in tongues and wild, uncoordinated movements of the body. Early 17th century (in sense 2): from French *enthousiasme*, or via late Latin from Greek *enthousiasmos*, from *enthous* ‘possessed by a god, inspired’ (based on *theos* ‘god’). – Google definition search

21 – e.g. In 2 Corinthians 9:2

22 – Strong’s definition of the root for ‘zeal’: *zeo* [pronounced dzeh'-o] a primary verb; to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids) (www.elijah.com/cgi-bin/strongs.cgi?file=greeklexicon&isindex=2204)

23 – Strong states that *zeo* means to be “fervid (earnest):--be fervent”

24 – 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NKJV)



Spiritual Authority

My observation of Christians operating in spiritual authority is that most times what they do and say is either foolishness or presumption, even though they fully believe they are operating by faith. It's easy to think you're operating in faith if you place the Bible ahead of the voice of the King. This is the consequence of biblical infallibility and the 'Word of God' teaching. But, as Watchman Nee wrote:

“Any action which lacks in obedience is a fall, and any act of disobedience is rebellion.”²⁵

Spiritual authority cannot be used in a presumptive or foolish way. Anything out of line with the protocols of spiritual authority – which every spirit being is fully aware of – places the person in a position of vulnerability from the enemy. Most believers are unaware of this because they presume that as they are saved, that God will do everything to protect and honour their efforts no matter what they do. Of course they justify this attitude with the Bible and/or the teachings of others.

Believers need to be well versed with the rules of spiritual authority before they start using it. (More on this in a future session.)

IMPORTANT: Notice in John 1:12 that a person needs to have authority from God to be a son. Here again we have spiritual authority in action. How many of us are aware that we need authority from God to be one of his sons. It's not about being 'saved', and definitely not about 'a vote for Jesus' at a outreach meeting.

NOTE: Fred's book is not available in book stores today, but it can be purchased from his website²⁶ or it can be read online at a number of subscription websites²⁷.

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10-1-2018
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RESOURCES

- “The Classics - Faith Foolishness Or Presumption - Part 1a – 1006a” YouTube [1:15-14:30]
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKvMs7ds4-c)
- “The Classics - Faith Foolishness Or Presumption - Part 1b – 1006b” YouTube [11:18-27:28]
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQuYtqntvcc)

25 – Watchman Nee, in “Spiritual Authority” (www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/56455-spiritual-authority)

26 – store.crenshawchristiancenter.net/p-3371-faith-foolishness-or-presumption.aspx

27 – cbpdf.abhappybooks.com/book/978-1883798628 or www.goodreads.com/book/show/676186.Faith_Foolishness_or_Presumption