

## TOXIC FAITH

### Understanding and Overcoming Religious Addiction

#### TWENTY-ONE TOXIC BELIEFS\*\*

1. Conditional Love  
God's love and favor depend upon my behavior.
2. Instant Peace  
When tragedy strikes, true believers should have a real peace about it.
3. Guaranteed Healing  
If you have real faith, God will heal you or someone for whom you are praying.
4. Irreproachable Clergy  
All ministers and priests are men and women of God and can be trusted.  
Because a particular individual doesn't have pure faith doesn't mean that the object of faith is also impure.
5. Monetary Rewards  
Material blessings are a sign of spiritual strength.
6. Investment Tithing  
The more money you give to God, the more money he will give to you. Although wealth is not bad and can be a great blessing, it is no indicator of spiritual strength.
7. Salvation by Works  
I can work my way to heaven
8. Spiteful God  
Problems in your life result from some particular sin.  
Pain is often a result of sin but not necessarily a punishment for it.  
Problems result from poor decisions, negative circumstances and the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
9. Slavery of the Faithful  
I must not stop meeting others' needs. What good does it do to meet needs of others if that produces so much anger in you that you cannot relate to them in a loving matter?  
Christ came to serve people and yet He took time to maintain His health so He could meet others needs

#### 10. Irrational Submission

I must always submit to authority. Silent submission in the face of violence, dishonesty, and abuse will only allow or enable that abuse to be passed to new generations.

#### 11. Christian Inequality

God uses only spiritual giants. God often uses those who have major flaws or who have been through a great deal of pain to accomplish many vital tasks for His Kingdom.

Out of a pure faith, we must act first; then we will be amazed at just how much God can do with so little.

\*\*\*Sometimes we wait for God to do what God is waiting for us to. Too often in the name of waiting on God, people fail to take responsibility or action.

#### 12. Passivity

Having true faith means waiting for God to help me and doing nothing until He does.

#### 13. Biblical Exclusivity

If its not on the Bible, it isn't relevant.

Just because it isn't in Scripture doesn't mean it is evil or a half-truth.

Is your faith based on godly truth or is it based on a make-it-up-as-you-go philosophy.

#### 14. Heavenly Matchmaking

God will find me a perfect mate

#### 15. Pollyanna Perspective

Everything that happens to me is good

They deny how they really feel and delay dealing with the pain and agony they feel due to death or loss.

#### 16. Bullet-Proof Faith

A strong faith will protect me from a problem and pain

Faith provides perspective, endurance, and purpose through the tough time, but it will not protect anyone from them.

#### 17. Vindictive God

God hates sinners, is angry with me, and wants to punish me.

People live their whole lives in constant fear of a God out of control who might make them the next target.

We do so many things with undesirable results that in essence we punish ourselves.

God does not wipe us all out because He loves us.

18. Mortal Christ

Christ was merely a great teacher.

Discern between accepting Jesus upon proper documentation for his existence versus accepting Him as a Savior of the world.

19. Impersonal God

God is too big to care about me.

20. Divinely-Ordained Happiness

More than anything else. God wants me to be happy.

The endless pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of pain at all costs is unrealistic.

God sees the bigger picture and knows that the pain is only temporary.

Pain can be a great motivator to draw closer to God.

With God, circumstances are much less important than perspective.

21. Possibility of becoming God

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the search for happiness has destroyed our joy and left us empty, looking for another fix. When we stop seeking happiness and start seeking God, joy ----lasting joy----comforts and sustains us.

To possess pure faith, a person must come to believe in a source of knowledge, a point of reference to help him/her as an authority.

Religious addiction is often used as a means to avoid reality. Therefore, very real issues will go unaddressed. In so doing, this puts the responsibility on God. Using the term "addiction" is an invitation to accept responsibility for the problem and determine to do something about it. The challenge is to break through denial and be willing to do whatever it takes to be free.

\*\*Material taken from "Toxic faith" by Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton Nashville, Tennessee: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1991