

Faith: strengths and weaknesses

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



To provide a reasonable point of view on this topic, one has to first establish what faith means at a personal level in order to identify how it serves as a basis for knowledge in religion and natural sciences. Faith is regarded in various ways; commonly as reliability on someone/thing, religion, beliefs, and others. An English dictionary generalizes faith is a “ strong or unshakeable belief in something, especially without proof or evidence”. Essentially, in this context, faith is the solid unconditional belief of something with little evidence or proof. With the definition stated, we can now focus on the matter in hand, its strengths and weaknesses.

In today’s world there is an ongoing debate between faith and science. The extraordinary advances of science have sometimes led to the belief that it is capable of answering by itself all of man’s questions and resolving all his problems. Some have concluded that by now there is no longer any need for God. It has been said that one must choose between faith and science: either one embraces one or believes in the other. Between faith and science there will always be conflict. A scientist who is committed to scientific research no longer has a need for God and vice versa is prominent.

A scientist by the name of Dr. Collin’s made a breakthrough in science by creating the human genome which consists of the entire DNA in our species, the heredity code of life (National). Such a breakthrough for a scientist that is a strong believer in God would call for an occasion of worship. He made it known that the belief in God is completely a rational choice and faith is paired with the fundamentals of science (National). But the real question is should faith and science be separated? Many scientists believe it should be separated simply because they don’t believe in God and they have theories

that prove just that. As Christians our world views should strongly relate to our faith. Our task is to shape a worldview according to the teachings of scripture, and continually test the world views against the scriptures.

This biblical worldview will then serve as a guide through life, and this includes responses to origins, stewardship, justice, medical, and genetic concerns. Hebrews chapter eleven verse three states, “ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” Everything in biology ranging from meiosis, genetics, to anatomy includes God’s Governance of the cosmos, even chance and random processes. Biblical information about the relationship between God and his world is foundational to developing a Christian view of science and biology.

Although faith and science will always be controversial I believe they coexist. It is to my understanding that the reason why most scientists have turned atheistic and secular is because they are not strong believers in God to begin with. The powerful observations made in the science world are indeed believable but as Christians we underlie God’s power that exhibits the results we see. Secular scientists don’t believe that God has that much power and that is why this great controversy continues today and will continue throughout our lives.

Religions are, for the most part, guided by the beliefs of those who choose to profess them; in other words, what they have faith in. The choice of profession is up to the individual; it is also usual to see people who realize that their faith inclines towards a different direction and proceed to change

what their religion was. What one follows or believes in usually has a strong impact on the person's life. It is common to see people wearing religious symbolic items, such as a cross hanging from a necklace, or families getting together to attend the weekly mass (or other cult-like activities). Ultimately, all of these customary behaviors are directly affected by people's knowledge about their religion.

Religion is, habitually, an established dogma. The Bible, for example, established the basis of the Christian faith, the Quran for the Islamic one, etc. One chooses to what extent one is going to follow its path. Faith is the limiting factor here; where one of its weaknesses becomes visible.

A sad example of the extreme extents of faith is the people who have such a strong devotion to their beliefs that they are willing to put life itself at play. My father was raised in a religiously oblivious (although not necessarily atheist) environment; he tells me that "If you have faith in Him, there is no need to run". By that he means that people with such strong beliefs and passion about their religion will, gladly, give their life for it. Personally, I regard these actions as unnecessary, yet I keep a sense of sympathy towards the people who choose these paths, I find their commitment outstanding. However, it is this same unconditional passion what reveals the dark side of religion: the inability to consider or accept a different opinion, the displays of hate towards those who do not share its views, and most sadly, the actions that target life and inspire terror.

We are all familiar with the tragic September 11 (2001) attacks that happened here in the United States. The perpetrators' reasoning came from

the fundamentalist interpretation of the readings in their holy texts.

Apparently, those who die for their religion are guaranteed a special place in heaven. These men had faith that the atrocities they committed would be rewarded with some sort of eternal happiness in their afterlife.

On the other hand, religion helps guide its followers towards a lifestyle where they contribute to their community in very positive ways. From my limited experiences in both Catholic and Christian churches, I have noticed how its members selflessly provide funds for the church, set up fundraisers and volunteer activities to better the community, assist those who need help, among other good deeds. Religions encourage humane acts such as these; the funds gathered are meant to better the lifestyle of as many people as possible. It is this faith, based on values and human ethics, which should be supported and encouraged. The church fulfills a very important part of life. It helps the people who need guidance to stay on what is generally perceived as the right track, an environment where we attain our ethics and morals by respecting others, being compassionate, etc. I may not be involved with any specific religion; nevertheless, I endorse these activities which I rather refer to as doing “ what is and feels right”.

I feel that faith and natural sciences share a very strong tie; this is the fact that the two often conflict with each other. When I think of natural sciences, I think about the studies of nature itself; Animals, plants, abiotic factors, the biosphere. It would be overwhelming to attempt to quantify how rich in flora and fauna this world is. The outstanding wonders in this planet, such as: underground springs, mountain ranges, and geysers leave people

speechless. It all makes me wonder in what way was it formed. Here is where faith ties in; it varies according to what one believes that created the Earth we live in.

Scientists (a portion of them) “ have faith”, as to say, in the Big Bang Theory (theory essentially stating how an explosion occurred, creating the universe in which we live today). Christians on the other side, view God as the ultimate creator of everything. I view these and other claims, such as the existence or non-existence of any deity, as something we humans are not supposed to know or should not be able to explain; furthermore no one can claim any of these ideals either true or false. That is one of the beauties of faith, how it allows for various interpretations.

However, these two main views tend to collide. An example of this is the argument of the theory of evolution vs. the theory of intelligent design (essentially the belief that God designed humans). In the perspective of scientists, religion is not backed by any factual evidence. It is based on the recordings of a group of people who cannot be tested for the veracity of what they said or wrote. It is ironic to point out that scientific theories can be backed by experimentation; however they are incapable of ever being totally true. The existence of holy beings is controversial as well. Scientists label it as irrational to believe that there was a supreme deity who created everything; they seek to find evidence behind those beliefs. The weakness of using faith as knowledge in science becomes visible here; arguments between the two happen often in everyday situations. An example of the conflict is visible with schools that avoid teaching evolution to their students.

The main problem being, that science and religion always want to prove each other wrong.

From the point of view of the most devoted, scientists are regarded as non-believers, the lost, sinners, among other terminologies. Unlike scientists, their answer to the question of what started life is simple. Their god created it. They have faith in an all-powerful creature, while scientists continue to seek for answers. The believers are comfortable with the thought that there is a creature which set a whole life for them to fulfill. I admire how these people do not lose valuable time trying to figure out the answer behind existence, I believe that a stable mind is a positive thing. Who knows? Perhaps us “not knowing” is how it was meant to be.

Faith is the basis for the great majority of the religions in the world, the religions we choose are quite determining in life. There are religions that encourage and cherish the value of human ethics and morals, and therefore better the community. On the contrary there are religions where the “right thing” is not as clear, and what one believes to be right might not be viewed in the same way by the rest of the world. The extent of one’s faith determines to what point one is going to follow a religion.

For thousands of years, people based everything on faith in God. A person’s place in society, how good a crop would do, and the changes in the earth were all decided by God. People and animals were as they were because God made them that way. God inspired people to write the Bible and sent his only son to die for people’s sins. All of this was the common faith of the people in Europe until the nineteenth century. Faith was hit hard by a group of free

thinkers and was forced to a back seat to science and reason. It was harder for people to believe something just on faith. People now had to have evidence to back up the things that society just accepted in the past.

The constant argument between religion and sciences is also influenced by faith. The belief that religion is the answer helps individuals to not require having a feeling of knowing the answers to the great philosophical puzzles of life, its existence, or creation. Those who support science have a more reasonable explanation (according to them) to what goes on around them. We are not to make religion and science clash, we should all acknowledge and allow them to coexist. We are curious in nature; we will always try to get answers even if we do not know the questions.