

# FOCUS ON FAITH

## UPSIDE DOWN

Many of us have probably heard the comment that Christianity is for people who need a 'crutch to lean on' or that it's just for young kids and old ladies. Perhaps the people who've said that (or maybe think it now) have memories of Sunday School days or possibly it's a perception based on observing typical attendees at churches. Well sorry to disappoint anyone who may hold that opinion but I don't think I fall into any of above categories!

I've even heard it said that maybe the prayers which church leaders write for each edition of the Journal should be entitled 'Prayer for the Weak' but the title is correctly spelt with two 'E's'!

The Christian faith isn't for simpletons although the message is simple – 'God loves you!' It's not for the weak or faint hearted either because if it's correctly lived out, then it is dynamic and powerful in its effect. The children's prayer may say, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild...' but meekness and mildness in this context is about having a humble and modest attitude rather than being so feeble that people walk all over you or that you're incapable of standing up for yourself.

**Christianity isn't for wimps. It's for those who recognise their own fallibility and who determine to live differently**

We've just commenced a new theme with the weekly Prayers based on Jesus' teaching from Matthew's Gospel chapter 5. His instructions, which are commonly known as the 'Beatitudes', turn conventional wisdom upside down. Just take a look at some of these radical statements.

Blessed (which one Bible version translates as 'happy, fortunate, to be envied') are those who:

- Are completely dependant on God
- Mourn and grieve
- Help to bring peace instead of always insisting on their own way or rights
- Are put down or ridiculed because of their righteous activities, actions and beliefs.

Get the picture?

The One who represented God in an earthly form was Himself misunderstood, ridiculed and eventually betrayed, beaten and crucified following false accusations and a rigged trial. And yet He says, "Love your enemies and pray for them", "Don't take revenge", "Don't lie and cheat to get one over on other

people", "Think of others, especially the less fortunate, rather than yourself all the time".

I admit that often many of us Christians fail to live up to the standards and instructions we've been given and perhaps we can (and do) put people off. Someone once penned, "I don't have a problem with God; it's His fan club I can't stand". Perhaps that's why we are 'practicing' Christians – because we're still trying to get it right.

But let's face it; if we live the way we've been shown by Jesus, then Christianity isn't for wimps. It's for those who recognise their own fallibility and who determine to live differently – God's way and in His strength.

Perhaps it's time to turn the way we live upside down. Think about it for a moment and look around. Our world, our communities, our families and even personal relationships, are plagued by problems and difficulties. God's ways may seem upside down but maybe they're the right way up. After all to get best results, isn't it always better to follow the Maker's instructions?

I guess the question I'd ask you to consider is, 'which way is the best way?' If we're prepared to follow His way instead of ours, then perhaps we'll find that, in the words of The Lord's Prayer, God's will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.

If you'd like to find out more about the real, radical Christian faith, log on to [www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk](http://www.lifting-jesus-higher.org.uk) which has details of local Christian Churches and contact details.



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