The Role of Reason in the Life of a Believer

From the early moments of man’ existence after being created by God, he has been challenged to engage creation utilizing his mind and his ability to reason. In Genesis, 2:15-20, God assigned Adam the task to evaluate all of the creatures in God’s creation and to name them. This exercise required him to consider each creature and to place a name upon it. God also asked Adam to manage his creation, both the animals and the lands. This challenge required man to use the thinking ability God had placed within him and to learn from experiences. This paper will reflect upon the need for reason in a believer’s life as well as the necessity for faith in his life. It will seek to explain how a believer must learn to seek clarity with the reasoning skills as they also exercise the ability to draw near to his Creator and trust His character.

The ability to reason is a gift from God. It allows a believer to gather facts and evaluate whether certain facts can create causal relationships that allows the believer to anticipate what the future might hold for them. For instance, a believer might have a small sum of money that they have saved and they might wish to invest that money to get a return that would enable them to pursue a future project they have in mind. The believer could study the concept of how compounding interest can create ever growing returns if the believer allows the money to stay invested. The believer must also learn about risk and the devastating effect investing funds with a dishonest person or a high risk investment might have for a beginning investor. They can consider the quality of the instrument they wish to invest within, the term of time they have to leave the investment at work, and the character of the person they place their trust in to manage their investment. All of these considerations require the ability to reason and evaluate the best course.

In a similar way, a believer must use the ability to reason to evaluate the truths of God which are written in the Bible. God has provided guidelines about how a believer should live and has explained that it is “best” for a believer to follow His instructions. The believer can reflect upon those he has known and consider their lives and how God has been faithful to His promises to those individuals. He can also consider the times he followed God’s commands and saw benefit. Likewise, he can consider the times he rebelled and the consequences of those actions to his life. He can also examine how God was faithful to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and kept His promises to the people of Israel. In addition, he can see the cause and effect of their pursuing God and their rebellion to God. A believer must use their ability to reason to fully realize all that God has done, is doing and will do in the future.

Faith is also an essential tool for a believer. The believer must develop a personal relationship with God and learn to trust in His character. Each day, God works to reveal Himself to the believer through the work of the Holy Spirit and the specific actions and conversations He has with the believer. As time goes by, the believer matures to the point where he is completely convinced that God lives within him and is with him at all times. The believer’s actions reflect a devotion to this intimate relationship and he willingly applies the truths he has learned in God’s Word.

Non-believers might look at a believer’s actions and mock him for seemingly acting in “blind faith” in circumstances that a worldly person might seek to avoid or to take advantage of the situation. The believer is working according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and can take great comfort from having this divine guidance to direct his decisions. A believer is not always given all of the answers as to why the Holy Spirit directs him toward a certain action. This is meant to help the believer grow in their faith. They are able to reason through the things they experience and how they saw God work in their circumstances. His active participation builds a believer’s faith. In Romans 5: 1-5, the writer explains that a believer’s hope (faith) is developed through afflictions that develop endurance, which leads to proven character. This true character relies upon trust in the Lord for guidance and certainty about the future. As we follow this logic, since a mature believer has proven to himself that God is active and can be trusted, the believer can trust that his salvation is certain and that there is a place for him in heaven. Jesus said in John 14: 1-4 that He was going to prepare a place for believers and that He would bring them to Him. He also shares in Revelation 22:12 that His is coming quickly and will repay each person according to what he has done. These admonitions provide the believer with clarity and purpose in this life and he is wise to follow the direction of His creator.

A believer should consistently use reason to make decisions as they journey through life. They should rely upon their faith in God to comfort them and provide direction for them as they consider God’s Word and listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice as they make decisions in every day life. These decisions are based upon the fact of God’s active participation in their lives and they are wise to seek His ways and follow the paths He sets for them.