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 it's 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 20th 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,