

**Lucan:** Let us pray. Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the blessing of this time of sacred fellowship, convocation, and rest. We ask that your Spirit be with each one present. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

**Pastor Chick:** Amen.

**daphna dee:** Amen

**Barb:** Amen

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Gadriel:** Amen

**Adriel7:** Amen

**Naraiel:** Amen

**Lucan:** Happy Sabbath 😊 Yah brought a series of words to my attention this week, which I'd like to begin by sharing.

In the Scripture, there is a Greek word, "dokimos," which is generally translated as "approved," or "accepted." For example, "Study to shew thyself approved [dokimos] unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15)

And again, "For not he that commendeth himself is approved [dokimos], but whom the Lord commendeth." (2 Cor. 10:18)

It also is translated as "tried" in one verse: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [dokimos], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12)

Part of what first caught my interest is that the concordance has a paragraph explaining the historical meaning and use of the word, which is not especially common. It is not especially long, so I will share it here: ""In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into moulds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft, and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens to stop the practice of whittling down the coins then in circulation. But some money-changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money; they were men of honour who put only genuine, full-weight money into circulation. Such men were called dokimos, and this word is used here for the Christian as he is to be seen by the world."

We see a word then that means both tried and approved; that the one so called has been weighed, and not found wanting. The word that it comes from is "dokeo," and it means essentially, "to think." It's often translated into words like "suppose," "think," and "seemed good." For example: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think [dokeo] not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44)

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think [dokeo] that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matt. 6:7)

"For it seemeth [dokeo] to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him." (Acts 25:27)

The word may indicate both false and true beliefs – when Yahshua is thought not to come, then He comes. Those that prayed in repetitions thought – falsely – that they would be heard. This word indicates thoughts and beliefs, but doesn't speak to their truthfulness. This may seem like a strange root for a word meaning "tried and found to be accepted."

There is a third word however, related to the other two, which ties them together. That word is "dokime," which is translated variously as "proof," "experiment," "trial," and "experience":

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience [dokime]; and experience [dokime], hope" (Rom. 5:3-4)

We see then one word that begins with thoughts and sentiments, then another that moves to the trial and testing of those through experimental experience, and finally shows them to be approved, having been tested and found true. The sequence of words here describes the process of self-examination, and weighing the experiences of the saints in that process. And the weighing of experiences is what I would like to talk about today.

At the end of this sequence, we find that our experiences – having been tested and proved – are a great blessing to ourselves and others. For example, Paul writes of his experiences, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. 1:3-5)

The experiences of the saints often involves the trial of their beliefs and thoughts, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Those experiences then, having been proved, are blessings to ourselves and others whether in comfort, edification, or correction. We begin with "dokeo," a thought; we examine it, "dokime," and we come out approved, "dokimos."

Yet experience has limits. All of us have, at one point or another, met someone who refused to accept the testimony of Yahshua because it did not agree with their experience. The man whose experience is one of constant striving and sin can't reconcile that experience with the gospel; one must go. The man whose experience tells him the blessings of God are on his church can't reconcile that experience with the news that the same church has forsaken God, and that His Spirit has departed. Whether the message or the experience, one must be given up. Mrs. White tells us that "there are more errors received and firmly retained from false ideas of experience than from any other cause."

That is a statement that ought to be allowed to sink in for a moment – more errors from a false idea of experience than "any other cause." Evidently, then, it is very important that we have a proper idea of experience! If our understanding of this is flawed, then what we consider to be "tried and true" will also be flawed; the thought or belief has not been properly tried, and therefore, may not be true.

What, then, is the right idea of experience? We can begin with what it is not – it is not safely measured by feeling. We read the following from the Testimonies: "You have a strong mind and set will, and you think you understand your own case better than others can, because you trace your feelings. You are guided by your feelings and are governed by your experience. You have tried this and that plan to your entire satisfaction, and have decided that your judgment was the best to follow in your own case. But what has been your standard? Answer: Your feelings... Now, my sister, what have your feelings to do with the real facts in the case? But very little. Feelings are a poor criterion, especially when under the control of a strong imagination and firm will. You have a very determined mind, and your course is mapped out before you; but you do not view your case from a correct standpoint. Your judgment is not safe to be relied upon when it relates to your own case." [3T 68]

If the experience is measured by feeling, whether it be "I feel better on a diet of meat and soda" or "I feel that Yahweh accepts any day of worship I choose to give," then the judgment is flawed and the experience cannot be relied on.

Again, from the same letter: "I have before stated, you, my sister, rely upon experience. Your experience decides you to pursue a certain course. But that which many term experience is not experience at all; it is simply habit, or mere indulgence, blindly and frequently ignorantly followed, with a firm, set determination, and without intelligent thought or inquiry relative to the laws at work in the accomplishment of the result."

Now this gets more to the heart of the matter. We may have done things a certain way for our entire life; even a lack of discernable consequences is not a right idea of experience. The smoker who lives to old age may point to his experience, and say the habit is healthy. The gossip who does not sense their sin may say their experience lends itself to a better social circle. Lucifer himself had his experience to cite when he took off his veil and was not immediately sentenced to judgment.

What, then, is real experience?

"Real experience is a variety of careful experiments made with the mind freed from prejudice and uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude and an anxious desire to learn, to improve, and to reform on every habit that is not in harmony with physical and moral laws."

This is true, reliable experience – that which is only found by standing resolutely in the light. This is true self-examination; that which is manifest in a careful attitude and an anxious desire both to learn, and to repent and be healed of any remaining dross.

"The idea of others' gainsaying what you have learned by experience seems to you to be folly and even cruelty itself. But there are more errors received and firmly retained from false ideas of experience than from any other cause, for the reason that what is generally termed experience is

not experience at all; because there has never been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principle involved in the action." [3T 68]

Here we will close with the quote mentioned earlier in its context. Experience may be relied on only to the extent that it has been tried by close examination against the principles of the Word of Yah. It is our duty to bring our thoughts and beliefs to the trial of experiment, and to bring our experiences before the trial of truthful examination. This is the work of sanctification; to be purged from false thoughts and unreliable experiences, so that only that which is "dokimos" in us may remain to be approved by Yah and man.

**Adriel7:** Amen

**Lucan:** Are there any comments about the study tonight?

**Zahakiel:** C

**Lucan:** Go ahead

**Zahakiel:** Thank you for sharing this study. As you know from my own presentations...I find a lot of blessing from looking at words in their contexts. While the good news of Yah's love is designed to be apparent in every language...I think we gain something by examining the ideas as they were originally expressed.

Also, with regard to the main concept you presented, about experiences potentially being false... you highlighted that experiences based on feelings cannot be trusted. This is certainly true, and I would add that, especially in these last days, the deceptions can go even deeper than that. A lot of what we think we see is actually missing pieces supplied by our brains, to compensate for missing or conflicting signals from our eyes. In other words, sometimes our imagination can have as much to do with what we think we are seeing than the facts. This is why "eyewitness testimony" in court cases has been shown to be faulty time after time. I believe in one place Mrs. White also said that in the last days, we will not even be able to trust our senses. The truth is, we never really could...but now the Enemy has found ways to exploit the weaknesses of our bodies like no time in the past. All we can safely trust, all we can safely rely upon, is our understanding of the Father and Son, and our faith in Their promises. We know that we can rely upon Them, and Their words, not only because of our experiences, which may indeed be flawed...but also because the Holy Spirit, an assurance that we cannot explain, only experience, bears a "second witness" that the testimony of Yah is true.

I am thinking again of our conversations with the Thusia Church some weeks ago. It was not their "experience" that any day but the Seventh is blessed by Yahweh. Because they relied on this experience, and not on the testimony of scripture and (to a lesser extent) Christian history...they would hear none of what we wished to share with them. If they had done as Bro. Luke describes here, carefully experimented, freed themselves from prejudice so that they might taste and see that Yahweh is good in this way as well as they way to which they are used, we might have seen an outpouring. But... as the study also rightly reveals, it is not enough to question the experiences of others. Self-examination is the most important examination we are called upon to do. End.

12-2-2016 Unreliable Experience

**Lucan:** Amen. 😊 Thank you for sharing that...

**Pastor Chick:** C

**Lucan:** Go ahead

**Pastor Chick:** I appreciated the teaching and found the duration short enough to make the point (s) without losing the audience. I would offer one suggestion because I had some difficulty keeping up with the reading...if the LMK convention were used for quotes, it might give us slower readers a good chance to keep abreast. END

**Adriel7:** 😊 (and us copy & pasters 😊)

**Lucan:** Sure, thanks for that feedback. 😊 I'll incorporate it going forward.

**Kim:** C

**Naraiel:** C.

**Lucan:** Are there any other comments? Go ahead, Kim.

**Kim:** Before life had humbled me, I was totally closed off to the idea that the SDA church was Babylon. I think a proud heart is full of prejudice. As I realized my needs I became more open minded. End

**Lucan:** Go ahead, Giselle

**Naraiel:** First. Jaime wanted to thank Bro. Luke for this study, he will read it again tomorrow morning. End. Second. On the Facebook group I shared a reading about "Confusing ideas about Salvation" which can be related with wrong experiences (teachings) on Salvation. One of them is relying on emotion, and others are based on wrong conclusions. The problem is not reading the Bible, but seeing what conclusions are people going to get from what they read or hear, based on previous experiences. If experience is more important than their perceptions and their reading comprehension changes direction somehow. End.

**Kim:** C

**Lucan:** That reminds me of individuals we've encountered over the years who have had past experience with various sects. Many of them were burned by the experience and, it's all but impossible to get them to look honestly at the Scriptures that still promise a unified, spotless Church as a result. For many, the fear of a repeat experience is more important than the word of Yah promising otherwise. Thankfully, perfect love casts out all such fear. 😊 Go ahead, Kim.

**Kim:** That reminds me of how Mormon's base their faith on a burning in their bosom. They can't see past that feeling. End

**Lucan:** Now, Mormons are an interesting group. I've met many of them who have a better "experience" in the practical matters of faith than most Adventists.

**Kim:** C

**Naraiel:** C.

**Lucan:** Go ahead, Kim

**Kim:** Whenever they're confronted with a new idea they almost go into a trance and say they feel a burning. End

**Lucan:** That one is outside of my "experience..." 😊

**Kim:** 😊

**Lucan:** I would be blessed to find as many Adventists with ordered families, happy demeanor, and healthy diets as I do Mormons. My prayer is that some of them might see the CSDA position as producing even greater fruit, and join to the truth. 😊 Go ahead, Giselle

**Naraiel:** The world is becoming more complex, unnecessarily challenging on different areas, including job descriptions and institution policies. Jobs are another kind of experience that can sanctify or leaven people's lives little by little, by force or need. Depending on the kinds of jobs, but I think we have come to a time when very few jobs are free from spiritual danger. Job descriptions can cultivate good or bad habits by force or by need. Christians would need to be praying fervently for Yah's protection on all kinds of environments. For example: certain careers and jobs demand and train their employees to become suspicious of everything. That must be quite bad for character edification. End.

**Kim:** C

**Lucan:** Go ahead

**Kim:** At my work we do that, but I compartmentalize it. End

**Naraiel:** Q.

**Lucan:** Go ahead

**Naraiel:** You do what?

**Kim:** Relate to it like an isolated thing.

**Naraiel:** I am not sure what you are referring to, specifically. Could you clarify? End. C.

**Lucan:** Go ahead

**Kim:** Oh. I am a cashier and I have to report suspicious behavior. End

**Naraiel:** because habits with time helps to weaken or strengthen a certain trait of character. End. (I was thinking more about police and detectives. I am not sure how Christian can choose to remain in that work environment).

**Kim:** Q

**Naraiel:** (Especially with today's demands).

**Lucan:** While I appreciate (and would like to continue) the discussion, I think we have moved past the original topic. I would like to close with prayer if there's nothing else directly related, and we can resume discussion (without the need for moderation) after. 😊 Bro. David, would you offer a closing prayer?

**Zahakiel:** Ok. Dear Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the gathering of brethren tonight, on your holy Sabbath day. We thank you that we are not left alone, that you have not left yourself without a witness in the world, that we should be strengthened and comforted by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit, and that we should give a firm, consistent and glorious testimony to the world of your love. We thank you, and give you praise, that you are trustworthy above all, that every man should be false, but you are always true. Bless our examinations always, so that in the coming Day of Judgment, and now, during the examination of the living, we may be found approved, accepted. We thank you that this is so, as you dismiss us from this meeting, for we have asked it in Yahshua's name. Amen.

**Gadriel:** Amen

**Lucan:** Amen

**Pastor Chick:** Amen.

**Naraiel:** Amen

**Adriel7:** Amen

**Barb:** Amen

**Kim:** Amen

**daphna dee:** Amen

**Elyna:** Amen.