

Faith, What is It?

Hebrews 11:1-6

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

I. From Websters 1828 Dictionary:

1. Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence; the judgment that what another states or testifies is the truth.

3. In theology, the assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief of the scriptures, of the being and perfections of God, and of the existence, character and doctrines of Christ, founded on the testimony of the sacred writers, is called historical or speculative faith; a faith little distinguished from the belief of the existence and achievements of Alexander or of Cesar.

4. Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence or trust in God's character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation.

- A. All this is fine, but what is faith?
- B. Faith is the simplest of all aspects of our relationship with God, yet the hardest to explain.
- C. There are three elements of faith.
 - 1. Knowledge, belief and trust.

Romans 10:14

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

II. Knowledge

- A. Notice, belief comes after knowledge.
- B. The only way for a person to have a knowledge of God is to hear about Him.
- C. Romans 10:17 tells us faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.
- D. The only way to have faith IN God is know ABOUT God.

Proverbs 1:29-31

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

- E. What happens to those who choose not to have knowledge about God:
 - 1. Fear of the Lord is reverence. How can you revere God if you don't have faith in Him? How can you have faith in Him if you don't believe? How can you believe if you don't know?
- F. Knowledge of God is the very foundation of having faith in God.

III. Knowledge then brings belief.

- A. People who study in college to be doctors will spend 8 to 12 years gaining knowledge.
- B. That knowledge causes them to believe they will be doctors.
- C. We believe ships will not fall off the edge of the world because we have knowledge the world is round.
- D. Once you have knowledge of God your mind moves to believing in and about God.
- E. When someone gains a knowledge of the Word of God, the next logical step is to believe it.
- F. If it is our desire to please God, we must have faith.

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- G. Again, this begins with a knowledge of Him and His word.
- H. That knowledge should take us to believing that God is and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.
 - 1. A person must believe in God's existence and omnipresence.
 - 2. A person then must believe God is eternally and exceptionally good to those who diligently seek Him.

IV. Once we have gained the knowledge and belief needed to approach God, all is left is trust.

- A. Again, from the 1828 Websters Dictionary, trust is: **1. Confidence; a reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship or other sound principle of another person.**
- B. When Ruth was speaking to Boaz about how she left her native land of Moab to live the life of an Israelite, Boaz responded with this:

Ruth 2:12

12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

1. Ruth experienced a mind at rest on the integrity, veracity, justice and friendship of a God her culture did not know.

C. When David was running for his life from the murderous intentions of Saul, he said this:

1. David found peace of mind in his worst trial because of his knowledge and belief in God.

D. Other scriptures:

Nahum 1:7

7 The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

2 Samuel 22:3

3 The God of my rock: in him will I trust: *he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my*

Isaiah 26:4

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:

Proverbs 30:5

5 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

also *is* become my salvation.

E. So, what is faith?

1. Faith is knowledge, belief and trust.

2. When we have faith in God, we have peace of mind.

3. When we have faith in God, we have peace of heart.

V. No wonder when the Lord and the disciples came to the withered fig tree, the only pronouncement was to have faith in God.

A. No matter what happens, have faith in God.

B. No matter how bad a situation looks...have faith in God.