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FAITH IN GOD

by
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The word FAITH conjures up all kinds of mental images and stirs human emotions. Actually there are all kinds of "faith." But when these different kinds of "faith" are evaluated we readily see that in many If not most instances what we are referring to is "hope" - - NOT FAITH. We "hope" our car starts when we get in to drive to work. We "hope" we will live through the night when we go to bed - - but we have no assurance we will. We "hope" to have food, clothing and shelter but we cannot actually have faith that tragedy will not strike and thus dash our hopes. Many other examples of the "hopes" we have could be cited but none actually represent "faith."

On the other hand, is there ANYTHING in which we humans can have *true genuine faith*? In reality there is only one thing we humans can have total and absolute FAITH IN. But there are many factors which regulate to what degree we can actually EXERCISE that faith. That one thing we can actually have and truly exercise faith is the Almighty Creator God. But case histories show that very few of us can actually claim to have and exercise that kind of faith. WHY?

Only one of the many scriptures from the Holy Bible that expounds this subject of faith is Hebrews 11:1. Here we find "Now faith is **BEING SURE OF** what we hope for and certain of **WHAT WE DO NOT SEE.**" And verse 3 states: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command." Then verse 6 states: "Without faith it is impossible to please God **BECAUSE ANYONE WHO COMES TO HIM MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE WHO EARNESTLY SEEK HIM.**" James 1:5-8 then nails down these passages. James says that if any of us lack anything we are to ASK GOD for it but when we ask WE MUST BELIEVE AND NOT DOUBT FOR HE WHO DOUBTS WILL RECEIVE NOTHING FROM GOD SINCE HE IS DOUBLE MINDED AND UNSTABLE IN ALL THAT HE DOES.

We need to review the aforementioned texts carefully since they establish the very basis for faith and how we can both have and exercise faith. As Hebrews 11:1 states, faith is BEING SURE OF something even though it is not yet in our sight - - even though we do not have it as yet! It goes on to say we must BE CERTAIN of things we do not yet see or have. Pause and let those words sink deep into our souls and minds. Then concentrate on verse 6, which states "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Thus if any of us have a desire to please God we must have and

exercise faith. It does NOT say we must have "hope" in order to please God. There is a vast difference between "faith" and "hope."

The second half of verse 6 states: "Anyone who comes to Him (God) ***MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE WHO EARNESTLY SEEK HIM.***" These are powerful words, which find most of us short before God. In today's world [especially in America] there is a heated and growing debate over the subject of evolution. The contention is whether public schools should teach only evolution as the origin of life on earth or if public schools should also teach "Intelligent Design" as a possible source of life on earth. Let us use this debate for a moment so as to understand this subject of faith.

First and foremost we must realize that there is absolutely no true scientific evidence to support the ***THEORY*** of evolution. There are no missing links bridging the gaps between the many different life forms on earth. On the other hand, there is **ABSOLUTE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT LIFE COMES ONLY FROM PRE-EXISTING LIFE OF THE SAME KIND.** This point automatically brings up the valid age -old question [that clearly debunks the theory of evolution] of "WHICH CAME FIRST THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?" It is a proven scientific fact that we must have an egg in order to have a chicken and we also must have a female chicken in order to have an egg. But merely having a female chicken so as to have an egg is not enough since we must also have another absolutely necessary ingredient - **A MALE CHICKEN!**

I first used this "chicken and egg" illustration in 1955. My wife and I had just married and I had rented a cottage in South Pasadena, California from a graduate from the University of Washington. He had all kinds of degrees in geology, archeology, anthropology, evolution etc. In interviewing me as a potential renter he learned that I was a Christian that believed in the Bible and creation. He approved me as a renter without any harassment at the time. However, each month he would come in person to collect the rent and each time he would try and engage me in a discussion [argument] over creation and evolution. He would insult me for my faith in God and creation.

I did not oppose him verbally for three months. As the time approached for him to come by to collect the rent for the fourth month, I determined to stop his insults once and for all. True to form he immediately began to ridicule me for my beliefs. But I stopped him with the statement "Wait just a minute - - I have a proposition to make to you!" I then proposed to him that **IF HE COULD GIVE A CLEAR SCIENTIFIC ANSWER TO AN EXTREMELY SIMPLE QUESTION THAT I WOULD RENOUNCE MY BELIEF IN GOD AND THE BIBLE AND EMBRACE EVOLUTION!** I could see from his facial expressions that he was elated at the prospect of debunking God and Creation and winning someone over to embrace evolution. So he heartily agreed to accept my challenge believing that he [with all his degrees] could answer any and all questions I could pose on the subject of evolution.

I then began to toy with his mind by feigning embarrassment over my asking such a simple question to such an educated mind as his. Actually I toyed with him for several minutes by making such statements as "I am almost ashamed to ask you such a simple question which I know you will be able to answer immediately with clear scientific proof." I actually toyed with him to the extent that he began to get agitated that I was so hesitant to ask the question. When I

felt I had him primed enough I quietly said, "If you can give me **CLEAR AND ARTICULATE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE** as to which came first the chicken or the egg I will embrace evolution."

You would have thought a huge mule had just kicked him in the stomach. His face turned both white and red and various shades in between. The question literally took his breath away. When he gained a little composure he quickly glanced at his watch and stated "Oh, I am twenty minutes late for an appointment" as he hurriedly rushed to his car and drove off. I never saw the man after that. A few days later he telephoned asking that in the future I mail the rent check to him - - which I did.

This was an "educated" man but he had educated himself in false "assumed" information while refusing to look at the true scientific facts involved. He knew beyond the shadow of any doubt that you must have a female chicken to have an egg and you must have an egg to produce a chicken. And just having a female chicken is only half of what you need. You also need a perfectly formed male chicken. This same principle applies to all forms of birds, mammals, fish, insects and reptiles.

I could spend countless hours involving countless species of life on earth. The existence of a human is perhaps the best example I could use since humans are the "most advanced and complex" species of life on earth. When we carefully examine the human being we should be awe struck. A very large number of humans today reject the idea of "INTELLIGENT DESIGN" BEING THE SOURCE OF LIFE ON EARTH. Yet, look at the human body itself. I personally do not know how many different parts there are in the human body but there must be thousands and each of these thousands of parts represent absolute **MIRACLES**. Let us for the sake of illustration take the eye. It would take literally thousands of pages to describe the eye and how it functions and what these functions allow the human (and all other life forms) to accomplish their purpose and function. The deeper you probe into the eye, into the eyeball and the sense of sight you readily see just how complex eyesight really is - - that there is unmistakable INTELLIGENT DESIGN that brought eyesight into being. And this is only one of the many senses and bodily functions that clearly demonstrate "intelligent design."

Take any other sense that the body possesses. The sense of smell is miraculous and shows intelligent design. Then what about the sense of taste? And then there is the sense of feel plus the sense of sound

[hearing]. Then there is another "sense" that is all too often overlooked. That is the sense of "BALANCE" - - WE CALL THAT EQUILIBRIUM. No specie of mammal, animal, reptile, bird or insect could exist without equilibrium. Every life form must START OUT WITH equilibrium else it could not exist let alone "evolve" into another specie.

With what we have just reviewed we need to realize there are literally thousands of other factors in "life" we have not even considered. Take the bone structures of the various vertebrates, which enable all to function as it was intended they function. Take the "mouth" used to ingest food that sustains life. Then look at the digestive systems and the digestive juices that each possesses. Look at the stomach and the intestines and the bowels and the urinary track. Look at the heart

and the circulatory system that enables the body to function. Look at the lungs and how and why they function. And what about the kidneys and the liver? And what about the reproductive organs and how they function? What about the nerves that signal pain or other factors? Unquestionably there is "intelligent design" in all these bodily functions.

There are many other organs within the body that perform specific INTELLIGENTLY DESIGNED functions that enable that body to live and perform. As I stated earlier, literal books could be written [and have been written] on just a few of these points. Since I want to get back to the subject of FAITH, LET ME DRAW THIS SECTION TO A CLOSE BY QUOTING Romans 1:19-20 which reads: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who SUPPRESS THE TRUTH by their wickedness, since WHAT MAY BE KNOWN ABOUT GOD IS PLAIN TO THEM [if they had a willingness to see], BECAUSE GOD HAS MADE IT PLAIN TO THEM. For since the creation of the world GOD'S INVISIBLE QUALITIES - - HIS ETERNAL POWER AND DIVINE NATURE - - have been CLEARLY SEEN, BEING UNDERSTOOD FROM WHAT HAS BEEN MADE, **SO THAT MEN ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.**" Clearly, if a person wants to know anything about God all he need do is study what we call "nature" and we see God in all His glory.

The point is that, as Hebrews 11:6 states, WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD. We must not only claim to "believe" in God we must KNOW that he exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. It is NOT enough to merely claim to "believe in a god." As the Bible states, there are many "gods" and many "lords" but to God's true people "there is but one God, the Father from whom all things came and FOR WHOM WE LIVE [are supposed to live] and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live!" (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

But the question on the agenda today is FAITH TOWARD AND IN THAT GOD! How does this faith come about? Do humans just automatically have this faith? Can they exercise and display this faith at will? Is there something we humans must do to have this faith? If so, what would that be?

From what we have already learned we must first PROVE TO OURSELVES THAT GOD EXISTS. That proof does not come merely through "casual" study. I have already given you the basis for this study. We must prove conclusively to ourselves that God exists and that He rewards us by keeping His promises.

There is the need to make clear that NO ONE CAN MERELY ACCEPT CHRIST AS SAVIOR UNLESS OR UNTIL GOD THE FATHER CALLS THAT PERSON (John 6:44). Do you personally understand that important spiritual principle from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself? If God the Father has not called you and given you over to Christ for safekeeping then you cannot and will NOT understand these words. On the other hand, if God the Father has singled you out, called you and given you over to Jesus Christ then you are not going to escape this calling. Even a casual study of the Bible shows clearly that once God the Father begins to deal with a human being He EXPECTS that human being to respond to that calling through SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. Let us return to Hebrews 11:1 again for a most important point. The first part of that verse states that faith is the assurance [being sure of] things

we do not as yet have in our possession and BEING CERTAIN OF THINGS WE DO NOT YET SEE! Now notice the rest of that verse which states: **"THIS IS WHAT THE ANCIENTS WERE COMMENDED FOR!"**

One of the best examples of this is none other than Abraham. As Galatians 3:6 states emphatically, **ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD AND IT [THAT BELIEF OR FAITH] WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS!** What did Abraham then do? Did he go about repeating "I believe in God" or "I have faith in God?" No, as Hebrews 11:7 says, **"RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES BY FAITH."** Then as verse 8 states, Abraham DID SOMETHING! He got up off his backside and went where God directed. (carefully study verses 7-12). Did you catch what these verses say? Study the entire chapter of Hebrews 11 and see what these many Godly people did to demonstrate to God they BELIEVED HIM AND BELIEVED IN WHAT HE HAD PROMISED TO THEM. Most sacrificed their lives **AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THIS BELIEF!**

Faith is A LIVING THING. It is a relationship between the human and his Maker - - the Almighty Creator God. God has given each of us sufficient knowledge that He exists. The next step then is ours. We must begin to look to, trust in and rely on that God for all that we need to fulfill our purpose in life and we are to learn what that purpose is and how we are to fulfill it by looking into that mirror of God's word and digesting what God requires of us. We are to come to the point the disciples reached when Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We BELIEVE and KNOW that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68).

Keep in mind that Christ had just REPEATED His dogmatic statement of John 6:44 - - "No one can come to me UNLESS the Father who sent me draws him (compare verse 65). Then verse 66 shows that MANY of those who had been following Him TURNED BACK AND NO LONGER FOLLOWED HIM. The point is quite simple. The twelve disciples truly recognized who Christ was and what He represented. All the others were more curious than anything else. They did NOT recognize that Christ was the true Messiah who had come to bring salvation to mankind (see verse 68 again). But the twelve were specifically chosen and called (I Corinthians 1:26-31). And as Paul explained in Romans 11:29, **THE GIFTS AND CALL FROM GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE!**

But let us dig a little deeper into FAITH IN GOD and see what that really is. Again, the prime example of faith in God is found in the example of Abraham. Galatians 3:6 contains a profound statement - - "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD!" Paul further explains this in Hebrews 11:8-12. But Paul really nails it down in Romans 4:16-25. Let us go through these verses and see what God is telling us.

Verse 16: "The promise (of eternal life) comes by faith SO THAT IT MAY BE BY GRACE (not because of our own human righteousness) and may be GUARANTEED TO ALL OF ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING.

"He (Abraham) is our (spiritual) father in the sight of God, in whom we believe - - the God who gives life to the dead and CALLS THINGS THAT ARE NOT YET (present) as though they were." (verse 17).

Verse 18: "Against all hope (though the promises made SEEMED impossible) Abraham in hope BELIEVED (trusted God)." As verse 20 states, "He did not waver through unbelief (doubt) regarding the promises of God but was STRENGTHENED IN HIS FAITH AND GAVE GLORY TO GOD." Then as verse 21 states, HE WAS FULLY PERSUADED THAT GOD HAD THE POWER TO DO WHAT HE HAD PROMISED. This is why it was CREDITED to him as righteousness" (verse 22).

Now notice what God is saying in verses 23 and 24: "The words it was credited to him were written NOT FOR HIM ALONE BUT FOR US WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WHO RAISED JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD."

But we must KNOW beyond the shadow of any doubt that God is true to His word - - AS WAS ABRAHAM. All those saints mentioned in Hebrews 11 DEMONSTRATED THEIR FAITH AND BELIEF IN GOD BY AND THROUGH THE DEEDS OF THEIR LIVES. That included a harlot named Rahab (Hebrews 11:31) James explains Abraham's and Rahab's cases further in chapter 2, verses 20 – 26. By carefully studying these verses we find that "FAITH WITHOUT DEEDS IS USELESS" (verse 20). As verse 21 states, Abraham was CONSIDERED righteous BY WHAT HE DID BY BEING WILLING TO OFFER HIS SON ISAAC ON THE ALTER. As verse 17 states, "Faith by itself, IF IT IS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY ACTION IS DEAD." Then verse 19 states "Show me your (claimed) faith WITHOUT DEEDS and I will show you my faith BY WHAT I DO."

It is NOT enough to merely "claim" to have faith in God WE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT FAITH BY OUR ACTIONS (CAREFULLY REVIEW VERSES 20-24). Thus we find that Rahab gained favor with God BY WHAT SHE DID IN REJECTING HER COUNTRY AND ACCEPTING THE GOD OF ISRAEL. She literally laid her human life on the line BY HER ACTIONS since she would have been killed had others in her country learned of her actions. As verse 26 states "As the body without the spirit is dead, SO FAITH WITHOUT DEEDS IS DEAD."

As followers of Christ we are to have and demonstrate LIVING faith and not merely a "profession" of faith. Our actions in our daily lives must back up our claims. We are talking about a faith that is LIVING AND VIBRANTLY ALIVE AND THRIVING.

If you find that you are lacking in this living and vibrant faith then there are actions you can take to rectify the situation. The very first thing you must do is be willing to admit your failings and weaknesses. Then you must HUMBLY go to God in earnest prayer and ask His help and guidance in your deep and meaningful evaluation of your spiritual condition before God.

For those who are listening to this over our telephone "Dial a Message" program, it is hoped you have been jotting these scriptures down for careful study. If you wish a printed copy of this message then you should request it. Once you have a printed copy of this message you should take it and your Bible to your private place of prayer and lay this message and the Bible before God as you prostrate yourself before God. Carefully and prayerfully study every passage and then compare the message in each verse to you and your life. Look into that mirror of God's word (James 1:21-26) and allow God to show you how you appear to Him. This process should

give you the incentive you need to truly repent of your humanness and begin to trust God for the help you need to overcome your human weaknesses and sins.

Doing this DEMONSTRATES to God that you have a LIVING AND VIBRANT FAITH IN HIM and that your actions show this LIVING FAITH.

Let me caution you that you cannot conjure up this kind of Living Faith. God reveals this to us in Ephesians 2:8 that "For it is by grace you have been saved THROUGH FAITH - - and THIS FAITH is not from yourself, it is the GIFT FROM GOD" This kind of LIVING FAITH comes from God as a gift but it comes as we develop that close and intimate relationship with Him through prayer and Bible study. By DAILY talking and walking with God in our daily activities. By evaluating our actions in light of clear instructions in the Bible. We have articles that show what really counts with God and what we individually should be pursuing in our relationship with God. Request and study these articles.

Remember that you can have that rewarding God granted and God given faith ONLY if you maintain this intimate relationship with God on a daily basis. Merely going to church on the Sabbath is not enough. There MUST be demonstrable FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT in our daily lives (see Galatians 5:22-26). We are to be diligent in replacing the WORKS OF THE FLESH (Galatians 5:19-21) with the FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT. We cannot actually have faith in God and truly BELIEVE HIM AS DID ABRAHAM AND OTHERS unless we are doing this.

If you find that you are short in this then you need to go to God in humble prayer and ask Him to grant to you what you lack. You can and should ask God to help you overcome your unbelief (Mark 9:23-24).

Remember that it is God who makes it possible for all of us to STAND firm in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21). That is because it is God who "anointed us and set HIS SEAL OF OWNERSHIP on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts AS A DEPOSIT GUARANTEEING WHAT IS YET TO COME"

As Paul further explains in Philippians 3:13-15, we are to forget our past mistakes (once they are repented of and forgiven) and strain for what is ahead (in Christ). We are to PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL God has set before us. And if we are SPIRITUALLY MATURE we will have and maintain this view of God and our salvation. And as verse 15 states, "we are to live up to what we have learned!" If we do this we will then be CREDITED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS as was Abraham, Rahab and so many others.

This then is THE LIVING FAITH that comes from God provided we are in daily contact with Him through diligent Bible study and prayer and in fasting. As the Bible clearly teaches, THE DEEDS AND ACTIONS OF OUR LIVES DEMONSTRATE TO GOD THAT WE LITERALLY BELONG TO HIM AND ARE TOTALLY DEDICATED TO DOING HIS WILL. THAT IS *LIVING FAITH* - - THE KIND THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. May God grant us this LIVING FAITH!

[SPECIAL NOTE: We have printed material on many different subjects. These are sent free of charge to any who request them. We do not try and tell you what to believe or not believe. What we do is point out what God says in His word and then allow you to decide what you can and will do about this instruction. The Bible shows that each person must work out his own salvation personally before God (see Philippians 2:12-13). It is necessary that each person answer to God and God alone FOR HIMSELF OR HERSELF. That is why we should not judge or criticize another (study James 4:11-12 and Romans 14:10-13). We, in the Living God Ministry, are your SERVANTS. We are here to help you FIND GOD'S WILL in your life. But we are NOT God's "police" - - we do not try and force or coerce you into following God's instructions found in the Bible. You must PERSONALLY CHOOSE whether you CAN or WILL follow the instructions of the Bible. We know that IF God's Spirit is working with you that you will respond TO GOD. You are to respond to God - - not us and our "teachings." Christ did say that His "sheep" (people) would RECOGNIZE His words. Do you recognize these words as coming from God? These are the words that will judge you when you are brought before God's judgment seat!]

"These were more noble . . . , in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11 KJV