

6 Things Every Christian Should Know

The Fundamentals of Christianity

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By Robert R. Davis

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The book of Hebrews chapter six is the basis for this work. In it, the apostle Paul outlined what he considered the foundational truths every Christian should know. Therefore, these teachings should be the first lessons a new believer receives in the Church. Unfortunately, most Christians never receive this fundamental instruction and so attempt to build their faith without a proper foundation.

Every believer should go over these basic topics and ensure they have a proper understanding of the tenets. This knowledge is indispensable to all Christians in their walks with Christ. After gaining a full understanding of these things, we should feel confident to move on to the deeper things. Let's look at Hebrews to see what Paul says about the subject:

*Hebrews 6:1 **Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,***

*Hebrews 6:2 instruction about **baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.***

1. Repentance
2. Faith
3. Baptisms
4. Laying on of Hands
5. Resurrection
6. Judgment

Paul urges us to pass what he calls the elementary teachings of Christ in order to reach maturity. These teachings he calls foundational; according to him, they should be thoroughly understood so that they are not rehashed. These

principles should be the de facto standard for every believer.

What the apostle outlines is the whole Christian experience. Starting with our initial decision to repent, we begin to walk by faith. Next, we become baptized as a visible sign of our faith. Through the act of laying on of hands we receive the Holy Ghost and any elevations in the Church. Finally, we wait on the resurrection (rapture) of the Church and the Great White Throne Judgment, where everyone is judged by God.

Chapter 2

Faith

Faith is a common term in the Church, so much so that we probably do not stop to define what it is and what it is not. Faith is full assurance in the power and authority of God through His Holy Word. Faith is not loyalty that is faithfulness. Faith is not blind trust that is foolishness. Faith is rooted and grounded in the truth of God's Word, not man, not Church doctrine or theology. Faith is a steady, continuous process of growth within every believer.

Faith is not loyalty that is faithfulness.
Faith is not blind trust that is foolishness.

There is one scripture that has become the epitome of faith. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews pens a frequently quoted yet nebulous description of faith. The apostle could easily be called the father of faith. So, let's look at this scripture in order to get some clarity on the subject:

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is **the substance** of things hoped for, **the evidence** of things not seen.*

Hebrews states that faith is both substance and evidence. Substance means material. It is normally something that is

tangible or concrete. Faith is also evidence. Evidence is the proof, sign, or substantiation of something. Based on Hebrews faith is the following:

- The tangible material of things hoped for
- The proof of things not seen

Let's put the definition back together and form a new statement of faith, based on our understanding of Hebrews:

Faith is the tangible material of what we hope for, the proof or sign of what we cannot see.

The apostle Paul is saying that our faith is the tangible material and proof of what we hope for but cannot see. The first thing we need to ask is this: What do believers hope for? If we answer this question, we will know whether faith is really the proof of that hope.

We hope for the things we have gained through repentance, specifically salvation and restoration. We do not hope for regeneration because that is ours right now through the Spirit of God. Paul tells us that we do not hope for things we already possess (Romans 8:24). The Holy Spirit is given to us as an assurance of our salvation and restoration. The Spirit is like a promissory note backed by the government. Through the Holy Ghost we have the blessed hope that it will be paid in full whenever the note is due.

1. **Salvation** deals with the soul (and occurs in the resurrection— or future)
2. **Regeneration** deals with the spirit (and occurs at repentance or the present)
3. **Restoration** deals with the body (and occurs in the resurrection or future)

Salvation of our souls (Eternal Life)

*Titus 1:2 **In hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began....*

Restoration of our bodies

*1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.*

*1 John 3:3 And **every man that hath this hope in him** purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Now that we know what we hope for, how is faith the tangible substance of this hope? How is faith the proof or sign of what we cannot see? Let's look at the scriptures for the answer.

*St. Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, **If ye have faith**, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto **this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.***

St. Matthew 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Having your prayers answered consistently automatically builds your faith, which is why it is a good practice to keep a prayer journal. This way you definitely know what prayers are being answered, when they are answered, and how they are being answered. As we pray, the results of our petitions are the tangible substance of our faith.

Original Statement

Faith is the tangible material of what we hope for, the proof or sign of what we cannot see.

Example of Salvation

Faith (our answered prayers) is the tangible material of what we hope for (our salvation), the (answered prayers are) proof or sign of what we cannot see (salvation).

Let's look at another example of how this works.

1 Corinthians 14:21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

The fact that God dwells in us through the Holy Ghost is proof that we are no longer separated from God. We can only receive the infilling (indicated by tongues) of the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. Let's see how the infilling of the Spirit fits our definition.

Original Statement

Faith is the tangible material of what we hope for, the proof or sign of what we cannot see.

Proof of Eternal Life

Faith (infilling of the Holy Ghost) is the tangible material of what we hope for (eternal life), the (tongues are) proof or sign of what we cannot see (eternal life).

Fulfillment of biblical prophecies is also proof of the unseen promises of God. Can the scriptures really be used as proof of the resurrection? Certainly, the Bible says,

“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” You cannot scientifically prove that anyone has been resurrected, but everything that is true cannot be proven with science.

For example, a week from now you will not be able to prove scientifically that you read this book. Since you cannot prove scientifically that you read the book, does that mean that you did not read it? Of course not. There are other types of proof or evidence besides science. For instance, in a court of law, witnesses (oral) serve as evidence. If someone saw you reading the book, he or she can help you prove your case. Written evidence would also be valid. If you wrote notes in the book, your handwriting would serve as proof. So, using scriptures (written evidence) as a witness can definitely serve as proof of our hope in God.

Everything that is true cannot be proven
with science.

Faith has another application other than substantiating our hope. Faith also serves as a vehicle to access the spiritual realm. Both faith and hope apply to the spiritual or unseen realm, but faith pertains to the present, and hope deals with the future. Anything that is promised in scriptures but is not yet fulfilled requires hope. For example, salvation (final), resurrection, eternal life, and the restoration of Israel (the physical territory) are all things we must receive through hope. In contrast, anything promised in scripture, which we can access now, is acquired through faith. For example, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, and speaking in tongues all must be acquired through faith not hope.

<p>Faith pertains to the present. Hope deals with the future.</p>

Faith is how we access the things of God in the present. Without utilizing faith we could not receive the grace of God, which is through Christ. That is why the scriptures declare that without faith it is impossible to please God.¹ We know that faith comes through the Word, but practically speaking, how do we use it? Faith is compared to a mustard seed,² one of the smallest seeds in the world. Jesus illustrates through the mustard seed that only a small amount of faith can accomplish big things (St. Mark 4:14–15).

Faith is compared to a seed. The Word is also equated to a seed that is planted in the heart (soul) of man. The two terms can be used interchangeably because faith comes through the Word. So, how do we plant this seed (faith) in our soul? The Word must be spoken to be planted in us. Our words are the keys that activate faith. This is done through the teaching and preaching of the Gospel, but the most effective method is personally speaking the Word over your circumstances. By declaring the scriptures to ourselves, our faith is greatly increased, and we allow the Word of God to have full reign in our lives. Remember, in Romans Paul says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”³ Therefore, through speaking or declaring the Word, we plant the seed of faith in our hearts. This act causes a harvest of thirty, sixty, or a hundred times the original amount (St. Matthew 13:23). Why? Because it is God who gives the increase.

When Jesus was tempted by the devil, he declared the Word of God on every occasion. Likewise, whether we are avoiding temptation, looking for increase, or are in need of

healing, we must speak the Word of God. We are created in God's image. Therefore, we operate as He does. When the Lord created the world, He spoke it into existence (Genesis 1:1–3).

Whatever we need in the earth or physical realm, we speak into existence. This brings it from the spiritual realm into the physical. We stand on the Word of God and declare it without doubt. Doubt negates the effects of faith; it is like pulling your seed out of the ground. Whatever your need is, find scriptures that address your situation and start to declare them.

How many times should you do this? Remember, faith and the Word are like seeds you plant in the ground. A farmer never plants just one seed but liberally scatters seeds by the handful. So my recommendation is repeat your declaration until you feel confident it has been done in the spiritual realm. Then, begin to thank God for whatever you were asking for as if you actually received it already. This is akin to watering the seed you planted. Once you have watered (offered thanksgiving) your seed properly, wait patiently for God to give the increase. Let's look a little closer at the seed analogy:

*St. John 15:8 **Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.***

*St. John 12:24 **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.***

Jesus stated that God is truly glorified only when we bear much fruit. In order for a seed to bear fruit, the seed must die. Therefore, faith or the Word cannot be the true seed

Jesus is referring to because faith does not die within us nor does the Word. We are the seed or the seed coat to be more exact. A seed consists of three main parts: the seed coat, the endosperm, and the embryo. Of these parts, the embryo is the most important.

1. **Seed Coat:** Our flesh
2. **Embryo:** Faith
3. **Endosperm:** The Initial Word

The seed coat protects the internal parts of the seed during a period called dormancy, prior to germination. Dormancy is a protected state during which a seed “waits” for favorable growing conditions (water, light, temperature). During this time the endosperm is used as fuel to sustain the seed. Germination must follow shortly because the embryo cannot survive indefinitely. Likewise, the Word must be followed quickly by action or our faith will die.

Germination usually begins when the embryo (faith) is exposed to water (the Word/Holy Spirit). The water swells the embryo inside, bursting the seed coat and setting growth into motion. When faith expands inside of us, it bursts the seed coat, which is our flesh. Therefore, it is our flesh (seed coat) that must die in order for faith to spring forth and grow within us.

In order to truly glorify God we must die to the flesh and its desires. This is what is meant by us becoming living sacrifices. We are instructed by the Lord to die daily by picking up our crosses and following Him. This is what pleases God, not gathering on a specific day or worshipping in a particular way. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Scribes did all of these things, and yet Jesus called them hypocrites. Church attendance does not make us holy.

Holiness is achieved by a persistent daily dying to self so that the life of Christ may be seen in us.

In all of this we must learn to be patient (James 1:3–4). A seed does not grow into a full-grown plant overnight or even within a year. It goes through a growth process that takes time to happen. We must learn to be patient with ourselves and concerning our faith. We will not become mature Christians instantly; neither will our prayers always yield immediate results. If you really need something from God, then you cannot give up; you must be tenacious and determined to receive your blessing. Jesus spoke of this concept in a parable about the “Widow and the Unjust Judge” (St. Luke 18:1–7).

Jesus said that even if God bears long (prolongs) His answer, rest assured: He will answer. This is the kind of confidence in the Word that our faith must be built upon. We can boldly declare the Word because we have complete confidence in God’s answer. This is the kind of faith that pleases the Lord.

As I stated earlier, faith is full assurance in the power and authority of God through His Holy Word. Faith is not loyalty. That is faithfulness. Faith is not blind trust. That is foolishness. Faith is rooted and grounded in the truth of God’s Word, not man, not Church doctrine or theology. Faith is the evidence or proof of our hope, and it is the seed or Word that is activated by our mouths. Solomon declared that the power of life and death are in the tongue.⁴ We must always choose our words carefully, knowing that they are the keys that produce faith.

References

¹ Holy Bible, Hebrews 11:6.

² Holy Bible, St. Matthew 13:3–30.

³ Holy Bible, Romans 10:17.

⁴ Holy Bible, Proverbs 18:21.