

THE FAITH WALK

Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. If we truly love someone, we will want to please them. This study is about pleasing God and that is done through living by faith. Back in January 1985, God gave me a lifetime Bible verse.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, because anyone who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. - Hebrews 11:6 NKJV

Hebrews 11 is known as the Hall of Faith which highlights many examples of those persons in the Old Testament who demonstrated great faith in God. Many miracles took place, but our goal is not to seek miracles but to seek after God and to bring Him pleasure by trusting Him in all sorts of circumstances. The devil can produce miracles but he does not please God.

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who had stood their ground in the face of suffering, insults, persecution, and had even accepted joyfully the confiscation of their property. God wanted to remind them that they would be richly rewarded if they did not throw away their confidence in God nor **draw back** in their faith. - Hebrews 10:33-38. Vines Dictionary says that 'draw back' is a metaphor from lowering a sail and slackening from the course. God is saying to believers in times of trouble. **Keep Sailing!** Stay on course and be carried along by the wind of my Holy Spirit. Faith believes that **God is Real** and **God is a Rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him. - Hebrews 11:6



Jesus Looks for Faith

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2000 years ago Jesus was looking for faith as evidenced by his response to the faith of a Roman centurion. **'I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith'** -Matthew 8:10.

Will Jesus find faith on earth when He returns to earth? That was a question that Jesus asked.

When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? - Luke 18:8

Since faith is so important to Jesus, we should know what faith is and how we can better ‘live by it.’ I grew up in the Dutch Reformed Church, which is the oldest Protestant denomination in the USA with a continuous history (1628). I am thankful for the Biblical truths which I learned in church services and Sunday School. Although I learned about the gospel message of ‘**The Faith**’; I did not really learn about ‘**Living by Faith**’ until I was well into my twenties. This study will concentrate mainly on the latter type of faith, but first of all let’s briefly describe the former.

Abbreviations used in our study:

Heb. = Hebrew (the language of the Old Testament writings)

Gk. = Greek (the language of the New Testament writings)

Amp. = Amplified translation of the Bible (gives various text meanings)

Vines = Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament words

THE FAITH Historical faith, intellectual faith, the whole body of Christian truth, the gospel message of being justified by faith alone. This is faith as described in important Christian documents such as The Heidelberg Catechism and the Apostles Creed (which we recited every Sunday morning). Although such a practice can simply become a rote experience, I think that every church should at least recite it occasionally, especially many TV mega-churches, where doctrinal teaching is lacking. The church of Jesus Christ is meant to be prophetic not pathetic, to be courageous not cowardly, to serve milk and meat; not sweet cotton candy. The church has always faced the challenge of holding fast to the vital facts of **the faith**.

Acts 6:7 A large number of priests became obedient to **the faith**

Acts 14:22 Disciples are encouraged to remain true to **the faith**

Galatians 1:23 Paul now preaches **the faith** he once sought to destroy

Philippians 1:27 Contend as one man for **the faith** of the gospel

1 Timothy 1:2 Timothy was Paul’s true son in **the faith**

1:19 Some have shipwrecked their faith (Gk. = **the faith**)

6:12 Fight the good fight of faith (Gk.=**the faith**) Timothy is reminded of the time when he made his public profession of faith before witnesses that believed the essential truths of the Christian faith. (the love of money is why some wander from **the faith** - 6:10)

6:21 Some wander from **the faith** because they profess opposing ideas to the true knowledge of the gospel

2 Timothy 2:18 Denial of the future resurrection is in opposition to **the faith**

3:7,8 Some oppose the truth and thus are rejected from **the faith**

4:7 Paul had fought the good fight of **the faith** (1 Tim.6:12) and kept the faith. He uses the terms ‘sound doctrine’ and ‘the truth’ as synonyms for the faith eg. (4:3,4) Today there is a tendency in the church to dismiss the importance of studying doctrine. Some church leaders even deny such basics as the virgin birth, the resurrection, the full deity and humanity of Jesus, the exclusiveness of Jesus as the only way to salvation etc. John 1:1, 1 John 4:1-2, Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 15:1-6, John 14:6

Elementary foundation stones Hebrews 6:1-2

- **Repentance from dead works** Leave Sin 2 Timothy 2:19
- **Faith towards God** Cleave to the Son. Not positive thinking or faith in our faith but a faith focused on Jesus Christ's blood sacrifice for mankind through his death on the cross which secured covenant promise benefits for eternal salvation and now for our daily life,
- **Baptisms** Immersion into water / bury the old man
Identification into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit
Immersion in the Holy Spirit / empower the new man
- **Laying on of hands** Blessings upon leaders and others
Healing
- **Resurrection of the dead** No reincarnation or soul sleep. Believers go to be with Jesus at the time of death 1 Corinthians 15:42-54, Philippians 1:21-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- **Eternal Judgment** **Past** / Jesus bore the wrath for our sin at the cross. Believer's sin has already been judged - John 3:16-18, Romans 3:25
Present / Believers are being judged as **sons** - Hebrews 12:4-11
Future / Believers are judged as **servants** as their works are evaluated for their 'value'. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:7
Unbelievers receive full wrath of God in the **lake of fire** - John 3:36, Revelation 14:6-12; 21:6-8. This is not accepted by those who teach that all people eventually go to heaven (universalism). Some Christians have strayed from the faith based on a misunderstanding of Colossians 1:19-20 where God reconciles everybody to heaven.

FAITH DEFINED

The word faith is used only 2 times in the O.T. (Old Testament) but it is used over 240 times in the N.T. (New Testament.)

Faith is Gk./pistis / firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing. N.T. faith is in God or Christ or things spiritual - Vines Dictionary

Faith is believing, trusting, relying upon God. The O.T. equivalent of faith is the word 'trust'.

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

Substance Gk./ hupostasis (stasis =to stand, hup =under) That which stands under, a foundation. Substance is the basis or foundation on which we stand and build our hope. It is an earnest and certain expectation. Substance was used as a **legal term** that stood for the whole body of documents related to the ownership of a person's property which were on deposit in the archives. These documents were evidence of ownership and thus were considered as a **title deed**. Faith is our title deed to things that God has promised. It is based on the legal document which we know as the Bible.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
Hebrews 11:1 NIV

Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality - faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]. - Hebrews 11:1 Amplified

Faith looks beyond the visible into the invisible. The world itself was created by God at His command, the visible made from the invisible. Words are invisible to us, but they have creative power! In Genesis chapter 1 (the Book of beginnings) notice how many times you see this pattern. **God said.....God saw.**

**God calls those things that are not as though they were.
- Romans 4:17b**

God's words have creative power! Faith looks to a living God who is unlimited and infinite in knowledge, wisdom and power. Most importantly, He is also a God who is love and compassion, for power without selfless love is dangerous as motives are compromised. This is why God teaches us that **faith works through love .** - Galatians 5:6, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD - Luke 1:37

God spoke those words via an angel to Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was told that she would give birth to the Son of God by means of the Holy Spirit and the Power of the Most High coming upon her. It is not surprising that she would wonder about this because she was a virgin. God sent that word to enlighten her. - Luke 1:26-38. **The word nothing has a special meaning.** Here is how it reads in the Greek language. Nothing = Gk. / No rhema word

NO RHEMA WORD FROM GOD SHALL BE VOID OF POWER - Luke 1:37

A rhema word is a God given specific word spoken to a specific person in a specific situation. (Later in our study will look at the difference between a Logos or Rhema word from God.) Mary heard that powerful word from God; received it and then made a **faith confession**. That rhema word brought faith to her heart. This is the type of action that takes place when a sinner realizes that he cannot run his life anymore and submits to the Lordship of Jesus. Faith comes into their heart from the rhema Word of God and then they speak the Word of Faith.

The Word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, 'Everyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.

One of the main goals of Jesus was to teach his disciples about faith. He demonstrated faith to them in many real life situations. He was asleep and at peace in the midst of a storm on the seas and later commanded the storm to be at peace.. He believed God for miracles of provision in a variety of ways and taught his disciples to trust in God like He did.

If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. Mark 9:23

With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God, all things are possible.
Mark 10:27

The above two verses refer to two different situations, but the message is the same. All things are possible with God and all things are possible by a believing person. Wow!
It is interesting to read about what took place just before Jesus returned to heaven.

Matthew 28:16 some doubted.....he gave them authority
Mark 16:14he rebuked them for their lack of faith
Luke 24:45, 50 he opened their minds.....he blessed them

Just as Jesus accessed heaven's vast storehouse of blessings while he walked this earth, he wanted the same for his disciples. God's grace and generous favor has made every good gift available for mankind. - James 1:17. It is by grace through faith that these blessings come to us. May our faith in God and his goodness increase as we learn more about faith.

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