

4 Faith toward God



Bible Studies

Introduction

As important as coming to Christ and finding God's forgiveness for sin is, it would be nothing without the principle of faith toward God. Faith is that which takes us from an awakening and realization of our need for Christ, to a place of security and rest in the righteousness of God.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,
:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
:3 And this will we do, if God permit.

These verses reveal a progression of seven principles to be believed and embodied by every believer:

- 1. Repentance from dead works.**
- 2. Faith toward God.**
- 3. The doctrine of baptisms.**
- 4. Laying on of hands.**
- 5. Resurrection of the dead.**
- 6. Eternal judgment.**
- 7. Perfection.**

The message of Heb 6:1-2 is that having laid the foundation of repentance from dead works we are to go on in our experience unto perfection.

Perfection is the Goal to Which the Church is Destined

Faith toward God therefore becomes an important principle in the life of the believer that we are to both understand and exercise our selves in.

Faith toward God

Definition of Faith:

Our English word faith is a translation of the Greek word *pistis*, which according to Strong's concordance has the six following shades of meaning.

- 1.** It means to be persuaded of something, convinced, there is no doubt in your mind or heart.
- 2.** It also means credence.
That is - belief; credit; reliance of the mind on evidence of facts derived from other sources than personal knowledge, as from the testimony of others.
- 3.** Moral conviction - that is you know something to be absolutely true, and it is a firm conviction in your heart.

4. It especially means to rely upon Christ for salvation. That is to rely upon Him as the one who saves you from sin and its consequences.
5. It is to continue in a state of believing and trust.
6. It is the sum total of God in the Bible and the whole of Biblical doctrine therein.

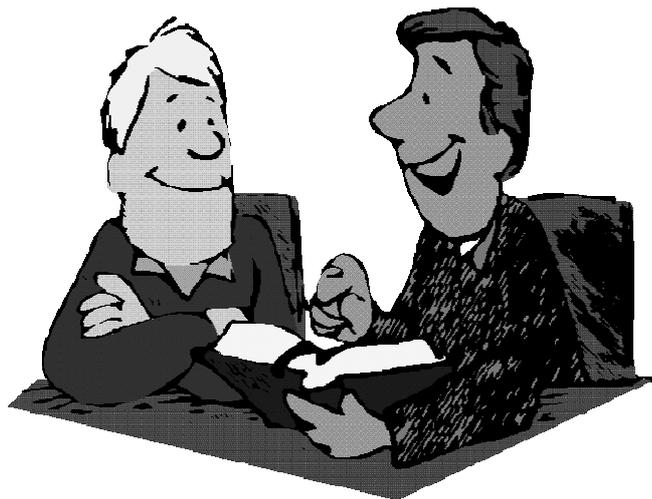
Therefore “faith” means to be fully persuaded, believing and relying upon the evidence of the facts provided in the Bible, which is the testimony of others. It is to know in your heart that the Bible is the absolute truth and that you can rely solely upon Jesus Christ for personal salvation, entrusting your soul to Him. It is walking in and maintaining this state of belief and trust. It is recognizing the Scriptures are the summary of all faith.

Faith and God’s Word

The Scriptures link faith with the Word of God.

Rom 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- Faith or the capacity to believe God is something that is produced in us through the hearing of God’s Word. This is because God’s Word is both living and creative.
- Just as God through His Word created the heavens and the earth, He through the same Word desires to produce faith in us through the Biblical principle of hearing.



Faith is Faith in God’s Word

The hearing of God’s Word is an important key to the development of faith in our lives. It is only as our attention is upon the Scriptures and what they reveal about God that our faith will be toward Him.

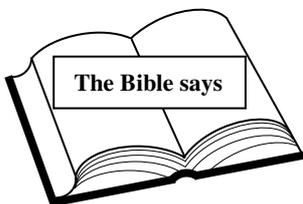
The Bible Defines Faith

A consideration of the Biblical meaning of the word faith is provided for us in the Book of Hebrews:

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

- Faith is the substance. That is, faith is the assurance or the confidence of things hoped for, the proof or conviction of things not yet seen.
- Heb 11:1 is suggestive of the fact that God’s Word as the basis of faith is equal to the reality of that which it speaks of. For example the Word promises us eternal life; faith grasps this as a present reality to be believed, though in its ultimate sense it is yet to be realized.

Faith Sees God’s Word as Equal to its Fulfillment



Faith is the means or the mechanism by which we are to realize all that God is, both now and in the future:

Heb 11:6 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.

Salvation through God's Word

Paul speaks of the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto Salvation.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The Gospel that Christ Preached was the Word of God



Paul speaks of the Word as having power to save those who believe it regardless of their ethnic background.

The Word has Power:-

1. To bring us into right relationship with God.
2. To bring us through to complete salvation.

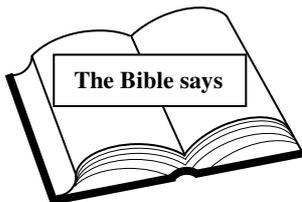
Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith.

- Paul teaches that within the Word is revealed how a person can enter into a state of habitual right standing with God. He speaks of it as a process that is from faith to faith.

- What this simply means is that in responding to the Gospel of Christ, we go from a response of faith that believes God's Word, to a position of faith that stands in and possesses the reality of it.
- This position of faith the Bible reveals as the condition of righteousness, or right standing with God. It is the condition Paul refers to when he declares that the just shall live by faith.

Justification by Faith

Justification by faith means: In believing and accepting the Gospel of Christ we are brought into a state of Justification.



Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Justification is the act of free grace, by which God pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous on account of the atonement of Christ.

David Speaks of Such a Condition

Psalm 32:1 A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

:2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

- Paul in his epistle to the Romans takes up this Old Testament Scripture in his explanation of the righteousness which is by faith (See Rom 4:1-8)
- Paul tells us that God actually imputes righteousness to us as we believe on Him. The idea of imputed righteousness is that which belongs to Christ, (the condition of righteousness) has been put to our account. In effect Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness, thus bringing us into a state of justification before God.
- Paul in developing the thought of imputed righteousness appeals to the example of Abraham (note Rom 4:1-5).

Consider Abraham:

- Gen 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: *I am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.
- :2** And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?
- :3** And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Abraham in response to God's promise of an inheritance laments the fact that he has no seed or offspring, for what is an inheritance without a generation to inherit it?

The Lord Answers Abraham

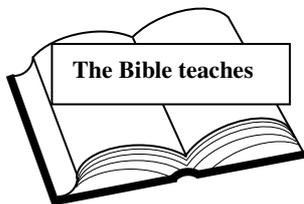
- Gen 15:4** And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.
- :5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.
- :6** And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness
- :7** And he said unto him, *I am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

- God promises Abraham a seed, in verse 6 (the key verse) Abraham believes God and it is counted unto him for righteousness.
- Basically this illustrates the principle of justification by faith, in that this was an impossible situation in which Abraham could do nothing else but simply believe God. Such is the believer's condition in coming to Christ. Paul speaks of grace in New Covenant terms:
Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:
:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.
- Salvation is the free unmerited gift of God that comes to us through faith in the atoning work of Christ. It is not by virtue of any thing we can do our selves.
- Faith therefore is the principle by which the soul is brought into the condition of righteousness with God. This occurs as we believe on the finished work of Christ for our salvation. Faith does not trust to self or our own merits, but believes upon Christ alone as the justifier of the human soul.
Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Works of Faith

Though we are justified by faith with out works, the Bible does reveal the need for works of faith.

- Jam 2:14** What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?



Does what we have here in the book of James contradict Paul's teaching of justification by faith, or is James bringing in a further revelation of the principle of faith that we need to understand and apply to our lives? In consideration of this question let us read:

- Jam 2:14** What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?
- :15** If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
- :16** And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding *ye* give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?
- :17** Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
- :18** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.
- :19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
- :20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

- :21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?
- :22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?
- :23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.
- :24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.
- :25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?
- :26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- A comparison of Paul's teaching on justification by faith with that of James's teaching on works of faith reveals that rather than a contradiction what we have in fact is two sides of the one coin.
- Paul in dealing with the subject of faith draws our attention to the fact that there is no amount of works that we can do to bring about our own personal justification. James on the other hand is concerned with the outworking of faith. James is not suggesting works as a means to salvation but rather works as the demonstration of genuine faith.

Faith must be Demonstrated

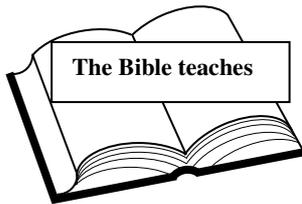
James calls for the tangible evidence of faith in the every day life of the believer.

Jam 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.



**Genuine Faith is Demonstrated in our lives by
What We Do**

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

James Appeals to the Example of the Faith of Abraham

(James's example is founded upon Gen 22:1-18)

Jam 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

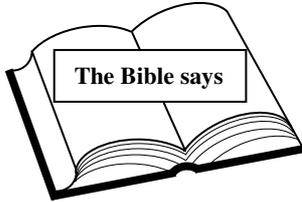
:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

- James's appeal to the example of Abraham brings into view the fact, that works of faith are a part of that which makes up the whole picture concerning our state of justification.
- A comparison of Paul's use of Abraham as an illustration of justification by faith, with that of James's use of Abraham as an illustration of justification by works, reveals two different aspects of justification in the life of Abraham yet both applicable to the principle of faith.
- In Gen 22:1-18 the fact that Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness is not actually stated, rather James brings the principle over from Gen 15:6 showing that it finds a fulfillment in the actions of Abraham.

Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- James's appeal to the example of Abraham as being justified by works reveals that works as a completion of ones faith are essential to the believer's state of justification.
- The fact that James applies the principle of imputed righteousness to the actions of Abraham, suggests the idea that justification is ours, not just because we believe, but also because we act in accordance with what we believe:

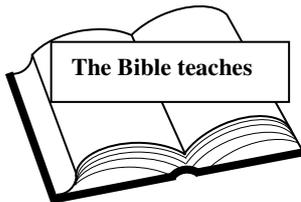


Jam 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

- Without works, faith is reduced to nothing more than a mental assent to the facts of the matter, without any corresponding evidence in the life.
- Abraham's faith was revealed in his obedience to God in respect of the offering up of Isaac.
- Abraham's actions served as living proof of his faith.
- Therefore, for the work of faith to be complete in our lives, it must be evidenced by works of righteousness. Such works are not a prerequisite to salvation, but they do testify that we are saved.
- In consideration of the order of the revelation of these two aspects of justification in the life of Abraham, it is evident that it is faith first followed by works of faith.

James Appeals to the Example of Rahab

James also appeals to the example of Rahab the harlot to further demonstrate the necessity of works accompanying faith.



Jam 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

A consideration of the conduct of Rahab reveals that she was a woman who acted in accordance with faith in the Word of God and as a result realized the righteousness of God.

James in Summary Declares

Jam 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The Increase of Faith

It is good to have a healthy desire for the increase of faith in your life.

Luke 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

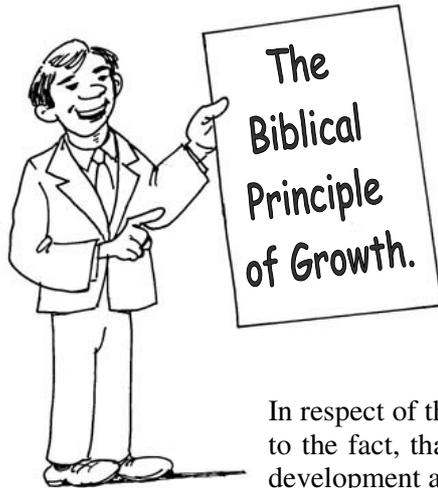
Jesus Replied

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

What is of interest here in relation to our study is the Lord's comment concerning faith the size of a mustard seed. The significance of this statement can be seen when considered in the light of what the Bible says in other instances concerning the symbol of the seed.

The Seed is the Word of God

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.



Mark 4:30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

:31 *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:*

:32 *But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*

In respect of the apostle's desire for the increase of faith, the words of Jesus point to the fact, that the growth of faith in the life of the believer is as natural in its development as is the process governing the growth of a tree.

The Key to the Increase of Faith is found in the Development of the Seed of God's Word in the Heart of the Believer.

2Thess 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Holding Faith and a Good Conscience

Another important principle relative to faith is the exercising of a good conscience. A good conscience is a conscience void of offence toward God and men.

1Tim 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Paul encourages Timothy to be sound in conscience. Faith brings to us that which is necessary to safely navigate our passage in this world to the next. The failure to maintain a good conscience disengages faith and sets us on a course of eventual destruction.

Your Faith Will be Tested

Peter in consideration of the principle of faith speaks of it as something that will be tested or purified through trials.

1Pet 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Just as precious metals are subject to a process of refining to remove all impurities, so also the believer is exposed to purging experiences in life that his faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Keeping the Faith

Paul the apostle's testimony at the end of his ministry was that he had kept the faith.

2Tim 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

In respect of keeping the faith Paul mentions three aspects applicable to our study. This is followed by the fourth point of the reward of service:

1. Paul Fought a Good Fight:

2Tim 4:7 I have fought a good fight.

Paul Encourages Timothy:

1Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

2. Paul Finished His Course once Committed to:

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

2Tim 4:7 I have finished *my* course.

3. Paul Kept the Faith:

2Tim 4:7 I have kept the faith:

We need to be a people who keep the faith, so many start out well only to fall away through the sin of unbelief.

4. Paul is rewarded for His Service:

Paul's fight; the finish of his course; and his keeping of the faith is rewarded:

2Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

To fight implies warfare and warfare implies endurance. We must not give up as the Scriptures prove many have done and will do, but fix our vision on the Second Coming of the Lord and our reward:

Matt 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Heb 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

A Final Exhortation

The ultimate outworking of **unbelief** is the destruction of the soul. The ultimate outworking of **faith** is the salvation of the soul. It is God alone who can outwork His salvation in our lives, therefore it is to Him we must look, remaining confident and steadfast, with a vision of the second coming of Jesus, as Peter expresses:

1Pet 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Points worthy of
noting:



1. Faith is that which takes us from an awakening and realization of our need for Christ, to a place of security and rest in the righteousness of God.
 2. Faith is one of the principles necessary to bring the church to its intended goal of perfection.
 3. Faith is faith in God's Word
 4. Faith comes through the hearing of God's Word.
 5. Faith sees God's Word as equal to its fulfillment.
 6. Faith brings us into a position of righteousness or right standing with God.
 7. Genuine faith is demonstrated in our lives by what we do.
8. The key to the increase of faith is found in the development of the seed of the Word in the heart of the believer.
 9. Having a good conscience is an important part of maintaining a life of faith.
 10. Our faith will be tested and purified through trials.
 11. The salvation of the soul is the reward of faith.