

Faith

Described

Faith is trusting, depending or relying upon God and Jesus Christ and believing in the truths in His written Word. Faith also means entrusting, committing, submitting and surrendering ourselves to God and His Christ as His exclusive possession for His use and purposes.

Faith refers to having confidence in God instead of in ourselves and being certain that He will do whatever He promises or says He will do. Faith also relates to trust in all of the wonderful aspects of His nature and character.

Faith explained

All the marvellous aspects of our salvation by God's grace through Jesus Christ are received by faith (see Acts 16:30-31, Romans 1:16, Ephesians 2:8 and 1 Peter 1:5).¹ In the following chapters on faith, conversion and repentance, we shall see that the type of faith which receives salvation through Jesus Christ:

- *believes or is certain* about the key *truths* revealed in the *Gospel*.
- must also be in the *Persons* of God and Jesus Christ.
- involves *commitment* and *surrender* or *submission* to God and Jesus Christ as Lord. Saving faith *entrusts* itself to His rule.
- includes *submitting* to the claims of the Gospel.
- includes *trusting, relying* and *depending* on God and Jesus Christ.
- involves having *confidence* in God and Christ and not in ourselves.
- is accompanied by repentance – a changed heart attitude – to our known sins at conversion.
- leads to a practical *turning from our sins* from the point of conversion.
- must be *centred* on Jesus' *death* and *resurrection*.

Other wonderful aspects of faith in the Lord

Other marvellous characteristics of faith are as follows:

- Because salvation is a *totally free gift*, it can only be received through faith, but not earned by faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 confirms this: ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.”*** Romans 4:1-5 speaks similarly. Faith is *not* a *good work* or a *reward mechanism* through which we supposedly merit or deserve salvation. Faith is instead the *God-appointed means* of receiving His gifts of grace. Be careful not to become a *faith legalist* – someone who

¹ The various features of our salvation are listed in Chapter “Salvation”.

imagines their faith is earning God's gracious blessings. Sadly, there are many faith legalists in the Church today.

- Faith is not something that can be worked up by ourselves. Faith is instead a *gift of God* (see John 6:29, Romans 12:3 and 1 Timothy 1:14). Hebrews 12:2 indicates Jesus Christ is the Author or Imparter of faith to new believers and the One Who continues working towards the perfecting of their faith: "**Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...**" Acts 18:27 records it is because of God's undeserved grace we can have faith in Him: "**...those who had believed through grace.**"
- If we are to be technically precise in a Biblical sense, we must say we could not be saved on the basis of our faith in God, no matter how strong, if He did not have a perfectly gracious character and Jesus did not die for us.
- We *are not saved through a perfect faith*. Instead we are saved through a *genuine sincere* faith. Only Jesus Christ expressed a perfect faith in God. Our faith is given by God to us in a perfect form, but no born-again Christian manifests this faith perfectly. If we needed to manifest a perfect faith to be saved, none of us would be saved. In Romans 14:1 and 3, Paul speaks of those with *weak* faith being received by God: "**Receive one who is weak in the faith...for God has received him.**" The word "**received**" here is a form of the word "proslambano" in the original Greek. In this context, "proslambano" means "of God or Christ accepting the believer".² We are saved by *God's perfect grace* and *not by our perfect faith*.
- Our whole salvation is dependant on faith from *start to finish* (see Romans 1:16-17). We do not start with trusting dependant faith in Jesus Christ on the day of our conversion and then finish with mere self-help or self-effort. Galatians 3:1-5 relates to this.
- Hebrews 11:6 refers to another aspect of faith: "**...he who comes to God must believe that He is...**" This expression means far more than just believing God exists. It also relates to having faith that God is our "I AM". The expression "I AM" refers to God being our everything.³
- In Romans 14:23, Paul reveals anything based on *unbelief* in God or Jesus Christ is *sin*: "**...for whatever is not from faith is sin.**" God regards unbelief or not having dependent faith in Jesus Christ as an horrendous sin (see John 3:18).

Bible Study Questions

1. What are the features of the type of faith which receives salvation through Jesus Christ?
2. Is saving faith a good work and reward mechanism by which we earn salvation? Or is it a God-appointed means of receiving God's saving grace?
3. What is a false legalist?
4. What does Acts 18:27, Romans 12:3 and Hebrews 12:2 reveal about faith?
5. Do we need to have a perfect faith to be saved by God?
6. What does the expression "**he who comes to God must believe that He is**" in Hebrews 11:6 mean?

² Bauer, page 717.

³ Refer to Chapter "Respect, Awe and Reverence" for more details about what "I AM" means.