

Exactly What Kind Of Faith Do We Need To Please God?

What is the Biblical definition of faith? –

First we need to understand that faith is **not** the power of positive thinking.

Trying to mature as a Christian and overcome our sins and weaknesses by just thinking positive thoughts, just will not be accepted by God.

Many people also make the mistake of confusing faith with emotions –

They try to “*work up*” faith, which really means an emotional feeling.

But these feelings are **not** the evidence of having faith, for faith is **not** physical, it **cannot** be heard, tasted, smelled or felt.

Faith is a spiritual matter, not physical –

2 Corinthians 5:7 [New King James] “*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*”

We are to “walk” by faith.

Romans 1:17 [New King James] “*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’*”

We are to live our lives by faith.

Faith should be a part of every thought and action we have in our lives as a Christian.

Colossians 3:1-3 [New King James] “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*”

Christians are to focus their lives on what is real, but unseen, eternal promises made by God.

2 Corinthians 4:18 [New King James] “*while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*”

Everything that is eternal is as yet unseen physically but can be experienced even now in our physical lives.

1 John 5:11 [New King James] “*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*”

Note it says “*has given*” the past present tense as it refers to eternal life.

How can this be?

John 17:3 [New King James] “*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*”

Eternal life is a relationship with God that can begin now while we are still in a physical body.

Hebrews 11:1 [New King James] *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

The Greek word translated “*substance*” is “*hupōstasis*” meaning assurance, confidence, essence, what supports, what we hope for.

Faith is also the “*evidence*,” Greek word “*ēlēgehōs*” meaning proof or conviction of what is as yet unseen.

All of this faith is based totally on the promises made by our Creator God in His Word, the Christian Bible.

Hebrews 11:3 [New King James] *“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”*

It is by faith that we recognise God as the Creator God of the universe, who through our now Saviour Jesus Christ created the universe out of nothing by the power of His Word.

John 1:1-3, 14 [New King James] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” ... “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

It is by faith that we believe this as we were **not** there, as the angels were, [**Job 38:4-7**].

Hebrews 11:6 [New King James] *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

Without this kind of faith it is impossible to please our Creator God.

Must obedience to God accompany our faith to make it acceptable to our Creator God? –

Romans 3:31 [New King James] *“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”*

The law is established in the life of a Christian who has faith because the law shows such a person what is sinful, [verse 20].

James 2:14-20 [New King James] *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe, and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”*

Faith must be demonstrated by action, otherwise it is dead. Action that involves obedience to God’s Word, the Christian Bible, and the principles that are expanded in it.

Sadly many people who consider themselves as faith-filled Christians **only** have a dead faith.

Faith to such people is merely belief in Jesus Christ’s existence and His sacrifice for the sins of all humanity. They do not understand that there are certain things that God requires them to do to make their faith alive and active.

Much of traditional Christianity believes that Jesus Christ lived the “good” life for us, that He obeyed God’s law in our stead.

However, the Word of God, the Christian Bible, makes it very clear that having faith does not excuse us from obedience to God as specified in His Word, the Christian Bible.

This is a great mystery to those who do not understand.

God requires us to follow His law of love towards Him and other human beings as spelled out by the Ten Commandments to be saved from eternal death and receive the gift of eternal life, [**Romans 6:23**].

Matthew 19:16-19 [New King James] *“Now behold, one came and said to Him, ‘Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?’ So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,” “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “Honor your father and your mother,” and, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.””*

Yet we are unable to do this by ourselves, with our own strength.

So many have concluded that God the Father sent Jesus Christ to obey Him for us and thereby excuse us from obedience to God!

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Let us examine the lives of some of the great faithful people that are recorded to be examples for us to follow as fellow human beings –

Noah –

Noah expressed living faith when he obeyed God’s command to build the ark when there was **no** physical evidence that a flood would come.

Hebrews 11:7 [New King James] *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”*

The faith of Noah had to last for 120 years without any sign of a flood, as he built the ark as a witness to the people of his generation, [Genesis 6:3, 5-8].

Notice the words *“of things not yet seen”* in **Genesis 11:7**.

Noah’s trust and confidence was in an invisible God performing what He had promised.

Noah proved his faith by his work over a period of 120 years of patiently waiting for God to deliver what He had promised.

Abraham –

Abraham had living faith, he proved his faith in an unseen God by his obedience.

Hebrews 11:8-12 [New King James] *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”*

As a result of this active faith God promised to greatly bless him and his descendants, [**Genesis 22:15-18**].

Abraham is an outstanding example of the kind of faithful obedience that God requires of every Christian.

One of the most thrilling examples of living faith is recorded in God's Word, the Christian Bible, is that of Daniel's three young friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. –

These three young Jewish men were in captivity in Babylon when the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had erected a great golden image and ordered everyone to worship this idol at certain designated times.

Those who refused were to be thrown alive into a fiery furnace, [**Daniel 3:3-6**]. This was exactly what Nebuchadnezzar did to Daniel's friends when they refused to worship this idol, [**Daniel 3:19-23**].

These three friends knew that they had to obey God rather than humans, [**Acts 5:29**].

By faith they knew that God would make it possible for them to obey Him.

Notice that God allowed them to go beyond the point of human help, only God could help them.

God wanted to see if they really would “go all the way” before He delivered them from this trial. God expected them to back up their words with action.

Daniel 3:24-25 [New King James] *“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counsellors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’”*

When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace he saw an angel from God walking in the fire with the three young men.

Notice Nebuchadnezzar's response [**verse 29**] *“delivered His servants who trusted Him.”*

This is an astounding example of living faith that trusted God to make it possible to obey His commandments.

1 Corinthians 10:13 [New King James] *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

This is a promise that God has made through His apostle Paul, even as we are in a trial we find it difficult to believe we really do have that strength, and we do not at first see any “way of escape.”

Ephesians 2:8 [New King James] *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”*

We receive salvation as a gift by God extending His grace towards us in an atmosphere of faith, both of which are gifts from God.

Galatians 5:22-25 [New King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

Faith is an attribute that we receive as we follow the lead of the active Holy Spirit in our lives.

Whose faith then is it?

Revelation 14:12 [New King James] *“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those **who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.**”*

“The faith of Jesus Christ,” not just faith in Jesus Christ but the faith of Jesus Christ placed in them and acting in them, through the active presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [Romans 8:9].

It is the very indwelling of the Holy Spirit which makes a person a Christian.

Paul plainly states that Jesus Christ lives in him. –

Galatians 2:20 [New King James] *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Two things made this happen, the crucifying of his own will and faith in Jesus Christ as His Saviour and Lord.

How did Jesus Christ live in Paul? –

Philippians 2:5-7 [New King James] *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.”*

Having the same humble, serving mind that is in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ dwelt in Paul through the Holy Spirit being implanted in the mind of Paul, the very faith of Jesus Christ can also be in our minds.

That faith of Jesus Christ will enable us to live a life of obedience to God as the apostle Paul did along with all the other true people of God.

If we were able, of ourselves, to supply the faith to obey God, our obedience would be self-righteousness, which to God is but *“filthy rags,”* [Isaiah 64:6].

Our righteousness, right relationship with God, must be through the faith of Jesus Christ, His faith in us, **not** our own.

What must we do to receive the faith of Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? –

Acts 2:38 [New King James] *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

Repent, meaning a change of mind and be baptised by total immersion, symbolic of our old life being put to death, [Romans 6:1-6].

Acts 5:32 [New King James] *“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*

Begin to obey God’s commandments.

Acts 20:21 [New King James] *“testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Must first show faith towards Jesus Christ before we can receive the very faith of Jesus Christ, [Romans 1:17].

God will give the Holy Spirit and the resulting faith of Jesus Christ only to those who meet these prior conditions.

There are also conditions for the Holy Spirit to remain active in our lives –

Ephesians 4:30-32 [New King James] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*

We here have a list of wrong attitudes of mind and action that will cause the Holy Spirit to grieve and **not** be active in our life.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [New King James] *“Do not quench the Spirit.”*

The Greek word translated “*quench*” is “*sbēbbyni*” meaning to extinguish.

This can happen when our enthusiasm for the study and meditation on God’s Word, the Christian Bible, fades.

Jesus Christ is the **only** source of living, active, dynamic faith, and we **only** receive His faith through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ.