

Faith: A Misunderstood Doctrine

Hebrews 11:6 [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Every benefit flowing from the atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, comes to the individual through the gateway of faith.

Forgiveness, cleansing from the penalty of sin, the Holy Spirit, all answers to prayer are received by faith, there is no other way.

Because faith is so vital to all our hopes as human beings, we dare take nothing for granted concerning it.

We simply must not allow ourselves to be uninformed or misinformed, we must know the truth.

Specifically, my fear is that the modern concept of faith is not a Biblical one.

The use of the word “*faith*” today is **not** what Bible writers meant when they used it.

How can I make such a statement?

- 1) The lack of spiritual fruit [**Galatians 5:22-23**] in the lives of so many who claim to have faith.
- 2) The rarity of a radical change in the conduct and lifestyle of people professing their new faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- 3) The failure of many teachers to correctly define the meaning of the word faith.
- 4) The doctrine of faith parroted so widely and received so uncritically by so many within the Christian fellowship.
- 5) Faith is even considered a substitute for obedience.
- 6) Faith looked on as a hiding place for weak character and necessity of hard thinking.
- 7) Natural optimism, emotional thrills and animal-like high spirits have been miscalled faith.
- 8) It is easily observed that for countless people the change from no faith to faith makes **no** actual difference in their lives.

Perhaps it will help us to know what faith is if we first notice what it is **not**.

It is **not** the believing of a statement we know to be true.

The human mind is so constructed that it must of necessity believe only when evidence presented to it is convincing.

Naturally when the evidence fails to convince, no faith is possible.

No threats, no punishment can compel the human mind to believe against clear evidence.

Such faith based upon reason is faith of a kind, **but it is not the character of Biblical faith.**

To condemn a person who follows evidence to its proper conclusion would be palpable injustice. But to justify a sinner on the grounds that their faith was based on following evidence to its proper conclusion would make salvation the result of the working of the mind and body **not** Biblical faith. [**Ephesians 2:8-9**]

True Biblical faith rests totally upon the character of the Creator God and asks **no** further proof than the moral perfections of One who cannot lie. [**Titus 1:2**]

To a person with Biblical faith, if God said it in His Word, the Christian Bible, it is true, even if the statement should contradict every one of the five senses.

We have faith in the Promise of the Creator God even if all the logical conclusions defy it being true.

Romans 3:1-4 [NIV] *“What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: ‘So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.’”*

This is the language of Biblical faith.

Such faith is approved by the Creator God because it rises above mere proofs and rests in the faithfulness of our Creator God.

When leaders within the Christian fellowship seek to prove the Christian Bible to be true by science, and believe this to assist us in our faith they overlook the true character of Biblical faith.

The very fact that these teachers feel it necessary to seek proof for the truths of scripture, reveals their own lack of Biblical faith.

Faith as the Christian Bible knows it is total confidence in God the Father and His Only Son Jesus Christ.

Faith is the response in our mind and human spirit [**Job 32:8**] to the divine character as revealed in His Word, the Christian Bible.

Even this response is impossible apart from the prior in-working of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical faith is a gift from the Creator God to a repentant and yielding human being and has nothing to do whatsoever with our senses or any data made available to us [**Ephesians 2:8**], for it is one of the “fruits” of the active indwelling Holy Spirit. [**Galatians 5:22**]

Any professed faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour that does **not** bring with it absolute obedience to Jesus Christ as our Lord is inadequate faith.

A person who believes will obey the words of Jesus Christ, failure to obey is convincing proof that there is **no** true Biblical faith present.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 [NIV] *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.”*

Where real repentance is, there is more than sorrow for past failures and sins, it involves a determination to begin now to do the will of God as He reveals it to us.

This is the real proof that we have Biblical faith in our Creator God and will be pleasing to Him.