

The Biblical Concept of Faith

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). Faith gives substance to your hope and makes certain the things you cannot see.

1. The Definition of Faith

- Dictionary: Belief, trust, fidelity or loyalty to a creed or religion. A confident belief in God and acceptance of His will.
- Taking God at His Word, without seeking proof, and acting upon it. It involves a decision or a choice to trust God, choosing to respond to His Word as truth (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).
- *The ability to act on God's Word. This involves knowledge and conviction of the truth and obedience to it* (Mark R. Littleton).
- Believing in the faithfulness of God.
- *The sixth sense – the eternal point of view* (John Wesley).
- *The response of the total person to God as a Person, in loving submission, trust and obedience, in and through the Person of Jesus Christ as the Revelation of God and Redeemer of mankind, Who as the Sovereign LORD offers Himself to the believer, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Scripture as his daily sufficiency* (Dr. Victor Matthews).
- *Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation* (Elton Trueblood).
- *Faith is conviction that moves. It is an action that is taken with the assurance of things hoped for, even though they are as yet unseen – Hebrews 11:1* (Dr. Alfred Martin).
- *Faith is not mere sentiment, but a substantial reality* (A. B. Simpson).
- Faith is not something that can be worked up in the human will, but is a sovereign gift of God (Acts 3:16; Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; II Peter 1:1).
- An agreement based on belief, trust and commitment. We can trust Him Who is "Faithful and True" (Revelation 3:14; 19:11).

2. The Object of Faith

- The Person of God (Genesis 1:1; Acts 16:31; 27:25).
- The Word of God. Faith accepts the Bible as being the revealed Word of God. The person of God guarantees the Word of God and is the basis of the believer's faith (Hebrews 4:1-3; 10:23; John 17:17, 19, 20).

3. The Sphere of Faith (John Wesley called Faith the Sixth Sense)

The Sphere of Faith

The Way of God
Spiritual
Eternal
Trusting
Everlasting Life
Revelation seeking
Accepting God's Providential Leading
Relationship

The Sphere of Flesh

The Way of Man
Sensual
Temporal
Trying
Everlasting Death
Evidence Seeking
Accepts human management
Religion (ritual)

4. The Necessity of Faith (Importance of)

- Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).
- Without faith, we could not become the children of God (John 1:12; Romans 10:9; Acts 16:31; Romans 1:17-23).
- Eternal life is given only to those who believe (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40).
- Faith averts destruction (John 3:16).
- Faith averts condemnation (John 3:18).
- By faith, one's spiritual hunger and thirst are satisfied (John 6:35).
- Assurance of salvation is gained through faith (I John 5:11-13).

- Faith secures our resurrection and averts eternal death (John 6:40; 11:25-26).
- Through believing in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes into the life of the believer (John 7:37-39; 14:12-17; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 John 4:15).
- Faith causes the believer to walk in the light as opposed to the darkness of this world (John 8:12; 12:46).
- Belief (faith) precedes worship (John 9:38).
- Faith in Christ brings about a right standing before God (righteousness) which is necessary to be accepted by God (Romans 10:9-10). By faith, Jesus Christ becomes our righteousness (Romans 1:17; 3:22; 4:5).
- Faith precedes peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).
- We are to live our Christian lives the same way we were saved (Colossians 2:6; Galatians 3:11; James 2:18; 5:15; 1 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:4).

5. The Characteristics of Faith

- It does not require evidence to believe it (Hebrews 11:1).
- Genuine faith is dependent on the knowledge of God's Word (Romans 10:17; James 1:22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- Faith can never function apart from a concrete object. There is no faith in mere passive believing. It necessitates a personal and active involvement (John 1:12; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-13).
- Faith is not blind nor is it irrelevant. It involves intelligent trust and works in the arena of life. It provides substance to hope (Hebrews 11:1).
- Faith links us to every promise in the Word of God. It sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible.
- Faith is never a feeling. It is a decision, a choice to trust God, to take Him at His Word and to act upon it in spite of how one might feel.
- Genuine faith never judges God on the basis of our circumstances (Hebrews 11:35-40), even though faith decisions will change our circumstances.
- Faith always relates to the future – "...of things hoped for..." (Hebrews 11:1).

6. The Benefits of Faith

- We are **saved** by faith (Genesis 15:16; John 1:12; Romans 4:3; 5:1; Galatians 3:26).
- We are **sanctified** by faith (John 17:17; Acts 26:18).
- We are **kept** by faith (1 Peter 1:5).
- We have **rest** by faith (Hebrews 4:3).
- We have **power** to live the Christian life and serve God by faith (Hebrews 11).

7. The Context of Faith

Faith assumes an intimate relationship with God (John 14:21) and a genuine love for God (Galatians 5:6). It involves focusing our attention and affections totally on Him and recognizing that He is able. Being out of fellowship with God makes it very difficult to exercise genuine faith. Faith is dependent on a relationship of persons (God and humankind) and grows by love. The first element of the fruit of the Spirit is love out of which every other element comes.