

Faith

- I. faith: Belief, trust, confidence. Confidence, reliance, trust (in the ability, goodness, etc. of a person; in the efficacy or worth of a thing; or in the truth of a statement or doctrine).
 - A. **(HEB 11:1)** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - B. Faith is a present experience with what we hope to see and receive.
- II. Consider the source of faith.
 - A. Our faith comes through the righteousness of God. **2PE 1:1.**
 - B. Our faith is born of God. **1JO 5:4.**
 - C. Our faith evidences sovereign resurrection power unto life in us. **EPH 1:19-20.**
 - D. Our faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and therefore evidence that we have been regenerated and renewed by the Spirit. **GAL 5:22; 1CO 2:14; TIT 3:5.**
- III. Consider the activation of faith.
 - A. Faith is activated by the word of God. **ROM 10:13-17.**
 - B. Ministers are the means through which men believe. **1CO 3:5.**
 - C. The word works effectually **ONLY** in the believer. **1TH 2:13 ct/w HEB 4:2.**
 - D. The gospel is hidden to the man without faith. **2CO 4:2-4.**
 - E. Faith is to the word of God as sight is to light.
 1. Light neither benefits the man with no eyes nor the man with closed eyes.
 2. So the gospel benefits neither the man without the gift of faith nor the man with the gift that does not use it.
- IV. Christ's resurrection is the foundation of our faith and hope. **1PE 1:21.**
 - A. Without that resurrection our faith is vain. **1CO 15:13-18.**
 - B. If Jesus be not risen and living, He is not the Christ.
 1. Christ abides forever (**JOH 12:32-34**). Jesus cannot be the Christ if He is still dead.
 2. Jesus' resurrection is the supreme proof that He is the Son of God. **ROM 1:3-4.**
 3. All of Jesus' other signs of His divine, messianic identity hang on the ultimate sign of His resurrection. **MAT 12:38-40.**
 - C. There is plentiful evidence to support faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **ACT 1:3.**
 - D. The possibility of the resurrection must be granted from the evidence of God's power in the creation. **ROM 1:20; JER 32:17.**
 1. If God could create a living man from the dust, He can certainly raise that dust to life again. **ACT 26:8.**
 2. Even evolutionists grant that life came from non-living matter: they accept the idea of life from the dead.
 - E. The probability of the resurrection is evident from its consistency with other facts.
 1. The coming of Messiah/Christ is connected with the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 A.D. **DAN 9:25-27.**
 - a. Messiah was to come 483 years from "...the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem..." and be "cut off" before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.
 - b. Jesus corroborated Daniel's prophecy in the Olivet Discourse. **MAT 24:1-2, 14-16.**
 2. Jesus of Nazareth received the kind of treatment prophesied of the Christ. **PSA 2:1-3; ISA 53:3; ACT 13:27.**

3. The time of Messiah's coming, the associated historical events and His sufferings were uniquely applicable to "...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs..." (**ACT 2:22**).
 - a. This proves Jesus is the Christ.
 - b. And, if He is the Christ, He is risen from the dead, since "...Christ abideth for ever..." (**JOH 12:34**).
- F. There were numerous eyewitnesses to the risen Christ. **1CO 15:5-8**.
 1. The record of these eyewitnesses has been written so that we might believe. **JOH 20:30-31**.
 2. Our belief of the events of other history is based on records that have been left by those who experienced that history.
 3. The N.T. documents meet the criteria of reliable history.
 - a. The N.T. writers were contemporaries of the times and persons of whom they wrote.
 - b. It is unlikely that the N.T. writers would have endured the suffering they did for something they knew was a lie or about which there were plausible doubts.
 - c. The N.T. writers recorded the doubts they had and how they themselves accepted the facts only under the weight of the strongest evidence.
- V. Based upon the evidence that is available, we trust God with respect to those things of His that we cannot see.
 - A. We accept God's account of the origin of the world though we cannot personally verify it. **HEB 11:3**.
 - B. We are confident of heaven though we have never been there.
 - C. We trust proven men in areas where we lack personal knowledge and experience. How much more should we trust God! **1JO 5:9**.
- VI. There is more to faith than merely seeing the evidence. Seeing is not necessarily believing.
 - A. These passages show faith operating *with* sight: **EXO 14:31; JOH 2:23; 20:8**.
 1. However, some saw the evidence and did not believe. **JOH 6:36; 12:37**.
 2. Evidence alone will not guarantee the exercise of faith. **LUK 16:31; JOH 12:9-11**.
 - B. These passages show faith operating *without* sight: **JOH 20:29; 2CO 5:7; 1PE 1:8**.
 1. These passages do not exclude the fact that faith is based on evidence.
 2. We are not personal eyewitnesses of Biblical history, but we base our faith on the accounts of those who were eyewitnesses.
 3. The abundance of available evidences from the creation, prophetic accuracy of Scripture, external confirmation of Biblical people, places and events, internal consistency of Scripture, Scripture's description of scientific principles, etc. all attest to its claims as being the very word of God which can therefore be trusted where it declares things that we cannot test with our five senses.
 - C. Unbelief of the gospel cannot be charged to its lack of proof.
 - D. The man who will not believe the testimony of Jesus Christ would not believe if he actually saw Jesus Christ himself.
 - E. A man will not believe the facts until God gives him the ability to believe. **JOH 6:64-65; ACT 16:14; PHIL 1:29**.
- VII. We must distinguish between true faith and *feigned* (pretended, sham) faith. **1TI 1:5**.
 - A. True faith is proven by works. **JAM 2:14-26**.

1. True faith is more than merely acknowledging facts. It is a matter of submission to God and His will.
2. Devils believe yet rebel. Theirs is hardly a godly faith.
- B. True faith is obedient. **ROM 16:26.**
- C. True faith *works by love*, which is known by keeping the commandments of God. **GAL 5:6 c/w 2JO 1:6.**
 1. The following verses show the connection between faith and love.
 - a. **1CO 13:7 ct/w PRO 14:15.**
 - (1) Charity believes what God declares, whether it be something testable by the senses or not. c/w **ACT 24:14-15; PSA 119:128.**
 - (2) Charity trusts God even when it hurts. **JOB 13:15; HEB 10:32-35.**
 - (3) If we truly love God's word, we will believe it and act accordingly. **PSA 119:167.**
 - b. **1TH 1:3; 3:6; 1TI 1:5.** Faith and charity walk together.
 - c. **2TH 1:3.** Faith and charity grow together.
 - d. **EPH 1:15.** True faith accords with love of brethren. c/w **1JO 5:1.**
 - e. **TIT 3:15.** Faith is the grounds of brotherly love.
 - f. **1JO 3:23.** Faith in Christ and love of brethren are one commandment.
 - g. **EPH 3:17-19 c/w 1JO 2:11.** Understanding requires faith and love.
 2. Faith may be great but worthless without love. **1CO 13:2.**
- D. The work of faith results in glorifying the name of Christ. **2TH 1:11-12.**

VIII. There are varying degrees of faith.

- A. It may be dead. **JAM 2:26.**
- B. It may be little. **MAT 6:30; 8:26.**
- C. It may be great. **MAT 8:10; 15:28.**
- D. It may be weak. **ROM 14:1.**
- E. It may be strong. **ROM 4:20.**
- F. It should increase. **2TH 1:3; LUK 17:5.**
 1. The ministry of the word increases faith. **1TH 3:10; EPH 4:12-13.**
 2. Increased faith results in increased witness. **2CO 10:15; ACT 9:22.**
- G. One may be full of faith. **ACT 6:5, 8.**

IX. Consider some effects and benefits of faith.

- A. By faith we perceive the reality of God and His works.
 1. God is real and His works are manifest whether believed or not.
 2. But without faith, the reality and the works attesting to it are not perceived as they should be. **PSA 78:18-24.**
 3. One will never undo God and His works by unbelief; he will only undo himself.
- B. There are special manifestations of God to the believer. **JOH 11:40; 14:21; REV 3:20-21.**
- C. This perception of God through faith motivates the believer to act against nature. **HEB 11:27; ROM 4:19-20.**
 1. It is our nature to fear man rather than God. Faith overcomes that. **PRO 29:25; HEB 13:5-6.**
 2. It is our nature to yield to our weakness. Faith overcomes that. **1CO 10:13-14; ISA 40:28-31.**
 3. It is our nature to be weary in well-doing. Faith overcomes that. **GAL 6:9; 2CO 4:7-18.**
 4. It is our nature to doubt God's power and willingness to provide for our needs.

- Faith overcomes that. **MAT 6:31-34; PHIL 4:19.**
5. It is our nature to expect immediate compensation or gratification for goodness. Faith overcomes that. **LUK 14:12-14; HEB 6:10-15.**
- D. Through faith we understand. **HEB 11:3; ACT 8:27-38.**
- E. Faith evidences the possession of eternal salvation.
1. Believers have everlasting life. **JOH 3:36.**
 2. Believers are justified and accounted righteous. **ACT 13:39; ROM 4:5.**
 3. Believers are elect of God. **1TH 1:4-6; TIT 1:1.**
 4. Through faith we become wise unto salvation. **2TI 3:15.**
 5. Believers may know that they have eternal life. **1JO 5:13.**
- F. By faith Christ *dwells* in our hearts. **EPH 3:14-19.**
1. There is an indwelling of Christ in *regeneration* that all the elect experience. **ROM 8:9-11.**
 2. There is an indwelling of Christ in *fellowship* that only the true believer experiences. **JOH 15:1-12.**
 - a. dwells: To abide or continue for a time, in a place, state, or condition.
 - b. abide: To wait, stay, remain.
 3. According to **1JO 2:24**, we will be abiding in Christ if we are abiding in that (apostolic truth) which we have heard from the beginning.
 - a. The words, “abide,” “remain,” and “continue” all translate the same Greek word, “meno” (SRN G3306) which means *to remain, abide, stay, dwell*.
 - b. We must continue in Christ’s doctrine if we are to continue in Him. **GAL 1:6.**
 4. After the example of Paul, we must pray for the strength of the Spirit to live the life of faith.
 5. With Christ dwelling in our hearts, the issues of our lives will be under control: His control. **PRO 4:23.**
 6. The person who has Christ dwelling in his heart by faith is rooted and grounded in love.
 - a. rooted: Filled or covered with roots; firmly fixed or established, deeply implanted, *in* something.
 - b. grounded: Deeply or strongly founded; firmly fixed or established; resting upon a good basis.
 - c. This contrasts with fickle or feigned devotion. **EZE 33:30-31; HOS 6:4.**
 7. This indwelling of Christ leads to the ability to comprehend.
 - a. The dimensions of God can only be known by divine revelation. **JOB 11:7-9.**
 - b. These dimensions are comprehended by the saints since it is to them that they are made known. **EPH 3:9-10; COL 1:25-27.**
 8. This indwelling of Christ leads to a knowledge of His love which passes knowledge. c/w **1CO 2:9-10; ROM 8:35-39.**
 9. This indwelling of Christ leads to being filled with all the fullness of God.
 - a. As finite beings, we could never contain the infinite God. **1KI 8:27.**
 - b. This is being filled with such a fulness as God is ready to grant and we are capable of receiving. c/w **JOH 16:12-13; 1CO 3:1-2.**
 - c. Mind how being filled with God accords with doctrinal knowledge. **EPH 5:18-19 c/w COL 3:16-17; 1:9-10 c/w HEB 11:6.**
 10. This prayer of Paul describes a full, spiritual life which results from faith in what God has revealed unto saints by the Spirit.