

FAITH TOWARD GOD
Firm Foundation Chapter 18
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What Is Faith?

Without faith, we cannot please God. "Faith makes the difference between defeat and victory in a Christian life." Faith allows us to be conquerors and to perform extraordinary deeds. According to **Heb. 11:1**, "**Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**" In essence it is having the confidence that the things that we are hoping for will actually happen. It is simply trusting that God will perform what He promises to us.

Saving Faith

We are saved by faith, which we receive as a gift of grace from God. God is able to give us faith to be saved by **hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)**. People need to know and believe the salvation Gospel to be saved, but how will they know unless they hear it or read it? To become saved, according to **Rom. 10:9**, a person must **confess** with his mouth that Jesus is Lord, **believe** in his heart that God raised Jesus for the dead, and then **accept** his/her salvation. When people have an assurance and trust that God's Word is true concerning the salvation message, faith is produced in their heart, and they can be saved. This faith initially came as God allowed someone or something to communicate His Word to the individual.

Similarly, **our faith increases as we hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)**. God has told us how to get faith, so "the responsibility of whether we have faith or not rests on us."

Two Kinds of Faith Exemplified

God Himself operated in faith when He created the world. First, **God believed it** (visualized it). Second, **He said it** (commanded it). Third, **it happened**, or came to pass (materialized). The principle of faith is believing first, and then seeing the manifestation of it. This **heart knowledge faith** can be described as, "**I believe it because God says it is true.**" However, **head knowledge faith** is described as, "**seeing is believing.**" It is better to have heart knowledge faith than head knowledge faith, but it is better to at least have head knowledge faith than no faith at all.

Three days after the disciples watched Jesus die on the cross, God raised Him from the dead. Eleven of the disciples saw Jesus and communicated this message to Thomas. However, Thomas did not believe and said that **he would believe when he had seen** Jesus himself. When Jesus approached Thomas, he exhorted him saying, "**Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet they have believed.**" Thomas had head knowledge faith, but there is a better kind of faith.

Abraham had heart faith, since he believed the promise that God gave him. Abraham believed because God said it was true, not because he had seen the manifestation of it. **Rom. 4:17-21** describes Abraham's heart faith:

17 [Abraham believed God Who] calls into being that which does not exist.

18 **In hope against hope he believed**, in order that he might become a father of many nations, **according to that which had been spoken**, "So shall your descendants be."

19 And **without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body**, now good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, **he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith**, giving glory to God.

21 and **being fully assured that what He had promised; He was able also to perform.**

"Abraham did not consider his body; he looked only to the promise of God." Just as we would trust the words (witness) of a friend, so we ought to trust the words of God. **I John 5:9a** says, "**If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.**"

Clarification of True Faith

Although Scriptures such as **Mark 11:22-24** are true when they say that we can have whatever we ask and believe for, we must also understand the truth of **I John 5:14-15**, when it says, "if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us." Faith is trusting God according to **His Word and Will**. Faith does not move God (God is already moved **if it is His will**). Faith just puts us in a position to receive from God what He already wants to do for us.