



What Drives Christian Faith?

James 1:2-3: (NASB) ²*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,* ³*knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.*

Is Christian faith different? Is it somehow more magical or extensive than the faith of other religions? Is it less credible than the faith we have in science or medicine? Is Christian faith based on long-standing traditions, feelings, the Bible, or what church you go to? Is Christian faith transformative? Should Christian faith be a recommended staple in everyone's diet?


What is faith?

 An anomaly that won't survive, *The Meaning of the 21st Century*, James Martin (film, based on a book of the same title)

- *Each of us can contribute on a daily basis to the elimination of our species. We are just sort of exceeding everything. We are outgrowing the earth, in a sense. We are well beyond the point of no return. No one can afford to remain ignorant of these issues and not do something about them. This is our make or break century. It's probable that we can be much better off than today by the end of the 21st century. What is absolutely certain, however, is that we can do this only by being careful with our planetary capital. We are the first species that can plan our own destiny, but on an evolutionary time scale, we have been here only the minutest period of time. It could be that we are an anomaly that is not going to survive.*

On this program, we will talk about having a "Faith Factor," a takeoff on the television show, "Fear Factor," where people compete to face their fears.



What is the basis of the  in this film? The participants are putting their faith in humankind to change the destiny of the world.

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary:

Faith (noun)

1. Confidence or trust in a person or thing; faith in another's ability.
2. Belief that is not based on proof.
3. Belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion.

Everyone has faith - even atheists have faith.

Hebrews 11:1: (Rotherham) *But faith is of things hoped for, a confidence, of facts, a conviction, when they are not seen...*

Interestingly enough, "confidence in things that are not seen" is also a definition of fear. Faith is confidence things will work out; fear is confidence they will go wrong, thus the Fear Factor vs. Faith Factor.



This next story is a dramatization of a story of a college professor who challenged his students about faith in God.

 **How is this God good, FAITH, Pan Pacific Film Festival**

- *Is God all powerful? Is God good? My brother died of cancer, even though he prayed to God to heal him. Most of us would attempt to help someone who is ill, but God didn't...how is this God good?*

This might make you think of James 4:3: *You ask and receive not because you ask amiss.*

The New Testament only uses one Greek word for “faith:”

Faith: Strongs #4102, persuasion, credence, conviction. Reliance (esp. upon Christ for salvation) constancy (in such profession). (By extension the system of religious) truth.

But the same word was translated as *assurance* here in Acts:

Acts 17:31: (KJV) *Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given **assurance <4102>** unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

What is the basis of the  of the *assurance* in this text?

True faith can be described as trust, which implies that there must be some reason or reasons for the trust to even exist. Here the Apostle Paul uses a factual event, the resurrection of Jesus. He is given assurance/faith in that God raised Jesus from the dead. He uses this as proof that God will do what He says will come to pass.

Credulity (noun): readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence (gullibility)

Often Christian faith is looked at by those outside of Christianity as credulity, but that is not the case. Biblical faith has surety and conviction behind it whereas credulity has only a willingness to believe. We need to all know *why* we believe what we do so that it can be transformative in our lives. The Apostle Paul tells us that we are always to have a reason for our hope.

Is faith a necessary part of life?

A “living faith” requires action!

Hebrews 11:6: (KJV) *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

It is not possible to please God without faith.

 **What if truth no longer was, Losing Faith in Faith, Post-Modernism, YouTube**

- *What happened is at some point we realized that we were in a seam of history where the bedrock of our civilization that we believed would be unchangeable - the progress - the very notion of progress, the notion of truth, the reliability of reason, our trust in the historical process was somehow collapsing. This began to be talked about as early as 1979. There was a French philosopher named Jean-Francois Lyotard who spoke about what he called “the canopy of truth” that was collapsing. What he meant by that was that we grew up in a time where you discuss what is true and what is false. You give five reasons*

*why this is true. But what if the whole concept of truth is under attack?
What if people are not even sure if there is a truth to be known?*

What is the basis of the  in this philosophical approach?

Truth has become “what I think it ought to be.” Truth becomes relative to where I am in my life and what is good or right or true for me personally. That creates a big problem in society.

True faith is solid ground to stand upon.

Matthew 8:26: *Why are you fearful, O you of little faith.*

Psalms 107:29: *He maketh the storm a clam, so that the waves thereof are still.*

Psalms 31:1: *In thee, O Lord do I put my trust...*

...Continue in THE faith:

Colossians 1:23: (KJV) *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

The faith is already in place. It does not have to fit what we individually like because it is something bigger than us.

 **No old Holy Books, outgrowingod.com** (The beginning of this clip is sarcastic...)

- *At the dawn of the 21st century, how would we possibly manage our lives without religion? Without religion, we would no longer have the benefit of ancient holy books to educate us about the origins and nature of the universe. We would instead have to rely on science alone. Without religion, we could no longer base our morality on Iron Age Ethics and obedience to supernatural law. We would instead have to base morality on human well-being and define for ourselves what is good based on reason, compassion and experience.*

However, the 20th century was the bloodiest century in the history of humankind and not because of religious wars. It was because individuals rose up without God, proclaimed their own power and slaughtered millions.

Our faith can be based on many different things:

- Science: A system of knowledge based on study and observation
- Medicine: The science and art of preventing and curing disease
- Opinion: One perception of reality versus another
- Preference: A personally preferred perception of reality
- Tradition: Specific patterns of the past used as a template for the present and future
- History: Using the accounts of the past as a tool to prepare for the future
- Astrology: Relying on the alignment of stars and planets as tools to plan your life

- Prophecies: Nostradamus, The Mayans etc...
- Paganism: We are the gods
- The Secret: The concept that the universe waits for your direction to fulfill your life
- Atheism: The belief that God does not exist or should be ignored
- The Bible: A book of history, prophecy, philosophy, tradition, medicine and science

The bottom line is that all of the above approaches to life or parts of our life rely on faith. We all have faith. Is our faith strong; is it credulity or a mixture of the two? In many of these cases, our faith is well-placed, necessary and will yield life enhancing results - such as faith in medicine and faith in the Bible. In other cases, our faith would be better placed elsewhere.

Jude 1:3: (KJV) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that **ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.***

...not a faith you make up as you go, but the faith of the saints.

We can have faith in God's plan for the ultimate redemption of mankind.

Is faith appropriate for children?

Matthew 7:7-11: (NRSV) ⁷Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? ¹⁰Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Do we not want what is best for our children? How much more does God want to give to us? What better gift do we have to give than faith that produces gratitude?

Proverbs 22:6: (NASB) *Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

God has a plan and it is His will that all men should be saved.

Multi-generational faith is reflected in the Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:3-7: (NASB) ³I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.


The progression of faith:

Romans 10:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴How then will they call on Him in whom they have not *believed*? How will they *believe* in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things! ¹⁶However, they did not

all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? ¹⁷So *faith* comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

 **Real faith releases miracles, Bill Winston, preacher**

- *What is faith? Confidence in God! This Gospel was never meant to be preached with all this revelation and no proof. When you start operating in righteousness, the miracles will take place. (Yelling) But if you've got no self-esteem...if you are always intimidated, if you're living so close to the world that, like Sampson, all of a sudden you lose your strength because you think more of Delilah than you do of Jesus...*

What is the basis of the  in this Christian perspective? A lot of emotions and excitement of the moment. Will that drive you to live a changed life? We believe the recipe for real, true faith is building the foundation of faith brick by brick, proving things to be true.

James 4:3: (NASB) *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

We are not to ask from a standpoint of ego.

Is all faith the same?

 **No faith in God or immortality, outgrowinggod.com**

- *Without religion we would no longer have faith in an invisible God to give us hope. Instead, we would have to find hope in the proven potential of the human intellect, the intensity of our will to survive and the depth of our capacity for goodwill. Without religion, we lose the promise of immortality on the far side of death. We would instead be left with the sober conclusion that this life and our present reality is the only one we have, and as such we need to make the most of it.*

Again, what is the basis of the  in this approach? The faith in human intellect and compassion.

What about Paganism? (From a pagan website) “Paganism is a religion of nature, in other words Pagans revere nature. Pagans see the divine as immanent in the whole of life and the universe; in every tree, plant, animal and object, man and woman and in the dark side of life as much as in the light. Pagans live their lives attuned to the cycles of nature, the seasons, life and death. The Bible tells that man was made in the image of God. The Pagan gods and goddesses of the ancient Pantheons are made in our image which is the other way around.”

Paganism's origin:

Genesis 3:4-7: (NKJV) ⁴Then the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Satan presents the temptation to *be like God*. He was the father of Paganism right at the beginning. It is a misrepresentation of God's true will for mankind.



Proverbs 16:18: (NKJV) *Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

(Source: Wikipedia) Atheism is, in a broad sense, the rejection of belief in the existence of deities.The term *atheism* originated from the Greek *ἄθεος* (*atheos*), meaning "without god(s)", used as a pejorative term applied to those thought to reject the gods worshipped by the larger society... The first individuals to identify themselves using the word "atheist" lived in the 18th century. Arguments for atheism range from the philosophical to social and historical approaches. Rationales for not believing in any supernatural deity include the lack of empirical evidence, the problem of evil, the argument from inconsistent revelations, and the argument from nonbelief. Although some atheists have adopted secular philosophies, there is no one ideology or set of behaviors to which all atheists adhere.

The biblical definition of Atheism:

Ephesians 2:11-13: (NKJV) ¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh— who are called *Uncircumcision* by what is called the *Circumcision* made in the flesh by hands— ¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope** and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Without God: Strongs #112 *atheos* (ath'-eh-os); godless KJV-- without God.

It takes great faith to be an Atheist!

What makes Christian faith different?

The Bible teaches us to prove our Christian faith - to NOT be credulous:

2 Timothy 2:15: (NKJV) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22: (NKJV) ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.



Faith requires action.

Friendship, love, art and song, outgrowingod.com

- *Without religion, we would have no God to give additional meaning to life. We would instead have to find transcendence in human friendship, love, art and song and in celebrating our good fortune and joy at being alive. How would we manage our lives without religion? We would manage just fine.*

Christian faith develops through testing:

James 1:2-8: (NRSV) ²My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, ³because **you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance**; ⁴and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. ⁶But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; ^{7, 8}for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Trials = Joy?!? How can that be? Perhaps that reminds you of:

1 Peter 1:7: *That the trial of your faith being more precious than gold that perishes.*

How do you get the pure gold that everyone sees as so valuable? Literally it is tried by fire in order to be purified. The analogy is to our Christian faith. Testing produces endurance. If we are not continually developing our faith, then it is not worth very much.



Christian faith is evidenced in the testimony of our lives:

James 2:14-18: (KJV) ¹⁴What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

We should live and act differently, approaching life in a godly way. We should be rejoicing even if we are in trial and temptation.

Believe God, **Bill Winston, preacher**

- (Yelling) I believe! Put your faith in God from now on and you won't have misplaced faith in whether or not this doctor's report was right...what the newspaper said...have faith in God no matter what reports might come into your life. Just make up your mind that I'm gonna have faith in God!

Just remember that God does not “plow the road” for you in your life. God allows you to plow it yourself because that is where faith is developed. We work through these things by His grace, but they are not removed. Faith is not just a feeling.

Christian faith cannot be vital without expression:

James 2:24-26: (KJV) ²⁴Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ²⁵Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? ²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

What can we do about wavering faith?



Check your blood pressure:

Colossians 1:23: (KJV) *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

Be grounded and settled. If you are all bent out of shape about circumstances, your spiritual blood pressure is too high. Faith should help to steady you.

Check your sources:

Ephesians 4:11-15: (NASB) ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ...

Are you finding your foundation of faith in the places you worship, or is your faith built on traditions and emotionalism? Within the Christian community, we were warned there would be craftiness and scheming. We need to be on guard!

Check your baggage:

1 Peter 5:7-9: (KJV) ⁷*Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you.* ⁸*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:* ⁹*Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

We carry around doubt, fear and lots of other baggage. We need to check that baggage with God. The word “casting” here literally means to throw. Throw your cares to God and just take your carryon filled with your Bible!



Check your God: Is God all powerful? Yes! What does that mean?

Psalms 89:11-14: (NASB) ¹¹*The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them.* ¹²*The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name.* ¹³*You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted.* ¹⁴*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You.*

We would love our system of government to be based on righteousness and justice! Check what God you are worshiping because the God the Scriptures describes is a wise, compassionate, loving God with a plan from the beginning to the end.

Check your ego:

James 1:5-7: (NASB) ⁵*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.* ⁶*But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.* ⁷*For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,*

True godly wisdom does not develop where ego exists.

We want to make sure our Christian faith is grounded on that which is secure and godly. If not, we need to fix it.

So what drives Christian faith...?

*For Jonathan and Rick (and Kathy!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



(Source: Wikipedia)

Modernism: Modernism, in its broadest definition, is modern thought, character, or practice. More specifically, the term describes the modernist movement in the arts, its set of cultural tendencies and associated cultural movements, originally arising from wide-scale and far-reaching changes to Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In particular the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by the horror of World War I, were among the factors that shaped Modernism. Related terms are modern, modernist, contemporary, and postmodern.

In art, Modernism explicitly rejects the ideology of realism and makes use of the works of the past, through the application of reprise, incorporation, rewriting, recapitulation, revision and parody in new forms. Modernism also rejects the lingering certainty of Enlightenment thinking, as well as the idea of a compassionate, all-powerful Creator.

Postmodernism: Postmodernism is in general the era that follows Modernism. It frequently serves as an ambiguous overarching term for skeptical interpretations of culture, literature, art, philosophy, economics, architecture, fiction, and literary criticism. It is also confused with deconstruction and post-structuralism because its usage as a term gained significant popularity at the same time as twentieth-century post-structural thought.

...Postmodernist ideas in philosophy and the analysis of culture and society expanded the importance of critical theory and has been the point of departure for works of literature, architecture, and design, as well as being visible in marketing/business and the interpretation of history, law and culture, starting in the late 20th century. These developments—re-evaluation of the entire Western value system (love, marriage, popular culture, shift from industrial to service economy) that took place since the 1950s and 1960s, with a peak in the Social Revolution of 1968—are described with the term Postmodernity, Influences on postmodern thought, Paul Lützeler (St. Louis) as opposed to Postmodernism, a term referring to an opinion or movement. Postmodernism has also been used interchangeably with the term post-structuralism out of which postmodernism grew, a proper understanding of postmodernism or doing justice to the postmodernist thought demands an understanding of the poststructuralist movement and the ideas of its advocates. Post-structuralism resulted similarly to postmodernism by following a time of structuralism. It is characterized by new ways of thinking through structuralism, contrary to the original form. "Postmodernist" describes part of a movement; "Postmodern" places it in the period of time since the 1950s, making it a part of contemporary history.

Next, a really good outline from a website that breaks down faith in the New Testament:

(Source: <http://www.bible.ca/s-faith-defined-basics.htm>)

II. Faith (Gr: pistis) used in four ways:

A. #1: A personal belief, mental acceptance and acknowledgement of God's existence:

1. Hebrews 11:1,6: Assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen
2. 2 Corinthians 4:18: We look not at things seen, but at things not seen
3. 2 Corinthians 5:7: we walk by faith not sight
4. John 20:27-29: how blessed are they who have not seen but believe

B. #2: A conduct or work inspired by the complete surrender to mental acceptance:

1. Just as repentance can be seen: Matthew 3:7-8, so too "faith can be seen:" Matthew 9:2
2. James 2:14-26: We show our faith by our works
3. We must have an obedient faith:
 - a. Obedience of faith: Romans 1:5; 15:18; 16:26
 - b. Acts 6:7: word kept spreading, great many priests became obedient to the faith
 - c. Matthew 7:21-27: not only call "Lord," but obey
 - d. By faith, Abraham obeyed: Hebrews 11
4. Faith is said to do work:
 - a. Galatians 5:6: faith working through love
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11: work of faith
 - c. Hebrews 13:7: considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith

C. #3: A trusting or trustworthiness: (pistis)

1. Matthew 24:45; 25:21,23; Luke 19:17: "faithful servant"
2. Romans 3:3: the faithfulness of God
3. 1 Corinthians 4:2: stewards must be faithful
4. 1 Corinthians 15:14,17: if Christ is not raised your faith is vain, worthless
5. 2 Thessalonians 1:3: your faith is greatly enlarged

D. #4: The system of doctrine and morality peculiar to Christianity:

1. Statements encouraging us to properly maintain the system of faith
 - a. Jude 3: contend earnestly for the faith
 - b. Galatians 1:23: preaching the faith he once tried to destroy
 - c. Ephesians 4:5: only one faith
 - d. Ephesians 4:23: until we all attain to the unity of the faith
 - e. Acts 14:22: encouraging them to continue in the faith
 - f. Acts 16:5: strengthen in the faith
 - g. 2 Corinthians 13:5: test yourselves to see if you are in the faith
 - h. 1 Corinthians 16:13: stand firm in the faith
 - i. 2 Timothy 4:7: I have kept the faith
 - j. 1 Timothy 1:13: reprove them that they may be sound in the faith
 - k. 1 Timothy 4:1: in later times some will fall away from the faith



l. 1 Timothy 4:6: nourished on the words of the faith and sound doctrine

m. 1 Timothy 6:10: wandered away from the faith

n. 1 Timothy 6:20,21: Gone astray from the faith

2. Statements of general interest:

a. Galatians 3:23: before the faith came we were under the law

b. Galatians 6:10: especially the household of the faith

c. Acts 6:7: obedient to the faith

d. Romans 10:8: word of faith we preach

e. Luke 18:8: will Jesus find the faith upon the earth when he returns