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What Do YOU Have Faith In?

James 2:18: (NASB) *But someone may well say, You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*



Faith is a part of life. Faith is not reserved for those of us who claim religion. On the contrary, faith is an integral part of human life, no matter what perspective you come from. We have faith in the people in our lives that they will be there for us. To varying degrees we have faith in our doctor's ability to take care of us, our employer's responsibility to be fair to us and our co-workers' sensibility to do their fair share with us. We have faith in the Internet as a window to the world, and we have faith in the antivirus software we use to protect that window. How does the faith we find everywhere in life compare to religious faith? Is one kind of faith reasonable while the other is sensational or are they the same?

 **This has got to stop, *Theists Projecting Faith Onto Science, The Rational Channel***

- *(First speaker) Science has required, requires and will require faith. Furthermore, science requires faith because assumptions are made all the time and they are usually assumptions that scientists can't prove. Science can't tell you the difference between good and evil. Science can't tell us that rape is wrong. Sure, we accept that as a value judgment but science can only tell us what is observable and testable. And even then a degree of faith and assumption making is required.*
- *(Second speaker) Okay, this has got to stop. So, we've all heard this statement before.*
- *(Dr. Ben Carson) Well, first of all, I think it is quite evident from what you've seen tonight, it takes faith to believe in God. It takes faith to believe in evolution. I think it takes a lot more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe in God, but they both require faith.*

A biblical definition: Hebrews 11:1: (NIV) *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

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

Faith is always from the same Greek word <4102> in the entire New Testament.

Faith: Strong's #4102 persuasion, credence, conviction, reliance, constancy

When something has credence, it has something to hold it together. Faith is built upon something. Sometimes faith gets confused with credulity. Credulity: noun - readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence (gullibility). Real, sound and biblical faith is NOT credulity.

True, deep and powerful faith must be built and developed as any muscle must be built and developed - in degrees and stages: James 2:14-17: Faith *by itself* - if not put into practice and expressed - is dead, useless. Christian faith can die because of inactivity.

A lot of people who do not have faith in the Bible look at people like us as foolish children having a fantasy faith in something we made up and want to believe in, like unicorns.

(Source: McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia) Faith...is essentially trust. The various uses of the word (both objective and subjective) may be summed up as follows:

1. an objective body of truth: 2. a rule of thought, 3. a personal quality, act, or habit of the individual man. ...Psychologically, faith is the faculty of grasping evidence, with a propensity to admit it when duly presented to the mind. "The faculty of grasping evidence." Christian faith must be built on grasping evidence.

Biblical faith has surety and conviction behind it, whereas credulity has only a willingness and feeling. The first problem we encounter is this: many who say they "believe" in the Bible are merely being credulous or gullible.

Observations so far about faith:

- Faith is NOT science, though the principles of searching and testing are present.
- Faith is NOT credulity.



- Faith is acquired by listening and considering, not by feeling.
- Faith is maintained by study, proving and experience.
- Faith is spread by repeating the last two steps above.

If we look at faith through these observations, we can now talk about the kind of faith in the Bible.

It seems as though those outside of Christianity assume all Christians to have credulity and not faith. We will examine these as a “faith versus feeling” comparison.

Feelings, deep emotions when experienced and dwelt upon can and most often lead us to credulity, for emotions need and seek to be validated simply because they exist.

When we lead with our emotion, it more often leads to credulity because we just want something to be true.

Philippians 3:17-21: These false Christians were not described as having true faith; rather, they seem to have had a sense of greed and ego towards Christianity as an opportunity for worldly gain...no faith, just feeling! They were using Christianity as a means to an end. Their validation came only in worldly forms. However, this is where our validation comes from. Our validation is a long-term proposition we need to wait for with patience and humility.

Faith, true faith absolutely can and should lead to feeling, to strong emotion that will back it up and keep us reminded of the “why” of our faith.

“Feel” the strength of the direction of this next text: 1 Peter 1:13-16: True faith provokes excitement, enthusiasm, passion and a feeling of direction. *Be holy yourselves also in all your behavior* - You cannot conform to your former feelings; you have a new set of guidelines. Faith brings out our heart so we can be holy in our emotions. There is strength in emotion.

Faith and trust in full action: Faith can and should use feeling to draw inspiration!

Romans 8:35-39: **Inspiration** is an important element, because the tasks of our faith are difficult and require **conviction**. **Conviction** requires feeling to back up our faith. **Our Scripture-based conviction empowers us to stand:** ³⁸*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* That is how faith puts feeling into action, not the other way around.

Faith and feeling: How well or poorly do they operate without each other?

Feelings cannot stand in the absence of faith for feelings, strong and persuasive emotions are much more of a sprint than a marathon. Feelings can inspire for a time but ultimately need a deeper and stronger conviction to even survive long term.

Faith can and needs to be able to stand and endure in the absence of feelings, for faith, true and abiding faith is far deeper and stronger than any feeling that we might have.

True faith CAN stand because it has a concrete base of truth on which it is built. Remember the caller’s comment about believing the power of the magnet because of the result? We can apply that principle to several Scriptures written thousands of years ago.

Here are some things the Bible said about science long before these were known about:

Meteorology: Water is recycled in the earth’s water cycle: Job 36:27-29: How was Job able to write this? He was inspired by God to do so.

Oceanography: The ocean currents: Psalm 8:8: Paths of the seas - There are invisible ocean currents underneath the water. David wrote the Psalms but probably had never been to an ocean. How would he know about ocean currents, a verifiable fact today?

In the early 1800’s, Commodore Matthew Maury, an American astronomer, historian, oceanographer, meteorologist, cartographer, author, geologist, and educator discovered *the paths of the seas* based on this text. He discovered ocean currents because the Bible told him they was there. *Birds of the air* - we now know air streams are used for bird migration.



Astronomy: The sun moves around in an orbit: Psalm 19:4-6: *A tent for the sun/it runs its course* - it has a set boundary where it can move. Man historically believed the sun moved around the earth, but the Bible said otherwise.

The earth is round - and it has an atmosphere: Isaiah 40:22: *He who sits above the circle of the earth* - If you are in space looking down, the earth appears as a circle. How could Isaiah have known this? *Spreads them like a tent to live in* - Describing our atmosphere - our earth lives inside the "tent" of the atmosphere.

The Pleiades - only six stars are visible, yet seven are mentioned: Amos 5:8: The seventh star can only be seen with a telescope.

We say we have faith in the Bible, but it is not because of some fantastical, imaginary idea. We can prove it with Scripture and use science to back up that proof.

Faith and Feelings: How do they contribute to positive changes in our lives?

Feelings at best can help us want to change and perhaps even help us take steps towards change but they lack the depth of conviction to see true and lasting change all the way through. New Year's Resolutions are a great example of this. Most of the time they are based on feelings and end up crumbling.

A few years ago, the book "The Secret" became popular. *The Secret is the Law of Attraction. This idea, simply put, states that "everything coming into your life is the result of what you have been attracting to your life."* This idea (broadly discussed in the book "The Secret," by Rhonda Byrne) claims that your destiny is in your hands and that as you master the art of visualization, you will command the universe to fulfill that which you desire.... Thoughts become things. As long as you are thinking, the law of attraction is working. "Like" attracts "like." Your feelings/emotions let you know what you are thinking. It is the story of Aladdin and the Lamp, "Your wish is my command."

If we are following in Jesus' footsteps and doing our Father's will, we are not to "command the universe" to do anything. This is selfish and not sacrificial - the two do not work together.

To an extent you get back what you put out - this is true: Galatians 6:7: (NKJV) *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.* See? The Bible says what you sow you shall reap, so if you sow thoughts of riches, glory and honor, you will reap those same benefits! We see that in the so-called "Prosperity Gospel" but it is despicable to take the goodness and sacrifice of the Gospel and turn it into selfishness.

We are not God, but His creation and should seek to be recipients of His divine mercy and NOT our fallen desires: Matthew 6:27-30: Our "secret" is not to focus on what we want but it is to lock on to the will of God for us. I will be given, by the grace of God, what He sees as beneficial for me.

Faith can and will drive us to make changes in our lives that are clear, sweeping and abiding for real faith can actually be identified by the real effects it has on our every day.

A living faith requires action. We want to use it so it can develop and have an influence on those around us.

We cannot think that we are locked on to God's will for us without severe tests of our resolve: James 1:2-6,8: Expect trials and receive them with joy, because it means your faith is being tested. What better way to live than have your faith tested every day?

Feelings can get lost in everyday moments, because these moments don't feed them. On the contrary, these moments can disturb and unsettle our feelings and spread seeds of discouragement and discontent.

1 Timothy 6:17-19: Feelings get lost and crushed in everyday moments of life.

Faith can thrive in everyday moments for it is at these times when we are engaged in the sometimes monotonous tasks of life that faith can give them perspective and meaning. Faith turns our minds upward in thanks and praise even when we are of necessity focused downward on worldly responsibilities.



2 Timothy 2:14-15: It is not good if we try to guide the word of truth to verify what we want it to say and what we want to believe! Christian faith is built on something solid - not just how you feel in the moment. While belief in the Bible is NOT science, we truly adhere to a "discriminatory approach" to Scripture, just as that same approach is used in science.

How important is context? Here is an example using driving directions: "Take Exit 37 and stay to the left. At the next light, turn right and it is the first driveway on the left." Pretty simple! But are these good or bad directions? That depends on what direction you are coming from, what highway you are on and even knowing what state you are in!

People may think that is the way we are with faith in the Bible - just pulling out any directions and saying this is the way God speaks. They do not understand how the Scriptures are built.

The Bible is to be understood this way:

- When are the words spoken/written? This is important to understand the context.
- To whom are they spoken/written? If you are reading something written to a certain group of people and you try to apply it to a different group of people, it is like reading someone else's mail. For whom is the message meant?
- What are the circumstances of the words needing to be spoken/written?
- Why are the words being spoken/written? What provoked that writing?
- When - in what age - do the words apply? God applies His plan differently as time goes on to achieve His ultimate end.
- Are the words symbolic, literal or prophetic? The Bible uses all three and it is important to know how to apply these. If you take a symbol and try to apply it literally, you will not get the correct meaning.
- Are they admonitions, parables or a record of events?

This is how we establish true faith. 2 Peter 1:16-2

Faith and feeling: How do they drive us when we are called to action or in times of emergency?

Feelings can bring us to extremes - in these situations they can reduce us to quivering blobs of emotion or they can bring us to the heights of heroic moments.

Matthew 8:23-27: Jesus' closest followers were scared for their lives and became quivering blobs of emotion! Did they forget the son of God was in the boat with them? Their emotion did not let their faith register that he was present with them. This was faith that needed to grow into trust. Trust is faith applied in what seems impossible. Trust is the *result* of faith. Sometimes we may be in a similar position where those around us are wholly skeptical. It is at such a time that faith and feeling - if properly balanced and developed - can shine in witness to God!

Example of intense faith driving through a trial that would end in death: Acts 7:51-58: We might not have the same experience as Stephen, but that does not mean we cannot have the same trust and courage. We must move forward in our lives by faith not founded in feeling or emotion, but in the facts of Scripture and the beauty and unfolding of God's plan, fulfilled prophecy and more.

Philippians 3:7-14: Clearly, faith is a continual growth process. The Apostle Paul himself had to press on to move forward. Spiritual growth is not necessarily comfortable. We need to understand the value of our feelings and apply them to our life of faith and trust. In this way we can become a living epistle for Christ. We can become a book that others can open, read and have faith in. What is it we have faith in and why? How can we take that faith and have it apply in a way that is going to change our lives now and for eternity? Our example to others can help them learn that real faith is based on the truth of Scripture - they can change their lives as well and become more Christ-like. We want to take our feelings and focus them on the foundation of faith.

***So, what do YOU have faith in?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***