



## How Does Faith Actually Work?

**James 2:20: (NASB) *But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?***



Faith is awe-inspiring in its transformative power, reassuring in its calming ability and provides powerful contentment as we apply it daily. Faith is also one of the most misunderstood, misrepresented and maligned aspects in all Christianity. Faith is too easily confused with ignorant hope, and as a result is easily dismissed by its detractors as a little fantasy in the limited minds of those who are believers. So, what is faith - really? How does it work? Is Christian faith the same as having faith in other people? Does it equate to the kind of faith that you would have in a doctor or an attorney to act in your best interest? Are we given Christian faith as a gift, or is it something we have to develop?

### **A biblical definition of faith:**

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

*Faith* is always from the same Greek word in the entire New Testament. In every conversation we have regarding faith, we always introduce what we would call "pseudo-faith," or credulity.

### **Merriam Webster:**

**Credulity: noun**

**readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence (gullibility)**

Some people think Christians are being gullible. But faith is not credulity.

 **Millybuggins faith, *What is Faith, Video Illustration, Grace Christian Church, Vinita, Oklahoma***

- Faith, the final frontier. These are the voyages... nah, that's ridiculous, although that's where most people take this topic - to science fiction. Faith. What is it really? A magic feeling we get to help us through tough times? A mystical bridge between fact and fiction? Is it really blind? Is it a word we use when we can't explain ourselves? Is it real on any level? Let's investigate. Hypothetical: a person says to you, "I sure do wish I could believe in Millybuggins like you do. I just don't have that kind of faith." Well, what that person is really saying is that Millybuggins aren't real, and you are the type of person who believes in unreal things, and it takes a strange faith thing that not many other people have for you to get there. Okay, in the nicest way possible then this person is calling you insane, or at best just a little nutty. See, you have this odd capability of believing in something you desperately wish to be true, but you just can't be sure if it is. However, since it makes you feel better, it's worth it...for you. Well, that pretty much sums up what faith means to most people. In other words, the stronger your faith, the more*



*ridiculous the belief must be, because after all, a little faith helps you believe in things that probably aren't true. So then, that really powerful faith would be the kind of faith you absolutely know something isn't true but you still believe it anyway. Thus, faith is reduced to some blind anecdotal act that magically suspends disbelief of reality in order to make you feel better.*

Christian faith should first and foremost be based on God Almighty. Why?

**All the physical creation is from Him:**

**Psalms 89:11-14:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all it contains, you have founded them. <sup>12</sup>The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name.

Mountains are inspirational! Being on a mountaintop allows us to see the beauty of creation. Mount Tabor is 1,880 feet in elevation and located in lower Galilee. The disciples would have seen Tabor daily. Mount Hermon, at 9,232 feet, is the highest elevation in Israel's territory.



**Mount Tabor**



**Mount Hermon**

For those who do not believe in God and say things just happen, it is difficult to explain how orderly things are. How was the order put in place? Order does not come from disorder.

**He is ultimately powerful:**

<sup>13</sup>You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted.

**He is ultimately wise and benevolent:**

<sup>14</sup>Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; lovingkindness and truth go before You.

The texts start with describing the grandeur of creation, then the strength of God and now His wisdom and benevolence. A God that is all of these things gives us confidence.

**To truly be all-powerful, one must be all-trustworthy as well:**

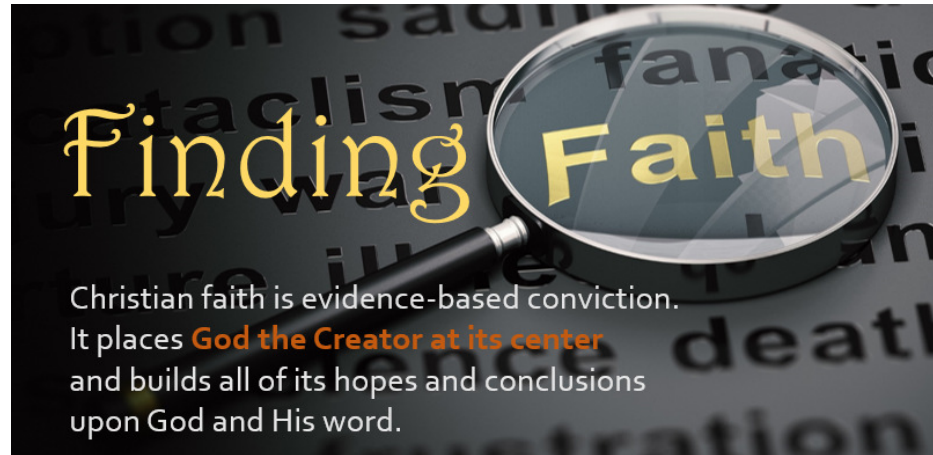
**2 Timothy 2:11-13:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with him, we will also live with him; <sup>12</sup>if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; <sup>13</sup>if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.



**Our faith must become provable to God, not our friends or family:**

**2 Timothy 2:15: (NASB) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.***

**Approved to God - it is great to have faith IN God, but there is more. We have to pay attention, invest ourselves into what God is all about.**



Christian faith is evidence-based, not “feelings” based.

**How does faith get started? Is it a gift?  
Is it like a muscle that needs exercise? Is it a way of life?**

Faith is actually all of these things. The mistake many make when they look at and try to analyze faith is putting it in a “box” that is accessible through emotions. We will see this is actually a backwards approach. Faith has foundations far deeper and stronger than feelings.

***A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history. – Mahatma Gandhi***







## Acquaintance

The words of others are needed for us to be introduced to Christian faith.

We first need to become acquainted with Christian faith and this usually happens by being introduced to it by others. When we meet someone for the first time, it is said that we "make their acquaintance."

### Faith is a gift based upon the rich mercy of God:

**Ephesians 2:4-10:** (NASB) <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Imagine being introduced to God with this kind of resume!

### Faith makes our acquaintance by not coming to us as a result of any works of our own:

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship...

Having faith is not because we did something special; it is that God is so special and is drawing us to know Him. Acquaintance comes through deep humility.



**Redefining faith, What is Faith, Video Illustration, Grace Christian Church, Vinita, Oklahoma**

- *You've got to wonder, is this really the kind of faith the Bible talks about? Let's look at the word again, okay? Let's refocus. The Bible refers to faith really in only one way. It's like this: suppose I say, "I have faith that my friend will repay me the ten bucks he owes me on Saturday because he said he would." See, there's nothing strange about that faith, and nobody would fault me for having it if they knew my friend. Because what I am saying essentially are three things: 1. My friend is real. 2. He's trustworthy, and 3. (Which is really a subset of 2) I believe in 1 and 2 because I have a relationship with my friend. Now, for just a second, let's get morbid to make a critical illustration. What if my friend died on the way to give my ten bucks back? He didn't come through. No matter how much faith I had in him, how real and completely trustworthy he may have been, he didn't have the power to live up to my faith. Was he really any less trustworthy or any less real? No, but the person or object in which I place my faith is an essential part of how strong my faith should be. I mean how much faith do you have that your 2-year-old Bassett hound can drive your new Lexus to the bank and bring you back a \$1,000 in twenties? None, I hope.*

Our faith has to be in accordance with the power and ability of the One in which you have faith.

Faith makes our acquaintance by offering us peace based on answers to hard questions.



**The Gospel is a free gift to any and all who would accept it. Faith is witnessed by followers:**

**Romans 10:12,14-15,17:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him;....* <sup>14</sup>*How 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?*

*How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? If you want people around you to have a relationship with God, you can introduce Him and make their acquaintance.*

**Faith makes our acquaintance by prophecy fulfilled and by the power and word of Christ:**

<sup>15</sup>*How 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...<sup>17</sup>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things - this is a prophecy from Isaiah 52:7, foretelling the message of the gospel.*

We assume most of our listeners have gotten to this first phrase of becoming acquainted with faith.



The good news of the gospel was prophesied thousands of years before the message was available. Many prophecies in the Old Testament had their fulfillment thousands of years later. We can build our faith because we observe God's faithfulness in fulfilling what He promised.

**Faith makes our acquaintance by the rehearsing of factual events:**

**2 Peter 1:16-21:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>...This is My beloved son with whom I am well-pleased <sup>18</sup>...we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.*

Peter was referring to the Mount of Transfiguration scene discussed in Matthew 17:1-3. Peter, James and John saw a miraculous vision of Jesus appearing with Moses and Elijah. Here Peter is saying, "Brethren, this is a fact, because I was there."



**Faith makes our acquaintance by tying all of the Scriptures together through Jesus himself:**

*<sup>19</sup>So we have the prophetic word made more sure (confirmed), to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup>But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup>for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit... from God.*

The factual events Peter saw confirmed prophecies about Jesus. Jesus is the key to learning about faith.



True faith gives us something solid to put our hope in, not something to wish for.

**Now that we are acquainted with faith,  
how do we really get to know it and give it a home?**

Interestingly, we will find that our emotions do begin to play more of a role in this next phase of faith's development. Once acquainted with someone we then get to know them. This process can be thrilling as a new relationship has lots of possibilities. Faith's possibilities are endless.

***Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.***  
— Saint Augustine

**Acceptance**

To make faith a part of our lives, we need the word to God to read and learn from.



I was thinking about when I got to this step of acceptance. I hit bottom in my life and the Lord overruled and directed me to the right person to introduce me to God and His plan. It was so harmonious and fit together so beautifully. Then I met brethren who had faith and understanding. I went to studies on weeknights and Sundays. Then a brother (pastor) from New Haven, Connecticut, came to our church group in Wilmington, Delaware, to give us a sermon on the majesty of God's power in the heavens. He had charts and pictures of the universe and the galaxies and how everything works together. I



thought if God can keep the universe in order like this, it was time for me to step up and give my heart to Him.

Faith is like a muscle that needs exercise. We accept faith into our lives by exercising it. "Muscle memory" is continuous repetition of an action so that such action becomes instinctive. When stress is high, muscle memory carries us through. This is how faith works!



**Accepting faith comes through observation and application. This can mean learning through failure:**

**Matthew 8:23-26:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. <sup>24</sup>And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus himself was asleep. <sup>25</sup>And they came to him and woke him, saying, Save us, Lord; we are perishing! <sup>26</sup>He said to them, Why are you afraid, you men of little faith? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

Why are you afraid, you men of little faith - this is a rebuke, but not one that says, "You are losers." It means, "Your faith needs to grow more. I am with you; remember who I am. What could you possibly fear?" This is the kind of faith they had to grow into. We come through stormy experiences and are reminded we need stronger faith.

 **Faith in God, What is Faith, Video Illustration, Grace Christian Church, Vinita, Oklahoma**

- *But now turn that analogy of my friend and your dog toward God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal and incapable of lying, and ask yourself this: On whom does it make the most sense to place your greatest faith? Well, I'll tell you, anyone who has a right relationship with God (and quite honestly anyone who doesn't) knows He is the only one capable of doing everything He says. The only one with a knowledge of the future. The only one who understands everything. The only one who really knows you, and the only one who has revealed through nature and His word who He is and what He's done, how much He loves you, and why He is the only completely trustworthy one there is. Got it? Good. In summary then, faith in God is always a response to truth and reality and has nothing to do with blind leaps, the U.S.S. Enterprise or wishful thinking. Trust me.*

**Accepting faith is working at proving its basis. This gives us ever-deeper faith foundations. The Bible teaches us to prove our faith - to NOT be credulous:**

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

The importance of context: The Bible needs to be *understood* and not just read. In the acquaintance stage, we often start reading the Bible. In the next stage of acceptance, we want to study the Bible.

For more tips on how to study the Bible, please see our two-part program, CQ Episodes #839 from November 11, 2014, and #844 from December 14, 2014, "Can We Know the Mind of God?"

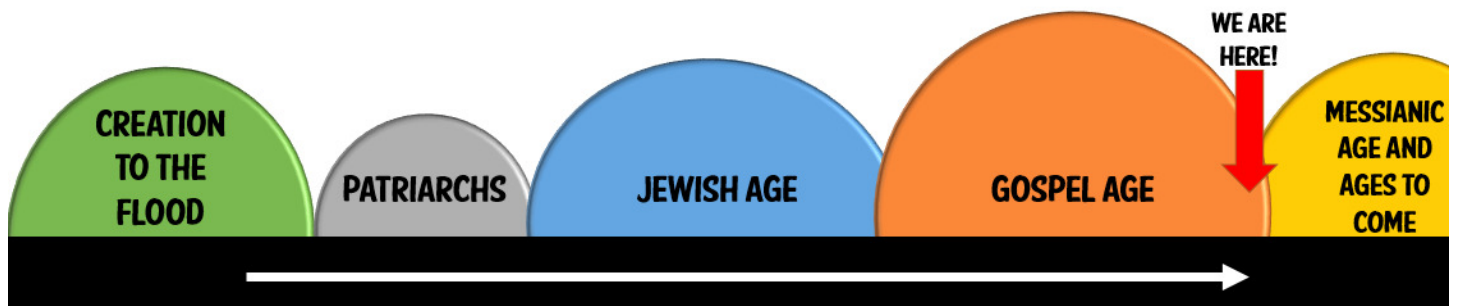




- When and to whom are the words spoken/written?
- What are the circumstances of the words? Why did they need to be spoken/written?
- Why and when (in what age) are the words spoken/written, and when do they apply?



Biblical history divides humanity chronologically into ages, or time frames.



- Are the words symbolic, literal or prophetic, admonitions, parables or a record of events?

**Accepting faith is receiving trial and testing with an embrace:**

James 1:2-8: (NRSV) <sup>2</sup>My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; <sup>4</sup>and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

This should encourage us through our trials. Our experiences help our faith grow, so we should be thankful for them. In almost every aspect of life, endurance is a major factor. Developing endurance carries us through. Going through difficulty can foster endurance.

**Accepting faith means using what we learn as a basis for more growth - endurance brings opportunity for wisdom:**

<sup>5</sup>If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

Do you need wisdom? Read the word, pray and ask those around you who are biblically-minded to help you. There is humility in our growth process of acceptance.





**Accepting faith is consciously putting doubt aside, replacing it with the credibility of God's ways:**

*6But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; 7,8for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.*

Why doubt? We already know who God is, what He has done, His power, His mercy, His plan...these are the credible reasons we can put our doubt aside. This is part of accepting faith in our lives.

**Accepting faith is fighting for the truth upon which it is foundationally-based:**

*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.*

*Earnestly contend for the faith* - there was truth delivered at the beginning of the Gospel Age, but was starting to get corrupted. We have to find scriptural truth, not believing something just because someone says so or because it sounds good.



Emotions can override clear thinking.

**We are now acquainted with faith and have accepted it into our daily lives. What else do we need?**

Here is where we think most Christians begin to fade. Let's face it - once we get to know what faith is, and once we put it in place in our daily experiences, we kind of feel like we have arrived. We haven't. Next, we need to put our faith in a position to rule us - not just be a part of us - but to *rule* our hearts.

***Obedience is an act of faith; disobedience is the result of unbelief. – Edwin Louis Cole***



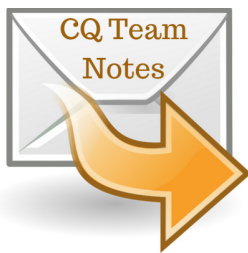
# Allegiance

Our words and actions firmly reflect the word of God in all parts of our life. What does our faith do TO us?



Tricia comments: Some of my biggest challenges in Christian faith are that there are so many different conclusions. How do you know that your faith is true and solid? In the end we all have a different perspective of what it looks like, and I find that confusing.

What is the word of God driving us towards? It has been said that the Bible is like an old fiddle upon which any tune can be played. This is one of our challenges. If we have a need and an objective, we can make the Bible fit it, but allegiance in faith implies that what we have faith in is bigger than we are. Where it guides, I will follow, even if it is not what I want.



We believe some of the alternate "fiddle tunes" come from trying to find truth by comparing Scripture with the various manmade creeds. Creeds of men often misalign God's character with human traditions and conflict with the Bible. We must believe in God's word as the truth, believing also when it seemingly contradicts itself it is in fact inviting our open-minded study. God promises to reward our efforts in the study of His word. The Bible is harmonious in its teaching of the love of God and the redemption and reconciliation provided in Christ. We are told in 1 John 1:5-7 to walk in the light, continuing to make progress or else the light, which does not stop, will pass on and leave us in darkness. Also see Jeremiah 29:13, John 17:17, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 3:16-17

## We show our allegiance to our faith by doing works of faith:

James 2:18-20: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. <sup>20</sup>But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Faith without works is useless - our faith should provoke us to change. Works of faith take on many forms such as prayer, witnessing, encouraging and studying. We can be courteous with integrity and lead by example.

Colossians 3:23-24 tells us to Do all things as unto the Lord.



## One word - God, This is Your Brain on God, Michael Ferguson, TEDxSaltLakeCity

- This is an exciting time to be a brain researcher. Let's talk about the word "God" for a moment. It's a simple three-letter word in English, yet this one word is so powerful linguistically and psychologically that it is used to invoke military courage, to promote feelings of nationalism and even to justify war and atrocity. The hypothetical omission of this one word by a President of the United States, the failure to simply say, "God bless America," would likely cause their public approval ratings to plummet. Whatever your metaphysical beliefs are, the literal fact is that the trajectories of lives and nations swing on the hinge to this one word: God.

The human mind is wired to look for something bigger than ourselves.



**We show our allegiance to our faith by standing firmly in the righteousness and protection of Jesus:**

**Romans 8:33-39:** (NASB) <sup>33</sup>Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup>who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

*Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword - the Apostle Paul went through all of these things! This was his Christian walk, but none of that mattered because God was bigger than all of it. He was not writing these things to be poetic or inspirational. He was saying, "In my experience, tribulation, persecution and so on will not separate us from the love of Christ. This is a fact...I have been there!"*

**We show our allegiance to our faith by being thoroughly convicted to the cause of Christ:**

<sup>36</sup>Just as it is written, *For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.* <sup>37</sup>But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.

The previous verse was inspirational, but this one is tough - it is all about sacrifice and sounds grim. *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us. We will not make it through such difficult times if we do not have allegiance to our faith.*

**We show our allegiance to our faith by fighting against any and every dark obstacle and power:**

<sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor 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.



When I go through trials, I look back on my Christian walk and remember situations the Lord brought me through when I never knew how I would get through. If He helped me there, I know He will help me through THIS experience. Trusting in Him will strengthen my faith.

We show our allegiance by reviewing past experiences, just like the Apostle Paul.

**We show our allegiance to our faith by fighting all the way to the end:**

**2 Timothy 4:6-8:** (NASB) <sup>6</sup>For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup>in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

The Apostle Paul is realizing his life is ending, and he is speaking to his spiritual son, Timothy.



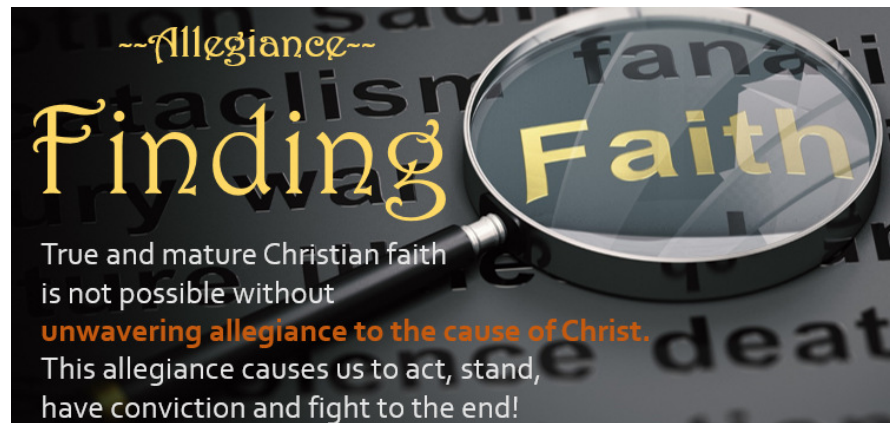
We show our allegiance to our faith by humble and frequent self-examination:

**2 Corinthians 13:5:** (NASB) *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you - unless indeed you fail the test?*



Especially through preparing and broadcasting Christian Questions every week, I have learned (not because I wanted to but because God thought I needed it!) how to stretch and try to live up to what I thought was my potential, and then add a little bit. I think, "Hmmm...I don't know, God, but you've brought me this far..." Once I settle in, He has me stretch a little more.

Over twenty years of doing this, my allegiance to faith says I will never give up regardless of what the Lord puts before me. This has been a huge faith lesson.



**We are acquainted with Christian faith, we have accepted it and have allegiance to it. What's next?**

These three phases of developing faith lead us to a deep and profound life. Our Christian faith is obviously not built on the whimsical foundation of emotion; rather, it is built on the impenetrable foundation of God, His word, His plan and His son. This brings us to a powerful level of trust.

*I gave in and admitted that God was God. – C.S. Lewis*

 **Experiment, This is Your Brain on God, Michael Ferguson, TEDxSaltLakeCity**

- *In addition to the biology that supports ecstatic religious experience, we were also curious about how social behavior is influenced by the brain on God. One possibility that we considered is that perhaps our study participants would demonstrate an in-group authority bias if they were asked to compare the teachings of their own religious leaders with the teachings of other faith traditions. We designed a spiritual quotations task in which participants were presented with a spiritual teaching, and next to it with a picture of the person who made the statement. They were then asked to rate how meaningful the teaching was, and also how strongly they felt the Spirit in response to that teaching.*

We will hear the results of this experiment soon.





Mature Christian faith breeds unrelenting trust. Biblical trust carries different shades of meaning.

**Trust:** Strongs #982 *batach*; properly, to hide for refuge

Strongs #2620 *chacah* (khaw-saw'); to flee for protection; figuratively, to confide in

The two Old Testament words for *trust* used together show us the differences between them:

Psalm 118:5-9: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>From my distress I called upon the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a large place. <sup>6</sup>The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me? <sup>7</sup>The LORD is for me among those who help me; therefore I will look with satisfaction on those who hate me. <sup>8</sup>It is better to take **refuge <2620>** in the LORD than to **trust <982>** in man. <sup>9</sup>It is better to take **refuge <2620>** in the LORD than to **trust <982>** in princes.

Old Testament *trust* means to go to someone or somewhere with full confidence of protection, care and comfort. This full confidence is not possible unless faith in all three phases is present.

*Trust in princes* - When we trust in man and those in authority in an earthly environment, we use what is convenient and obvious. But when it says to *take refuge in the Lord*, we are going to a higher level, finding what works with great power to trust in. This is what allegiance to faith brings us.

Proverbs 3:5: (KJV) *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

It is easy to trust what is right in front of us, but to *take refuge*, “running to for protection” happens when we go to God. Even though the way might not be the convenient and comfortable way, it is the right way.

New Testament words:

**Hope:** Strongs #1679 *elpizo*, to expect or confide

To expect something requires trust because there is an expectation. Trust breeds confidence.

**Persuade:** Strongs #3982 *peitho*, to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy, to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively, to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty)

 **Result, This is Your Brain on God, Michael Ferguson, TEDxSaltLakeCity**

- *Because this was an experiment, though, we threw in a little bit of a twist. It turns out that none of the teachings were from their attributed sources. We collected quotations from the writings of C.S. Lewis. He's sometimes referred to in Mormonism as the Thirteenth Apostle. We randomized these teachings across all of the trials, and we asked the participants to rank how meaningful they were, how strongly they felt the Spirit, and what we saw was so beautiful from the point of view of cognitive science. Believing Mormons consistently ranked the teachings of their own leaders as more meaningful and as more spiritually evocative than the teachings of out-group authority figures, even though in reality they were all from the same source.*

They leaned towards that which they thought was the highest source. We need to be open to truth. Sometimes we will get truth in a way we did not expect, and the word of God says something we did not think it meant.



Mature Christian faith breeds unrelenting trust. Trust is often instilled through logic and teaching, not emotion.

**Notice the time frames in which “the faith” was presented:**

Acts 19:8-10: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and **persuading <3982>** them about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup>But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup>This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

*Reasoning and persuading* - showing them the way they should trust in the kingdom of God. He used a logical, factual presentation beyond what they had heard before.

Paul continued for two years. He had such allegiance to his faith that he spent his time helping others to trust in the will, word and way of God. Paul had unrelenting trust.

He applied each phase of faith again and again so those who heard had real opportunity for faith and trust to change their lives.

**Trust is a tenacious characteristic that comes as a result of well-developed faith:**

Romans 8:22-25: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For in **hope <1680>** we have been saved, but **hope <1680>** that is seen is not **hope <1680>**; for who **hopes <1679>** for what he already sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we **hope <1679>** for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

**Strong's <1680>** is another form of **hope <1679>**.

Hope is an expectation. Trust does not breed just a thought or a wish; it breeds expectation.



A lot of Christians talk about how faith feels. Instead we should be talking about how faith transforms. How am I different as a result of my faith in God through Christ? What has changed in my daily life? What has changed in my



experiences? Am I still in the stage where I am just acquainted with faith? Am I still in the acceptance stage or have I gotten to the point of allegiance? This means I will acquiesce to being ruled by what faith requires of me, no matter what it is. This brings unrelenting trust.

**So, how does faith actually work?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!**



Join us next week for our podcast on October 15, 2018:  
Ep. #1043: "How Do Angels Help Us in Daily Life?"



***Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light. — Helen Keller***

At the risk of being repetitive - 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:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? <sup>17</sup>Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

**Faith really is based on knowing (being acquainted), accepting that knowledge, and then being loyal to it:**

**Romans 10:6-11:** (NASB) <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down), <sup>7</sup>or who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup>But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, <sup>9</sup>that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup>for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.

**Faith in adversity - an example of a crossroad that someone technically did not even have a right to stand at and yet, unshakable faith delivers:**

**Matthew 15:22-28:** (NASB) <sup>22</sup>And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and implored him, saying, Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us. <sup>24</sup>But he answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>25</sup>But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, Lord, help me! <sup>26</sup>And he answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. <sup>27</sup>But she said, Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from



their masters' table. <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus said to her, O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once.

Jesus engages the woman - he tests her faith, and she is unshakable.

### Faith knows where to go for protection when we are faced with impossible odds:

1 Peter 5:6-11: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. <sup>10</sup>After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### A little more on trust:

#### Merriam Webster (partial definition)

Trust:

1a: assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something;

1b: one in which confidence is placed;

2a: dependence on something future or contingent: hope

### Describing trust as an outgrowth of love:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup>does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, <sup>6</sup>does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup>bears all things, believes all things, **hopes <1679>** all things, endures all things.

### What NOT to trust:

Philippians 3:3: (NASB) For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no **confidence <3982>** in the flesh.

Psalms 91:3: (KJV) Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

### A failed attempt to gain Paul's trust:

Acts 21:10-14: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, This is what the Holy Spirit says: In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. <sup>12</sup>When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>Then Paul answered, What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>14</sup>And since he would not be **persuaded <3982>**, we fell silent, remarking, The will of the Lord be done!

### Trust needs to be properly focused:

1 Timothy 6:17-19: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their **hope <1679>** on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. <sup>18</sup>Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup>storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.