



What Does it Feel Like to Have Real Faith?

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



Christian faith is a big deal. The Bible tells us that faith is a gift from God. It tells us the just live by faith. It tells us that faith without works is dead and that without faith it is impossible to please God. It tells us that we can be of little faith needing more - and then it tells us that if we have faith like the grain of a tiny mustard seed, we can move mountains. With all of these varied and important applications of faith it is surprising that defining faith and how it really works can be difficult tasks. Faith is far too often described as a feeling or a pathway to believing in something that has no substance. When it comes to biblically defined faith, nothing could be further from the truth!

Let us first figure out what faith is and what it is not.

The book of James gives a very brief greeting and then immediately dives into matters of faith:

James 1:2-8: (NASB) ²*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your **faith** <4102> produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James starts with, "Hello, Brethren, how are you?" Then he dives right in by telling us that faith can - and should - be tested, and it produces endurance.

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.*

Building upon this *testing of your (our) faith which produces endurance*, he says we need to be wise; we need to ask God for wisdom.

James tells us that wisdom is another deeply important Christian quality that should be sincerely sought from God:

⁶*But he must ask in **faith** <4102> without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

Requesting wisdom must be done with faith! It is important to realize that faith is central to a Christian's life. What does this really mean?

Faith Observations:



- Faith can and will be tested, and such tests produce endurance. Do not think that if we have faith, everything will be great. James is telling us exactly the opposite.
- Faith is to be used when we sincerely ask for God's wisdom. God's wisdom is not easy to obtain. Upon asking, it is not just delivered to us by mail. Wisdom is a developmental process.



Let's look at a biblical definition of the word faith using two different translations:

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;*

The Rotherham translation stretches out the definition, breaking it into two different categories we will get to in a moment.

Faith: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #4102 *pistis*; persuasion, credence, conviction. Reliance (especially upon Christ for salvation) constancy (in such profession). (By extension the system of religious) truth

This means that when we profess our faith, we are immovable. Faith is a persuasion, a conviction which relies on something solid.

Faith is always from the same Greek word in the entire New Testament. In previous episodes about faith, we have always introduced what we would call pseudo-faith or "fake" faith. Many critics of Christian faith use the word "credulity" to define our faith. But that word just doesn't fit.



Merriam Webster:

credulity: noun

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

Faith and gullibility are entirely different. When we are talking about Christian faith, we are not talking about believing in some fantasy or wish. Gullibility believes in fantasy and wishes and the kind of hope which no substance behind it. The faith we are talking about is much bigger and much deeper.



Faith is shown here to fuel our standing in the present, as well as our anticipation of the future. It shows us:

- How we stand here and now in our belief in God.
- What we look forward to in the future.

FUTURE



The Apostle Paul begins with the future: *Of things hoped for, a confidence.*

Faith is when we are persuaded of the credence and the clarity of God's future plans. It is us saying, "Yes, Amen - that is what is going to happen":

Isaiah 55:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

As Christians, we read God's future plans as fact, not fiction. Christian faith stands on a conviction that the words of God WILL, in due time, become present facts.





We do this by looking to the past. We see this in the restoration of Israel found in Ezekiel 38. It was just a prophecy, but now we look at those words and they are a fact. God does what He says He will do.

This is a thrilling prophecy of the Valley of Dry Bones. It is not a literal prophecy about bones, and sinews and muscles appearing on the bones. It is talking about the regathering and restoration of Israel in picture language.



Before 1948 the restoration of Israel was just a prophecy of something future. Now we can look at it and say, **“That is a fact!”**

This is what faith does with the future. It looks at God’s word and sees prophecies as facts. These things will happen because God says so.

We need to be careful not to take every scripture literally. Some scriptures are symbolic and picture something entirely different. Examples of this are parables and the book of Revelation.



The Apostle Paul continues with the present: *a conviction, when they are not seen.*

The Rotherham translation says faith is conviction of that which is here and now, but not seen or understood by the average person.

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

2 Corinthians 4:18: (NASB) *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Faith changes the way we see the world and the things we focus on. We are not looking at the things around us; we are looking at what God is doing with the things around us. This is a big difference!

Faith changes the way we act in the present because we see the present from a godly perspective. It changes the way we view the future because we know the facts before they make themselves plain. How do we know this? God told us through His word.

Christian faith stands on a conviction that God’s will and plan up to now are beyond our sight but are as real as the tangible things in our lives. “Our faith in God is as tangible as this red pen that I hold in my hand.” This is what faith does. It takes what we believe and makes it very real. We do not believe in things that have no substance; that is not what Christian faith is about. This is a deep subject.





Faith Observations:

Faith is conviction and constancy based upon sound reality. Looking at the complexity of DNA, for example, we see it could not have come about by accident. It shows supreme intelligence.

- Faith’s strength helps us comprehend what is yet to come based on what is already known.
If the regathering of Israel prophecy came true, and others did too, we can say, “We know this; therefore, we know that.”
- Faith in no way resembles wishes or imagined fantasy that we sometimes seek comfort in.
True Christians do not take comfort in “just wishing it could be this way - if only...” That is not Christian faith.

Based on what we have learned so far, faith is not an emotion. Faith gets confused with a feeling, but it is far stronger than that.

Before the Apostle Paul goes into the amazing accounts of faith in Hebrews 11, he does two things.



First, he shows the power of faith:

Hebrews 11:2: (NASB) *For by it the men of old gained approval.*

Hebrews 11:2: (Barclay) *It is because of this faith that the heroes of the past received the approval of God.*

Here is the power of faith: it brings approval of God. Sign us up! Who doesn’t want God’s approval?



Second, he gives a basis for faith:

Hebrews 11:3: (NASB) *By **faith <4102>** we understand that the worlds (ages) were prepared by the word (command) of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*

All that we know of the earth’s development and humanity’s history was put in place by the will of God. The worlds (the ages) - the periods of time that have changed over history - were prepared by the command of God. He had it all in His mind. He had it all in hand. That gives us a basis for having faith - we can trace that through Scripture.

An example of this command of God:

Genesis 1:1-3: (NASB) *¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, Let there be light; and there was light.*

Then God said - we have the commands of God that show and reveal the works of God. Our faith is therefore founded upon the mightiest moving force that all of creation has ever experienced! This is not some little wish; it is the biggest power we can imagine.





Faith Observation:

- The true faith of Scripture is entirely focused on the past, present and future power of God.

This focus on the past, present and future power of God is the foundation, the basis of faith - everything grows out of that.



Finding Faith's True Identity:

Biblical faith is a serious character trait that has little or nothing to do with how one feels. It is a state of mind that stands firmly in its convictions, no matter what the outward circumstances of life may bring.

With just a definition in hand, faith is already looking like a far-deeper life changer than many may give it credit for!

Christian faith is fundamentally based upon the reality of God. How is it that such a profound faith comes to us?

The Bible teaches us that our Christian faith is multi-layered. While its main focus is to thoroughly embrace the reality of God and His plans, it comes to us by way of the manifold grace of God. This is its true beginning, and it is important to remember that it is only the beginning of faith. God has so arranged our faith that we receive it so we can grow it!



THE GIFT OF FAITH: Faith is a gift based upon the rich mercy of God.

Notice how grace and love take our present condition and elevate it (*the evidence of things unseen*) so we can be part of a glorious future (*the conviction of things hoped for*):

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

Verse 6 tells us he *raised us up with him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places* - that is NOW, so that (verse 7) in the FUTURE, we can be there. Faith has both aspects; His grace applies in both places.

Faith comes to us by GRACE and NOT as a result of any works of our own:

⁸For by grace you have been saved through **faith <4102>**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship...



We receive faith as a gift - not by our works. Faith does not come because we are so smart, or so courageous, or so intelligent. Faith comes as a gift by grace. How does it come to us?

We receive faith by hearing the word of God. The gospel is a free gift to any and all who would accept it.



This gift is freely offered. and faith is a major part of this gift:

Romans 10:12,14-15,17: (NASB) ¹²*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; 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?*



Some Christians get hung up on these Roman scriptures. The question is, are we stuck on who the message comes from or the message itself? The truth of God comes only through His word. If the message is not *good news...for all* - Luke 2:10-11 (ESV), it is not the original gospel.

Christian faith is built on the power of God. How do we understand the power of God? Through the word of God.

Nature helps us to see the power of God, and the word of God explains it all. If we are not adhering to God's word, we are not adhering to a Christian faith. We might have a denominational thought or a traditional thought, but that may not be real Christian faith. It must be based on the word of God.



Faith comes freely, but it comes by hearing. True faith needs to be planted in one's heart and mind. It is not natural:

¹⁵*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! ¹⁷So **faith <4102>** comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

We learn faith because we hear the gospel and say, "That's an amazing thing! I need to know more!" This is the process. Grace plants faith - it is a gift - and then we have to do something with it.

Let's take a look at some examples of individual LIVES OF FAITH in Hebrews 11. In these examples we are focusing on the way these people lived their lives of faith, and not on doing this or that as an expression of faith, because faith changes the way we live.

EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO LIVED THEIR LIVES OF FAITH:



Abel:

Hebrews 11:4: (NASB) *By **faith <4102>** Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through **faith <4102>**, though he is dead, he still speaks.*



Abel loved God and lived in righteousness.

God testifying about his gifts - how amazing!



This was shown by God's own testimony and Abel's appropriate sacrifice, which was modeled after God's sacrifice to clothe his parents after their sin:

Genesis 3:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife which means there was an animal who was sacrificed to cover them. Blood was shed to cover Adam and Eve because of their sin. **Doesn't this sound like the robe of Christ's righteousness with which Jesus covers our sins?**



It is a beautiful picture. We believe they understood that blood sacrifice was important to God because of sin. It costs something to kill and offer an animal. God made that plain from the very beginning.

We know very little about Abel:

Genesis 4:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD. ²Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;

How many times do we have God testifying about someone's faithfulness? Not many. We may not know much about Abel, but we do know that God testified about his gifts. That is enough to teach us that he lived a life of faith.

Both Genesis and Hebrews point to Abel's "life of faith" that was the result of his righteous dedication to God. No big drama; he was just doing what was important because he wanted to do it. This is why God testified about him. It is amazing how little we know and yet how honored he is. He is an example of a life of faith. We can imagine his heart sincerity since the Lord was so pleased to receive his offering.



Enoch:

Hebrews 11:5: (NASB) By **faith <4102>** Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

Again, we have the statement that *he was pleasing to God*. This is what faith does.

He would not see death could mean that he either never saw anyone die or that he (in his "young" age of 365 years) did not see any signs of death coming to him. Either way, we see God's grace in his life and the plain fact that he was pleasing to God.

He was in the prime of his life for that time in history when people lived to be 600-900 years old. The statement that *Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death* can be confusing, but this explanation makes sense.



Obviously, he was not taken up to heaven because John 3:13 tells us no man has ascended unto heaven except Jesus. He was taken out of life - he died - God took him. He will be raised as one who was already pleasing to God because he lived his life in great faith. His life was a transformational way to live, as recorded in Hebrews 11:5.

Faith Observation:



- Lives of faith are clearly recognized by God Himself:
We do not need to try to impress our friends and neighbors with acts of faith. If we live a life of faith, God notices. This is all we need and is where our faith needs to go.

Hebrews 11:6: (NASB) *And without **faith <4102>** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

Again, we see the need to believe in God here and now (*must believe that He is*) and also believe He is one who will act in the future (*He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*). Each is as important as the other. Faith transforms us now and keeps transforming as God’s plan unfolds.



Finding Faith’s True Identity:

Biblical faith is solely based upon a firm belief in God as the God who is ultimately over all ages - past present and future.

Such a belief will provoke one’s life towards godly righteousness and not merely the doing of godly acts.

We are not talking about acting or just going through the motions. Rather, we live differently because faith has now been planted in our life. It is fundamentally different - it is not about filling in the blanks or checking off the boxes.

Faith, then, is an all-the-time thing that does not fluctuate with mood or environment. It is the result of a steady loyalty to God!

**A life of faith is a life that is driven by godly righteousness.
Where do works of faith come into play?**

We have laid out the groundwork that shows us how deep faith is a transforming influence in our lives. Once we begin this transformation, we will be more and more in line with doing the work that a life of faith requires. In other words, God gives us a basis of faith as a gift. We, in turn, need to take that gift, develop it, and essentially give our faith - that gift - back to God as an offering to Him! It is not enough to have been given faith by grace; we must develop it and give back to God our lives of faith.



THE WORK OF FAITH:

This work can only truly begin once faith has begun directing our everyday life:

James 2:18-20: (NASB) *¹⁸But someone may well say, you have **faith <4102>** and I have works; show me your **faith <4102>** without the works, and I will show you my **faith <4102>** by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that **faith <4102>** without works is useless?*

Q. Does James contradict the Apostle Paul?



No. There are many critics who say James and Paul were on opposite ends of this issue, but nothing could be further from the truth. James is saying that a life of faith provokes us to action. It makes us act. If we are not showing our faith through our actions, our faith is not a vital faith.

The Apostle Paul lived this axiom. Maybe he did not say it, but this is exactly how he lived. He was out in front with works of faith.



Understanding the fundamental role of faith and works in our Christian walk

Works of faith take on many forms, not only those like the great, dramatic works of Paul. Our works of faith can include prayer, individual witnessing of the gospel, encouraging one another, studying to understand God's word and expectations of us - these can be some of the works of faith of a life that is driven by faith.

EXAMPLES OF LIVES OF FAITH WHO SHOWED US HOW TO DO WORKS OF FAITH:



Noah:

Hebrews 11:7: (NASB) *By **faith <4102>** Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*



Genesis 6:8 tells us that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, so he was already living faithfully. Can you imagine the ridicule Noah probably went through and how unreasonable his building of the ark looked to others? What a huge task he faced! It is hard to imagine his faith in God's prediction of a flood because it was an impossibility in those times. Yet he went forward and accomplished his task.

Noah was already faithful! God never chose someone to do a massive work unless they were established in a life of faith first. Noah was a prime example. It is beautiful the way the New American Standard Bible translation says, *in reverence prepared an ark*. It was the reverence of Noah's conviction that God was guiding him that gave him the strength and focus to build the ark over all those decades with incredibly hard work, probable ridicule and planning.



His faith was vital. It was a life of faith that drove him every day. He lived his faith.



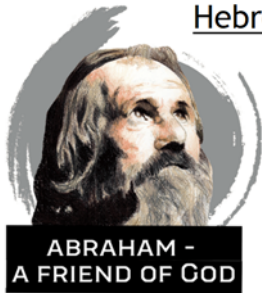
Faith Observation:

- Faith is not a feeling; it is a drive that promotes action!
Noah is a dramatic example of faith-provoking action.

Abraham:

We will start by looking at the life of faith Abraham lived, and then we will look at his works of faith.

First, the life of Abraham's faith:



Hebrews 11:8-10: (NASB) ⁸By **faith <4102>** Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By **faith <4102>** he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham's life of faith was exemplified by his willingness to leave his father's heathen household and follow an unseen God to an unknown location. *He went out, not knowing where he was going.* God tells him He will bring him to an unknown location and Abraham says, "Okay!" Abraham had a great sense of loyalty to this unseen God. There was no house or mansion, no stability - he lived in a tent. Again, there is no drama here. He walked away from wealth and comfort to go to an unknown land led by an unseen God. He learned to follow and follow. That was the story of Abraham. Then he gets older and has this promised child.

Abraham's works of faith were built upon his life of faith:

James 2:21-24: (NASB) ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²²You see that **faith <4102>** was working with his works, and as a result of the works, **faith <4102>** was perfected; ²³and the scripture was fulfilled which says, *And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness and he was called the friend of God.* ²⁴You see that a man is justified by works and not by **faith <4102>** alone.

Abraham stepped out of his comfort zone. He was already living out of his comfort zone uncomfortably (in a nomadic existence) by following the unseen God into unknown territory. But now he was being asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac, the promised seed who he had waited all those years to have. At this point we can see the works of faith grew out of his continual following, that lifestyle of faith. It is a very powerful example.





Faith Observation:



- Faith is much more than an expression of mere heart reliance or a feeling of assurance. It is the action of “getting one’s hands dirty” for the sake of whatever the cause is that God has provoked us to act upon.

Faith makes us do different things than we would have done otherwise. This is faith that is based on the Almighty God, the Creator of all things. This faith is not based on something flippant, or wishful, or fanciful or imagined, but based on the power of God.

Look around the world we live in, at the ecosystem which works all by itself without us that is not established by chance. If we look again at the intricate DNA of living organisms, the balance of nature and the universe, we see an incredibly well-designed machine. The mind and power behind these things are what we have faith in. God has given us His word to show us that our faith can grow into something even bigger because His plans are laid out for us so we can see and understand them.

FAITH IN ACTION:

Because our faith has become the basis for our way of life, there is no question as to our standing:

Romans 8:33-39: (NASB) ³³*Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;* ³⁴*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.* ³⁵*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

God is the one who justifies. Because of our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, He has given us the standing before Him. With that standing, He gives us His holy spirit to rise above these fleshly trials - but we are not saying these trials are not hard. They are hard, which goes back to the beginning of this podcast when we talked about the trials of our faith producing endurance and perseverance.



The beauty of these verses is that the Apostle Paul lists out things that are dramatic. He tells us that all these things may come our way. All those things came his way! He is using his personal experience to say that we stand in God through Christ. *Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised*, who we base our faith upon. He is the tangible evidence of God. He is God’s own son who became a man here on earth to die for us.

Because our faith has become the basis for our way of life, we are learning to be inherently willing to be living sacrifices as we walk in Jesus’ footsteps:

³⁶*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.* ³⁷*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.*

It does not say we just barely make it. Instead, it says, *we overwhelmingly conquer.*

Earlier we said living by faith means we are immovable. This encapsulates this whole discussion. That is how we overwhelmingly conquer *through him*. It is not because we are so strong; it is through Jesus' strength in us.

Because our faith has become the basis for our way of life, we are CERTAIN of our relationship with God through Christ:

³⁸For 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.

None of these things can touch us because we have the power of Christ covering us. It is not our strength; it is Christ's strength in us where we become untouchable. We just have to let him overwhelm our life in that way.

Finding Faith's True Identity:



Biblical faith is a deep and driving force that molds our way of life and provokes us to works of faith that would be pleasing to God.

These works are not to be confused with mere works of moral goodness or works of righteous compliance. Works of faith are works of deep dedication, works of stretching ourselves in the service of God through Christ.

We cannot confuse doing something nice as a work of faith. The fabric of our life must provoke us to stretch ourselves - it is a deep, profound, life-changing experience. From what we have seen so far, true Christian faith is not just a commonplace thing. It is a transformed life in action.

With all that we have already learned about the life-changing effects of true faith, what else can be added?

The study of faith seems like it is a never-ending journey of discovery. We think we understand it and then realize there are depths yet to be discovered. In this case, we want to look at one more level of faith - TRUST. Mature Christian faith breeds unrelenting trust in God's will and in the advocacy of Jesus when we struggle.

The depth of faith is often revealed in trust. Biblical trust carries different shades of meaning. An example is found in Psalms 118, which has two different Hebrew words for trust.

Trust: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #982 *batach*; to hide for refuge (but not so precipitately as 2620); figuratively, to trust, be confident or sure

Refuge: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2620 *chacah*; to flee for protection; figuratively, to confide in:--have hope, make refuge (put) trust

One word means, "I trust," and the other means, "I REALLY trust."

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



Notice how the deeper level of trust is in God, and the more superficial level of trust is in our fellow man:

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

Both sides have trust, but it is better to absolutely commit ourselves to the Lord God and His plans. Why is this so? Because He is the greatest source of power that has ever or will ever exist, and He has written His plan out for us in His word.

OLD TESTAMENT TRUST

Old Testament trust is going to someone or somewhere with full confidence of protection, care and comfort. This full confidence is not possible unless a transforming faith is present!



I've been married to Trish going on 43 years this year. You learn to truly, deeply, profoundly trust somebody over time. I know when there is a discrepancy in how we see something, especially when I get myself in over my head, I always have to pay absolute attention to her concern because I trust her implicitly. She would not say anything or do anything that would be against my best interests. That trust makes it so much easier to live. There is a power in that connectivity. We want to trust our Heavenly Father in that way.

NEW TESTAMENT TRUST:

Trust: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1679 *elpizo*; to expect or confide

Trust: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3982 *peitho*; a primary verb; to convince, to rely

Faith is like a muscle that needs exercise. We accept faith into our lives by exercising it! It is great to have the gift, but unless exercised, it is not going to do anything for us. Exercising it is what brings trust.



Living a life of faith means I live according to that which is not seen:

Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

We do not physically see that kingdom now, but we live according to the knowledge that it will happen because our lives are driven toward it. It is sensible to say we can live that way because we have been given the grace of understanding the power of God through Christ Jesus and the word of God.

Jesus taught us how to rest in the tumult of life. He taught us how to trust:

Mark 4:36-38: (NASB) ³⁶*Leaving the crowd, they took him along with them in the boat, just as he was; and other boats were with him.* ³⁷*And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.* ³⁸*Jesus himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion...*



Only in this Mark account do we see there were other boats. A big storm comes up and Jesus is sound asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat. He felt the movement of the boat but was unfazed by it. However, everyone else panicked!

Why could Jesus sleep so soundly? Because he had such a trust in his Father's providence.

...and they woke him and said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

Matthew 8:26: (NASB) *He said to them, Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?...*

The apostles wake him up and say: "We're drowning here! The boat is filling with water. Don't you care?!" His reaction is not that the situation was pretty serious, or that they should start bailing; it was, *Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?* What a strange reaction to have at this moment of sheer panic. Logically they were right to be panicked. He was about to teach them a dramatic lesson of faith. Theirs was a faith that was immature. This was okay - they needed to learn and see the power that Jesus would wield with the power of God's spirit.



Jesus would show them **WHY** their faith needed to grow - he would show them **WHY** to trust in his next actions:

Mark 4:39-41: (NASB) ³⁹And he got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush, be still. And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And he said to them, Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith? ⁴¹They became very much afraid and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

This lesson wasn't just about faith. They had a little faith, but they had to grow it to the point of trust. Jesus' lesson to them was that while he was in the boat, they had nothing to fear because his Father was protecting him for the work that He had given him to do. He had no doubt in whatever experience came his way. That is why he told them: "You are of little faith now, but you need to become of much bigger faith. Let me show you how. Let me show you the power of God so you can witness it before your very eyes."



The development of faith is working at proving its basis. Its basis is a transformed life, believing in God through Jesus and God’s word so we can say, “My life, therefore, is different. This gives us ever deeper faith foundations!



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

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.

Test all things; hold fast what is good is a requirement for Christians.

We must learn what the word of God says. It is nice to learn by listening to others, but it is better to learn not just by listening, but by fellowshiping with others in spiritual matters, by studying and delving into the word of God on our own as well as with others. When we study, we need to understand the importance of the context of what we are reading. The Bible needs to be understood and not just read. There are lots of pieces to understanding the Scriptures. The Bible is a really big book covering thousands of years of history. It includes prophecies, parables, accounts of the lives of notable people, miracles and sayings - all need to be put in context.

The Bible needs to be understood and not just read.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT:

- When and to whom are the words spoken or written?
- What are the circumstances of the words needing to be spoken or written?
- Why and when (in what age) are the words spoken or written and when do they apply? Everything does not apply to all people at all times. We need to discern when (and to whom) they apply.
- Are the words symbolic, literal or prophetic, admonitions, parables or a record of events?

This is a big job but is part of having our faith grow.



To learn what the Bible says about "earth," we can quickly find every verse containing that word

GENESIS 1:1

In the beginning **H7225** God **H430** created H1 **H8064** and H853 the **earth. H776**

Beside each word is an assigned number that correlates back to the Hebrew or Greek word in the original text

GENESIS 1:2

And the **earth H776** was **H1961** without form, and darkness **H2822** was upon the face **H6440** of the deep. **H8415**
And the Spirit **H7307** of God **H430** moved **H7363** upon **H5921** the face **H6440** of the waters. **H4325**

GENESIS 1:10

And God **H430** called **H7121** the dry **H3004** land **Earth; H776** and the gathering together **H4723** of the waters **H4325** called **H7121** he Seas: **H3220** and God **H430** saw **H7200** that it was good. **H2896**

For tips on how to study the Bible, including using Bible aids like a concordance:

<https://christianquestions.com/bible-study/>



Romans 8:22-25: (NASB) ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And 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. ²⁴For in *hope <1680>* we have been saved, but *hope <1680>* that is seen is not *hope <1680>*; for who *hopes<1680>* for what he already sees? ²⁵But if we *hope <1679>* for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

These verses are an explanation of a mature Christian faith that breeds this unrelenting trust! The Greek word translated into English as *hope* used in these verses is an extension of the word used for *trust*.

If we hope for what we do not see (this is in the present), with perseverance we wait eagerly for it (this is in the future). Faith always has to do with both present and future.

This set of scriptures starts out with, *we know that the whole creation... suffers.* We know this because we can look around and observe it. This does not take a lot of faith. What does take faith is *waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons* of God. And that the hope we (the faithful followers of Jesus) have will become the hope they (the rest of the world) have. The world is groaning and travailing in pain waiting for us to be faithful.

That is what a life of faith looks at and recognizes as its job. We do the will of God in order to do the work of God so that all the families of the earth can be blessed. That is what Christian faith should be bringing us to.



Back to our theme text one more time:

James 1:2-4: (NASB) ²*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your **faith <4102>** produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

In conclusion, faith is not a feeling. It is an expression of who we are. If we are not looking at our faith this way, we need to re-evaluate what our faith is based on. Too often we find our faith is based on what we think and feel, rather than the power of God expressed through the word of God and the history and prophecies that have come true and will come true. We need to put it all together.

Finding Faith's True Identity:



Biblical faith is not only deep and transforming, it also permeates through our entire life experience.

When we truly learn to trust in our faith in our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus, each and every part of our lives can be lifted higher. Let us accept this gift of faith, work at its development and allow its influence to bring us to action for and praise of God and our Lord Jesus!

We need to ask: "Have I been lifted higher?" If not, question what our faith is really based on and what we should be doing to increase that faith.

We need to base our faith on the word of God, not the traditions of men. We need to hold close that *Jesus died as a ransom for all to be testified in due time.* If this is not the gospel we are hearing and following, then what we are hearing is not the gospel of God. Think again and base your faith on godly principles.

*So, what does it feel like to have real faith?
For Jonathan, Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.





Does the following text appeal to blind faith or fact-based reason?

Romans 1:18-22: (NASB) ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Hope: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1680 *elpis*; (to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation or confidence:--faith, hope

Here in the 21st century, we are now cracking the code of DNA, mapping cellular construction, exploring the interconnectedness of ecosystems and using the power of the sun. Man is grasping the incomprehensible laws of nature and yet cannot admit these laws are designed!

A few small examples of God's sovereignty over nature:

Psalms 8:8-9: (KJV) ⁸The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. ⁹O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Matthew Maury (1806-1873) is considered to be the father of oceanography.... During a severe illness when he was in bed for some time, he asked his son to read the Bible to him. While listening to the Book of Psalms, he noticed the expression, "paths of the sea." Upon his recovery, Maury took God at His word and went looking for these paths.... What Maury discovered were the ocean currents; a continuous, directed movement of seawater in a specific pattern. This discovery and mapping of these currents led to considerable developments in oceanography.

While the Bible is not meant to be a book of science, it certainly does reveal several facts of science:

Job 36:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷For He draws up the drops of water, they distill rain from the mist, ²⁸Which the clouds pour down, they drip upon man abundantly. ²⁹Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion?

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1278: What Does It Feel Like To Have Real Faith?

See:



<https://christianquestions.com/character/1278-faith/>

1. What does James say about faith? What should we expect to happen if we have faith? What does this produce in us? What should we ask for with faith and how is it delivered? (See James 1:2-8)
2. Define the difference between true faith and credulity or gullibility. Faith changes the way we see the world - what does it enable us to see? What do we have confidence in? What are we convicted of? (See Isaiah 55:10-11, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Hebrews 11:1-3)
3. **GIFT OF FAITH:** How do we gain faith? Where does it come from? Can we choose to have faith? Explain. Is it sufficient to just accept the gift of faith? What do with it? (See Ephesians 2:4-10, Romans 10:12-17)
4. Why are Abel and Enoch included in the "faith" chapter of Hebrews? What is the difference between living a life of faith and merely doing godly acts? Once given faith by grace - how do we give back to God? (See Hebrews 11:4-6, Genesis 3:20-21, 4:1-4)
5. **THE WORK OF FAITH:** What does James say about faith? Is this in conflict with Paul? Explain - see the Romans verses. Describe how Noah and Abraham exhibited works of faith in their lives. (See James 2:18-24, Romans 4:1-5, 5:1-2, Genesis 6:8, 15:6, Hebrews 11:7-10)
6. **FAITH IN ACTION:** What is our status with God and with Christ? Who or what can separate us from the love of Christ? How can we *overwhelmingly* conquer our trials? What is the amazing promise given us in verse 38? (See Romans 8:33-39)
7. How does Psalms 118:5-9 illustrate two levels of trust? What should we take away from these verses? When we exercise our faith, how does it lead to trust? How did Jesus teach this lesson in the account of the boat and the storm? (See Matthew 6:33,8:26, Mark 4:36-41)
8. When we are told to "test all things" what does this encompass? When we study the Bible, what is the importance of context? List the points given. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22)
9. How has your life been lifted higher? How have you accepted the gift of faith? How have you worked at its development? How does the influence of your faith prod you into action and praise for God and our Lord Jesus?