

FAITH

Faith is the road
street - access to
God
"avenue of access"

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The words faith and believe are closely related in the New Testament. Faith has been defined as the "unlimited willingness to let God do all the saving." As a matter of fact, the Bible clearly makes this the starting point in man's response to God - Hebrews 11:6. The basic usages of faith in the Bible are:

1. A Body of doctrine to be believed - Jude 3.
2. An act of believing - Acts 16:31.

In the Bible, there are many references to acts which appear to be acts of faith, but are in reality only acts of intellectual assent, falling short of saving faith. (cf. James 2:19).

One common religious saying is: "You must have faith," or "I have faith." However, in the Scripture, faith must have the proper object. (cf. Ephesians 1:15). Faith is not some magical substance that generates itself in the vacuum of the human soul. It would be entirely possible for people to have honest faith in the wrong person or cause. For example, a drowning man might have a rope in his hand, but in order for it to do him any good, it must be attached to something or someone other than himself! So faith for faith's sake does not save - it must be in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Romans 10:17

Faith is not the result of human reason or effort; it is rather man's response to the Word of God under the ministry and operation of the Holy Spirit. How one hears the Word is of grave importance. John 5:25 suggests two kinds of hearing. The problem with those who hear the gospel and do not heed it is primarily a problem of the will. They choose not to believe God! They are willing to believe men about almost any subject, but God's truth they refuse to obey. (cf. John 5:40)

2. Ephesians 2:8-9

Faith has been called "the hand of the heart." Saving faith is a single act of a whole soul's commitment to Jesus Christ. This act is done through the divine power and enabling of the Holy Spirit. Someone has said there are 3 necessary ingredients in evangelism:

1. Preach the Word.
2. Pray for the Spirit to use the Word.
3. Prevail or call upon men to believe.

3. Hebrews 11:1-6 ff.

This chapter shows how faith answers some of life's great questions:

1. What about things we can't see? Answer V. 1
2. What about origins? Answer V. 3
3. Is there a God? Answer V. 6
4. What about death? Answer V. 5

Faith enabled Enoch to please God. Faith enabled Noah to prepare for coming judgment. V. 7. Faith enabled Abraham to be a pilgrim in a foreign land. V. 8 ff.

In each of these historical references, God honored faith. It was the faith of these men that reserved for them a place in God's honor roll!

The heart of this doctrine centers around three elements as it pertains to personal salvation:

1. Assent - "I believe" the facts about Christ. (I Corinthians 15:1-5)
2. Appropriation - "I take or receive" Christ into my life. (John 1:12)
3. Abandonment - "I commit or entrust my all to Him." (2 Timothy 1:12)

These 3 elements are present in every genuine act of saving faith.