

# What is Faith?

Text: Hebrews 11:1-2

Date: 3-2-25

## I. Thoughts about faith

Through faith we can proceed in growth and choose the right path and not the one of turning back. So, what is true biblical faith? Who are examples of living by faith? Can a person truly live by faith? What are the hallmarks common to people truly living by faith? The Hebrew's author was writing to people like us, who were challenged and struggled in their faith journey. They faced hardships and at times wanted to throw in the towel. Our faith is also challenged and at times conflicted.

Instead of giving up, we must persevere and stand steadfastly trusting in the object of our faith: Jesus Christ.

## II. What is faith? (Heb. 11:1)

The word *faith* (Greek: *pistis*) means *strong confidence in, trust, reliance upon, having confidence in an object of trust*. In Prov. 3:5 the word has the idea of *placing your whole weight upon*.

**Explanation/substance:** This word *substance* (Greek: *hypostasis*) means *reality that contrasts with everything that is a shadow and fake; "that which something really and truly is; whatever that (logically prior) quality, aspect, or reality is that makes things what they are"*.<sup>1</sup>

**Explanation/evidence:** This word *evidence* (Greek: *elenchus*) means *proof, proving, "convicting evidence — evidence that makes someone fully agree, understand, and realize the truth or validity of something; especially based on argument or discussion"*.<sup>2</sup>

"The verse boldly equates faith with the reality and demonstration of these things".<sup>3</sup>

Faith is the assurance and confidence in the future through Jesus Christ. But it is more than that. It is the substance, the reality through the real Person of Jesus Christ.

John Phillips, in his commentary on Hebrews, describes it this way: "Faith is a kind of spiritual 'sixth sense' which enables the believer to take firm hold upon the unseen world and bring it into the realm of experience. All our senses do this. The eye takes hold upon the light waves which pulsate through space and make real to a person the things he sees. The ear picks up the sound waves and translates them into hearing."

- Faith then is the reality, the certainty of things hoped for.
- As a result, faith is the confident assurance that God gives based on the convicting evidence that God has revealed in His Word.
- Faith always has an object.
- Biblical faith has the object in Jesus Christ and God's promises.
- Everything about faith rests in God and His revelation both in His Word and through the Word.
- Faith is not wishful thinking and uncertain hope.
- "Faith is living in a hope that is so real it gives absolute **assurance**".<sup>4</sup>
- Faith is seeing the unseen. Faith is seeing the invisible.
- Faith rests on the rock of God's truth.
- A person cannot understand God without faith, a person cannot know God without faith, and a person cannot walk with God without faith.
- Faith then is not blind but rests on the truth of God Himself.

<sup>1</sup> Brannan, R., ed. (2020). In *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Lexham Press.

<sup>2</sup> Brannan, R., ed. (2020). In *Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Lexham Press.

<sup>3</sup> Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 1239). W.B. Eerdmans.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). *Hebrews* (p. 287). Moody Press.

“The person of faith lives his belief. His life is committed to what his mind and his spirit are convinced is true”.<sup>5</sup>

### III. The proofs of faith (Heb. 11:2-3)

#### A. Revelation

The OT ancients were given first-hand authentication of God through revelation.

**Truth:** We are not alone in this fight. Faith is not some abstract notion but is seen in the lives of many people that have gone before us. Faith is not something that we try to grasp at, something that we hope for. Faith is reality in God. Just as those in the past, those under the old covenant trusted in God by faith in the coming of Jesus Christ, we now on the backside of the cross can trust all of God’s promises as rooted in the Person of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). [Hebrews](#) (p. 288). Moody Press.