

## FAITH

### What is it?, How do I obtain it?, How do I know when I have it? Can I lose it?

**Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV 4** "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

In the story of Jesus walking on the water in the Sea of Galilee, we observe Peter as he sees the Lord on the water and asks the Lord to bid him to come to Him. When Jesus does this Peter steps out onto the water and then realizes where he is and begins to sink and cries out for the Lord to save him.

**Matthew 14:31 NKJV 31** And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" **Matt. 8:26, Matt. 16:8**

We can see from just this one incident that faith has something to do with belief. Peter doubted his ability to walk on the water as the Lord was, therefore he sank.

In many other incidents of healing the Lord marvels at the faith of those requesting to be healed. In other words, they believed that the Lord had the power to heal them or their loved ones. This is very evident in the retelling of the healing centurion's servant.

#### **Luke 7:2-9**

Again, faith is equated to belief. The centurion believed that Jesus had not only the power to heal his servant but, He did not even need to be in the same room with the servant to do so. He was right.

God's word has revealed a definition of faith for us.

**Hebrews 11:1 NKJV 1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**Hebrews 11:6 NKJV 6** But without faith 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 diligently seek Him.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. How is belief connected to faith?  
Give some examples from God's word.
2. How are hope and belief connected with faith?  
Give an example.
3. What does the word substance mean?
4. What does evidence mean?

## How can I obtain faith?

Have you ever heard the saying that “seeing is believing”?

**John 20:29 NKJV 29** Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We have read in Hebrews that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”.

We have also come to the conclusion that faith is strongly connected to belief. How can we believe without seeing?

The centurion’s servant had not seen Jesus, or witnessed His power to heal; as far as we know. Yet Jesus was able to heal through the belief of the centurion. In other words the faith of the centurion that Jesus could heal and that His power was so great He could heal without being in the same place as the servant.

How did the centurion get such a belief?

**John 3:2 NKJV 2** This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

This is an account of Nicodemus coming to the Lord for answers. He believed that Jesus was “come from God”, because he had witnessed the signs Jesus did.

What were the signs that Jesus did?

How can we have faith, a strong belief, having not witnessed the signs of Jesus for ourselves?

**Romans 10:17 NKJV 17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

What else is required to obtain faith without the proof of seeing first hand?

## **Belief**

We have said that faith and belief are closely connected and are, in fact, the same.

So, what is it we believe that defines our faith as Christians?

Let us do some self-examination concerning what we believe to establish where we stand.

I believe....

God exists and is alive and is active in His creation. **Pslms. 18:46, Jer. 44:26, Mark 12:27, Acts 17:26-28, Romans 1:20**

God is one. **Deut. 6:4, Mark 12:29, 1Cor. 8:4, Eph. 4:4-6**

God created everything that exists. **Gen. 1:1, Exodus 20:11, Acts 4:24, Col. 1:16**

God has spoken His will to man. **Gen. 8:15, Gen. 12:1, Gen. 35:15, Heb. 1:1**

God has revealed His plan for humanity. **Gen. 3:15, Deut. 29:29, Pslms. 98:2, Matt. 11:25, Romans 1:17, 1Cor. 2:9-10, 2Pet. 1:21**

God through His providence has assured His will be done. **Isa. 55:11, Ezek. 12:28, Jer. 23:3, Joel 2:32, Romans 9:27, Eph. 1:11, Heb. 13:20-21**

Jesus is the only begotten son of God. **Prov. 30:4, John 1:14, Luke 1:30-32, Luke 2:21, 1Tim. 2:5-6**

God has revealed how man shall be saved. **Pslms. 37:39, Pslms. 85:9, Hab. 3:13, Zech. 9:9, Matt. 1:21, Acts 2:38, Acts 5:30-31, Acts 13:23, Acts 22:16**

It is important what we do in this life. **Gen. 5:24, Gen. 6:9, Deut. 5:29, Deut. 30:19, John 8:12, Romans 6:4, Romans 8:1, Gal. 5:25, Rev. 20:12**

The Holy Spirit is alive and active. **Mark 12:36, Mark 13:11, Luke 2:26, Acts 5:32, Romans 8:13-14, 1Cor. 2:13, Heb. 3:7, 1John 3:24, 1John 5:7**

Belief in these things and many others establishes our faith.

Belief comes from our trust that God's word is true for all times. **Pslms. 119:7, Pslms. 119:50, Pslms 119:105, Matt. 24:35, John 17:17, Heb. 13:8**

## Faith-How Do I Know I Have It?

**Matthew 7:15-16 NKJV 15** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **16** "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

This verse in Matthew the Lord is centered about "false prophets". It can however, in the theme of knowing someone by their "fruits" is valid. Fruit is used by the Lord as an analogy of works, outward actions.

**Luke 3:8 NKJV 8** "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Here again the idea of "fruit" or actions is used to say that our repentance, in this case, is evident by our outward actions.

**Matthew 5:16 NKJV 16** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

This verse from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount", more than the others demonstrates what our good works, lights, shows the world and demonstrates to us our own faith.

**Ephesians 2:10 NKJV 10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 NKJV 1** Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; **2** for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

So these things that we do should give us confidence as to our faith. Believing God and the words of His Son are what establish our faith.

**Revelation 14:13 NKJV 13** Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

And finally we read from James.

**James 2:18 NKJV 18** But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

## Can I Lose My Faith?

**Galatians 6:9 NKJV 9** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. **2Thess. 3:13**

This verse encourages us to continue to do good, perform good works. What the verse does not tell us but implies as to what happens if we “lose heart”.

To “lose heart” is to become discouraged to continue to maintain our belief in the things we are taught as to how to live before God. **1Thess. 4:1-2**

To turn back from progressing toward the goal set before us is to fail.

**Hebrews 11:14-16 NKJV 14** For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. **15** And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. **16** But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

This passage says that those, the children of Israel, had an opportunity to turn back to Egypt, but, because of the perseverance of Moses and some others, they continued on to the “promised land”.

It also speaks to the faith of Abraham and others listed in this 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the **Hebrew** letter. Their faith was to continue towards the promised land of the “heavenly city” made by God.

They did not lose their focus on attaining eternal life with God.

So, is it possible to lose our faith. Some have.

**Galatians 4:9 NKJV 9** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

**Galatians 5:4 NKJV 4** You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Hear Paul chastises the Galatians in their leaving the true gospel and seduced to another.

**Hebrews 6:4-6 NKJV 4** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, **5** and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, **6** if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

So, we see here that it is possible to “fall away” from the faith of promise.