

The Concept of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-3

Introduction

Faith is being sure of that for which you hope and being convinced of what you cannot see. Faith can be simply defined as confidence in the integrity of God. It is believing that He is who He is and that He will do what He says He will do. The focus of faith is never how much faith you have, but should rather be on the object in which you are placing your faith. A lot of faith in the wrong thing won't help you. A little bit of faith in the right thing will.

Many people have a problem with faith because it requires us to be on God's timetable versus our own. Faith involves patience and waiting as we put our confident trust in God and His sovereign will. Faith necessitates the believer's willingness to face the future and the unknown because we choose to trust a God who sees even when we cannot. While "seeing is believing" is a widely accepted way of thinking, this is contrary to how believers ought to operate. God asks us to expectantly believe because He has declared it, whether or not we have seen it.

Faith is never just believing. Faith is believing enough to act. In Hebrews 11, each illustration for men and women of faith begins with the words, "by faith". Then the illustration will go on to describe something they did. Faith is simply acting like God is telling the truth. Living by faith is different than living by feeling.

While your feelings are not irrelevant, they also should not dictate your actions. Emotions are real, but they change. Faith is choosing to believe in an unchanging God despite circumstances. Sometimes you have to believe God when you don't feel like it. Sometimes you have to believe God when you have no idea how He will work in your life to make everything work for your good. Sometimes you have to believe God when God is the last place you feel confident placing your trust.

Getting Started

1. Most Christians will agree that they believe God. Take a moment to assess your own faith. Do you really believe God? How do you know?
2. One area where many people struggle today with having faith in God is in the creation/evolution debate. Explain why either belief system requires faith.

Let's Get Personal

1. "Living by faith is acting like it is so, even when it's not so, until it becomes so." This familiar quote by Dr. Evans defines faith in action. Describe a time when you had to believe God and the object of your faith did not exist.
2. Is there any area of your life where you struggle to put your faith into action? If so, why?
3. Many people struggle with having faith in God because their life experiences have caused them to wonder if God will really come through. Is this true for you? Tell your group about an experience that makes faith challenging.

Take the Next Step

1. Over the upcoming months, we will be going verse by verse through Hebrews 11. Take the time this week to read through the whole chapter for yourself.
2. One of the best ways to increase your ability to live faith in action is to be around others who have had practice doing exactly that. Do you have people in your life who exhibit confident faith? If not, pray this week that God will send faith-filled people into your life.

Renew Your Mind

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen..." Hebrews 11:1
