

The Nature of Faith

- What do people commonly mean by the word faith? Give some examples of how the word faith is used.
- What do you mean when you use the word faith in a religious context?
- The word faith is translated from the Greek word *pistis*. It is also translated “believe” and “trust.” It derives from a word meaning persuasion.
- Some people say: faith is to believe in something that hasn’t been proven (or can’t be proven). And if it is proven to be true it no longer requires faith. Is this concept scriptural?
- Read Hebrews 11. What does faith appear to mean in this chapter? Is there a component of trusting God at his word, or believing a promise God has made? Is there a component of obedience? Does this fit the idea that faith is believing something when you are not sure it is true?
- Is it the degree of faith a person has, or the object in which they place their faith. If we have faith a chair will hold us up when we sit on it (and not collapse), will the outcome depend on how much faith we have, or the appropriateness of our faith (the strength of the chair). Is this analogy appropriate when we apply it to having faith in people or in God?
- Some people promise us things, or say they will do something. Our belief in their word is related to how we assess their character and whether they have kept their word in the past (proved *faithful*).
- *Romans 4:18-25*. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed [had faith] and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief [without faith] regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **being fully persuaded** that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe [have faith] in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (NIV)
- If we are people of hate, we are hateful. If we are people of truth, we are truthful. If someone is a person of faith, does that imply they are faithful? How does this alter your concept of faith?
- Read Luke 17.
- The disciples request more faith (possibly to help them forgive as Jesus required). Jesus answers them that they don’t need a lot of faith, and then tells a parable to illustrate. This implies what the disciples needed was obedience (or possibly humility) rather than faith. Is obedience a component of faith. Do the examples in Hebrews 11 imply that a component of faith for these people was in obeying God?

Summary

Faith has to do with believing (or trusting) God who we have been convinced in. It is based in his nature—that he is reliable. Our faith involves trusting, being faithful, and obedience.

Although the amount of faith we have is important, it is not nearly as important as *who* our faith is in.