

## **LESSON 26 - FAITH**

### **What Is Biblical Faith and Do You Have It?**

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**W**e need biblical faith in Jesus to be saved. What is biblical faith? How is it different from blind faith? How is it different from word of faith? Do *you* have biblical faith? Is your faith built on your personal trust in God’s sovereignty, character, and will? Do your desires and behavior affirm or deny your faith? This lesson we will examine these questions.

#### **1. Biblical Faith is Different from Blind Faith or Word of Faith.**

**Blind Faith** is having faith in something without sufficient knowledge or good reason. It’s belief with ignorance. I could believe and have total confidence that I can fly were I to jump off a tall building. But considering all reason and evidence, I’d be wrong to believe this. I could trust a person or source saying I can, but they likely did little to prove their trustworthiness. Blind faith is *without* knowledge or trust.

**Word of Faith** is a false faith, from a false, new age spirituality called “New Thought,” even though it’s still believed by some Christians. It’s about people using their *own* faith to *cause* something to happen by *their own* will. As if you were to believe hard enough that something will come true, then it will. This could be described as “having faith in *faith itself*.” It is about gaining prosperity in this life by having faith for health, wealth, success, or some other blessing. This is a corruption of what the Bible says about faith. One large Christian cult uses a perversion of Matthew 19:26, “*With GOD all things are possible*”, they say: “With *faith* all things are possible.” Their trust is in themselves, their own words, and so-called spiritual laws, when it *should be* in God. This is idolatry and occultism, not Christianity.

**Biblical Faith** lies at the intersection of knowledge, belief, and trust- in God, Jesus, and the Gospel. Faith in the Gospel, for example, is to believe and trust the Gospel, which means also having knowledge of it. Knowing about it isn’t enough. We need to *believe* it truly happened, and is a promise we can still *trust in* today. We need to know, believe, and trust in all of what the Word of God says (the Bible). You also need to trust in God, Jesus, and the Gospel *personally*. We can’t just know *about* God, and believe He exists. Even demons believe this, and shudder (James 2:19). You need to have a personal relationship with Him, and your own testimony about how He saved you. You need your own story of how you live your life *with* Him and *know* Him, and the sense that He knows you too. You need to believe in His goodness and promises and trust Him as He guides you. You can’t believe in God or trust in Him, without personally knowing Him. You can’t know God and trust Him, without belief in Him. And you can’t trust God without believing in Him and knowing Him. For biblical faith we need all three.

## **2. Is Your Faith Built On Your Trust in God's Sovereignty, Character, and Will?**

Do you trust in God's Sovereignty, meaning in His eternal, supreme power and authority? In Job 41:11 God said, *"Everything under heaven belongs to me."* Job 12:10 says of God, *"In his hand is the life of every creature."* Romans 13:1 says, *"The authorities that exist have been established by God"* and Hebrews 3:4 says, *"God is the builder of everything."* Nothing happens without God either causing or allowing it to happen. He's sovereign and has the power to fulfill, and thus guarantee, every promise.

Do you trust in God's Character, that He's good, moral, and just? Psalm 97:2 says, *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne."* God is trustworthy. The Bible says He's true (John 3:33), His word is truth (John 17:17), and He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He's loving, faithful, merciful, and gracious. Joel 2:13 says, *"he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."* Deuteronomy 32:4 says about God, *"His works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."* Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 our Heavenly Father is perfect. He is holy, incorruptible, and without weakness, blemish, or fault. We can find comfort in our struggles, temptations, and trials when bad things are happening, because we know that God is always good.

Do you trust in God's Will, meaning that what He desires, what most pleases Him, and what He directs or allows to occur, *will* in the end, be the best possible way? Since God is always in control, and God is always good, then we *know* that God's Will is always best. Romans 12:2 describes God's Will this way: as *"his good, pleasing and perfect will."* What He wills to happen may not be what we want to happen, or what seems best to us in the moment, but ultimately it *will* be best in the end. From eternity, we will know and appreciate how God used *every* bad thing to accomplish a greater good.

*Because of* our knowledge and belief in God's total sovereignty; His eternally good and unchanging character; and His perfect will, we can *always trust Him* no matter what happens in life.

**3. Does Your Desire and Behavior Affirm Your Biblical Faith?** It's not enough to just know, believe, and generally trust God. We have to live out our faith, learning to *actively* trust Him in our day to day lives as we walk with Him. Faith isn't something we should just *hope* to have. Our faith can be sure—and tested. If you have it, your heart's desires and behavior will show it. A biblically faithful life proves we love God, neighbor, goodness, and truth; and desire to be like Jesus and receive glory, honor, and immortality (Romans 2:7). If we claim to have faith in Christ, but haven't repented of our sinful ways and continue to live in sin, we lie and the truth isn't in us (1 John). If we don't love God, and our brothers and sisters in the Faith, and seek after God's Kingdom and His righteousness, then our faith is worthless. We can't earn our salvation, and we *are* saved by faith alone—but not by a faith that *is alone!* Your faith is shown to be genuine by how it changes who you are and how you live. Genuine biblical faith *will* produce godliness, good fruit and deeds. In Matthew 7:19 Jesus says, *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* James 2:14 and 2:26 say, *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."* 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves."* Examine yourself and test your faith.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, increase my faith in You. Help me know, believe, and trust in Your sovereignty, good character, and perfect will. Affirm my faith. Make me like Jesus. In His name. Amen.