Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 6: FAITH AND HOW I CAN GET IT

INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective, and includes time for discussing these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This module is ideal to use when discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these concepts.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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LESSON 6: FAITH AND HOW I CAN GET IT

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson looks at the term 'faith' and how it is used in the Bible. We know from the Bible that faith is necessary for salvation, and necessary to please God. Where does this faith come from? How can we build our faith? Why is faith important? Read on to find out more!

JUST SO YOU KNOW…

We put our faith in things every day. We have faith that the chair we go to sit down on will hold us up. We have faith that the sun will rise tomorrow. Every Christian must have faith to receive salvation, so it is important to know what faith is. Faith is not a feeling we have, and it is not contingent on a number of facts being proven to us; rather it is a conscious decision to put our trust in God rather than ourselves and to believe that His word is true. As we pursue faith, God will increase it. Faith is a commonly used word by Christians – it is important that we understand it and use it correctly.

GETTING STARTED

1. What things (systems, beliefs, objects, people) do you put your faith in every day? Why do you have faith in them?

2. Could you tell if someone had faith in God? What evidence would there be of their faith? Should there be any outward signs of inward living faith?

STUDY

- **WHAT IS FAITH?** Christians use the word 'faith' a lot. It is important we know what we mean by that word! The Bible defines it for us in the book of Hebrews.

  - What does Hebrews 11:1 say that faith is?

This verse tells us that faith in God is having confidence that what we hope for will happen. God gives us the faith to believe in Him and supplies us with the evidence we need. Faith is believing the Word of God and acting on it. It is believing that God will fulfill His promises. It is agreeing with something without waiting for proof. Although we cannot see God, our faith leads us to believe based on the evidence around us (Romans 1:19).

There are three components to faith:

- Knowing the facts about God that have been revealed to us.
- Accepting these facts as true.
- Believing in Jesus Christ who is at the centre of the facts.

- **FAITH DEMONSTRATED THROUGH ACTION:** Whether or not we have faith in God is demonstrated by what we do. If we do not trust God very much, we are unlikely to trust Him enough to obey Him. We won't take risks to follow God.

  - What do the following verses say will accompany true faith?

James 2:14-26	

  - What would having faith in God look like in your own life? What would you do if you had great faith?

- Read Acts 9. What did Saul (who was later called Paul) do when he heard the voice of God? How did Saul demonstrate that he had faith in God?

The example of the Apostle Paul helps us understand the importance of action backing up our faith. Saul was a man who had persecuted many Christians; in fact, his job was to collect anyone who believed in God and bring them bound to Jerusalem. One day, he was walking on the road and he heard Jesus speaking to him. Jesus told Saul to go into the city and wait for instructions. The Bible tells us that he was blinded for three days before a man named Ananias was sent to him, at which point he was able to see again. From this point forward Paul's (formerly known as Saul) mind was set on Christ. Although the road ahead was very difficult for him and there were threats on his life, he pressed on and led a life of great faith that was pleasing to God.

It would have been easy for Paul to ignore God's voice and continue on with his life. He could have said, "I heard Jesus and I know now that He is powerful and mighty, but what He is asking is too much." Paul's faith only became real and meaningful because he acted on it. What good is believing that something is true, but ignoring it?

- **FAITH TO PLEASE GOD:** If we claim to believe in God but do not obey His commands, then we don't have true faith.

  - Look at the following verses and write down what they say about how our faith pleases God.

Hebrews 11:6	
Ephesians 2:8-9	

The verses above tell us that we cannot please God without faith, and that our faith is necessary for salvation. We must believe God's promises, and act upon them in order to receive salvation.

- There is power in having faith! God rewards it. Faith allows God to work through us. Look at the following verses that demonstrate the power that is available when we have faith. Mark 11:22-24, Luke 1:37. How does knowing this change the way we face problems in our everyday life?

- **HOW TO INCREASE YOUR FAITH:** As believers in Christ we are called to the kind of faith that moves us towards action. This is not an easy faith to have and it is normal to struggle. If you struggle with unbelief or a lack of faith, confess this and ask for God to increase your faith. Make sure you continue to read your Bible to learn more about what you believe in, and pray for an increased measure of faith each day.

  - Read the following verses. What do they tell us about increasing our faith? What practical steps can you take to increase your faith today?

Romans 10:17	
1 Corinthians 2:5	
Luke 17:5	

The steps we can take every day are:

- Read the Word of God. Get it into our hearts and minds through daily reading, hearing and study.
- Practise trusting God, not in ourselves or others.
- Ask God to increase our faith.

God will increase our faith if we ask Him to. As we practise trusting in Him every day and remembering all He has done for us, our faith will grow! God requires faith from us in order to accomplish His purposes through us in the world. Consider how you can increase your faith today!

IN SUMMARY

- Faith is believing the Word of God enough to act upon it. Faith is agreeing with God based on who God is, not waiting for proof.
- Three components of our faith are : knowing the facts about God, accepting the facts to be true, and believing in Jesus Christ who is at the center of these facts.
- True faith is accompanied by actions that demonstrate our faith. Faith without action isn't true faith at all.
- Faith pleases God, and faith is very powerful.
- We can increase our faith by spending more time in God's Word, trusting Him and asking Him to increase our faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What causes your times of unbelief? Struggling with faith is normal, but is sometimes a result of sin that we refuse to confess or repent from. What changes can you make in your life to increase your faith?

2 How can you encourage the faith of the people around you?

3. What is God asking you to do today as an act of faith?