Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 5: FAITH AND HOW I CAN GET IT

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *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 discussion of these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal for use with discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these ideas.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians or those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christian salvation. Those who are preparing for evangelism and discipleship may benefit from discussion of these ideas. These lessons assume the participant has made a decision to follow Jesus and wants to explore Christianity further.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help the leader prepare for the lessons and can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 6: FAITH AND HOW I CAN GET IT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the term faith and how it is used in the Bible. Participants will also look at how to build their faith from a biblical perspective.

LEADER'S NOTE

Every Christian must have faith, so it's important to know what faith is. Faith is not a feeling that 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. Your participants may have some misconceptions about the word 'faith.' Go carefully through the Scripture verses so they understand what the Bible says about faith. It is a commonly used word by Christians but sometimes it is not understood. As a leader, spend time praying for the faith of your participants. Pray that their faith would increase as they hear the Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions

- What does the word 'faith' mean to you? How would you describe it?
- What things (systems, beliefs, and people) do we put our faith in every day?
- Do you recall when you first put your faith in God? What preceded this? Was it something you saw, or heard, or felt?
- 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

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH:

- **What Is Faith?**
  - Look at Hebrews 11:1 for a Biblical definition of faith. The Bible tells us that faith is believing the Word of God enough to act upon it. 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 that God revealed to man
    - Accepting the facts as true
    - Believing in Jesus Christ who is at the centre of the facts
- **Faith Demonstrated Through Action.** Read the following verses together. What does it tell us about how faith should be demonstrated?
  - James 2:21-22"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works."
- **The Apostle Paul's Example of Faith in Action**
  - The example of the Apostle Paul helps us understand the importance of action backing up our faith. Read about the conversion of Saul (whose name was changed to Paul in Acts 9). 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 his faith. What good is believing 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 to understand how faith pleases God.
  - Hebrews 11:6 We cannot please God without faith.
  - Ephesians 2:8-9 We are saved through faith.

- **Power in Faith**
  - Faith pleases God and it allows God to act through us. Look at the following verses to demonstrate the power that is available when we have faith.
  - Mark 11:22-24 Faith can move mountains.
  - Luke 1:37 Nothing is impossible with God.
- **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 to see what God tells us about increasing our faith.
    - Romans 10:17 Faith comes through the Word of God.
    - 1 Corinthians 2:5 We need to rely on the power of God, not men.
    - Luke 17:5 Ask God to increase your faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What causes your times of unbelief? Struggling with faith is normal, but is sometimes a result of sin. What changes can you make in your life so that you increase in faith?
- How can you build on and encourage the faith of the people around you?
- What is God asking you to do as an act of faith today?
- If you are ministering to primarily oral learners, how can you help them to increase in faith if they do not have access to the written Word of God?
- What is your Bible reading habit like? Why is the Word of God necessary for faith?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray that participants will have the kind of faith that moves them towards action. Thank God for His gift of salvation through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. Pray that participants would have assurance of their salvation and grow in faith, grace and knowledge of God.