discipleship essentials

LESSON ESSENTIALS

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 6: FAITH AND HOW I CAN GET IT

Faith pleases God, and it also gives us freedom from sin and an assurance of salvation. This lesson will show you what faith is and how you can get it.

The Bible praises Abraham for his faith because he believed God in spite of his circumstances. That's the kind of faith that God calls us to exhibit. Read on to know more!

Faith might be a term commonly used by Christians; however, it is not always correctly understood. This lesson will educate you on the subject of faith, telling you how the Bible defines it.

REFLECT

Instead of turning to the dictionary for the definition of faith, look in the Bible for God's definition. Hebrews 11:1 says, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." More simply, faith is believing that something God says is true, even if we can't see it, and believing enough to act on it.

LOOKING DEEPER

To read more about the life of Abraham, look in the book of Genesis chapters 11-25.

Abraham sat by his tent in a field, looking up at the stars. He was a stranger to the land and owned no property, yet God promised him a land to call his own. He was an old man without children, but God had promised him more descendants than he could count. Abraham could see the evidence of God's love and protection, but wondered how he would be the father of many nations. So Abraham talked to God about it, and God promised again that He would be with Abraham. The Bible tells us that Abraham had faith. He could rely on who God was because of what he saw God do. He could rely on God's Word because He knew the character of God. He could see the world God made and counted the blessings God had given him, and that is what he based his faith upon. Hebrews 11:8-12 tells us about Abraham's faith. Look at this passage. "By faith Abraham obeyed… Abraham went out, not knowing where he was going." In Romans 4:3 we see, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." The faith that Abraham had, demonstrated by his actions, was enough for God to see him as a righteous person. Abraham was looking forward to the promise God made that all nations would be blessed through him, which would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This faith that Abraham displayed was very powerful. What is faith? And how can we have faith like Abraham had?

'Faith' is a very common Christian term. We hear it from preachers and believing friends, and read it in Christian books. However, it can be easily misunderstood. Instead of turning to the dictionary for the definition of the term, look in the Bible for God's definition. Hebrews 11:1 says, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." More simply, faith is believing that something God says is true, even if we can't see it, and believing enough to act on it.

The Bible places great importance on faith. Romans 3:25 says that our sins are forgiven through faith in Christ. This means, that it is only through faith that our relationship with God is set right. Hebrews 11:6 goes on to add that, "without faith it is impossible to please God."

If we were to analyse biblical faith, it would include three elements. First, we ought to know the facts that God has revealed to man; second, we must believe these facts and agree that they are true, and finally we must apply these truths to our lives. By 'facts', we mean the truths recorded in the Bible. You can't choose only one or make changes to these elements; if you know that the Bible says that God sent His Son to die for us, but don't believe it, you don't have

faith. Also, even if you believe it to be true, but don't accept it as relevant to your life, you still don't have faith.

Paul is a good example of someone who lived by faith. When he first heard God's message, he believed it and accepted it as being relevant to his life, thereby acting on it. In fact, this became the foundation of his life and his testimony.

There are many in today's world who hear the truth, believe it to be true, but do not act on it. The Epistle of James points out that our works demonstrate our faith. What good would it be if we said that we had faith, but then refused to change our lives to follow God's Word? We would only be fooling ourselves if we thought that faith was all about accepting a set of knowledge.

Faith is always a response to our belief in God, and our knowledge of who God is. Let's return to the example of Abraham. When Abraham heard a voice from heaven telling him to roam the land for many years like a nomad, he did so without asking questions. He listened to this voice, and wandered the land – the land that God promised to give his descendants. It is no wonder then that the Bible calls him a great man of faith. Abraham had no physical proof when he heard God's voice asking him to leave on this journey. He could have thought it was his own imagination, or just decided to ignore it and live how he wanted. But he didn't. Instead, he acted on his belief. He based his whole life on God's message, believing that God would give the land to his descendants, even though he didn't even have a child at that time.

For those of you who think that you can never have the faith of Abraham, remember that he was far from perfect. He expressed doubt and fear sometimes. But he also acted when it mattered. Let's not forget that Jesus tells us faith can move mountains. 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. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes through the Word of God. Developing faith comes by hearing and obeying the Words of God. If we are to believe something we must first know the facts. Secondly we must choose to obey. Thirdly, we need to practice relying on God and not on ourselves or others (1 Corinthians 2:5). As we see God meet our needs we will grow in faith. Lastly, we can ask God to increase our faith (Luke 17:5) and He promises He will do so.

THINK ABOUT IT

If we were to analyse biblical faith, it would include three elements. First, we ought to know the facts that God has revealed to man; second, we must believe these facts and agree that they are true, and finally we must apply these truths to our lives.

Jesus patiently waits for us to put our faith in Him. We are not only by placing our faith in Christ are we justified in Him, but we can please God. The Bible says when this happens, the angels rejoice. You couldn't ask for a bigger reward.

IN REVIEW

- Faith pleases God and is critical for the salvation of a believer.
- The Bible defines faith as being sure of the things we hope for, and certain of things we cannot see. In other words, faith is believing that something God says is true, and believing enough to act on it.
- We get faith by knowing what God says, believing it to be true and applying it to our lives.
- It is by faith that God gives us salvation and freedom from sin.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- What are some of the things that young people today might want to put their faith in? How can you direct them to God?

- How can you practically strengthen your faith and build the faith of your friends?

- Is God asking you to take steps of faith? How can you please Him with your faith?

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All other content is © 2019 Trans World Radio Canada, and may be used in any way you like as long as you use it with the purpose of reaching the world for Christ and do not charge for the use of the material. See more license details at www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing.