

Faith, Hope, & Love

Faith. Where do you even begin with a topic like faith? When I searched "faith" in the ESV, the result was 150 uses of faith/faithfulness in the OT and 300 in the NT. Hundreds of passages deal with faith, but there are different aspects of faith. For example: what is faith? "Please give us a definition!" Then there are various aspects of faith - such as how it's used in different contexts. Faith, many times, carries the idea of trusting God. Faith has to do with your belief in God, which is why the terms *belief* and *faith* are interchangeable in many passages. However, in many instances, it is understood by action. Faith is also used in both a subjective and objective sense. While the majority accepts this, we still don't explain faith similarly under the Christian umbrella. So, do I get into that, or does that not affect you as it does me? Do you get the point? One lesson, as usual, can't do the job.

In a study like ours, a definition truly is helpful:

- State of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith in the active sense='believing', in reference to deity. William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 818.
- To believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance - 'to believe in, to have confidence in, to have faith in, to trust, faith, trust.' Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 375.

However, the best approach is to seek the Bible's definition and/or see how it's used in context:

- **Mark 11:20-24.** What is faith in this passage? It's the opposite of doubt - belief.
- **Matthew 14:31** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"
- **Hebrews 11:1-7.** This passage represents different aspects of faith without harming our study. In other words, it doesn't muddy the water, instead gives a well-rounded picture of faith.
 - Faith is how those before us were commended/approved by God.
 - **Ephesians 2:8-10.** This passage does not contradict Hebrews 11.
 - Faith many times requires nothing more than for you to believe in a truth stated by God. He created the world. Were you there? How do you know? You may point to evidence, but there's a difference between evidence and proof. We believe because a God we cannot see said He made everything we can out of nothing.
 - **John 20:29** Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
 - **Romans 10:17** is simple. The whole process is simple. God sends someone to preach a message which is heard and finally believed.
 - Faith results in obedience to God. If you believe that God is faithful to you, you will be faithful to God.
 - Whether it's Abel's sacrifice, Enoch's general way of life, or Noah's building of an ark (with specific instructions on dry ground because of a worldwide flood that he

believed he'd be saved from), they obeyed God. Why? Because they were being faithful to the Faithful. They trusted in God. They honored God. If these are true, then you will naturally obey God. Do you sincerely trust and honor God if you don't obey Him?

- **Deuteronomy 32:51** because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel.
- **1 Chronicles 10:13** So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance.
- **James 2:14-26.** Listen, true faith is not divorced from works of righteousness. This passage continues to show what people of faith DID. Only an individual with a biased doctrinal belief would take offense at the obvious. This passage isn't about justifying humanity because of their works. Instead, it shows how God approved of people because of their faith in Him, which they exercised during challenging circumstances. The letter would have encouraged the recipients who faced trials and temptations to drift away from their faith in Jesus.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:3** remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Faith also believes in the best of God. God wants you to believe in Him and see Him for who He truly is: a God who seeks to reward those who seek Him.
 - God isn't a joy killer. He isn't seeking to rob you of true life happiness. He offers us the absolute best.
 - **1 Peter 1:5-9.** But He tests those who seek Him.

Faith should be evident in our lives.

- **Matthew 9:2** And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."
- **Luke 17:5** The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
 - Even those of faith need growth. You're not alone in that respect.
- **Romans 4:1-8.** Faith is not a boastful mindset. It is not a work. It's a mindset that trusts in a God that saves weak and sinful people. It's a belief in a God who keeps His promises and forgives sinful people.