

FAITH

What Does It Mean To Live By Faith

Romans 1:16-17; Romans 5:1-2; Hebrews 11:1, 6

FAITH...*the deliberate choice to have confidence and trust in the character of God, whose ways we may not understand at the time.* The *natural response* to the *character* of God.

There are many manifestations of **faith**...just like there are many manifestations of **grace**. There's *traveling* faith... *financial* faith...*physical/healing* faith...etc. But the most important is **saving** faith!

Scripture refers to people with *little faith* at least *six times* (**Matthew 6:30; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 16:8; Matthew 17:20**...mustard seed) and *great faith three times* (**Matthew 8:10; Matthew 15:28**).

The difference for the believer between **FAITH** and **PRESUMPTION** is knowing that God has spoken.

HEAR GOD...OBEY GOD...PLEASE GOD (**Hebrews 11:6**)

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

~Romans 10:17

BELIEVE + TRUST = FAITH

I. WHAT FAITH IS: How it's displayed and lived.

A. Believing/Trusting (Chair illustration)

Hebrews 11:6

Exodus 3:14...“I AM”

Romans 10:9-10

I Corinthians 15:1-4, 14

Doubting **Thomas**...wouldn't believe that Jesus has resurrected unless he put his hand in His wounds (**John 20:25**).

“I believe...help my unbelief.”

~Mark 9:24

B. Assurance/Confidence

Hebrews 3:14

Hebrews 11:1

Compound word: *stasis* means “to stand”...*hupo* means “under”...“to stand under”. ie. A picture of a *foundation*.

In ancient Greek literature *hupostasis* was used as a legal term referring to “documents bearing on the ownership of a person's property, deposited in archives, and forming the evidence of ownership.”

C. Conviction

Hebrews 11:7-13

Romans 4:16-21.

I Peter 1:8-9

It's more than an opinion or philosophy. It implies a deeper manifestation of the inward assurance. It's a picture of *saving faith* lived out even when persecution comes.

D. Commitment...absolute surrender

A picture of Lordship

II. WHAT FAITH DOES:

A. Faith Obeys

Romans 16:25-26...in faith

I Samuel 15:22...in worship

I Peter 1:22...in truth

In one's walk. In overcoming temptation, trials, testing, suffering, disappointment...

B. Faith Endures

Hebrews 12:1

James 5:11

C. Faith Works

James 2:20

I Corinthians 15:58

II Timothy 3:17

III. EVIDENCES OF A GENUINE FAITH: But not necessarily saving faith

These are things which neither prove nor disprove true saving faith. Though the following characteristics will be evident to some degree in all who are genuinely born-again, they can also be apparent in unbelievers, sometimes to even a very high degree.

1. **External visible morality**...a person can be outwardly moral, yet still not be saved. Some pagans and cultists put many Christians to shame by their high moral standards and conduct ([Matthew 7:16-23](#)).
2. **Intellectual knowledge of spiritual truth**...It is even possible to have a great deal of familiarity with the truth of God's Word and still be unsaved ([Matthew 4](#); [James 2:19](#)).
3. **Religious involvement**...is no proof of saving faith. In the Old Testament, the Lord repeatedly condemned the Israelites for their meticulous, ritualistic observance of the Mosaic ordinances and ceremonies, while having absolutely no trust in Him at all ([John 5:39](#); [Hebrews 3:6-12](#)).
4. **Active ministry in the name of Christ**...cannot verify that a person is genuinely saved ([Matthew 7:21-23](#)). Judas Iscariot was every bit as active as the other disciples, being sent out with the other eleven to preach repentance, cast out demons and heal the sick ([Mark 6:7-13](#)). He even became so respected and trusted by his comrades that they selected him as their corporate

treasurer ([John 13:29](#)). Although he obviously considered himself a dedicated follower of Christ, Jesus Himself declares that Judas was a devil from the beginning ([John 6:70](#); [John 12:5-6](#)).

5. **Conviction of sin**...does not necessarily demonstrate saving faith. Mental institutions in every country are absolutely bursting with individuals so burdened by the guilt of their sinfulness that they can no longer function in society. Their sense of shame and regret may have become so overpowering as to literally drive them to insanity, but not to repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord!
6. **One's statement of "Assurance" of salvation**...is not an infallible mark of saving faith. The world is filled with individuals who confidently but mistakenly feel in their own minds that they are in right standing with God and that their admittance into Heaven is secure. But if it were not possible for people to be deceived by Satan about the authenticity of their salvation, then the Scripture would have not included so many warnings to unsaved people who only think they are saved, when they in fact are not ([Matthew 7:21-23](#); [James 1:22-25](#); [I John 2:19](#)).
7. **Experience of a "past decision" made for Christ**... does not accurately verify saving faith. If there is no authenticating spiritual fruitfulness...the corresponding evidence of Godly living as the result of the supernatural transformation the Holy Spirit effects in a genuinely saved person's life, it does not matter how *"real"* or vivid the memory and *"feeling"* associated with that past profession may seem to be.

Unless and until there is regeneration, there has been no saving faith (**Matthew 3:8-10**; **Matthew 13:20-22**; **Mark 4:5-7**)!

IV. AUTHENTICATING EVIDENCES OF TRUE SAVING FAITH:

All of these Biblical confirmations are more of what Christ does in us, rather than what we do for Him! These proofs are more a matter of inward motivating character than simply outward conduct.

“We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.”

~1 John 3:19-20

1. **Supreme love for Christ**...is THE most telling and reliable proof of genuine saving faith! The Lord certainly has not left His children in uncertainty about our relationship to Him.

When the Father draws us to salvation, He draws us to this passionate longing for intimate fellowship with Jesus, not some casual complacency (**John 6:44**; **Revelation 3:15-16**)!

2. **Sincere repentance and increasing hatred of sin**...are hallmarks of a truly *broken heart* and *contrite spirit* (**Psalms 51:10-17**).

This second standard of saving faith is the opposite side of a supreme love for God. The one who genuinely loves the Lord will therefore have a built-in hatred for sin because of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence within them.

The ONLY ministry the Holy Spirit performs in the life of a lost person is convicting them of their personal sin,

God's supreme and perfect righteousness, and the coming Day of Judgment (**John 16:8-11**)!

At the moment we are born-again however, the Spirit comes to live within us (**Romans 1:4**; **Romans 8:9-11**), regenerating us spiritually (**John 3:3, 5**) and sanctifying us (making us holy both positionally and practically (**Romans 15:16**; **II Thessalonians 2:13**)).

The Greek word for **confess** is *homologeō*, to say the same thing about. It means we call our sin what God calls it...we agree with Him!

The New Testament word used for **repent** is *metanoeō*, meaning literally, to make a u-turn; it is a redirection of the mind, will, and emotions.

When the prophet **Nathan** boldly confronted **King David** about his sins of adultery with **Bathsheba** and the murder of her husband **Uriah**, David's repentance was sincere as reflected in this emotional prayer...

“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.”

~Psalms 51:1-4

A true believer often hates sin even while they are committing it, but always after they have done it, because it is completely contrary to their new nature in Christ. Even though a Christian's humanness sometimes draws them into sin, and like Paul, they do the very

thing they know they ought not to do (**Romans 7:15-16**), they will have no peace of conscience until they genuinely repent of it.

True repentance is much more than simply *“feeling sorry”* or *“feeling guilty”* for our sin. Judas became bitterly sorry for his sin of betraying Jesus, even to the extreme of committing suicide. But there is no Scriptural evidence whatsoever that he repented of his betrayal or asked Christ’s forgiveness.

Paul rejoiced and commended the Corinthian believers for...

“...being made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God”

~2 Corinthians 7:9

Sincere repentance always involves a reverent, Godly sorrow...sorrow that we have disobeyed and offended our holy, loving Lord.

If a person’s sin doesn’t deeply trouble them, increasingly putting them under conviction about it, then that person’s salvation is absolutely questionable!!!

The test of true repentance is not simply sorrow for the way sin harms oneself (as it always does), but especially that their sin is an offense and grief to Holy God. This, above all else, is what leads a believer to implore forgiveness from their Lord.

- 3. Genuine humility**...is a third reliable evidence of true saving faith. The two character qualities which most distinguished Christ’s life and ministry were His holiness (**Luke 1:35; Mark 1:24; Acts 2:27; Acts 4:27, 30; Acts 13:35; Revelation 3:7**), and His humility

(**Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 11:29; Matthew 21:5; Philippians 2:8**).

No person can be saved as long as they trust in and exalt themselves (**Job 22:29; Psalm 25:8-9; Luke 1:51-52**). Salvation begins with confessing our spiritual poverty (**Matthew 5:3; James 4:6-10**), and becoming willing to take up our cross to follow Christ (**Matthew 16:24**).

Like the **Prodigal Son** in **Luke 15:17-21**, the true believer who sins will always eventually come to their spiritual senses. They will then hasten to their Heavenly Father to humbly confess their sins and their unworthiness of the Lord’s forgiveness, while pleading for it solely on the basis of the Father’s grace (**I Peter 5:5-6**).

- 4. Devotion to God’s glory**...is also undeniable evidence of true saving faith (**Revelation 5:12**) and inseparably conjoined to supreme love for God and repentance of sin.

A person who is authentically saved will say with the apostle Paul...

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

~Philippians 1:20

(cf. **Romans 14:7-9; Colossians 3:17, 23; II Thessalonians 1:11-12**).

As with each of the previously mentioned evidences of salvation, this desire may not always be seen in the perfection of a true believer’s life, but it will ALWAYS be evidenced in the direction of their life!

5. **Importunate prayer**...is a fifth verifying proof of sincere faith. Paul told the Galatian believers...

“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

~Galatians 4:6

The heart of every genuine Christian cannot help but to call out to God as their Heavenly Father, whose own Spirit is in them to generate that yearning. Every authentic Christian will freely confess that they do not pray as often or as earnestly and persistently as they should. But in their innermost being, communion with their Heavenly Father will be the sincerest desire of their heart.

Among the responsibilities Christians have towards God and society, the apostle Paul exhorts in **Romans 12**...

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...”

~Romans 12:9-12

6. **Selfless love**...is another telling proof of salvation. This love is not only for God, as in the first mark of saving faith, but for other people as well...especially fellow Christians.

The most emphatic way such love is demonstrated in practice is through forgiveness, just as was God’s greatest demonstration of love towards us undeserving, hell-bound sinners (**Luke 23:34; Mark 2:7; Acts 7:60**).

7. **Separation from the world**...Believers are called to be in the world, but not of it. We are not to be *“secret-agent disciples,”* camouflaged like chameleons who blend in unnoticed with the sinful culture around us. Our lifestyle is to be separate and distinct from the lost people we live among. Christ has left us in the world specifically for the purpose of testifying of Him...the central testimony of which is not to reflect the world’s values, standards, and ways (**John 17:15-18**).

8. **Spiritual growth**...is an eighth mark of saving faith. The central truth of Christ’s parable of the soils in **Matthew 13:3-23**, is that true believers will always continue to grow spiritually in varying degrees. If the seed of the Gospel has genuinely been received, it will take firm rooting and multiply!

Like the farmer and his crops, a true Christian may not completely understand how he grows spiritually, but he knows that because he has spiritual life within himself, that he will grow!

9. **Obedient living**...is the final distinguishing proof of saving faith. Jesus is our example in all things because His every act of obedience pleased the Father (**John 8:29; Hebrews 5:8**).

Although no one is saved by their *“good works,”* those who are truly born-again will want their lives to produce them out of obedient gratitude to the one who saved us. Paul wrote to the young Christians at Ephesus...

“We are (God’s) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (of obedience), which the Father has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

~Ephesians 2:10