

Must-Have Items for A Valid Faith Philippians 2:12-13

Introduction

What is Biblical faith? The New Testament word for "faith" is *pistis*. It means to have conviction of the truth or reality of something, a belief in something or someone. In the New Testament it is used for having a conviction or belief in relationship to God and spiritual things, generally with the emphasis of trust or reliance. The verb form is *pistis* means "to believe, rely on, or trust in." It often occurs with prepositions to stress a "personal trust and reliance which is distinct from mere credence or belief."

Biblical faith is having confidence and trust in God's ability, power, skill, and promises as He is revealed in Scripture. This New Testament faith or belief is a reliance (a belief and confidence) on the work and grace of God's plan.

Biblical faith includes all phases of salvation and sanctification, past, present, and future! It includes deliverance from sin's penalty, sin's power, and even sin's presence as we continue to walk in the Spirit. Biblical faith is not a work; it is actually the one thing you can do without doing anything.

Faith is not doing something; it is receiving something. Salvation is a gift we receive by faith.

In John 6:26, Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."
(John 6:26-29 NKJV)

These Jews thought salvation was a matter of works. But Jesus said that salvation was a gift. It was the product of God's work and was to be received by believing in the Son of Man, the Messiah, because God had placed His seal upon Him. People of faith can admit their spiritual inability and helplessness to merit God's salvation or even handle their own life without God's grace and help.

Illustration: If you drive over a bridge to cross a gorge, and there is no other way to cross, you are saying that you trust the bridge to get you to the other side. But you are also saying you can't get to the other side on your own without the bridge.

Romans 4:1-5 says, "What then shall we say that Abraham our Father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to

him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." (Romans 4:1-5 NKJV)

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV)

Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5 NKJV)

Faith in God abandons any confidence you might have in yourself. When you recognize your helplessness and realize Christ's sufficiency, you can rest in God's complete and finished work provided for you by Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul says that Jesus "was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25 NKJV)

If our faith is by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace. Hebrews 4:10 says, "For he who has entered His (God's) rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His." (Hebrews 4:10 NKJV)

Certainly, an active and growing faith will produce works in a believer's life, but in reality, biblical faith demonstrates what God, in His power and grace, is doing for, in, and through the one who believes in God. In Philippians 2:12, Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13 NKJV)

In Philippians 4:13, Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

We don't need to be praised for our faith because it's not really our faith; it's God's faith in us. All the praise for any work our faith produces belongs to God since He is the author and finisher of our faith!

Illustration: Whenever you sit down in a chair, you're exercising faith in the chair? You're showing you believe the chair will hold you up. Your faith brings the chair and your posterity together so you can rest. But you aren't sitting on your faith? It isn't your faith that holds you up; the chair does. So who is to be congratulated, you or the chair? The chair, of course, or the one who made it. Our faith glorifies the creator of the chair.

In the same way, biblical faith allows God to be God in you. It brings God's action forth through you in a way that glorifies God.
Faith doesn't receive the glory; God does!

Illustration: Think of the gear shift in your car as faith. Your vehicle has an engine and wheels, and a transmission. You can start the car, but you're not going anywhere until you put the car in gear! The gear shift relates the power under the hood to the wheels on the road, and the car begins to move forward. The gear shift doesn't move the car down the road; it connects the engine and transmission together so the car can move forward down the road.

That's the part faith is designed to play in the life of the Christian. Faith joins the power and wisdom of God with your voice and your hands so the gospel message can go forth and do its work.

But faith needs to have a valid object which is why biblical knowledge is so important. Biblical knowledge helps our faith focus on the right object. Faith in the wrong thing is worse than no faith at all.

The Apostle Paul addresses this in 1 Corinthians 15. He writes, "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty, and your faith *is* also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." (1 Corinthians 15:12-19 NKJV)

Illustration: Let's say you're driving a piece of equipment that weighs 20 tons and you try to cross a bridge with a 10-ton load limit. What do you think will happen? The result will be disastrous. The bridge will fail, and your false confidence will cause a lot of destruction.

There are three things a must-have object of faith needs to be valid.

I. Faith Must Be Able to Save

The faith of God within us has the ability to save us.

The Bible says that during his earthly life, Christ offered both requests and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his devotion. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25 NKJV)

Faith brings the power of God into the life of the believer. We become the children of God, and we are justified by faith. Through the Holy Spirit's power, we can also live a Christ-centered life of faith. From start to finish, the Christian life requires faith and dependence on God and His grace. That makes the Christian life a supernatural life that only God can accomplish in us. He does this through the Spirit, who comes to indwell us at the moment of our salvation.

As God's gift to us, the Holy Spirit accomplishes a wealth of ministry vital to our growth and spiritual life. It's impossible to live the Christian life by self-effort, nor can we manufacture a resurrected body by our own effort. The Apostle Paul rebuked the believers at Galatia for their failure to recognize this fundamental principle.

The Galatians began with faith in Christ, but because of the pressure of legalists, they returned to the realm of human achievement through religious works for spirituality. Paul described their failure to understand this as the result of being bewitched, which is undoubtedly the product of Satan's deception.

James 1:21 says, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."
(James 1:21 NKJV)

In Chapter 4, he says that only one is the lawgiver and judge—the one who can save or destroy. So why would you sit in judgment of your neighbor?

II. Faith Must Be Available to Save.

The faith of God within us is available to save.

Acts 17 says that from one man, he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

God does not want us to fail; he wants to save us. He has devised a plan of salvation that can rescue you from your sins and makes that available to you through Jesus Christ. Romans 8 tells us that Christ is the one who died for our sins and rose again from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. Do you ever stop to think that Jesus Christ is praying for you?

Romans 10:13 says, "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
(Romans 10:13 NKJV)

Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them."
(Hebrews 7:25 NKJV)

It's important that you do not underestimate the importance of faith in your life. The very nature of our modern society scoffs at true dependence on God. With all of the advances in modern science and technology in health, convenience, comfort, speed, power, amusement, and information, we have created a natural spirit of independence and an illusion of self-sufficiency. But the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Lord, we know that people do not control their own destiny. It is not in their power to determine what will happen to them."

Hebrews 13: 5 says, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ([Hebrews 13:5 NIV](#))

God does not want you to be overwhelmed by your circumstances. He knows that too much stress and pressure can cause discouragement and depression. God's plan of salvation provides us with a faith that is available to save us from losing hope and giving up.

The prophet Isaiah writes, "Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." ([Isaiah 55:6-7 NKJV](#))

And in verse 31 of Chapter 40, he writes, "But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." ([Isaiah 40:31 NKJV](#))

The final "must have" ingredient of your faith is that it must be willing to save!

III. Faith Must Be Willing to Save

One of the best-known and loved verses of scripture is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." ([John 3:16 NKJV](#))

In Hebrews 10, Jesus presents himself to the Father and says, Here I am, I have come to do Your will, Oh God." Jesus came to fulfill what God has willed. He removes the need to slay an animal to atone for a person's sins and replaces it with the sacrifice and death of His own life. By doing this, he establishes forever, the will of God, and therefore no longer are animal sacrifices needed to please God.

Now, all it takes is to accept that Jesus is the sacrificial lamb provided by God to take away the sins of the world. Christ was willing to offer himself as a sacrifice for your sins. Christ's sacrifice for you means the faith of God is willing to save you and give you eternal life.

Philippians 2 says this, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the

likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV)

The Bible does not say that Jesus only came to die for the sins of a select few. Scripture clearly reveals that God loves all people, which is why He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world.

1 Timothy 2 says, "For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4 NKJV)

2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9 NKJV)

I know there are many preachers today who believe in a limited atonement. It's a doctrine they learned in Seminary; they surely didn't learn it from the Bible. The Scriptures are clear. The faith of God is willing to save anyone and everyone.

Luke 10:19 says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10 NKJV)

That doesn't mean everyone will be saved. Even though God has chosen to save everyone, he has given us a choice too. And not everyone will choose God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

But if you do choose Christ, you have chosen a faith that is willing and able to save you.

Conclusion

But saving faith does not operate in a vacuum. There is saving faith, but there is also "the faith," the body of scriptural truth revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Bible. For faith to be effective, it must have a valid object which includes the right content. This is a tremendously important principle. Jesus reduced all of Scripture to two great commands: loving God and loving one's neighbor as himself.

The Bible is the Word of Truth, and the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. The Holy Spirit never contradicts the Word which He Himself inspired. This is one of the reasons there is such an emphasis in the Bible on knowing what the Word accurately teaches. Psalm 119: 9 says, "How can a young person maintain a pure lifestyle? By following your instructions!"

Faith must be personal. You cannot operate on the faith of someone else. Each person must personally receive Jesus Christ by faith. John 1:12 says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:" (John 1:12 NKJV)

You must personally know and believe the principles and promises of God's Word if you want to experience true spiritual changes in your life. With faith in Christ and faith in the promises of God's Word, we are well-equipped to experience every provision and aspect of God's plan of salvation.

Hebrews 4 says, "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*." ([Hebrews 4:1-2 NKJV](#))