

## R12.2 March 2022 Blog

### Faith – Part 1 of 3

Faith is a large and complex topic, but it is a key concept for our relationship with God. We will devote the next 3 blogs to this important topic.

The first step in thinking on and analyzing any subject is to know the key words and their definition.

1Co 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1Co 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Note that faith and hope made the big 3!

So, first, what is the definition of faith?

- Webster Definition: A confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, of an idea or thing
- Biblical Definition: Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen.

The Biblical definition provides us a clearer definition of faith. We can ask ourselves the following questions:

1. **What do I hope for?** What is the sustaining hope that I have? Do I hope for anything spiritually, or are all of my hopes worldly?
2. **What evidence** do I bank on for this thinking? In the biblical definition, we can't see the source of our hope. It is unseen.
3. **What is the link between hope and faith?** Faith is confidence in what we hope for. Faith is a complete trust or confidence in something. Hope is a peaceful assurance that something that hasn't happened yet will happen. Hope is key to faith because it defines what "wish" we have. Biblical hope is built on faith.

As you explore your hopes, let me share some of the major hopes that I recall having over the years:

#### My Temporal Hope

Fortune (\$)	Friends
Girls	Fame
Athletic Prowess	Big and beautiful body
Successful life by worldly standards	Never die
Good or better mind	Good family life

From this list of hopes, what would you say is my faith?

## My Eternal Hope (Found in Heaven; Unseen)

There is a Heaven without disease and I am going there	Meet God and Jesus
Protected from evil things	Visit all creation
All my needs taken care of	See all the family again in Heaven

I am sorry to reveal that I focus on temporal hope a lot, which taints my faith. Our hope is a major motivator in how we live our life, what we do and think.

Here are several verses in Romans that are very helpful in understanding faith:

- Rom 1:5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,
  - I know if I really believe when I act on my faith, which is obedience.
- Rom 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."
- Rom 10:8 But what does it say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the Word of Faith which we proclaim.
  - I was recently watching news on TV and I realized the Bible or God is never mentioned in our Cultural dialog.
- Rom 11:20 Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be high-minded, but fear.
  - Note: What or whom am I to fear?
- Rom 14:23 .....all that is not of faith is sin.
  - Wow, read that over several times!

During these blogs on faith, let's review some of the examples of faith from the Old Testament provided to us in Hebrews.

Heb 11:5 By faith **Enoch** was taken away so that he did not see death; "and was not found, because God had taken him": for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Scripture doesn't tell us what Enoch did, but we can conclude that if we live a life of faith, with a focus on God, that we will know enough to please Him and the payout of this thinking and life is through Jesus' eternal rewards. The key to "pleasing God" is to live a life driven by your faith in Jesus, hearing and doing the Word of God.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that **diligently** seek Him.

To be diligent, is to *search out*, that is to *investigate, crave, demand, worship*: inquire, seek after.

Some application for you is to survey your life. How much time and attention are you giving to diligently seeking God? Apparently, this is how we please God. Also, from these verses, we see that the motivation for our work is as important as the act itself.

Let's look at another OT example of faith:

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham was looking for "the perfect city", and he found it only after he died. But he was motivated to shape his life from believing and searching in God's Word and promises.

The phrase "looking for" infers anticipation. Do you anticipate God's reward with joy? It is also noteworthy that Abraham's children were heirs to the same promise.

Abraham had faith in God. We cannot please God unless we have Abraham's faith and that faith directs our life.

Recently a friend of mine asked a young adult audience what they hoped for. All responded that they hoped in temporal things. There was no mention of an eternal hope in God. I submit to you, if that is their hope, they will probably end up believing and worshiping things of this world (i.e., money, looks, position, house, etc.) and serving false gods.

#### Application:

1. You and your spouse think about what each of you hope in and for and document them in two separate lists (yours and your spouse's). Are they eternal? Are they the same?
2. What is the difference between "hope in" and "hope for"?
  - a. The question should be "who do you **hope in**, not what do you hope **for**"?
3. What is the connection between hope and fear?