

## **The Nature Of Biblical Faith**

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-8 ©  
With Pastor Joseph Rodrigues

### **OUTLINE**

#### **Introduction**

In the last session, we had a look at one of the first of the foundational doctrines, what the writer to the Hebrews describes as 'elementary teachings'.

Two *important points* need to be reiterated before we proceed to examine the next doctrine, i.e., "faith in God": -

1. repentance *always* precedes faith (an unbeliever is not called to have faith without first repenting) and
2. Repentance originates with God (so we can no longer boast!)

This necessarily means that we proceed *through* repentance into faith.

This second elementary doctrine, 'faith in God' focuses, not on the content of one's belief, but rather the character (or nature) of one's belief.

It examines

1. the origin of faith,
2. how one acquires it,
3. where it resides,
4. how it expresses itself in practical living, and
5. how one nurtures and develops it.

It is an important teaching for Christians, especially in the light of the abundance of misplaced faith prevalent in the church itself!

#### **What is faith?**

-*General* (and legitimate) use of the word- simply believing in or trusting in (person, thing, action etc)

-*Biblical* faith:

1. Originates from and relates to God's word. (Rom 10:17). Note it **only comes through God's word**
2. It is **a substance (Heb.11: 1)** though not physical, but spiritual, and the basis upon which hope is built.

- Faith is different to Hope. The two are often confused. Faith is something that relates to a present reality in the heart (**Rom10: 10**), while Hope relates to a future expectation in the mind (**1Thess. 5:8**) Therefore, Faith protects the heart, while Hope protects the mind.

-Popular misconception is the belief that faith is believing *that something is so*. In other words, faith is regarded as *the content* of one's belief. But biblical faith is different; it is the reflection of one's *character* or disposition of one's heart. Therefore, biblical faith is primarily faithfulness, loyalty, and commitment to God.

-The best expression of faith is faithfulness (Consider why James declares that faith without works is dead!).

-It involves commitment (**Luke 22:28**)

-More than anything else it is commitment *to a person* (**2 Tim 1:12**). Note the word "whom".

**Faith relates to what is unseen or invisible.** It is the reliance is on the unseen reality of God's word (**Heb. 11:3**).

-For this reason, biblical faith and sight are mutually exclusive (**2 Cor.5: 7**).

-We naturally want to see first before we believe. Biblical faith involves believing, then seeing (**John 11:39-40**).

-There is an intellectual aspect to faith, in that we can receive the *doctrine* about faith. But simply receiving the doctrine is not sufficient. Giving mental assent or recognition is not 'exercising faith'.

-Confession of our faith is required (**Matt 10:32, 33; Rom. 10:10**). We act according to our beliefs.

-Confession of our faith is important because it relates us to Jesus *who is our great high priest*:  
See **Heb. 3:1; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 10:21-23**

**Faith is the only basis for righteous living. This is an important doctrine!**

-“But the righteous will live by his faith (**Habakkuk 2:4**). This was a revelation God gave to the prophet about six centuries before the Christian era that was to provide the basis of the gospel

-**Rom. 1:17** “but the righteous man shall live by faith”

-See also **Rom.14: 23; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38**.

-Practical applications of faith. The basis of any application is our understanding of our total dependence upon God, so that we receive “with thanksgiving” and are prepared to share.

**Faith is developed through trials and testings; in other words, faith has to be worked out!**

**Jas. 1:2-4**

**1 Peter 1:6-7**

You cannot grow in faith without an increase in your trials! The harder the test, the greater the faith exercised. This is a fact that every Christian’s experience will attest to.

*Consider: What are the options available when tested? How do we respond?*

**Why does God test our faith?**

As we have seen Scripture warns us that our faith will be subjected to severe tests. These are necessary in order to prove its genuineness and to develop strong Christian character in us – such as perseverance, hope, the love of God in our hearts, and the satisfaction in nothing and no one but God Himself.

Tribulation is a necessary part of our total Christian experience (Peter and James’ teachings).

Paul, James and Peter all assure us that once we understand the purpose of our tribulations, we will embrace them with joy.

**Faith as a gift.**

One of the nine spiritual gifts in **1 Cor.12**.

Note that these gifts are all described as *manifestations of the Spirit*. It falls in the category of ‘power gifts’. *Therefore, it is sovereign and is supernatural.*

Examples of this “god’s faith” -

See **Mark 11**(fig tree cursed). Jesus’ challenge to the disciples was to receive and exercise this sort of faith. This sort of faith is not on the human level. It enabled Jesus to raise the dead, restore withered limbs etc.

This kind of faith is expressed through a spoken word, but energized by supernatural faith.

It is characterized by quality, not quantity (“mustard seed” sized faith is sufficient).

It can be released through a word spoken in prayer (see **James 5:15**).

It is given in a specific situation to meet a specific need.

It remains in god’s control, given or withheld at his discretion, like the other nine gifts (**1 Cor. 12:11**). It is not ours to command. Even Jesus recognized this. He did not curse *every* fig tree, or raise *every* dead person etc. Jesus always did only what God asked him to do depending totally on him (**John 5:19; 14:10**).

**Conclusion.**

In the light of the above, what do you think about ‘faith healing’ and similar teachings?

