



This study marks the beginning of a new series of Bible studies dealing with *Attitudes of the Heart*. We will be studying a different attitude each week for the next fifteen weeks. What do we mean by an “Attitudes of the Heart”? These are the inward attitudes of the heart which are fundamental to Christian character. Christianity is chiefly an inward work of the Holy Spirit in the life of God’s people. God is not concerned with men conforming outwardly to some religious system but rather that they be conformed inwardly to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29).


This conforming process takes place as we learn more about God the Father and submit ourselves to Him. So although the Holy Spirit is responsible for producing these attitudes, we are also responsible for obediently submitting to the Spirit’s work within us (Eph 4:30-32; 1 Thes 5:19).

This week we will be dealing with a foundational attitude to all others and that is *Faith*.

 Heb 6:1. **Q.** According to this verse, what two things are foundational to Christianity?

 Romans 5:1. **Q.** How are we justified? _____.


Faith is the door which all men and women must pass through when entering the Kingdom of God (Gal 3:22; John 3:15). It is *trust in God*.

 Hebrews 11:6. **Q.** What must we have to please God? _____.

Q. According to that verse, what two things does faith encompass?

Faith in God is believing that He exists, and that He is who He has revealed Himself to be. It is then trusting Him based upon that revelation. A Christian has, by definition, exercised faith in God when he trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord (Gal 3:26). He believed that God existed, he believed the testimony God gave of His Son and trusted that God would save him as He promised (1 John 5:10-13).


Not only does a man become a Christian through an initial exercise of faith (Eph 2:8-9), but he continually grows in his faith as he matures spiritually (2 Thess 1:3).

 Gal 3:11. **Q.** How should the *just* live? _____.

Faith is Trusting God

We have already seen that faith is *believing that God exists, that He is who He has revealed Himself to be and trusting Him based upon that revelation*. At salvation, we trust God to fulfill the initial promise of salvation through Jesus Christ. Following salvation, the Christian life consists of learning more and more about God and developing an ever increasing trust based upon our growing knowledge of who He is and what He has promised.

In 2 Timothy Paul is writing to Timothy from prison. He has experienced much affliction for the gospel’s sake and is aware that his death is imminent. It is under these circumstances that he wrote 2 Timothy 1:12:

 2 Timothy 1:12. **Q.** For what two reasons was Paul not ashamed?


1. _____

2. _____

Paul’s unashamed faith was firmly founded upon the fact that he *knew God* and based upon this elder saints deep knowledge of God he was persuaded that God would preserve him at the time of judgment. Deep faith comes from deep knowledge of who God is.

Many Christians find it difficult to trust God because they have a shallow understanding of who He is. It is hard to trust someone that you do not know! As we read and obey the Bible, experience answers to prayer and trust God through our trials we learn more and more about Him. The more we learn about him the easier it becomes to trust Him. The more we trust Him, the easier it is to exercise faith.

Paul had experienced both triumphs and trials in his Christian life and through it all He learned to trust God by faith. In Philippians 4:12 Paul said “*I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*”

 Philippians 4:13. **Q.** What belief sustained Paul through his times of abundance and abasement?

The Christian life is a life of faith. **Q.** Gal 2:20. How did Paul say that he now lives?

For the Christian, all of God's promises are culminated in the person of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:20 says *For all the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* If we ever doubt God's loving care for us, or his ability to help us, we need not look any further than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God proved His loving character by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. He proved His endless ability by raising Him from the dead (Eph 1:19-20).

The Hall of Faith

Hebrews chapter 11 is commonly referred to as God's *Hall of Faith*. In it, we find a list of some of the great men and women of faith found throughout the Old Testament.


Abraham

 Heb 11:8-10. **Q.** How did Abraham respond to God's call?

Q. Did Abraham know where he was going? _____.

Q. v9. If Abraham did not know where he was going and had no rightful claim or ability to take the land he was in, on what basis was he dwelling there?

Abraham did not know where he was going, yet he obeyed. He uprooted his family and travelled to a strange land all based upon his trust in God. He believed that God would fulfill the promise that He had made even though the circumstances around him did not reflect it.


 Romans 4:16-24. **Q.** v17. What two things about God did Abraham base his faith on?

v18. **Q.** Abraham believed even against hope. On what basis?

v19. **Q.** What did Abraham *not* consider?

v20. **Q.** Abraham was _____ in faith.

v21. **Q.** What was Abraham persuaded about God?

 Heb 11:17-19. **Q.** What did Abraham do by faith?

Q. What had Abraham received from God? _____.

Q. What did Abraham take in to account when he offered Isaac?

Abraham was willing to disregard his difficult circumstances and the apparent impossibility of his situation all based upon God's promise. He was able to trust and to remain strong in faith because he *knew God*. He knew God enough to be persuaded that He would keep the promise that He had made. He offered Isaac knowing not only that God had promised him a seed, but that God was also *able* to raise him from the dead.

Faith involves standing on God's promises and believing He is able to fulfill them.

Sarah


 Heb 11:11. **Q.** What did Sarah do by faith?

Q. How did Sarah judge God? _____.

Q. Because Sarah judged God as faithful, what did she believe God would do?

Sarah did not have the strength or ability to conceive. The reality of her situation was bleak. There was no logical reason to believe that she would have a child naturally but she did have a child and through that child a multitude of descendants arose (v12). Sarah did not only believe *in* God, but she *believed God*. She knew God was faithful and unchanging and based upon her knowledge of who God was, she trusted Him.

Joseph

 Heb 11:22. **Q.** What did Joseph do by faith?

There were no circumstances occurring in Egypt at the time of Joseph's claim that would have lead him to believe that the children of Israel would depart. He based his claim entirely upon faith in the promise of God. He so trusted in God's promise that he gave the children of Israel instruction as to how to deal with his bones when they finally escaped Egyptian bondage (Ex 13:19).

Looking at the above examples we could say that ***Faith is resting in God's promises based upon our trust in His character and ability.*** Like Abraham, Sarah and Joseph we should not allow circumstances to affect our faith. Even when we don't understand our circumstances, we can still understand our God. In order for us to truly exercise faith then, we should seek to learn more about God and more about what he has promised!

His Promises

List the promises found in the following passages.

- 📖 Rom 10:9-10 _____
- 📖 John 10:27-28 _____
- 📖 Heb 13:5 _____
- 📖 Php 4:19 _____
- 📖 1 Cor 10:13 _____
- 📖 1 John 1:9 _____
- 📖 James 1:5 _____
- 📖 Rom 8:28 _____

This is only a small sampling of the multitude of promises God has given to His people throughout scripture. Do you believe them? Even God's most difficult promises become easy to believe when we learn to trust Him. Getting to know our eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, holy, sovereign, righteous, promise-keeping God, leads us to real faith. No matter how unbelievable God's promises might seem at first glance, they all become believable as we grow in our knowledge of who God is and what He is able to do.

A Lack of Faith?

Do you sometimes find it hard to trust God? Even the Apostles had to ask

Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5). Take what faith you have now and ask God to give you more, than trust that He will (Mark 9:24).

An essential inward attitude in the Christian life is *faith*. **What can we do this week to help deepen our faith?**

Review

1. Christianity is not a matter of conforming to outward religious standards. What is it a matter of?
2. How does becoming like Jesus happen?
3. In your own words, what is faith in God?
4. Faith involves more than belief, what should our faith lead us to do?
5. If we want to deepen our faith, what should we learn more about?
6. How should the fact that God sent Jesus Christ to die for us increase our faith?
7. Why can we still have faith when our circumstances don't make sense?