

What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian's Life Is A Life Of Faith



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

A Christian's Life Is A Life Of Faith

Learn the importance of faith in the life of a Christian and what that faith makes possible

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW102

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian's Life Is A Life Of Faith

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a Christian means a great deal. Fortunately, God has given us all the information we need to know about what being a Christian really means. As we study His saving message, we discover that a Christian's life is a life of faith.

Faith Is Necessary To Be Saved

Faith is not only a part of a Christian's life; but, it is the central part of his/her life! It is necessary every step of the way – both to become a Christian and in order to live as a Christian. There will not be any salvation for the one who does not have a genuine faith!

Necessary to become a Christian

The Christian was once alienated from God by his/her sins. Having faith in God and Christ was necessary in order to be saved from those sins. Hebrews 11:6 says, "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 those who diligently seek Him." Without this quality of faith, you are not able to conduct your life in a way that is pleasing to God. It does not matter if you are a morally good person who is trying to have a

positive impact on this world. It does not matter if you do many good things (even the things God would want and has commanded you to do). It does not matter if you are a good husband or wife and fulfill the role God has given you to fulfill in the home. It does not matter if you are an excellent father or mother who is totally invested in your children. None of it matters – without faith!

Jesus clearly indicated that faith was necessary in order for an individual to be saved from sin. John 8:24 says, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." In order for you to be able to have spiritual life through Jesus Christ, God requires that you have faith! Similarly, in Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." First, observe that both faith and baptism are identified as being requirements for salvation. Then, notice the consequence of failing to believe: Eternal condemnation. Throughout the Scriptures, therefore, the Bible tells of the need to have faith – and warns of the consequences of failing to have faith.

The Scriptures teach that we are unable to earn our own salvation from sin by our own works. However, salvation has been made available by the grace of God to all who will have faith. Ephesians 2:1-10, for instance, demonstrates that we were once "dead in trespasses and sins" when we were living according to the sinful ways of this world. But, thanks to the grace and mercy of God, we were given the opportunity to be made alive – "even when we were dead in trespasses." Verses 8-9 then say, "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."

John 3:16 summarizes this in a similar and succinct way: "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." What a tremendous opportunity we have been given – to "not perish but have everlasting life." However, in order to partake of this wonderful blessing, we must have faith! Now, this is not faith *only*, but an active and obedient faith (as we'll see later in the

lesson). Clearly, faith is necessary in order to become a Christian and be saved.

Necessary to live as a Christian

Faith is not just a one-time requirement that God has placed upon us in order to be forgiven of our sins and become a Christian. After becoming Christians, we cannot then turn away from the faith which brought us into God's favor. In fact, the Scriptures instruct that we must be "faithful until death" in order to receive the "crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). The Scriptures also teach that it is possible to live in such a way so as to fall away from the grace of the Almighty God. Galatians 5:4 says, "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

Therefore, it is not pleasing to God if you have faith so as to receive the forgiveness of your sins and then turn away from that faith later in your life! Instead, as you live your life and experience trials, temptations, and persecutions, the "genuineness of your faith" is being put to the test (1 Peter 1:7). You must have a kind of faith that perseveres these tests. For instance, Jesus taught a parable about the word of God being planted in the hearts of men and women – and how it produced results that differed depending upon each one's heart (see Luke 8:4-8, 11-15). Specifically, Jesus makes reference to one group of people who heard and were receptive to the word of God (immediately receiving it with joy). However, they only "believe for a while" and fall away in time of temptation (vs. 13). This individual does not continue to demonstrate true faith – and, consequently, cannot live in a way that is pleasing to God!

Rather than becoming weaker in faith, God wants His people to grow in their faiths. 2 Peter 1:5-11 demonstrates that Christians are to be giving "all diligence" to add (supplement) their faiths with other God-approved qualities. For instance, verses 5-7 instruct the Christian to "add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." The passage continues by illustrating

that the one who is growing in his/her faith will be useful and fruitful in the service of the Lord!

Finally, consider how faith is necessary in your life as a Christian because of its connection to defending against the attacks of the devil. The Scriptures plainly demonstrate that Satan is active in this world in trying to lure people away from serving God (see 1 Peter 5:8). In order to be victorious over this fierce enemy who is seeking to devour our souls, the Christian will have to be alert, self-controlled, willing to resist, and "steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:8-9).

In fact, God has identified spiritual armor that every Christian must put on in order to serve Him and overcome the attacks of the devil (as identified in Ephesians 6:10-18). As the apostle Paul was writing concerning this armor, consider what he says about the role of faith (vs. 16): "above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." The picture is one of Satan hurling flaming arrows at us in order to destroy us. Indeed, Satan has many different tools at his disposal in order to lure us away from serving God. However, Paul says that we must (above all) take up the "shield of faith" in order to overcome his assaults. Therefore, our faith will be necessary in order to live faithful lives that please God and be saved!

Faith In...

Faith is necessary for salvation. God has required you to have faith in order to become a Christian and in order to live pleasing to Him as a Christian. But, what or who must your faith be in? Certainly there are many things and people folks put their faiths in. However, please appreciate where the Bible says your faith must be in order to be pleasing to God.

Faith in God

Look at Hebrews 11:6 again. "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 those who diligently seek Him." There

are clearly some fundamental truths about God that we can and must truly have faith in as Christians.

(1) Faith that God exists. Before you can put your faith in anything else about God or Christ, you must have complete faith in the existence of God. You “must believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6). Certainly, God has given you sufficient evidence to be able to know that He does exist and put your full faith in Him. He has demonstrated that He exists in two ways. (1) He has demonstrated that He exists through His written word. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” You can have faith that God exists when you read of His existence in the pages of Scripture (i.e. Genesis 1:1). (2) He has demonstrated that He exists through the things He has created. Psalm 19:1 says that the “heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” Similarly, Romans 1:19-21 says that the truth about God can be known because God has shown it to us. Namely, He has shown us that He does exist through the things He has created. So, we are without excuse if we reject His existence.

(2) Faith that God is who He says He is. It is not enough just to believe that there is a higher power identified as “God.” There are many people who claim to have faith in God; but, they do not really believe in who God tells us He is. Instead, they believe in their own god called “God.” However, we must remember that “what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them” (Romans 1:19). What God wants us to know about Him has been made known to us (either through His creation or through His written word). Therefore, we are not at liberty to make God into whatever we want Him to be. We must simply accept who He says He is. For instance, the Bible reveals that God is an all-powerful, ever-present, eternal, all-knowing, holy, gracious, merciful, loving, and longsuffering God who is also a jealous God and will punish those who disobey Him. Yet, there are many who do not choose to believe or accept that God will punish anyone (even though they disobey God).

(3) Faith that God is manifested in 3 persons. Part of an accurate faith in God involves accepting the truth that there are three separate and distinct Beings who all possess the quality/nature of being

God. The Scriptures teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all are Deity. For instance, passages like Matthew 3:16-17 show all three of the members of the “Godhead” as separate Beings. In the text, Jesus Christ was on the earth and was baptized, the Holy Spirit is seen in the form of a dove, and the Father's voice is heard. Then, passages like Matthew 28:18-20, John 1:1, and Acts 5:3-4 (along with others) demonstrate that all three possess the nature of being God.

(4) Faith that God will reward those who seek Him. Not only does Hebrews 11:6 say that you must believe that God exists in order to please God; but, it says that you must believe that “He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” God has promised that the outcome of your faith is the salvation of your soul and the eternal reward of life in Heaven (see 1 Peter 1:3-9). He has promised “the crown of life” to those who are “faithful until death” (Revelation 2:10). You must have the faith in God that God will do as He has promised to those who diligently seek Him.

(5) Faith that God will do everything He promises to do. Not only must you have faith that God will reward those who diligently seek Him; but, you must have faith that God will do everything He has promised to do. For instance, you must have faith that God has promised to send Jesus Christ to end this earth one day (2 Peter 3:10). You must have faith that God will judge the world by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10). You must have faith that those who are judged to have been righteous will be given everlasting life in Heaven (Matthew 25:34, 46). And, you must have faith that God will punish those who are judged to have been unrighteous by sentencing them to eternal punishment in Hell fire (Matthew 25:41, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). In all things, you must have complete faith that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) and that He will do whatever (anything and everything) He has promised to do.

Faith in Jesus Christ

While Jesus Christ is part of the Godhead, we need to think about Him specifically – as it relates to our faith as Christians. There are some fundamental

truths about Jesus Christ we must have faith in to be acceptable to God.

(1) Faith that Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ possesses the nature of being God. While there are many passages that teach Jesus' Deity, consider John 1:1 (note that Jesus is referred to as the "Word" in this text). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Therefore, as you develop your faith, you must believe that Jesus Christ possesses all the same qualities as God (the Father) possesses.

(2) Faith that Jesus Christ was God manifested in the flesh. John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Whenever Jesus Christ was born on this earth, He was God living as man. Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This is the reason why Jesus Christ was identified as being both the Son of God and the Son of Man. He was God living in the flesh. You must have faith that Jesus Christ chose to leave Heaven in order to come to this earth and live as man.

(3) Faith that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life. Jesus Christ, as a man, was tempted by Satan in all the same ways we are tempted. Read, for instance, how Satan tempted Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11. However, Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a High Priest [Jesus] who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Therefore, as you have faith in Jesus Christ and recognize that He lived on this earth, you must have faith that Jesus Christ (though He was tempted) did not commit sin.

(4) Faith that Jesus Christ demonstrated that He was the Son of God. Jesus Christ did not just claim to be the Son of God. He demonstrated that He truly was the Son of God. Jesus Christ fulfilled all the prophecies that were made throughout the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the promised Messiah. In addition, Jesus Christ performed great signs and miracles during the time He walked on this earth. And, according to John 20:30-31, these signs have been preserved in the pages of the Scriptures so that you may "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

(5) Faith that Jesus Christ offered Himself as the ransom sacrifice for sin. Jesus' primary mission in coming to this earth was to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). In the language of 2 Corinthians 8:9, Jesus Christ (though He was rich) became poor so that you could become rich by His poverty. This means that Jesus Christ (although He lived in Heaven) was willing to leave Heaven, come to earth, suffer, and die on the cross so that you could become a partaker of all the riches of Heaven! Jesus Christ, as the sinless Lamb of God, was willing to offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world in order to give people the opportunity to have their sins forgiven. You must put your faith in the fact that Jesus Christ has provided you this opportunity to be saved!

(6) Faith that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. The apostle Paul taught that if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, our faith is worthless and we are still living in our sins. Of all people, then, we are the most pitiable (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). However, thanks be to God that Jesus Christ did raise from the dead – just as He had promised. The Scriptures provide us with sufficient evidence to believe in Jesus' resurrection, including the great number of people who were eye-witnesses of the resurrected Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-11). Yes, you can have faith that Jesus Christ is risen – and that He has provided the victory over death!

What It Means To Have Acceptable Faith

Now that we have seen that faith is necessary for salvation and that we must have faith in God and in Jesus Christ, we need to develop a greater understanding of what faith actually is. There are certainly many people in this world (even religious people) who have misinformed ideas about what faith actually is. Actually, there are two things essential to having the kind of faith that is pleasing

to God: Mental acknowledgement and works of faith.

Hebrews 11:1

Throughout Hebrews 11, the author paints a picture of what acceptable faith in God really looks like. But, before he does so, the author begins with this God-inspired definition of faith. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

True faith is the assurance of the things you hope for. True faith makes what you hope for a reality. True faith means that the things you mentally accept as being true are not just some kind of fairy tale or wishful thinking. Instead, true faith looks at those things (though they are unseen things) as being just as real as anything else! Then, true faith acts according to these realities.

True faith is also the conviction of things not yet seen. Yes, the Christian walks “by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). However, the Christian is not walking blindly. Instead, his/her faith is grounded in the hope of the gospel and his/her faith is sure enough so as to endure all of the things that will test it.

Then, after defining what true faith is, the Hebrew writer demonstrates true faith through numerous examples. These examples include Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and others. In all of these examples, they had complete trust in whatever God told them – so much that they acted in the way God desired! These are the two necessary ingredients to having acceptable faith.

Mental acknowledgement

True faith must acknowledge that what God says is truth. In John 8:24, for instance, Jesus said, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Also, recall that Hebrews 11:6 says that it is impossible to please God without faith – that you must believe that God exists and that God rewards.

This necessary ingredient of true faith can be seen throughout Hebrews chapter 11 in the examples that are given. For instance, (1) Noah believed the truth that God was going to send a flood to destroy

everything living on the earth. He also believed the truth that God would save him and his household if he prepared an ark (see Hebrews 11:7). (2) Abraham believed the truth that God had revealed to him concerning his son, Isaac. Abraham believed that God was going to fulfill His promise to make a great nation from the descendants of Isaac. He even believed that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead (see Hebrews 11:17-19). (3) The Israelites believed that God was able to deliver the city of Jericho into their hands (see Hebrews 11:30).

True faith begins by making definite decisions about whether you will accept what God has said to be true or not. Therefore, you cannot have true faith unless you first come to the realizations that I have stated earlier in this lesson. Believing these as truth is fundamental and essential to pleasing God. You cannot please Him if you do not accept what He says as being truth.

Works of faith

Yes, true faith mentally accepts what God has revealed as being true. However, there are many people who want to stop at that point. There are many religious organizations that believe and teach the doctrine of faith *only* for salvation. Under this doctrine, in order to become a Christian, all you must do is believe (mentally acknowledge) the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then, many of those same religious organizations will claim that you can never live in such a way so as to lose your salvation.

However, mentally accepting certain things as being true is *not* all that is necessary for salvation – and is *not* all that is involved in having acceptable faith. Look at the rest of Hebrews 11:6. You must believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder “of those who diligently seek Him”! The necessary inference is that faith is not complete and God is not going to reward you unless you are diligently seeking Him! God requires this diligent lifestyle of seeking to live according to His instructions in order to be pleasing to Him!

God requires these works of faith (or, works of obedience) because it is not enough just to acknowledge God as God, you must also glorify Him as God throughout your life (see Romans 1:18-32).

Your life must be lived in a way that is in harmony with the things you accept mentally as being true! This is exactly what we see demonstrated as acceptable faith in Hebrews 11. Think back over those same three examples I listed a moment ago. (1) Noah's faith was not acceptable to God just because he accepted the truth about the flood and the salvation that was available in the ark. His faith was only acceptable when He acted according to those beliefs – when he was moved with godly fear and prepared the ark for the saving of his household (see Hebrews 11:7). (2) Abraham's faith was not acceptable to God just because he accepted the promises about Isaac and his descendants, concluding that God was able to even raise Isaac from the dead. His faith was only acceptable when He acted according to those beliefs – when he was willing to offer Isaac on the altar (see Hebrews 11:17-19). (3) The faith of the Israelites was not acceptable to God just because they accepted the truth that God was able to deliver the city of Jericho into their hands. Their faith was only acceptable when they acted according to those beliefs – when they obeyed God's instructions to march around the city (see Hebrews 11:30).

Yes, the Bible does teach that works must accompany your faith in order for your faith to be pleasing to God. This is true both of the faith He requires in order to become a Christian and of the faith He requires in order to live as a Christian. However, these works of faith are not the same as works of merit. Works of faith are works that demonstrate your faith in God (demonstrating that you need to be obedient to God in order for Him to save you). However, works of merit are works that demonstrate your faith in yourself (demonstrating that you believe you can save yourself through your own good works). Works of merit cannot save any sinner (see Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 4:1-4).

While there are many passages which teach that works of faith (obedience) are necessary to please God and to be saved, consider James 2:14-26. In this passage, James states and demonstrates that faith without works (of obedience) is dead (see verses 14-17, 20, 26). He also demonstrates that even the demons believe (mentally) in God and tremble at His existence (see verse 19). However, the

implication is that the demons will not be saved by this mental acknowledgement alone. James also provides examples (of Abraham and of Rahab) that both mental acknowledgement and works of obedience are necessary in order to be justified in God's sight (see verses 21-23, 25). And, verse 24 solves the matter entirely: "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Faith at work = acceptable faith

Faith that is truly pleasing to God is faith that works! Once again, these works are not done in order to earn/merit salvation. Instead, whenever the individual who mentally accepts the truths God has revealed acts in a way that is consistent and obedient with those truths, he/she recognizes that he/she is still an unprofitable servant (having simply done what was his/her duty to do, Luke 17:7-10).

This is the kind of genuine faith that God wants from all mankind! First, this is the kind of faith that is required in order to become a Christian and be saved (John 3:16). God's word requires that individuals hear His word (Romans 10:17), believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Only after being baptized into Jesus Christ has a person truly believed in God (see Acts 16:30-34)!

Second, this is the kind of faith that is required in order to live as a Christian and remain in a saved condition. For instance, the apostle Peter wrote to some Christians who were being persecuted. They were being "grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of [their] faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7). It was not enough for these individuals to have become Christians at a previous point in time. It was not enough for them to just mentally acknowledge the truths God had revealed. They needed to put their faith to work and demonstrate that their faith was genuine by living in obedience to God and enduring the trials of life!

Dear Christian brother or sister, do you have an active, obedient faith? Are the decisions you are making as a child of God manifesting that you truly believe in the things God has revealed to be truth? Or, have you neglected one or both of these two essential elements of faith? Remember, God says that without this kind of faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

What Faith Makes Possible

It is my hope that you have a genuine faith. It is my hope that you mentally accept all that God teaches as being true. Then, it is my hope that you are living your life in a way that is in harmony with those convictions. If you are, there are some things that only true faith will make possible in your life. Faith is powerful whenever these two elements are in place.

Examples of faith

Take a moment to be encouraged by some examples of faith – and how much their faith impacted their lives. (1) After the Israelites were permitted to go away from the land of Egypt (after being slaves there), the Egyptian army pursued them. As the Egyptian army closed in on the Israelites, the Red Sea stood between the Israelites and being free. However, God provided Moses with the ability to part the Red Sea. Then, by faith, the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as if it was dry ground (see Hebrews 11:29).

(2) Whenever the Israelites had been taken into captivity by the Midianites (an army that was as numerous as locusts) God chose to use Gideon and 300 men (armed only with trumpets, empty pitchers, and torches) to deliver the Israelites from their oppression (read Judges 6-8). Then, because of faith in God, these 300 men went boldly to attack this powerful army – and (by the power of God) came out victorious!

(3) During the days of King Nebuchadnezzar, an image of gold was constructed and a decree was issued which required all the inhabitants of that land fall down and worship the image at the appointed

times. Failure to do so resulted in being cast into a fiery furnace. However, there were three men who had an unwavering faith in God who refused – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. These three men concluded that God was able to deliver them from the burning fiery furnace and from the hand of the king. But, whether God would choose to do so or not, they wanted everyone to know that they did not worship or serve the golden image (see Daniel 3:16-18)! Then, when they were cast into the burning fiery furnace, God saved them alive!

(4) After Jesus had sent His disciples away in a boat and the boat was in the middle of the sea, Jesus came walking on the sea to them (Matthew 14:22-33). The wind was contrary at the time and the boat was being tossed by the waves. Then, after Jesus made Himself known to His disciples, Peter was commanded to walk on the water and come to Jesus. For the time that Peter kept His focus and faith in Jesus, he was doing the “impossible” – walking on the water. However, whenever Peter took His focus off of Jesus and was distracted by the winds and the waves around Him, he began to sink.

Faith is the victory!

All of these examples (and so many others) demonstrate the great power of having faith in God. Their faith was the victory in each of these situations. And, although we are not called to walk on water, bow before a golden image, deliver God’s people from oppression, or pass through the Red Sea – our faith continues to be the victory over this world!

Consider 1 John 5:4-5. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” Earlier in the letter of 1 John, John wrote that “the world is passing away, and lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17).

The Christian, in refusing to live according to the ways of this world and fulfill the desires of the flesh, will not suffer the same destruction as all those who do! Though they experience ease of living here on this earth and they often enjoy pleasures of sin, those pleasures and comforts are only temporary.

Soon, their lives will end and they will reap the eternal consequences of their decisions. However, the Christian (in living a life of faith) will not suffer destruction. Instead, the Christian will receive the end of his/her faith – the salvation of the soul (1 Peter 1:9). This is the inheritance that is “incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away” – and is reserved in Heaven for the Christian (1 Peter 1:3-4)!

So, as the Christian has full confidence in the truths and promises God has revealed, he/she makes decisions and acts according to that faith. This faith will provide everything that the Christian needs in order to live in a way that pleases God and overcome all of the obstacles in this world!

Perseverance in trials

One obstacle the Christian’s faith will overcome are the trials of life. There will be many difficult things the Christian will endure. There will be sickness. There will be injury. There will be deaths. There will be financial struggles. There will be concerns for one’s family. All the trials of this life will put your faith to the test so as to see whether it is genuine or not! At each of these moments, you will be faced with choices – either to be steadfast in your service and devotion to God or to turn away from Him.

Faith will provide the victory over these trials! True faith will not waver at the promises of God. True faith trumps what is seen with that which is not seen. True faith recognizes that God has promised that there will be things which try our faiths. True faith recognizes that enduring these trials will produce an even stronger faith! James 1:2-4 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Perseverance in persecutions

Another obstacle the Christian’s faith will overcome are the persecutions he/she experiences for following Jesus Christ. Jesus promised that the world will hate those who are Christians – just as it hated Him (John 15:18-21). Therefore, Paul concluded that

“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Perhaps you will be physically abused for following the Lord. Perhaps you will be mocked for following the Lord. Perhaps you will be alienated from others for following the Lord. Perhaps there will be financial burdens placed on you for following the Lord.

Faith will provide the victory over these persecutions! True faith will not waver at the promises of God. True faith trumps whatever hardships you are enduring for following the Lord. True faith recognizes that God has promised that His people will suffer persecutions for following Him. And, true faith responds to these situations like Paul responded to his frequent persecutions. For instance, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Perseverance in temptations

A final obstacle the Christian’s faith will overcome are the temptations of Satan. As we have already observed, Satan is the fierce enemy of the Christian – trying to lure him/her away from following the Lord (see 1 Peter 5:8). The devil is doing everything within his power to appeal to your fleshly desires and convince you not to follow Jesus Christ! He is, as we have seen, hurling “fiery darts” at you in order to destroy you. Perhaps he is appealing to your earthly desire for riches. Perhaps he is appealing to your earthly desire for acceptance. Perhaps he is appealing to your earthly desire for physical pleasures. Whatever fleshly desire he is appealing to, he is trying hard to convince you that it is more fulfilling to follow those desires than it is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith will provide the victory over these temptations! True faith will not waver at the promises of God. True faith will trump Satan’s appeals for the passing pleasures of sin (see Hebrews 11:24-26). True faith will look to God’s promise that

there will be a way of escape from every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13) – and will seek that way. True faith knows that Jesus Christ was tempted in all the same ways we are tempted, yet He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15) – and knows that following the steps of Jesus will lead out of the temptation. True faith knows that we will be able to overcome every temptation Satan uses against us (1 Corinthians 10:13). True faith knows that Satan will flee from us whenever we resist him (James 4:7). Ultimately, true faith knows that no earthly pleasure, treasure, or relationship is worth losing the soul for (Matthew 16:26)!

Conclusion

As a Christian, your life must be a life of faith. Though there are many things that will challenge your faith, know that true faith in God is strong enough to overcome the world! There is victory in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57)! If you will keep your eyes focused on Jesus (walking by faith and not by sight, 2 Corinthians 5:7), you will receive the salvation of your soul when life on this earth is over (1 Peter 1:3-9)! What a glorious day that will be whenever faith will become sight – when you are no longer hoping in things that are unseen because you are living and experiencing all of the promises God had made. At this time, you will know that your faith was not misplaced and was not in vain!

Study Questions

1. Faith Is Necessary To Be Saved

Is faith necessary to become a Christian? Provide evidence for your answer.

Is faith necessary to live as a Christian? Provide evidence for your answer.

2. Faith In...

You must have faith in God. Identify some things you must believe about God.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

You must have faith in Jesus Christ. Identify some things you must believe about Jesus.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

3. What It Means To Have Acceptable Faith

How does Hebrews 11:1 define faith?

How does faith overcome the temptations of Satan?

Explain how mental acknowledgement is an essential element of faith.

Explain how works of faith are essential to faith.

What does acceptable faith look like? Do you have this kind of faith?

4. What Faith Makes Possible

List some examples of faith and briefly describe what faith made possible in each situation.

What does 1 John 5:4-5 say about faith? How is this true?

How does faith overcome the trials of life?

How does faith overcome persecutions?