

Foundations Principles: Faith in God



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Faith in God

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1 Faith in God

Repentance from dead works and faith in God go hand in hand. Salvation comes to a person when they realise that nothing, they can do will enable them to spend eternity in heaven. Having come to this epiphany they then turn to God and place their faith in His provision for their sins – Jesus. Having attained salvation, the new believer must grow in faith in their relationship with God, and their complete acceptance of His Word.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

“6 ...Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Hebrews 10:38 (ESV)

“38 But my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him”.

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

“1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”

1.1 Faith in the Lord & Saviour

Believing in Jesus as Messiah requires:

- Faith in His Deity as the Son of God.
- Faith in His sacrificial death.
- Faith in the power of His shed blood.
- Faith in His resurrection
- Faith in His High Priestly office
- Faith in His return for His Bride.
- Faith in His Millennial rule as the Son of David.
- Faith in eternity in the New Earth – the Son of God.

1.2 What is Faith?

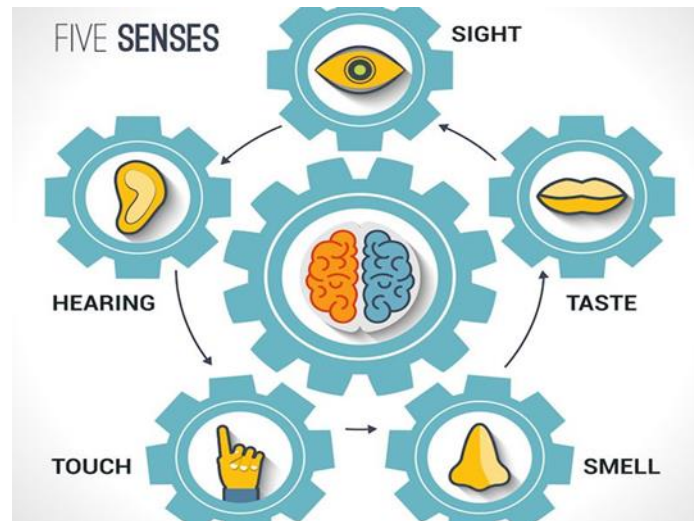
The author of Hebrews defines faith as “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1).

There are two keywords in this important scripture on faith:

Assurance: The New King James version translates the word “assurance” as “substance,” this is because the Greek word *hupostasis* has the literal meaning: “That which has real existence, the basic essence, the actual reality, the substance of something” (1). Faith is the “assurance” of that which is hoped for, true faith is real, and it has substance. Just as

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our physical senses give us evidence of the material world, faith is the “sense” that gives us evidence of the invisible, spiritual world. Faith makes a connection between our physical world and the spiritual world. A believer with faith knows the reality of the power of the Holy Spirit that is dwelling within them, an invisible substance. Our faith may be interpreted as a sixth sense.



(1). Hobart E. Freeman, THD, Faith (Claypool, IN: Faith Publications, n.d.) p3.

Conviction: Then the Greek word *elegchos* is translated as “conviction” by the ESV, it is also translated as “evidence” and “certain” by other translations. The person of faith has a conviction that what is hoped for in faith will become a reality, the result is evident to them. The apostle John describes this conviction by writing: “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him” (1 John 5:14-15).

The Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith has two aspects: an inner “assurance” of a spiritual connection to God, and an intellectual “conviction” that trusts that God’s promises are true. Having attained an understanding of the power of God living within us, we are then able to place our spiritual sense over our physical senses and say, “I walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

1.3 What is Kingdom-minded Faith?

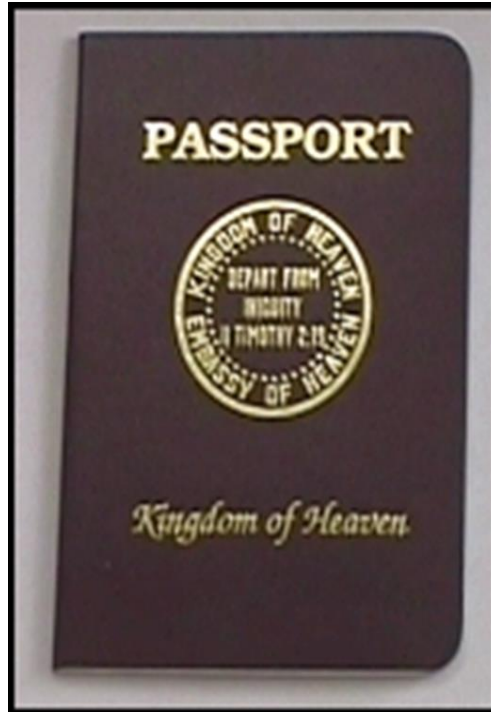
Ephesians 2:19 (ESV)

“19 ... You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

Philippians 3:20 (ESV)

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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Scripture is clear, believers are no longer of this world but have citizenship in heaven. The price for our citizenship was paid, not by ourselves, but for us through the blood of Jesus. So, when one applies for heavenly citizenship, it is only necessary to swear allegiance to the King, to then become naturalized citizens who have the full protection of the King. The Spirit-filled believer, who understands that they are Kingdom bound, is prepared to operate in faith. Their focus is on the Kingdom and not on this world. Their goal is to serve the Lord, and they look for the opportunities that He will bring their way, which will require them to exercise their faith.

1.4 What is Faith in God?

2 Timothy 1:12 (ESV)

“**12** Which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.”

The Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy, makes a powerful confession of his faith in God – that he had full confidence in the faithfulness of Christ to finish the good work that had been started in his own life. This is despite all the hardship and persecution Paul had experienced because of his ministry as an apostle. Also, he had a great hope, which was, that a day is coming when Jesus will return for His church – to complete His good work in us.

Faith is a verb, which it is best expressed through our outward actions. Paul had suffered much yet he tells us: “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ

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Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18). The outward actions of Paul's faith were numerous, the most obvious being praise for God was always on his lips.

Faith is also a noun; been changed from not only an outward action but a believing in one's heart and speaking His Word thereby turning that what you have believed into a noun (now having received it).

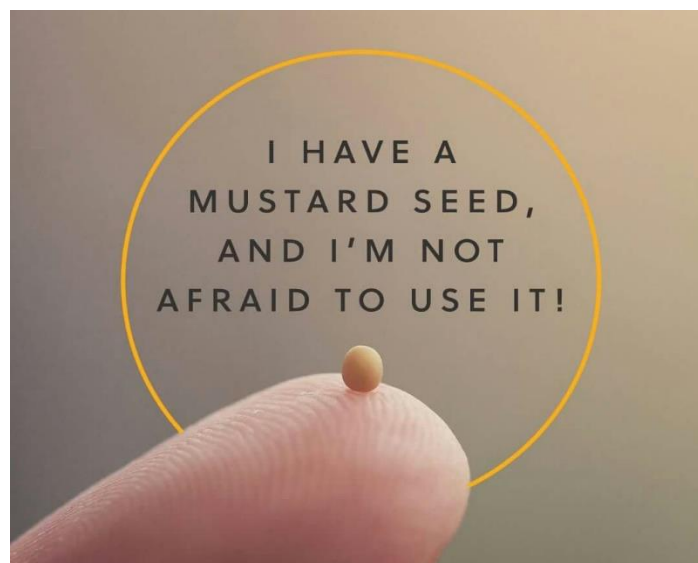
Mark 11:23 (ESV)

23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.

1.5 How much faith does the Believer need to be effective for God?

Jesus identified the tiny mustard seed as the amount of faith needed to do great exploits for God (Matthew 17:20). Faith is not measured in size but in depth. The closer we draw to God through a relationship with Him, by spending time with Him in Church, in prayer, and studying His word, the deeper our faith grows.

A good example of the application, or lack of the application of faith is found in Matthew 14:22-23. In the recorded narrative, the disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat, when Jesus comes to them walking on the water. The story then morphs into Peter walking on the water, then sinking into the water and having to be rescued by Jesus. This narrative, when considering faith is very revealing. Peter on seeing Jesus makes a connection with his God sense and steps out onto the water in faith. Then instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus, he looks at the wind-tossed sea, and his natural senses take over feeding him messages that tell him that he is in a dangerous place. The message is clear: – Faith requires us to keep our eyes on Jesus, when we do that, our faith grows, when we look to the world our faith diminishes.



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Faith as small as a mustard seed

1.6 Faith in God must become a lifestyle.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

“6 And 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 seek Him.”

The Author of Hebrews gives guidance to mature believers on how to live by faith - how to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. His instruction is that our lives must be lived in a daily walk with God, having faith in Him. Being eternally minded, knowing that God has a plan and purpose for our lives, and diligently seeking the fulfilment of that purpose. The rewards God gives the believer are both a closer walk with Him, which includes growth in faith, and eternal rewards in the Kingdom.

The believer then is to trust the Lord in every area of their lives, whether it be in the home with their families, at work, or in Church. Whether it be for their protection, for their finances, or for their relationships. God does not take pleasure in Sunday Christians (chameleons) whose focus is on worldly matters.

2 Is Positive Confession Faith in God?

Positive confession is an extremely dangerous doctrine to believe in for a few reasons:

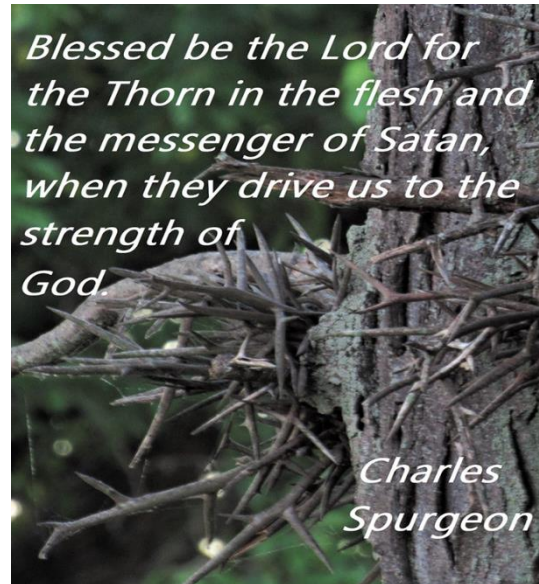
- Positive confession can be seen in Eastern Religions' belief in pantheism. The belief that everything is god means the individual being god, can through meditation, connect with the world (which is also god) and visualize their own reality. The influence of the New Age movement saw this belief enter psychology as the power of the mind, then into the business world as the power of positive thinking, then eventually into Christianity as positive confession. The ideology also can be seen in paganism where god(s) can be manipulated into doing what the individual wants, as long as the correct ritual is followed. In following positive confession, a person is reducing God from an all-powerful, all-knowing God, to an idol on their bed stand.
- There is a distinction between agreeing with scripture, and “confessing” it to be true and the “naming and claiming” of positive confession. It is very important to hold onto the word of God by believing and proclaiming it as true in and over one's life. Many a saint has held onto the Word of God and its promises and seen its redeeming power.
- The fault lies in pride – positive confession is taking control of their own life and destiny and wanting to invoke blessings for themselves. They are not humbly submitting to the will of God and allowing God to mould and shape their lives into

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a person worthy to serve Him (The book of Job is ignored). Remember, Paul wrote of his prayers to have a “thorn in the flesh” removed:

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (ESV)

“9 But (God) said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”



- Positive confession is extremely damaging for a person with disabilities or struggling with illness, or in financial difficulties. The individual’s difficulty is seen as not having enough faith. Where the exact opposite could be true, the individual has such a strong faith, that despite all circumstances they love God. God places such people of faith in these circumstances for practical reasons, He gives them life experiences that then enable the individual to minister to others in like circumstances.
- Scripture is filled with examples of "negative confession," one must only read the Book of Psalms to find ample evidence of people crying out to God for deliverance: Psalms 40, 69, and 80 are unashamed cries for help, for salvation, for rescue. Peter recognizes this cry for help when he exhorts believers to “(cast) all your anxieties on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). God is not a Being to be manipulated, He is a loving Father who wants to be involved in His children’s lives—the good and the bad. He requires that we humble ourselves before Him and seek His will for our lives. Being a servant willing to live through conditions of great hardship for His Kingdom holds great value.

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2.1 Confession of God's Word is Key to Walking by Faith and not by Sight.

Romans 10:10 (NKJV)

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:7–9 (ESV)

7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the **word of faith** that we proclaim); **9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

- Confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead, results in us been saved.
- This salvation is expressed as a **word of faith**, by confessing with our mouths and believing in our hearts.
- It's a dimension of the Spirit that the Father enables to walk in been able to speak His Word into our and over our lives and enable Him to release His Life into our situations. Trusting His Word is trusting Him.

Faith is not complete without confession.

2 Corinthians 4:13 (ESV)

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak,

Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

3 What is the Difference between Presumption and Faith?

Psalms 19:13 (ESV)

“**13** Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.”

In Psalm 19 David identifies two types of sin, hidden (unintentional, accidental, secret, unseen by the sinner) and presumptuous (deliberate, intentional). A sincere believer can become presumptuous because they are operating on their own will.

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An example would be that a person can have faith that God will give them protection during their car journey. However, to then take their hands off the steering wheel to praise God during the journey for that protection, is presuming on God.

A further example would be, that a believer needs to ensure they have confirmation from God on a ministry before proceeding. A person who believes that God will go along with their plans because they are performing a service for God, and therefore God must bless their activity, is presuming on God.



Presumptuous Sin

4 Isn't Faith, Hope, and Trust the Same Thing?

4.1 Faith and Hope

Faith and hope are distinct yet related. As we have covered, faith is relying on the “spiritual sense”, a knowing within that is not based on proof, but rather a conviction in an all-powerful God. Hope on the other hand is an optimistic attitude based on expectation or desire. Paul makes it clear that there is a distinction between faith and hope in his letter to the Corinthians: “Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). Note Paul lists faith and hope separately. That faith and hope are related concepts is seen in Hebrews 11:1, “Faith is confidence in what we hope for.”

An example that reveals the difference between faith and hope, yet shows their interconnection, would be a bride who has faith in her fiancé's promise to her and believes that he will be waiting for her at the altar on their wedding day. At the same time, she has a belief within that kindles an irrepressible joy – that is hope. The bride's

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belief in her fiancé's promise is faith. Her enthusiastic shopping for her wedding gown is an expression of the hope she has.

Paul in his letter to Titus writes that the return of Jesus is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). Our faith in the resurrection of Jesus gives us hope of His return for us. We can't see Him yet, but we know He's coming (faith), and we anticipate that event with joy (hope). Hope, therefore, is the expectation of our faith being fulfilled.

4.2 Trust

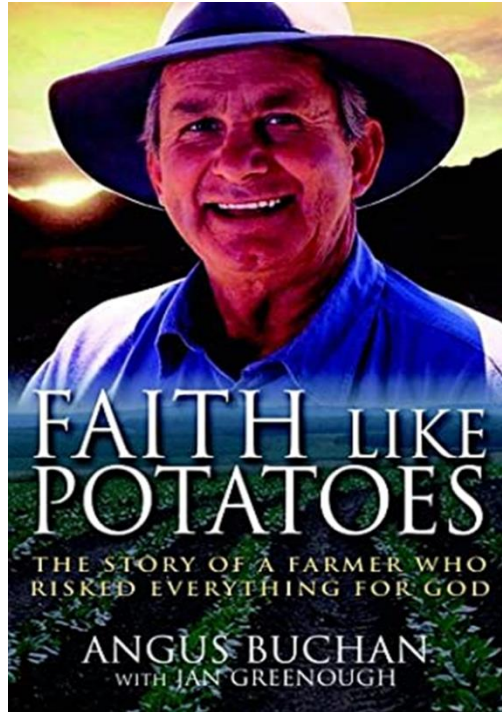
Trust, like faith, is a verb, the exception being when used as a noun to define character; just as faith requires action, so trust is something you do or act upon. Trust is never guaranteed. It is a willful choice, a deliberate action, and can only grow out of your faith. God is omniscient, He knows everything we are going through at this very moment, and everything we will go through in the future. He knows what is best for us and the best way to handle every situation. God has a plan and purpose for our lives and by placing our trust in Him, He will bring that to pass.

Trust is built on past experience and an understanding of the character of God. God is loving and faithful, and a believer is able to have complete confidence in God. Confidence that He can be depended on in times of crisis. Trust in God's faithfulness is strengthened by the individual remembering the past occasions God was there for them. David expresses this trust at one of the lowest points of his life, a fugitive alone in a desert cave in Adullam: "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me" (Psalm 13:5-6). David determines to sing to the Lord because "He [had] dealt bountifully with [him]." David recalls God's faithfulness in the past, in doing so there arises in his heart the calm of anticipation. He recognizes that God did it once before, so He will do it again, because His love is unending!

A common introductory exercise in group dynamics is the trust-fall, where group members learn to trust each other. They must have faith that their teammate will catch them even though their back is turned to them. To complete the task the individual must believe they will not let hit the ground. The activity is a demonstration of the faith that they have in their teammates. Trust in God is a core aspect of biblical faith; we are able to fall into the loving arms of our Lord.

The film "Faith Like Potatoes," by Angus Buchan, should have been titled "Trust Like Potatoes." Angus Buchan had faith in a God who has power over his creation, and he believed God was telling him to plant potatoes. Angus trusted that God was able to do what He said he would do, so he planted his crop of potatoes. As was stated earlier, trust is a verb, the planting of the potatoes then is Angus' trust in God, which is an extension of his faith in God.

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In conclusion with this study of faith and trust, we can illuminate a major problem within the Church today. Christians have faith in God, they believe in the immortal, invisible, wise God. The problem is that many believers do not trust Him, they trust in the world. Having been continually bombarded with humanistic philosophy, they struggle with putting their complete trust in God. We need to learn to depend on and trust in God for all things.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

"5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

5 Practical Application – How?

You cannot please God but through Faith, every believer needs to place their whole confidence in God. Being eternally minded requires that a person believes that God is always in Control and has a Plan and Purpose for their life. Developing a strength of character that can look to the future with confidence in God. A mature faith allows a believer to rejoice in all circumstances and live a life of faith, a life that is committed to the service of the Lord. This is a faith that will be richly rewarded by God.

6 Proclamation

I believe that I have through the sacrifice of my Lord and Saviour Jesus a spiritual connection to God my Father. I trust His word and believe His promise to be true. Having

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attained an understanding of the power of the Living God within me, I am able to say, "I walk by faith, not by sight."

7 Prayer

Lord Jesus in faith I came into a relationship with you and now in faith I seek to walk the path that you have set before me. Thank you that I do not have to do it alone and I am able to trust in you for the help and support that I need. May I learn to stand firm on your word and be able to praise you in all circumstances. I ask that I may attain the maturity in you that will fulfil your plans and purposes for my life.

8 Assignments

Faith in God.

- 1) There are two narratives in scripture that when compared will give us clarity and understanding of the type of faith required of believers by God - Acts 12:1-19 and Acts 16:16-24.
Show your understanding of the faith God requires of us by clarifying the two narratives in your own words? **(6)**
- 2) "Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord" (Psalm 32:10).
What main benefit are you able to perceive from David's words of wisdom relating to the difference between the "wicked," and the one who "trusts in the Lord."? **(4)**