

# Unlimited Possibilities Through Faith in God

Hebrew 11:1

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Hebrew 11: 5, 6

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 a testimony, that he pleased God. **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.**

Key Points

1. Build Character on the inside below the surface (heart)
2. Total dependency on God (Godhead)
3. Worship and appreciation

Genesis 22: 1, 2

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “**Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.**

Romans 10:8-11

## **What is Faith?**

Biblically, faith is trust, confidence in, or assurance. However, the biblical definition of faith differs from its modern definition. Before we look at the difference, let’s look at why we say biblical faith is trust, confidence in, or assurance.

The New Testament was written in Greek, not English, and the Greek noun “*pistis*” is translated “faith” in many translations of the Bible. For example:

- “...If ye have faith (*pistis*) as a grain of mustard seed...”
- “...Have faith (*pistis*) in God.” (Mark 11:22-KJV)
- “(For we walk by faith (*pistis*), not by sight:)” (2 Cor. 5:7-KJV)

**That *pistis* means trust, confidence in, or assurance, can be checked in any good Greek lexicon (“lexicon” is a word scholars use for “dictionary.”). For example, *Friberg’s Analytical Greek***

*Lexicon* has “confidence, faith, trust, reliance on.” Vine’s lexicon says, “firm persuasion,” and Bullinger’s lexicon says the same thing. Thayer’s lexicon says, “conviction of the truth of anything.”

When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, *fides* was the natural choice as a translation of *pistis*, because *fides* means “trust, confidence, reliance, belief.” The Bible was then read in Latin for hundreds of years. As the English language developed, our English word “faith” came from the Latin word *fides*. There should be nothing mysterious about *pistis*, *fides*, or faith. We know what trust is. *Merriam-Webster* defines it as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”

If both *pistis* and *fides* mean “trust,” how did “faith” come to be defined in our culture as “firm belief in something for which there is no proof” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition)? To understand this, we must remember that a dictionary definition is only a record of how people are currently using the word in their speech and writing. This is why dictionary definitions change as time passes.

What happened to change the definition of faith from “trust” to “firm belief in something for which there is no proof” was: (1) people started to use “faith” as “belief in something for which there is no proof,” (2) that usage was put in the dictionary as a definition of faith, (3) people who did not know what faith was looked it up in the dictionary, saw that definition, and used it that way. This process continued over time until now almost everyone thinks “faith” is “belief in something for which there is no proof.”

### **Perversion of Biblical Faith by Wayne Jackson**

One of the great tragedies of ecclesiastical history is the fact that so many have failed to find a balanced view of human redemption as this concept is set forth in the biblical record.

On the one hand there is Roman Catholicism, arrogantly contending that salvation is conferred upon the basis of merit. The Council of Trent declared that good works, done to the honor of God, have “truly merited the attainment of eternal life in due time”.

On the other hand, Protestant reformers, reacting against this unscriptural ideology, gravitated to an equally indefensible position, alleging that salvation is bestowed by means of “faith alone.”

### **Faith - A Word of Action**

One of the most absurd statements that we ever read was from a denominationalist who declared: **“Faith is the only thing that one can do without doing anything.”**

The following examples will clearly reveal that genuine faith is not a mere attitude; rather, it is a word of action.

(1) Jesus was teaching in the city of Capernaum. The crowds so pressed around him that some who sought his presence could not gain access to the Lord. Four enterprising men brought a lame friend, climbed to the rooftop of the house wherein Christ was teaching, and lowered their impotent companion through the ceiling. Significantly, the inspired writer comments: “And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5).

**What did Christ see?** He literally saw the action of these men (including the sick man who obviously endorsed the activity). But the action is called faith.

In a similar vein, James challenged: “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith” (James 2:18).

(2) John 3:16 is perhaps the best-known verse in the Bible; but it is one of the most misunderstood: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Does the “belief” of this passage include obedience, or exclude it? A comparison of this verse with Hebrews 5:9 reveals that the former is the case. In John 3:16, believing results in eternal life. In Hebrews 5:9, eternal salvation is said to issue from obedience to Christ. It thus should be quite clear that the belief that saves is one that manifests itself in obeying the Son of God. True faith is not just a mental process.

(3) Note this declaration from the Lord: “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36, ASV).