

“What is Faith?”

A brief discourse on the first principles of the fundamental truth behind the source, nature, object, and necessity of faith as described in scripture.

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The reason for this verse being chosen as a text is because within it and the surrounding context we find the answers to the source, nature, object, and necessity of faith. While these four areas are certainly not all that defines faith they are a solid foundation for the believer's understanding of this great blessing from God.

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The Necessity of Faith

Faith is necessary for God purposed its necessity. That is, faith pleases God for it honors Him in the person of the Son to whom it looks and comes and diligently seeks (Jn. 5:22-23 cf. 36-40; I Jn. 2:22-23). The necessity of faith is not that one who is not accepted by God might become accepted by God through having faith and believing. God has already accepted all whom He will accept in the person of His Son (Eph. 1:3-6). Faith is God's gift by which He enables those whom He has accepted to please Him in the honoring of His Son. Thus, all that we think, say, or do must flow from faith else it is sin and cannot please God (cf. Rom. 14:23). Our best intents and efforts are sinful intents and efforts apart from that faith which seeks to honor God in Christ.

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This pamphlet is not intended as a modern day soul winning tool. Its purpose is in hope of God being pleased to use it to the instruction, edification, and comfort of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

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Walter A Pendleton



The Source of Faith

The source of faith is said to be none other than Jesus (Heb. 12:2). This Jesus is He who is the Christ of God who is God manifest in the flesh (Matt. 1:21-23; Jn. 1:1-3,14-17). Jesus is the author [beginner] and finisher of faith. Thus, He being the source of faith's beginning He is the only one who can sustain it in all it is as the finisher. Those who have faith, and any who will ever have it, have faith as the gift which is given by God (Eph. 2:8). Any description of faith, in all that it is, which cannot be traced back to the free gift of God with God as the only source from start to finish is a false description. Faith is not offered; faith is not even commanded as something the human creature must do. Faith is the gift which God gives, in His own time, to everyone whom Christ represented and stood as Substitute in His resurrection and ascension (Eph. 2:4-8). Thus, the nature of faith cannot be defined apart from this truth of scripture.

The Nature of Faith

Faith is not a quality or characteristic found in any man or woman by nature. Human nature, by our fall in Adam, does not have even the potential for faith, which, of course, pleases God (cf. Rom. 8:5-8). Since it is impossible to please God without faith, only spiritually minded persons have faith with which to please God since carnally [fleshly] minded persons cannot do so. Faith

is a quality or characteristic of a spiritual nature, and one can only have a spiritual nature having been born of the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:6). Those who have been given faith have two natures [fleshly or Adamic and spiritual or divine) and the two never combine to compliment one another in spiritual matters (Gal. 5:16-23). Since faith is the fruit of the Spirit the nature of faith is not human but divine, it is not fleshly but spiritual. Faith was not God allowing the human creature to retain the capacity thereto in the fall, with the human creature thus in need of proper help and motivation to exercise faith in its potential.

Faith is what God must give in a sovereign act of grace in giving spiritual life (Jn. 3:8). From the sovereignly given gift of faith there flows believing itself. Believing is the active outflow of faith in the heart and mind of spiritually alive people. A person with faith believes that God is, not just that God exists. A person with faith believes that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him. All so-called faith which is not a direct result or fruit of the sovereign work of God Himself, in which God brings men and women to believe is not the faith spoken of in scripture. In other words, simply having "faith" that my crops will grow and produce food based upon prior experience of this fact is not the same faith which believes God. A person may have the first *kind* of faith and

not have the second *kind*, and many do. Moreover, the first *kind* never becomes the second *kind*. The first is of human origin based upon the ability of human nature to receive natural truth. The second is of divine origin based upon the spiritual gift God gives to receive spiritual truth. Thus, some have a believing faith which draws them to come to God diligently seeking Him as He is. This is the nature of faith with its object as well.

The Object of Faith

God is always the object of that faith which one must have to please God. These come and seek God Himself. The reward spoken of is not earthly rewards but the receiving of that which the believer is looking or seeking for—God—Who He is; What He has promised. The primary promise believers in the OT age looked for, from which all other promises flow, was that of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow (I Pet. 1:10-12). Thus we are exhorted, even in light of those before us, to be "looking unto Jesus..." (Heb. 11:39-12:2). Christ was and is the object of that faith described in scripture. Any "looking" which does not have the Christ of God as its object [focal point spiritually] is a looking which is of man and not of that faith which is of God (cf. II Cor. 4:5-6). The necessity of faith is then herein revealed.