



A Bible Study

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The more you think about faith, the more you realise how fundamental it is in our lives. 1 Corinthians 13, the great chapter on love points to three things which will endure for ever; faith, hope and love. Everything else will pass away. Our partial knowledge will become complete, the gifts of the Spirit will be rendered unnecessary, our earthly achievements and successes will come to an end, but the three qualities which have to do with relationship, will continue beyond the grave.

To appreciate something of the importance of faith, refer to these verses...

Romans 14:23

Hebrews 11:6

We can't please God without faith, because faith is a foundational aspect of all healthy relationships.

So what is faith?

Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1. What are the key words?

When we talk about being "in the Faith" we mean that we stand in a relationship with God. It is rather like Grace. It is a state in which we stand whereby we receive the blessings of having God as our Father, and Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

Where faith fits in, is that it is our response to God's offer.

Faith unlocks the door to allow Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to enter our lives, and enables us to step into the presence of God.

**A healthy faith has three elements to it:-**

**KNOWLEDGE: Read Romans 10:17**

You often hear people talk about blind faith. By which they tend to mean, "I don't want to have to think about it. I don't want to know anything. I'll just blindly believe it."

That sort of faith can get you into a lot of trouble.

From an early age, we warn children to be wary of strangers.

We have to be careful who we put our trust in.

Amongst my emails I have frequent offers of millions of dollars which people all over the world want to transfer to my bank account, because they tell me they think they can trust me.

Just the other day I was advised by a very official looking email that my ANZ bank account security had been breached, and they wanted me to log in and resubmit my banking details. This would have been difficult for me as I

## **LACK OF FAITH**

Consider what lack of faith does...

Deuteronomy 32:51

Joshua 7:1

Psalms 78:22

Isaiah 7:9

Matthew 13:54-58

Matthew 17:20

Mark 4:40

Hebrews 3:16-19

## **FAITH UNLOCKS BLESSINGS**

Matthew 8:10

Matthew 15:28

Matthew 17:18-21

## **JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**

How does what you have read so far, help you to understand these passages from Romans. How does faith fit in with our justification.

(Justification = Being seen as justified, made right, before God "just-as-if-I'd never sinned")

Romans 3:21-31

How does faith have to do with works as a means of salvation?

Romans 4:1-5, 9-10, 16, 20-22

What are the benefits of Justification by Faith?

Romans 5:1-11

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

As you read about the people of faith ask yourself

1. What was the basis of their faith (what did they know and believe)
2. What did their faith lead them to do?

Read Hebrews 11:1-3

People of faith generally .....

Abel (v4)

Noah (v7)

Jacob (v21)

Joseph (v22)

Moses (vv23-28)

Read now other acts of faith through the Hebrew writings (vv32-38)

What was their faith ultimately looking to?

What does our faith ultimately look to? (Hebrews 12:1-2, Romans 8:18-25, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

How is your faith demonstrated in your life?

How then is faith the basis of everything we do as Christians?

Why must everything we do arise from faith?

(See Romans 14:20-23)

## FAITH AS A GIFT

These references would seem to indicate a special gift of faith in order to perform miracles.

1 Corinthians 12:9, 13:2

Romans 12:6

don't actually have an ANZ account!

We cannot just trust anybody. To have a meaningful faith, we should know something about the person we want to have faith in.

Now, our knowledge and information about God and Jesus, come to us through the Bible, followed by prayer, and then our experiences and the experiences of others that we trust.

But note that we don't have to know *everything* about God and Jesus to have faith in them, just as in everyday life we assume trust of people in a variety of situations.

Take a moment to think about the people you trust each day. What knowledge do you have that encourages you to trust those people?

What knowledge do have of God which helps you to trust him?

Is there anything that makes that trust difficult for you?

What would you like to know which could help you?

The second aspect of a healthy faith is:-

### **BELIEF:**

This is your intellectual assent. After you have looked at the evidence you say to yourself, "Yes, that makes sense. I believe it to be true."

Now it is possible to believe things that aren't true, so belief is built on solid knowledge, or knowledge beyond reasonable doubt.

What are some of the wrong things people believe, or have believed in?

How would knowledge have corrected those beliefs?

Discuss times when you may have changed your mind about something you formerly believed

The third aspect of faith is crucial  
TRUST (or entrusting yourself)  
Read James 2:14-20

**Knowledge and true belief will lead us to entrust ourselves to God, trust what God has shown and told us, and act in accordance with it.**

I often tell the story of the little girl who was looking for her Daddy. "He's downstairs in the basement," her mother told her. So the girl skipped down to the basement which besides the staircase, could be accessed by double doors open in the floor. She looks down into the hole in the floor and calls down, "Daddy, are you down there?" "Yes," he calls back. "Tell you what. Jump down and I'll catch you." She peers into the hole. "But it's dark down there. I can't see you." "No. That's OK. I can see you. Just jump. It's not far. She hesitates She **knows** her father and that he wouldn't drop her. She **believes** he is able to catch her, but she needs to do something for faith to be complete. She has to jump!

Eventually she plucks up courage and jumps. Her father catches her and places her on the ground. Quickly she runs over to the stairs, runs up and comes around to the hole in the floor. "Again!" she cries out. And this time she hardly hesitates. Why? Because when she exercised faith the first time, she found her father caught her. She found him trustworthy, and her faith increased.

When has God upheld your faith in him?

What events have helped your faith to grow, when have you stepped out?

## FAITH AND THE NATURE OF GOD

What do we see of the faithfulness of God in these verses?

1 Corinthians 1:9

1 Corinthians 10:13

Deuteronomy 7:7-9

Psalms 145

2 Thessalonians 3:3

1 John 1:9

and of the faithfulness of Jesus...

Hebrews 3:1-6

Revelation 1:5a

2 Timothy 2:11-13

In what ways has **God** shown himself to be faithful through the Bible?

Consider...

Creation

The promises to Abraham (Gen 12)

Joseph

The Exodus

Joshua and the Land

The times of the kings and prophets

The Return to the Land

The sending of Jesus

His life, death and resurrection