

Faith Flavors

“...Perceiving that he had faith.”

Acts 14:9

“...For I believe God...”

Acts 27:25

Faith is so important in the Word of God and in the life of a Christian. As mentioned before, it is spoken of more than 245 times in the New Testament. Richard Lee and Ed Hindson in *No Greater Savior* state that, “Faith is believing. It is an act of trust by which we commit ourselves to someone or something.”

In Luke 18:8 Jesus asked, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” In Luke 8:25 he asked, “Where is your faith?” The writer of Romans asked in Romans 14:22, “Hast thou faith?” To this list of thought provoking, life searching questions, I would like to add, “What flavor (type) of faith do you have?” A quick study on faith reveals different types of faith.

We tend to put all kinds of faith in the same bowl and mix them up so that they are stirred all together. But we must be able to tell the difference between them.

It is recorded in several Biblical accounts that Jesus saw their faith (Matthew 9:2; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20) When Jesus looks at you, does he see your faith? If so, what type of faith does he see?

No Faith

“...How is it that ye have no faith?” (Mark 4:40) Other gospel writers mentioning this occasion have written “little faith.” Fear is the absence of faith and here they had put their eyes on their circumstances. Therefore, it canceled their little bit of faith because they were not looking to Jesus as the problem solver. He was right in the ship with them and they were still fearful. Jesus had already told them, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” (Mark 4:35) In this situation they demonstrated “no faith.” Fear overcame faith. The fact that they did not demonstrate faith in this situation does not mean that they did not have “the measure of faith” that is given to every man.

Little Faith

Jesus revealed in Matthew 6:30 that there were those that had “little faith.” The storm was raging, and the disciples trembling, crying to Jesus for help when he asked, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith.” (Matthew 8:26)

Matthew 14 records the “water walk” of Peter. Peter gets out of the boat and walks toward Jesus. Every step of faith will take us toward Jesus. As he walked he began to look at his circumstances, the wind and the waves. As he looked at his situation he began to sink. Jesus grabbed him out of the water and rebuked Peter, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31) He likely sat in the boat shivering from the cold. The other disciples probably laughed at him but he had done something no one else had dared to attempt; he had walked on water. Thank God for Peter’s “little faith.”

Natural/General Faith

We exercise natural faith when we turn the light switch on and expect there to be lights. When we get in an automobile we expect that it will start when we put the key in the ignition. A farmer believes that when he plants the seed it will produce a harvest. Natural faith is much like natural wisdom.

Every man is given the “measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3) Every human acts on a measure of faith every day.

We all probably start on the same level of faith. However, all people do not have the same level of faith. Every Christian has this general faith and it can be increased through the Word of God. It is through general faith that we are able to receive the answer to most of our prayers. We all want our faith to increase. In Luke 17:5 the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. Faith is a muscle. If you use it, your faith will grow. If you don’t use it, you lose it!

Romans 10:17 tells us how we can increase our faith.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Saving Faith

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” (Ephesians 2:8)

Through the grace of God, and saving faith that is increased through the hearing of the Word of God, we are lead to salvation. Saving faith allows us to realize that we are sinners, Jesus Christ is our Savior, and moves us into obedience to the plan of salvation. This becomes the obedient faith that brings salvation. Saving faith motivates a person to repent, be baptized in Jesus

name, and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the “power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.” (Romans 1:16)

Great Faith

Jesus expressed to the centurion, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Matthew 8:10) What prompted Jesus to say this? This man had a servant who was sick. He came to Jesus and explained the problem. This man did not feel worthy of having Jesus in his home. He said, “speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” (Matthew 8:8) He went on to say that he was a man who had authority who could command others to “Go and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” (Verse 9) This truly did demonstrate “great faith.”

Fruit of Faith

This is only received after the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As we become mature Christians we start producing the fruit of faith (Galatians 5:22). The Greek word is also translated “faithfulness.” This is a fruit that grows in the life of a Christian that enables him to have a strong, spiritual life and character.

Mustard Seed Faith

The mustard seed has living faith. Its faith is shown in its obedience to the laws of God. It acknowledges the law of God that says that what is sown will reap. It has no mind of its own and is willing to die in order to produce. The mustard seed will grow up to 15 feet (4.6 meters). Rabbis in the days of Jesus Christ used the mustard seed as a symbol of anything that is tiny.

“And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” (Luke 17:6)

Full of Faith

The disciples asked Jesus in Luke 17:5 “Lord, increase our faith.” Jesus immediately launched into the illustration of the grain of mustard seed. Our faith can grow progressively, when exercised to the point that we will be “full of faith.” This is not an impossibility for us since a deacon in Acts 6 is described as being a man “full of faith.” (6:5,8) Some refer to it as “progressive faith.”

When we exercise the faith that we have, it begins to grow. The mustard seed does not stay a little seed forever. It grows into a plant that can reproduce on its own.

Gift of Faith - Supernatural Faith

This is one of the gifts of the Spirit. This type of faith will be discussed in another lesson.

What type(s) of faith do you have? I trust you are not like Martha who said, “Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She had faith; faith in the past. Later she confessed, “I know my brother will rise in the last day; the resurrection.” She now had faith in the future. However, Jesus is a God of right now. He spoke to stinking Lazarus; already four days in the tomb and commanded; “Lazarus, Come forth!”

How to Move to a Higher Level of Faith

*Faith is like a Muscle;
It must be exercised for it to
grow!!*

We can move to a higher level in faith by listening to the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and then by acting on the Word that we have heard. We need to put the Word to work. In Malachi 3:10 God said to “prove me...if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” We can also

move higher in faith by “asking” for more faith. James said, “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” (James 1:17)

Study Questions

1. What is asked in Luke 8:25? _____

2. In Romans 14:22, what question is asked? _____

3. Give a Scripture reference showing that Jesus sees faith. _____

4. What are seven of the flavors of faith that are mentioned in this lesson?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

5. What is the opposite of "faith?" _____

6. According to Romans 12:3 what is every man given? _____

7. What did the disciples ask Jesus in Luke 17:5? _____

8. How do we increase our faith? _____

9. How are we led to salvation? _____

10. Why was it said that the centurion had "great faith?" _____

11. How high does the Mustard Seed grow? _____

12. What did the Rabbis in Jesus' day use the mustard seed as a symbol for? _____

13. How can we move to a higher level of faith? _____

14. When does our faith begin to grow? _____

15. How is faith like a muscle? _____