



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#96)

Faith – Our faith, God and people.

1

The World's Religions

I LIKE TO GET **DEEP** INTO RELIGION!

I PREFER SOMETHING MORE STABLE AND FIRM

The Foundation of Scripture



2

>> **It's ALL FROM A GREAT GOD!** <<

A great SALVATION!
God has done great things to bring us to salvation.

A great FAITH!
God has done a lot to make our faith possible, an accomplished fact, and a growing reality.

A great FAMILY!
One of the results of salvation is that God adopts us into his family. This means that *Jesus has become our brother!*

Jesus, who makes people holy, and all those who are made holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus isn't ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:11 (GW)

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"Same family? How can this be, since Jesus is God?"

There is a difference: Jesus is part of the family by nature. We become part of the family by adoption.

... Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, ...
Philip. 2:5b-6a (NIV)

[God's] unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.
Ephes. 1:5a (NLT)

- ✓ Because we are in God's family, God has given us rights and privileges that the world doesn't have.
- ✓ However, we also have responsibilities and obligations, which God empowers us to fulfill.

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MORE ABOUT THIS GREAT FAITH!

Last time: We observed some of its characteristics ... with a greater focus on how it relates to us (= ourselves as individuals).

Today: We will look further at this faith... with a greater "outward" focus.

GENUINE FAITH WILL HAVE ...

A GOD focus: Recognizing what he has done for our faith.

A FAMILY* focus: Recognizing the value of other Christians, and encouraging them in the faith.

* "FAMILY" – referring to all followers of Jesus, everywhere. Other types of "family" are only temporary.

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REMINDER #1: OUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY OBLIGATIONS AND PRIORITIES ARE REAL!

- ✓ Though we have a responsibility toward all people... we have an even greater responsibility toward members of our Christian family.

Whenever we have the opportunity, we have to do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers.

Galatians 6:10 (GW)

- ✓ In doing these things, we must remember that JESUS is Lord and Master. We are not to "lord it over" others!

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Cor. 1:24 (NIV)

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REMINDER #2: IF IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF A LIVING FAITH, IT WILL BE MORE THAN JUST FACT-BELIEVING.

MERE "FACT-BELIEVING" IS SOMETHING THAT DEMONS CAN DO!

You **believe** that there is one God. That's fine! The demons also **believe** that, and they tremble with fear.
James 2:19 (GW)

This verse is followed by two examples of *living* faith.

1. Abraham's example of faith lived toward God.
2. Rahab's example of faith lived toward people.

Both examples demonstrate that ...

... just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also **faith** without works is dead.
James 2:26 (CSB)

GENUINE FAITH WILL HAVE A GOD FOCUS!

Recognizing what God has done for our faith.

Here are some of the ways God has been involved in our **faith**:

GOD
Building OUR **faith**:

US
Encouraging THEIR **faith**:

FAMILY

GOD IS THE REASON WE CAN HAVE FAITH.

- ✓ God **requires** faith.

No one can please God without **faith**.
Hebrews 11:6a (GW)

And this is [God's] command: to **believe** in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.
1 John 3:23 (NIV)
- ✓ God **enables** us to have faith.

I didn't speak my message with persuasive intellectual arguments [but] with a show of spiritual power so that your **faith** would not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.
1 Cor. 2:4-5 (GW)
- ✓ God **gives** faith to people whom the world would consider the **least-deserving**.

Didn't God choose the poor in this world to be rich in **faith**... ?
James 2:5a (CSB)

JESUS PAID FOR THE SALVATION THAT COMES BY FAITH.

- ✓ Jesus was offered as a sacrifice, to pay for our sins.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through **faith** in his blood.
Romans 3:25a (NIV)
- ✓ Jesus' resurrection proves that the payment was accepted.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your **faith**.
And if Christ has not been raised, your **faith** is futile; you are still in your sins.
But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, ...
1 Cor. 15:14, 17, 20a (NIV)

A LIST OF EYEWITNESSES IS GIVEN IN VERSES 5-8.

JESUS HAS AN INSEPARABLE CONNECTION TO OUR FAITH.

- ✓ Jesus and genuine faith are inseparably linked, from start to finish.

We must focus on Jesus, the **source** and **goal** of our **faith**.
Hebrews 12:2a (GW)
- ✓ Through Jesus, **confident** trust in God is now possible.

Through him you **believe** in God who brought Christ back to life and gave him glory. So your **faith** and confidence are in God.
1 Peter 1:21 (GW)
- ✓ He made it possible... and he knows when we have it!

"I know ... your **faith** ..."
Rev. 2:19a (NLT)

THE BIBLE IS THE FOUNDATION FOR GENUINE FAITH.

In the past, we looked at the relationship of the Bible to salvation.

- Salvation is possible **only** through the Good News message.
- God embeds the moral law in the hearts of those who are saved. *But it's God, not the law, who saves us!*

- ✓ Since we're trusting **God**, instead of working for salvation, we can't boast.

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded! By what principle? Of works [= obeying the law]? No, but by the principle of **faith**!
Ro 3:27 (NET)
- ✓ At the same time, we affirm the validity of God's moral law.

Do we then nullify the law through **faith**? Absolutely not! Instead we uphold the law.
Ro 3:31 (NET)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONE WHO DEVELOPS OUR FAITH.

In the past, we saw that the Holy Spirit uses the message of the Bible to bring people to salvation.

- He also continues to use Scripture to grow us in all aspects of our salvation.

Here are just two examples of the Spirit's role in our faith.

- The Spirit develops within us faithfulness – we become people who can be trusted.

But the fruit of the Spirit is... faithfulness...

Galatians 5:22 (CSB)

- The Spirit will give some of God's people special "gifts" related to faith.

The same Spirit gives great faith to another, ...

1 Cor. 12:9 (NLT5) [= ONE OF THE MANY GIFTS THE SPIRIT GIVES TO GOD'S PEOPLE.]

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WITH ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE, WE ARE FULLY EQUIPPED TO FULFIL OUR FAITH-RELATED OBLIGATIONS TOWARD OUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY!

If we aren't sure what to do in some situation, PRAYER asked in faith is one of the ways we may obtain the wisdom for responding properly.

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting.

James 1:5-6a (CSB)

Since Scripture teaches us about our obligations, STUDYING and APPLYING the Word of God is also important. [If we aren't willing to do this, there's really no reason for us to claim we want wisdom.]

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[CHRISTIAN]

GENUINE FAITH WILL HAVE A FAMILY FOCUS!

Recognizing the value of family members, and encouraging them to grow in the faith.

Here are some examples of how we can be involved in the faith of others who are saved:

Building OUR faith:

US

Encouraging THEIR faith:

FAMILY

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FIRST, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL UNITY, AND TO OPPOSE DIVISIONS AND STRIFE WITHIN THE FAMILY!

- There is only one family. We all have the same God, same faith, etc.

We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.

Ephes. 4:4-6 (NLT)

- We do have different gifts and abilities (v. 7-11+) – but we're given them not for fighting, but for working together...

... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephes. 4:13 (NIV)

[A unity that is NOT based on FAITH and KNOWLEDGE is counterfeit.]

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SECOND, AS MEMBERS OF GOD'S FAMILY, WE ARE TO: ① ENCOURAGE AND ② BE EXAMPLES (AS POSSIBLE).

- ENCOURAGE each other in faith-related matters.

This encouragement isn't a one-way activity. We should endeavor to encourage each other!

[Our goal is...] to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, ...

Romans 1:12b (CSB)

- BEING AN EXAMPLE, showing others what it means to have a living, fact-based faith.

Being an example first requires at least some degree of spiritual maturity.

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"Spiritual children" can learn from those who are older in the faith.

PAUL WROTE...

To Timothy, my true son in the faith.
1 Timothy 1:2a (CSB)

To Titus, my true son in our common faith.
Titus 1:4a (CSB)

- Later, as the "spiritual children" grow, they can become examples for others.

ILLUSTRATION #1:
PAUL ⇔ TIMOTHY ⇔ OTHERS

PAUL TO TIMOTHY: But you know all about ... my faith...
2 Tim. 3:10 (GW)

TIMOTHY TO OTHERS: Be an example to all believers in ... your faith...
1 Tim. 4:12b (NLT)

In addition to faith, both of these passages list many other qualities to exemplify.

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ILLUSTRATION #2:
PAUL (& COMPANIONS) ⇔ THESSALONIANS ⇔ OTHERS

PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE EXAMPLES TO THE THESSALONIANS...

You and God are *witnesses* of how pure, honest, and blameless we were in our dealings with you **believers**.
1 Thes. 2:10 (GW)

THE THESSALONIANS BECAME EXAMPLES TO MANY OTHERS.

As a result, you became an *example* to all the **believers** in Macedonia and Achaia.
1 Thes. 1:7 (CSB)

[THEY JOYFULLY RECEIVED AND SHARED THE GOOD NEWS, EVEN THOUGH DOING SO BROUGHT PERSECUTION.]

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"Spiritual ancestors" (family members from the past) can also provide encouragement through their examples.

Scripture is *filled* with examples of people who had this living, fact-based faith. [Two examples here.]

ABRAHAM So Abraham is the *spiritual father* of those who have **faith** ...
Romans 4:11b (NLT)

[VERSE 11 = ABOUT GENTILES WITH THIS FAITH; VERSE 12 = ABOUT JEWS WITH THIS FAITH.]

PAUL ... I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an *example* for those who would **believe** on him and receive eternal life.
1 Tim. 1:16b (NIV)

- Hebrews 11 has *many* examples of a living, fact-based faith. But many other examples can be found throughout Scripture.

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Our mission...

To be filled with:

★ **GRATITUDE** ★ for what God has done *for* and *with* our salvation!

★ **JOY** ★ for what we are able to do to encourage each other's faith – knowing that God has empowered us for such a glorious task!

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