

Foundations Lesson #13

Faith in God

The author of the book of Hebrews writes, “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:1-2). Two of these six foundational doctrines have already been covered in lessons 4, 5, and 12. The purpose of this lesson and the three following lessons is to cover the remaining four of these foundational doctrines.

I. understanding what faith in God is

- being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see – Hebrews 11:1-2
- being fully persuaded, being convinced – Romans 4:18-21 / II Timothy 1:12
- trusting in God's great faithfulness – Hudson Taylor

II. understanding what faith in God is not

- Faith in God is not the mere belief that God exists. – James 2:19
- Faith in God is not wishful thinking. (faith in God vs. a longing for good things to happen)
- Faith in God is not a matter of denying reality. – Romans 4:19 “Without weakening in his faith, he [Abraham] **faced** [not denied] the fact that his body was as good as dead...”
- Faith in God should never be governed by emotions.
- Faith in God is not copying a specific action.
- Faith in God is not presumption. – Matthew 4:5-7

III. the importance of having faith in God

- determining a person's eternal destiny
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 / Revelation 21:8 / John 3:16, 3:36
- defining the huge gulf, in this life, between the saved and the unsaved
 - II Corinthians 6:15
- living our lives by faith
 - Romans 1:17 / Hebrews 10:38-39 / II Corinthians 5:7 / Galatians 2:20
- making it possible to please God
 - Hebrews 11:6 / Romans 14:23
- seeing prayer answered, the miraculous released, and the things of God opened up
 - Mark 11:22-24 / Acts 14:9-10 / Matthew 9:22, 29-30 / Luke 17:5-6 / John 14:12-14
- successfully defending against Satan's attacks
 - Ephesians 6:16 / I Peter 1:5
- consequences of not having faith in God
 - Luke 1:19-20 / Jude 5 / Matthew 13:58 / Hebrews 3:12-13

IV. growing into greater faith in God

- God having designed our faith to grow
 - II Corinthians 10:15 / II Thessalonians 1:3
- faith coming, and increasing, through hearing God's message
 - Romans 10:17
- calling into remembrance God's **past** works producing a strengthened faith in the **present**
 - Deuteronomy 7:18-19 / I Chronicles 16:12-13 / Psalm 77:11 / Psalm 143:5
- God chastising his people for not believing because they failed to remember his past works
 - Matthew 16:8-10 / Judges 8:33-34 / Psalm 78:40-43 / Psalm 106:7
- faith being strengthened through prayer, intimacy with God
 - II Corinthians 3:18 / Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (contrasted with the disciples)

V. evidences of having faith in God

- faith without actions is: no good / unable to save us / dead / useless
 - James 2:14-26 / Galatians 5:6
- Hebrews 11:1-40: the Bible's "Hall of Faith"
 - Abel: gave offerings that pleased God
 - Enoch: did not experience death
 - Noah: in holy fear built an ark
 - Abraham: traveled far away, even though he did not know where he was going
 - Isaac: blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future
 - Joseph: refused Potiphar's wife / spoke about the exodus
 - Others: conquered kingdoms / administered justice / shut the mouths of lions / etc.
- the two people, both foreigners, who Jesus said had "great faith"
 - Centurion: understood authority and submission even in the unseen – Matthew 8:5-13
 - Syro-Phoenician woman: refused to be offended – Matthew 15:21-28
- other evidences of faith in God: receiving promises / peace & trust / love / etc.
 - Galatians 3:14 / Matthew 6:30-31 / Matthew 8:26 / Galatians 5:6

VI. closing scriptures

- This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. – I John 5:4
- [Jesus speaking] "Everything is possible for him who believes." – Mark 9:23
- "Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld." – II Chronicles 20:20
- If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. – Isaiah 7:9