

The Evidence of Spiritual Life, Part 2 | Faith

I. The Nature of Faith

- Introduction

- Faith and knowledge are categorically not the same thing. It's true that you can't believe what you don't know, but the fact that you know something doesn't mean you believe it.
- Faith is not a hope in something. Faith is not even technically blind.
 - II Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24; II Corinthians 4:18, 5:6-8; Hebrews 11:7
- Faith is not knowledge or mental assent.
- Faith is also not knowledge-less. It is rooted in truth. The more truth we know, the stronger our faith is.
- Faith is simply a choice to trust something. In a best case scenario, faith is a choice to trust that what God says is true . . . is true. Faith is a confident expectation that everything God says is true and either has happened exactly as He said it did or will happen exactly as He says it will.
- Faith comes from God. II Peter 1:1
- But what if you choose to believe a lie? What if you put your faith in something that's not true? here is a Living Faith and that Living Faith has two practical outworkings. There's Saving Faith and Sanctifying Faith about which you can learn in Part 4 of the Grow Your Worship Series. But there is also Dead Faith, and there are three kinds of Dead Faith.

- Misplaced Faith

- Misplaced Faith is faith in something other than God.
- Countless people in the Bible had misplaced faith. Jezebel and Ahab believed their false gods would save them, but they both experienced the wrath of the one living God.

- Confused Faith

- This refers to someone who is personally deceived about what they believe. They're convinced they believe in God, but really they just *know* things *about* God.
- Martha is a good example of this.

- Partial Faith

- A good way to illustrate this is faith in *Christianity* instead of faith in the *Gospel*.
- Paul was a good example of this before he was converted. He—like the rest of the Pharisees—followed the Old Testament Law in all the wrong ways. He would say that he believed in Yahweh, and he thought his obedience of the Old Testament Law was proof of that fact, but the legalism of the Pharisees showed that they didn't understand the God they claimed to worship. They believed God was judging them based on their works instead of understanding that God would save them based on their faith. Part of what they believed about God was right, but a big part was wrong.
- Another good biblical example of Partial Faith is the demons. In James we read, "*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*" The demons don't submit to God as their King. They do not believe they must, but they *do* believe that He is powerful. That's why they shudder. The demons have a *right* belief about the power of God, but they don't have a right belief about the *position* of God. They still believe they can win.

II. The Evidence of Faith

- **You will unequivocally trust the God of the Bible.**
 - This won't mean that you won't have questions or doubts. But it means that when you discover that which you need for life and godliness in His Word, you will trust it. But you won't simply acknowledge it's truth.
- **You will act according to your trust in the God of the Bible.**
 - Everyone acts according to what they believe. We all *do* what we *believe* is best. Therefore, it's our doing that evidences our beliefs. I John
 - It doesn't matter what you say. It doesn't matter what you believe . . . if your works do not flow from a genuine trust and obedience to God's Word—a submission to God—your belief is not rooted in the God of the Bible.
 - When someone confronts you using the Bible, do you submit to the reproof? Do you at least humbly take the time to test yourself, study the Scriptures, surround yourself with biblical counsel, and at least consider the fact that you may be in sin?
 - When you become convinced of the fact that you have actually transgressed God's law, do you humbly confess your sin, ask for forgiveness, and start the process of change in repentance?
 - Do you submit your life choices to the Bible? Do you strive in all things to make certain that everything you do, say, feel, want, and think are in line with God's expectations for your life?
 - Are you a student of the Word, not comfortable to assume that you have it all figured out, but one who recognizes your need for continued spiritual maturity, recognizes the fact that you don't know and understand it all, and continues to learn from the Bible so that you may be more and more conformed to the image of God?
 - Faith is the gateway to spiritual life, but it's also the springboard for our maturity in it. A person who is moving away from God, deconstructing their faith, and the like does not have saving faith.
- **A Warning**
 - Human beings are blind. We're foolish. We're ignorant. We're deceived. It's so incredibly easy for us to believe that we're believing the right things and living the right ways . . . and be completely wrong.
 - We may be able to look at our lives and remember a time that you believe you put your trust in Christ, and then you may look at your life and see changes that appear to be the result of that trust, but many people people in that same position later came to realize that they were a Rocky Hearted individual. They saw things in the Scripture with which they agreed. They changed their lives in their own power to conform to the expectations they saw in the Bible which—by the way—were generally only freckle-deep. It was outward, superficial conformity to a standard. It was hypocritical, it was Pharisaical.
 - We absolutely must know and understand the Scriptures the best we can. We need to study and get wise counselors and be the eternal student God created us to be.
 - If you are prideful and defensive and argumentative when you are approached about possible sin in your life, that needs to be a warning sign—not simply that you may not be born again, but at least broadly that you may well be very wrong on this point, and you do need to change.