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## SALVATION

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world - he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.."* Acts 16:31a And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* Romans 10:9,10 *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:13 *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1

## September 2019 Newsletter - True Faith

True faith is a comprehensive and definitive study, by JMR Phillips Sr., Pastor of the Berean Bible Church in Redding, on the nature of faith in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, with its analogies, examples, synonyms and metaphors. It is in-depth and detailed, designed to give the believer in Christ a clear understanding into the nature of faith. With faith playing such a crucial role in the Christian's relationship to God, it seems imperative that we understand it as completely as we can. For failure to understand and utilize the principles of faith will lead the believer in Christ to fall short of the grace of God in his day to day living and will bar the unbeliever from ever entering into the grace of God, which comes through his Son Jesus Christ.

So a study on faith is needed, especially when determining the distinction between faith and works. Today there seems to be a confusing of the two; but as one studies he will see that true works proceed out of true faith. It is not to be mixed with faith, confused with faith, nor to replace faith; but will proceed out of faith.

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## 1. Faith in salvation.

Throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, one of the most recurring themes is faith! So important is faith that without it one has no salvation, no standing with God, no blessings, no hope and no future. Only death, Hell and misery await him.

Faith is to be exercised by all Christians, at all times, in all situations. In fact, faith is to be the continual mental dynamic of the believer. "*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

Now there are many applications of faith, many synonyms for faith, and a dirge of definitions for faith found in contemporary Christianity. But the best definition for faith is found in [Acts 16:31](#), where the Apostle Paul told the Philippian jailer to "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*".

Here **faith** is in the verb form of *pisteuo*, but is used with *epi plus the accusative of direct object* and is "**Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ**" When one has this, **he has changed the nature of faith from the idea of mere mental assent, or believing that one exists, to the idea of actually putting one's trust in him.**

**Trust is that state of mind where one knows that he is helpless to do anything about his situation and is now totally depending on someone else to help him or handle the problem.** Such as one in a building on fire and his arms and legs are broken. His only hope is to be rescued by a fireman, whom he will have to trust.

But there is another side to *epi plus the accusative* with faith that we have not emphasized, and that is it is a **total turning from that which one has had his confidence in**; a turning from whatever a person, or thing he has been depending on, **to put that trust in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.** There has to be a turning from and letting go of that other thing and a turning to Christ alone putting one's trust in him. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as one's Savior, the individual must turn from and let go of everything he is placing his trust, confidence, faith, security and dependence and put his total trust in Jesus Christ.

When it comes to salvation, that act whereby one is forgiven of his sins by God, justified, granted eternal life and the resurrection; the individual becomes saved, when he believes on Christ as his Savior. And, as we have seen here, it entails two things: 1) a turning from that which he has placed his faith or trust in, and 2) a turning to Christ in total trust. This means that **the unbeliever must turn from, let go, turn his back on that which he has previously placed his trust in, and turn solely to Christ in faith.** His morality, his good works, his money, his standing in the community, his membership in lodges, his religion, his membership in churches, his rituals, his practices, his intelligence, his education, his abilities, his parents, his family, another person, the government, rituals, exercises, techniques, formulas, etc., everything...**and trust Christ alone.**

The unbeliever, to be saved, to gain eternity, must totally turn away from, let go of, stop trusting in anything and everything and put his sole faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Anything other than that is not faith! On the one side we have all the pride, works and confidences of man; and on the other side we have the work of Christ, who accomplished all that was needed for our salvation. One can cleave only to one or the other, but not both. One can only trust in one or the other, but not both. It is vitally important that one understands these two dynamics in the nature of true faith: 1) the turning from and letting go of that which one has his confidence and trust in; and 2) a turning to Jesus Christ in total trust and faith.

Currently, there is so much emphasis in churches today on personal experience, feelings, activity, good works, etc., that people's minds are diverted to these things, instead of having a clear understanding on what **true faith** is and the need for it in the matter of salvation. With the result that they often skip past the faith part and become occupied with the concepts of personal experience, feelings, activity, etc.. With the tragic consequence that many of them, if not all of them are not saved at all! Why? Because they have never really trusted Christ as their savior.

God wants to save us and he wants to bless us, but this can only be done by his grace. And if it is by grace, and only by grace, then God has to reject **all** our works and deal with us according to the principle of faith. So the person, the believer, has to understand that it all has to be by faith, why it has to be only by faith, and have a thorough understanding of what **true faith** is.

## 2. Active and passive faith.

To help us understand more about the nature of faith, we need to see that **faith can be looked at objectively**, that is, what it is that we are believing, the Word, or whom we are trusting in, the Lord Jesus Christ. And **looking at faith subjectively** is where we look at the act of believing, the exercise of faith. Which is our study into the nature of true faith.

We have also seen that **faith can be active and passive**. **Active** in the sense that we act upon our faith. We step out in faith; we act upon our faith; we move forward in faith, etc... But faith can also be **passive**, where there is nothing that we can really do, where we must be patient and wait, like a person recovering from surgery.

We can also look at faith from the standpoint of believing, relying, acting. This where we believe something to be true, the promises of God; we rely on them, depend on them; and then we **act** upon them. In salvation, we trust Christ to save us, which is all we can do. After salvation, we still trust in Christ as our Savior, but now we are to move forward in the plan of God, obeying God's Word, serving him, solving problems, etc. This obedience to God, this living life, this doing God's will, this aspect of so many facets of our new life in Christ, requires that we take the initiative and move forward in faith. This is also an aspect of active faith. To do this, **we must believe God's Word**, believe that his promises are true, (faith); rely and depend upon them, him, (trust); **and then act upon them**, (active faith).

**Christians need to understand the difference between active and passive faith**, and the different situations where one or the other is to be applied. Some believers sit around waiting for God to bless them, when they should actively be going out and going forth in faith. This is an incorrect use of faith. It is a passive faith, when an active faith is called for. Others are stymied when there is absolutely nothing that they can do at the moment, due to injury or illness, or the doors have been closed on them. They keep on trying to do something about it in their own strength, when they should be resorting to a passive faith; patiently waiting on God to handle the problem or situation.

Regardless, though, whether we are talking about active faith or passive faith, it is still faith. **Active faith**, where we believe God's Word, rely upon God and then actively go forward in the situation. Or **passive faith**, where we believe God's Word, rely upon the Lord, and then wait upon the Lord.

One of the common problems that believer's have, and where they often deceive themselves, (and others), is where they are acting or waiting, but not in faith! The one is out of the strength of one's flesh; the working or activity; and the other is out of laziness, sloth, fear, etc., and they use waiting on the Lord as an excuse.

**Active faith and passive faith are both biblical concepts, but each one has their own area of application**. The trouble is that believers can use them to justify their own activity. The one believer can go out in the energy and motivation of the flesh and work like crazy without the underlying motivation of faith. While the other believer can sit around in inactivity, saying that he trusts the Lord. How is one to know? The thing that we need to see is that **true faith motivates the believer; it motivates to activity**. It motivates the believer to keep on asking; to keep on seeking; and to keep on knocking! It sees its responsibility before God and seeks to fulfill it. It also motivates the believer to wait upon the Lord. But, as it waits on the Lord, it still keeps on asking, seeking, knocking.

But in this matter of living by faith, (and how important it is), the believer needs to see that he does not understand all he needs to know about faith. So he needs to learn all he can about true faith, so he can be sure that he is really exercising it. And so, as he faces his trials, his pressures, his responsibilities in life, he knows that he must go forward and meet them. And he does go forward and meet them, this time, under girded by faith, believing, relying upon God, and acting on that faith.

### 3. Objects of false security.

In this understanding of what faith is, of what it means to live the Christian life by faith; the same ideas that are found in trusting still apply. A turning from that which one has his trust or confidence in, and a total turning to Christ in trust and faith. If we are to go out in faith, if we're to even have faith, then we must: turn from, let go, leave behind, that which we trust in, depend upon, lean on, that which is our security, (emotional or otherwise), and go out in total faith and trust only in the Lord.

In fact, we hold ourselves back from going out in real faith in the Lord, by our refusal to let go of whatever it is that we are hanging on to for security; or whatever person we are hanging on to. A friend, a loved one; any person can and does hold us back from living the faith life. To which, some Christian might reply, "Not my friend! They encourage me to go on in the Lord." But what they don't understand in the majority of the cases, is that **the emotional bond and the emotional security of the relationship actually prevents them from going out in faith, trusting solely in the Lord.** They cannot let go of the other person, who provides a base of security for them, so that they can go out in faith. But that's exactly what they have to do, to live by faith in Christ. They have to let go of whatever thing they are holding on to, or whatever person they are holding on to, whether it's for financial reasons, or emotional reasons, and launch out with faith in Christ alone.

Let's review some of the things that people hold on to; their objects of security; the ground they stand on; the rock they lean on; the things they have their confidence in, which are actually in essence, idols! (One can set up idols in his heart. Ezekiel 14:3,4; and **an idol is not just an object of worship, it is also an object of security!**) Some of the things that people hold on to, that they are trusting in are: their good works, their being good, observing certain taboos, their norms and standards, their money, their job, their standing in the community, their knowledge, even Bible knowledge, their church membership, their position in the church, observing certain rituals or practices, their religious activities, some other person, their family (even a parent can be and often is an idol in the heart), the government, their education and abilities, etc.. These are just some of the things that believers can and do hold on to and rely upon, instead of fully trusting in Christ in their day-to-day living. And as long as we have confidence in them, they will hold us back from living truly by faith.

### 4. Faith has a focus.

We have seen that the Lord has told us to ask and we will receive; to seek and we will find; and to knock and it will be opened to us. Cannot we see that these are all actions of faith? *"Keep on asking, and we will receive. Keep on seeking, and we will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to us."* **This is not a passive faith, but an active one.** And we will note, that these are all in the imperative mood, which is the mood of command, where Christ commands us to this action of faith. And in the present imperative, he tells us that this is something that we are to be doing continually. Faith is to be the continuing mental dynamic of the believer, and the continual manner by which he lives his life

Perhaps at this point we need to interject **the four major areas of activity in the soul: thinking, feeling, choosing and believing**. Although thinking and choosing are involved in this matter of believing, believing goes beyond that to an entrusting of oneself in all areas to Christ, and then acts upon that faith. **Passive faith** comes in when one has done all and has no other recourse than to trust the Lord.

Even though faith has both its subjective and objective sense, we are studying the subjective side of faith, as we try to understand the nature of true faith. **But faith still has to have an object to be faith.** Therefore, to develop and strengthen faith, **we must not turn our attention to our faith, but to the object of our faith: God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God.** The Father and the Son, and the promises that they have given us, are always to be the object of our faith. *"We're (the subject), to trust (the verb), in the Lord (the object), with all our heart (state of pure faith). And we're (the subject again), to not lean (the verb), on our own understanding (the object)."* Proverbs 3: 5 Here we see again what faith is really about. It could be anything that we are leaning on, relying on, or depending on, but here it's our own intellectual abilities to think and reason our way through a problem. And we're to turn away from that to a total dependent trust on the Lord.

## **5. Lack of faith and idolatry.**

As always, **the Lord is to be the total focus of the believer in his faith.** He looks to the Lord's wisdom, the Lord's power, the Lord's grace and plan, the Lord's leadership, the Lord's protection, etc.. And the best way to stop hanging on other people or things for one's security, so one can fully trust the Lord, is to start focusing all of one's attention on the Lord, after having made a conscious decision to live by faith. The dynamic involved is not to be thinking about all the things that we might be hanging on to for security and then trying to extricate ourselves from them, but to totally focus ourselves on God, his Word, his Son, looking to the Father and his grace provisions, trusting in him; and letting go of these things in the process. Hebrews 12:1,2 says it well, *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith."*

*"Trusting in the Lord with all our heart"*, means exactly that; and is a command! We're to trust him with all our heart! And we're not to be leaning or relying on anyone or anything else. Confession of sins, going over the promises, prayer are all things that can help us do that. (Often pressures, sufferings, trials, discipline motivate us to do that). As Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 17:5, *"Cursed is the one who trusts in man (the flesh), who depends upon flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord."* We're so prone to trust in other things in our hearts; our money, ourselves, others, the government, our job security; so many things that give us security, or so we think.

Israel had this problems many times. In fact, most of their existence, except for a relatively few number of people. That's why they carried their idols around with them, and in their homes and tents. They were afraid; they were insecure, and they thought these idols could help them. And remember, an idol was not only an object of worship but also an object of **security**. And that's what so many of us do today with our idols. We have our idols today. Not little figurines, but other things. Trusting in the Lord means to stop trusting in these things and really trust him.

## **6. Faith versus rationalism.**

In Proverbs 3:5 the word for **trust** (in the Lord) is the gal imperative of *batach*. *Batach* has first of all

the picture idea of laying down on the ground all stretched out and relaxed, free from concern and worry. And it tells us how we're to put our cares and problems on the Lord, our whole life! And the secure feeling that comes from it. And we're to do this with all the heart, and not have part of the heart leaning on something else. The word for **lean** is *shaghan* and has the idea of leaning a spear against the wall, or leaning on a friend for help or support. So often, we lean on others for help, if for nothing else as an emotional security blanket. **Here, what the person is leaning on, instead of fully trusting the Lord, is his own understanding, *biynatheka***. *Biynatheka* speaks of **one's mental ability to think a way through his problem. To handle problems with the mind; to come up with a solution by thinking his way through it**. As in distinction to simply putting the matter into the Lord's hands and trusting him. "*In all your ways*", your activities, the path you take in life, the decisions you make, the things you do; "*acknowledge him*", get to know him by prayer, faith, doctrine; "*and he will make your paths straight*." The paths we take in life, speak of the next grace objective that God has for us. Living the faith life, straightens out those paths; instead of wandering around in circles never realizing the good things God has for us. Wandering around lost, confused, disoriented, under the control of the sin nature, out in the World System, under the control of, and doing the will of, the devil. "*Lean back and trust Yahweh with all your heart, and do not lean on your own reasoning abilities (or any other thing for that matter)*. *In all your activities know the Lord, and he will make your journey straight to the next grace objective*." As before, faith has in it the ideas of: believing something to be true, relying on it, and acting upon it. And trust has the idea of turning from something, or someone, that you have your confidence in; and turning solely to the Lord, with the emphasis on the Lord.

## 7. Faith, the true positive mental attitude.

The thought life is very important in this matter of faith. **The believer needs to keep a positive mental attitude (PMA), as he goes through each day**. Negative thoughts and emotions are so destructive to the life of faith and peace that God wants us to have. The Apostle Paul addressed the believer's thought life in Philippians 4:8, where he writes, "*Whatsoever things are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy, to think on such things*."

**It's so easy to have negative thoughts creep into our minds**; either from ourselves, the members of our own families, our friends, school, TV, the government, etc.. Thoughts of fear, doubt, pessimism, always looking to why something can't work, instead of the possibilities; always looking to the hopelessness of the situation, instead of the solutions. It's a negative frame of mind based upon unbelief, instead of the positive frame of mind of faith.

**One has to learn to watch over his thought life to keep the negative thoughts of doubt and fear from coming in**. And if they're there, to get rid of them, and to be on guard for those who always seem to take the negative, doubting, pessimistic view of life, who are always ready to express it to you. This is not a condemnation of anybody, but hat **it's so hard to have a positive mental attitude, with a mind of faith, when one is bombarded continuously with negative, anti-faith, anti-truth, anti-God thinking from virtually everything in our society**. And it's made even more difficult, when we continually get it from our spouses, our friends, and other Christians. So, in this matter of faith, we must begin with our thought life. To be aware of the fact, that by entertaining negative, doubting thoughts we are undermining the mental attitude of faith. Then, apply ourselves to having a thought life of faith, and keeping the negative thoughts of doubt and unbelief out.

The Bible has much to say concerning our thought life; both in the cultivating of positive faith thoughts and the avoiding of negative thoughts, doubts, unbelief and mental attitude sins, "*Stop worrying about*



*even one thing", Philippians 4. Here we have the command to stop the mental attitude sin of **worrying**. This is where one has this thinking in his mind, and is to get rid of it. To stop it. And another is, "To take no thought for tomorrow". We are not allowed to let one mental attitude destroying thought in our mind. And if it gets in, we're to get rid of it.. But for so many of us, fear and worry are so easy to slip into. That's why Christ addressed this problem so much in the Bible. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear." Matthew 6. And, "Fear not little flock, for the Father has gladly chosen to give you the Kingdom."*

The real problem with fear thoughts and worry thoughts coming into our minds, (and staying there where they do so much harm), is when we're hit with a very serious threat to our well-being, our health, or our life. Or, when we're hit with wave after wave of serious trials and pressures over months and years. **The one** has a way of overwhelming us by the shock of it; and **the other** has a way of grinding us down, as we have seen with Job.