

FAITH



1. Faith Has A Source

(Leader's Notes)

The Bible says, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Faith is obviously important to God! We are going to begin a series of Bible studies on 'Faith'. We will discover what faith is, and why it is important to confess faith, and how to develop faith in our lives. First of all, what is faith?

- ♥ What do you think faith is? Discuss.
(Faith means 'to be fully persuaded' or 'to place your confidence in'. Faith is not just something we think, but something that changes the way we speak and act.)

In the New Testament the word for faith is 'pistis' in Greek, and it is used many times. Sometimes it is translated as 'faith', and other times as 'believe'. Often we think we need to produce faith ourselves, and we try to work it up. However the Bible says that faith is not a result of our efforts, but it comes from God. Faith has a source!

1. Jesus is the Author of faith

- ♥ How is Jesus described in Hebrews 12:2?
(He is described as the Author and Finisher of our faith.)
- ♥ What do you think it means when it says Jesus is the Author of our faith?
(Jesus is the Author of our faith because faith comes from him, and he is the one who takes the lead in faith, and shows us how to live by faith.)

2. Faith is a gift of God's grace

- ♥ How do the following verses show that faith is a gift of God's grace? Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:16
(We are clearly told that faith is a gift of God, given by him, so no-one can boast that they deserved salvation. Then in Romans we see that we receive God's promises through faith, and this faith is God's grace to us.)

If faith was something we could produce, then salvation would not entirely be a work of God. However God's Word says that faith is a gift given by God, so salvation is a gift we cannot earn.

3. Faith is a work of the Holy Spirit

Just as God the Father and the Lord Jesus are involved in our faith, so is the Holy Spirit.

- ♥ Who gives faith according to 1 Corinthians 12:9?
(The Holy Spirit)
- ♥ What does the Spirit of faith cause us to do? See 2 Corinthians 4:13
(The Spirit of faith causes us to speak and believe.)

- ♥ Often people say, 'faith changes things' or 'faith works miracles'. From what we have learnt so far about faith, is this statement totally true? Discuss.

(It is not totally true, as it is God who works miracles and changes things! These sayings can give us the idea that we have to work up faith so miracles can take place, but it is not our faith, but faith in a mighty God, who can work miracles.)

4. Faith is our responsibility

Although the origin of faith is God, the Bible clearly shows that we have a responsibility too. In Hebrews it gives us the reason why the Children of Israel never entered the Promised Land.

- ♥ Why couldn't these people enter the Promised Land? See Hebrews 3:7-8, 3:16-17, 19
(They did not enter because they had unbelieving hearts and were full of unbelief.)
- ♥ Did God hold them responsible for this? How do we know?
(Yes he did! He said they were rebellious (v8, 16) and sinful. (v12, 17) As a result they never entered the Promised Land. If they were not responsible God would not have punished them.)
- ♥ Share one promise God has given you in the past and you have seen it fulfilled. Are there any other promises that God has given you that have not yet been fulfilled? Is there anything you need to do, to see these come to pass?

We cannot create faith, but we must exercise it! In Hebrews 3:12 God is called 'The Living God'. He is a God who speaks and acts, and faith comes as we listen to him. Then we need to declare that faith and act accordingly! Let's begin to speak and act on those promises God has already given us.