

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

What Is Faith?

Heroes Of The Faith | Part 1 | Hebrews 11:1-6

INTRODUCTION

What is faith? If you were to ask most people, you might hear that it is a form of positive thinking or an intense desire for something to happen. We often treat faith as something we must generate ourselves through sheer willpower. However, this is just wishful thinking, not the biblical faith that God calls us to. True faith is something far deeper and more powerful, and understanding its real definition is essential for every believer.

To honor God and live a life that brings Him glory, we must get our minds around what true, biblical faith is all about. The book of Hebrews provides the most direct definition in all of Scripture. As we begin this series on the heroes of the faith, we must first go to God's Word to understand the very foundation upon which their lives were built: a faith that is not man-made, but God-given.

KEY POINTS

1. Faith Is A Divine Persuasion From God

The first thing we must understand is that faith is not something we can produce on our own. The Greek word for faith, *pistis*, comes from a root that means "to be persuaded." At its core, biblical faith is a divine persuasion. It is a gift that God distributes to us, allowing us to believe what He has revealed. Scripture is clear: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith; and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (*Ephesians 2:8-9*). If you have faith, it is because God Himself has initiated and generated it within you.

2. Faith Is Confidence In What We Hope For

The definition of faith in Hebrews begins with confidence. The Greek word used here, *hypostasis*, was a legal term used to describe a title deed or proof of ownership. In essence, faith is the outward certainty we place in God's Word as our unshakeable, legal documentation. When the Bible says God created the world out of nothing, our faith gives us the confidence to believe it, not because science can prove it, but because God has said it. This is why the authority of Scripture is so vital. If we lose confidence in God's Word, we will inevitably struggle to have confidence in God Himself.

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3. Faith Is Assurance About What We Do Not See

While confidence is the outward expression of our faith, assurance is the inward conviction. The Greek word for assurance, *elenchos*, describes an inner evidence or certainty that the Holy Spirit works within our hearts. It is the spiritual knowing that what God has promised is true, even when our circumstances and feelings tell us otherwise. The Spirit Himself "bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (*Romans 8:16*). This same Spirit gives us an internal assurance that He is leading us, speaking to us, and guiding our next steps.

4. Faith Is Exercised At The End Of Ourselves

We will never truly exercise faith until we stop looking at ourselves and trusting in our own abilities. Pride is the great barrier to faith. As long as we believe we can fix our problems, manage our situations, or sort things out on our own, we will not fully lean on God. Real faith begins when we lose confidence in ourselves. It is in the moments when we are helpless and hopeless, at the very end of our own resources, that we are finally positioned to throw ourselves completely on Christ and the mercies of God.

How do we get to this place of true, biblical faith? The first encounter is salvation. It is the moment you come to the end of yourself, recognize you cannot work your way to heaven, and throw yourself helplessly upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate act of surrendering self-sufficiency, and it is an ability given by the Holy Spirit.

After salvation, faith becomes a daily walk. In a world filled with noise, social media, and endless distractions, we are called to "be still, and know that I am God" (*Psalms 46:10*). This requires intentionally quieting our lives to listen for His voice. God still speaks to his children. He speaks through His Word, and He gives us an inner witness through His Spirit to confirm His direction for our lives. He will never lead you where His Word says not to go, but He will give you the next step.

Perhaps you find yourself in a situation right now where you are at the end of your rope. Maybe it is with your family, your finances, or your health. You do not know how you are going to get through it. This is not a position of weakness; it is the power position. When you are at the end of yourself, you are finally ready to stop trusting yourself and start listening for the Spirit of God to speak. This is where faith is truly exercised.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. The sermon teaches that faith is a gift from God, a "divine persuasion." In what ways have you previously thought of faith as something you had to produce on your own? How does seeing it as a gift change your approach to your relationship with God?
2. Dr. Dodd described faith as having confidence in God's Word, like a legal document of ownership. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust what God's Word says over your own logic, feelings, or the opinions of the culture?
3. To truly exercise faith, we must come to the end of ourselves. When was a time you felt completely at the end of your own resources, and how did that position you to listen for God's voice in a new way? What might God be asking you to surrender to him today?
