

## LESSON 2

# Faith Toward God

Hebrews 6:1-10

**NOTE:** Faith toward God is one of the six “principles of the doctrine of Christ” (Hebrews 6:1); we will study the others in later lessons. All six are easily identifiable by notation and lesson topic.

**O**ur last lesson identified faith, i.e., believing in and trusting Christ alone for salvation, as the first step toward salvation. Faith is an essential prerequisite in coming to God; without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Hebrews 11 is commonly called the faith chapter of the Bible. Each student should study this chapter thoroughly in conjunction with this lesson.

The writer of Hebrews admonished us to leave the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ, not laying again the foundation of these principles, but rather to go on to perfection, i.e., spiritual maturity. God is not telling us to forsake or abandon these principles. He is telling us to establish them in our lives as new converts and then to progress beyond them. We are to know them, understand them, have them in mind and heart, and then go on to maturity in Christ. Growth is involved in this process; we all should desire it.

Only two foundations exist for us to build our lives upon (Matthew 7:24-29). Until we are firmly established upon the foundation of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), we are not prepared to go on to greater things. The purpose of this lesson is to establish these principles in our lives and to motivate us to greater spiritual growth.

Since we have already established the essentiality of faith for salvation, we would do well to note its importance in our daily Christian walk.

We must clarify the meaning of the terms *the faith* and *faith* so we can understand Scripture in context.

The faith is the doctrine and teachings established by Christ, taught by the apostles, and delivered to the saints (Jude 3). When the Bible speaks of “contending for the faith,” “one Lord, one faith, one baptism,” and “some shall depart from the faith,” this is not in the same sense as “faith toward God.” Listed below are many of the verses relating to *the faith*; we should learn to differentiate between these two terms.

- Jude 3, 17
- Ephesians 4:5
- II Corinthians 13:5
- Philippians 1:27
- Romans 1:5; 14:1
- I Timothy 1:2; 3:9; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10
- Galatians 1:23
- Colossians 1:23; 2:7
- I Corinthians 16:13
- II Timothy 3:8
- Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5
- Titus 1:13; 3:15

A good thing to remember in helping to differentiate these two terms is that one can have faith and not be in the faith, but one cannot be in the faith without having faith toward God.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). This is the meaning of *faith toward God* as found in Hebrews 6:1. Faith is the translation of a Greek word meaning persuasion, credence, conviction of the truthfulness of God, assurance, and believing.

## HOW DO WE OBTAIN FAITH?

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing

by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). As we hear the Word, we must mix it with faith for it to profit us (Hebrews 4:2).

Our journey toward God and salvation really begins when we hear the Word of God and believe it. At this juncture we give mental and verbal assent to God and His Word. Having faith or believing must exist in our lives through every step the Bible leads us. Although we may not be able to explain the Bible or have a full understanding of it, yet we believe it. That is faith toward God.

When we believe, we are eligible to receive anything and everything God’s Word promises us. Mentally believing in or on Jesus Christ and His Word does not constitute salvation within itself. Rather, our faith becomes the propelling force that causes us to act on what we believe (John 1:11-13).

Both Satan and demons believe (James 2:19), but their belief does not save them. It takes more than this type of believing to be saved, yet we can never be saved without believing. Faith is the first step, the beginning ingredient, and a necessary part of salvation. Every step toward God must be prefaced by faith.

We can acquire great things from God through faith. The most important is salvation from sin. Some additional benefits accompany salvation, but they are constantly dependent on faith to keep them alive in our heart and soul.

## Salvation

Unbelief will stop us from receiving salvation for our souls. We must not allow the devil to confuse our minds by telling us that we doubt when the problem is a lack of understanding of God’s Word. There is a vast difference between the two. Unbelievers have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). These are the ones who refused to accept God’s Word and to believe and obey it. Let us obey Jesus’ call: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The following verses demonstrate the necessity of faith for salvation:

“He that cometh to God must believe that he is” (Hebrews 11:6).

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8)

“To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth ... in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25).

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God” (Colossians 2:12).

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand” (Romans 5:2).

“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:2).

## Healing

Healing, along with the seven other topics mentioned here, are really addenda to the subject of salvation. Since each of these has faith as its activator, we mention them here.

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick” (James 5:15).

To the woman with the issue of blood, Jesus said, “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:22).

“And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong” (Acts 3:16).

“According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29).

## **Pleasing God**

Every born-again Christian is filled with a basic desire to please the One who saved him from sin. This desire will bring discipline to our lives, with the resulting blessings of God upon us. Again, this can only be accomplished by faith toward God.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Enoch “had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5).

## **Victory**

Success in living for God, along with the conquest of besetting sins, can only come through faith. To avoid defeat in our Christian walk, we must keep our faith strong.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

We should study the things that constitute the world, with the view of being victorious over them. (See I John 2:15-17.)

## **Understanding**

Though the things of God are inexplicable by us, there is an abiding comprehension of the things of God. We accept them by faith; therefore, many things baffling to theologians are readily understood by the believer. How great is the peace afforded to believers!

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3).

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20) (Study Genesis 1-2 in conjunction with this verse.)

## **Sanctification**

We acquire initial sanctification when we are born again. Through faith, we retain and grow in this state of purification, holiness, and consecration. Other factors are involved, but faith remains the foundation upon which they stand.

“That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

“And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9).

## **Justification**

Justification is another benefit of being born again. Justification means being declared just, innocent, and righteous in the eyes of God. We receive and stand in this blessed state through faith in God.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 2:16).

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).

## Direction

The path of the Christian is often obscure; his or her only sense of direction is found through faith in God and His Word. Nothing more is needed; we just need to be aware of the type of circumstances under which we must travel.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7).

“Walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Romans 4:12).

## Righteousness

We initially acquire righteousness, which is closely connected to sanctification and justification, by the new birth experience (John 3:1-8). It is then maintained in the believer’s life through faith in God and obedience to His Word. “Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” in God’s eyes (Isaiah 64:6). Our goal is to have the righteousness of God ruling in our lives.

“The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith” (Romans 9:30).

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise ..” (Romans 10:6). (See Romans 10:1-6.)

## FACTS OF FAITH

Below are some pertinent facts concerning faith that we would do well to commit to memory.

- Faith works by love (Galatians 5:6).
- All people do not have faith (II Thessalonians 3:2).
- Faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26).
- Without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).
- Only charity is greater than faith (I Corinthians 13:13).
- Faith is a weightier matter than tithing (Matthew 23:23).
- The church is the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).
- Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
- The shield of faith is part of the Christian’s armor (Ephesians 6:16).
- Faith is one of the nine spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:9).
- Faith is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- We are to hold to faith lest we make shipwreck of our lives (I Timothy 1:18-20).
- There is a law (principle) of faith (Romans 3:27).
- We are to add to our faith seven virtues (II Peter 1:5-10).

Faith toward God is a virtually inexhaustible subject. I encourage you, with Bible and concordance in hand, to explore the depths of faith. The first goal of this lesson is to establish faith in your heart for salvation. The second goal is to increase your faith, causing you to build upon it so that you will never fall (II Peter 1:10).