

WHAT IS FAITH?

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” —HEBREWS 11:1

Undefined words can be a source of confusion, especially when interpreted in different ways. There are two popular notions of faith in widespread use today, and both are untrue to the biblical meaning of faith.

Faith is not a mystical power. Some think of it as a force, a mind-over-matter phenomenon whereby the actual act of believing something long and hard enough has the effect of making it come true. For example, the weather forecast can be calling for a rainy, cloudy day and it is raining and the sky is thick with clouds. We can believe in sunshine all we want, but it is not going to make the sun appear. That is foolishness, not faith. Believing in something never, in itself, changes the facts. Things simply do not happen by sheer force of belief.

Faith is not a substitute for facts. Many people see faith as something that comes into play only when they run out of facts. As long as they have facts they are secure, but when facts run out and things become uncertain, it is then they need to exercise faith. In other words, a basic ingredient in the exercise of faith is a good imagination – a willingness to believe in things that cannot be substantiated. It is actually the reverse that is true. Faith is not an alternative to facts, but is valid only when it is placed in facts.

Faith does not exist alone, but is an attitude of trust toward something or someone. In this respect, it is like love. Love does not exist alone but has to have something or someone as the object of our love. Similarly, faith is an attitude of trust in something or someone who works on our behalf. We place our faith in a myriad of things everyday. We place faith in a chair to hold our weight; faith in a car to get us to work; faith in our refrigerators to keep our food cold. The most important aspect of faith is not faith itself, but the quality of the object in which we place our faith. Having a little faith will not detract from the quality of the object and conversely, a lot of faith will not improve the quality.

In the Christian life, the object of our faith is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the exercise of our faith is an attitude of trust toward Him. When Scripture states that we are “saved by faith”, it means we recognize our utter inability to save ourselves. And in trusting Christ, we come in humble repentance and submission to Him, allowing Him to work on our behalf.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, who better to place our faith in than the One who created us? Thank You, Lord, for working on my behalf and being the rock in my life.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I trusting Christ on a daily basis to work on my behalf?