

## “Christianity Explained: How Do You Become A Christian? (Part 3e) [Some DOs and DON'Ts of Saving Faith]”

In today's message on saving faith, please consider six DOs and DON'Ts of saving faith. First, a DON'T: ***having once believed, don't now disbelieve***. It's not enough to just start in the faith, we need to continue in the faith all the days of our lives. The Lord delivered the Exodus Generation out of Egypt, but later they were destroyed and not allowed to enter the Promised Land because they lost their faith (see Jude 1:5). While telling the Parable of the Sower, Jesus referred to people who believe for a little while and then fall away during times of testing. This is sobering, because life is filled with times of testing (to prove that our faith is genuine). We must always avoid unbelief, because unbelief turns a heart hard, which turns that soul away from the Living God.

Second, let's counter-act that first DON'T with a DO: ***confess your unbelief and ask for God's help***. Aren't you glad we can be honest with God? He knows what's in our minds and hearts, anyway, so why not just bare it all before Lord? Mark 9 records that when Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, they noticed that the other nine disciples were in an argument with a large crowd of people. When Jesus asked what it was all about, a man told Jesus that he had brought his demon-possessed son to his disciples so they could cast it out—but they were unable to. Jesus called for the boy to be brought to Him, and he told the father in Mark 9:23 to believe, because “... *all things are possible to him who believes.*” Mark 9:24 records, “*Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.’*” Jesus cast the demon out and explained to His disciples the importance of prayer and fasting in casting out demons. I love this father's honest response, and how he asked the Lord to help him with his unbelief.

Third, another DON'T: ***don't shipwreck your faith by rejecting faith***. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:18-20: “*This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, <sup>19</sup> having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, <sup>20</sup> of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*” Paul refers to Hymenaeus and Alexander, who had shipwrecked their faith by rejecting the guidance of conscience, relapsing into evil practices, and by twisting the Scriptures to suit their whims and fancies. This sure formula for ruining one's life must be avoided at all costs.

Fourth, instead of destroying your faith, here's another DO: ***keep growing stronger in your faith***. Abraham faced impossible challenges without weakening in his faith or wavering through unbelief. He grew stronger in his faith because he was fully convinced that God is able to do what He has promised (see Romans 4:19-21). We, too, will grow stronger in our faith when we believe the

Promises of God (contained in the Scriptures), no matter what; and when we are fully convinced that the Promise-Maker (God) can be trusted and will absolutely deliver. Keep pursuing an ever-increasing faith, just like Smith Wigglesworth did.

Fifth, here's a final DON'T: ***don't abandon the faith***. There are many reasons why people turn away from the Christian faith, and the Scripture itself warns against several possibilities. A love for money will cause some to wander from the faith (see 1 Timothy 6:10). Loving this world will cause you to turn away (see 2 Timothy 4:10). Turning to a different gospel, other than the Christian Gospel contained in the Holy Bible will bewitch a person and cause them to turn away from Christ (see Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1). Some will be deceived by demonic teachings in the Last Days and led astray (see 2 Timothy 4:1). Last Days suffering will cause some to turn away, and the increase of wickedness at the end of the age will cause the love of many to grow cold (see Galatians 3:4; Matthew 24:12). Jesus said in Matthew 24:13: *“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

This leads right into the final DO: ***keep the faith through the finish line***. This was Paul's testimony near the end of his life, which hopefully will be ours, too (see 2 Timothy 4:7): *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”* Part of keeping the faith all the way through the finish line includes following God's rules of honor in the race of life without using trickery or pretense. Although we will all experience our share of stumbles, we should strive to never let our Master down. Through everything you go through in life never lose your trust in Jesus. Especially during these perilous times keep your faith near, front and center—never far away at a distance. As Hebrews 4:14 exhorts, hold firmly to the faith you profess!

## **Discussion Guide/Action Steps**

1. Don't fall away during times of testing. Pass every test of faith so that it will prove that your faith is genuine, and then cause your genuine faith to grow.
2. Ask the Lord to help you on the ups and downs of your faith journey.
3. Be sensitive and responsive when the Holy Spirit pings your conscience.
4. Grow stronger in your faith through the challenges you face.
5. In what areas might you be vulnerable to wandering from the faith? Ask the Lord to help you to avoid those dangers at all costs and to keep you true.
6. Listen to Andrae Crouch's song, *“Through It All.”* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xO5Qt2VQn4k>)
7. Listen to this song, *“Hold to God's Unchanging Hand.”* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juzAETPFetY>)