

# Faith towards God

## **What does the word faith mean?**

**It means:** belief, faithfulness, reliability, trust, confidence, firm persuasion, assurance, or firm conviction.

## **What is saving faith?**

Saving faith is faith in Christ, whereby we receive salvation and are brought into a right relationship with God. “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works” (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are saved by faith, not by works or good works. Faith is the only condition for salvation. Anything added, becomes a work attached to the grace of God.

**Example:** Missouri is called the “Show Me State”. This kind of faith is found in James 2:14-16. We “show” or prove our faith is genuine or “the real thing” by our works or actions. Faith and actions should be working together. Works makes faith perfect meaning “mature” or “complete” (James 2:26). James’ argument is that works are evidence of our faith. The conclusion in James 2:26 is clear, faith and deeds are essential to each other. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”.

**Text:** Habakkuk 2:4 “The Just Shall Live By Faith”

### **1. Faith, sometimes you have to wait for it:**

In Genesis 12:2 God promised Abram a great nation and again in Genesis 15:1-6 that he would have descendants.

Later in Genesis 16:1-4 Sarai and Abram have decided that they have waited long enough (10 years). So they decide to “help” God out. Sarai has Abram sleep with her maidservant Hagar. Hagar bore Abram a son, but it was not the son of promise as we see later in Genesis 17:16-21; 21: 2-3.

At God’s “set time”, or right time, Isaac was born (Genesis 21:2). Wait for God’s timing, not yours. Be careful in your waiting / being delayed that you

don't produce an "Ishmael". Abraham waited 25 years for the first promise God had given him back in Genesis 12:2 to be fulfilled.

## 2. **Faith must be tested:**

After waiting 25 years for his son, God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Notice Abraham didn't say . . . .

- 1) "But God, I need a few more weeks to pray about this"
- 2) "But you know God, I need some more time to research this"
- 3) "But God you know I need some more time to get ready for this big test"
- 4) He didn't even say, "But you know, God, I've waited 25 years for Isaac, and now you want me to sacrifice him."
- 5) He didn't try to bargain with God or negotiate with God; I'll give you 1,000 sheep instead of Isaac, Lord."

There were no buts or what or questions for God. Abraham simply obeyed.

## 3. **Faith must have expression:**

Noah's project called for special faith by building the ark on a dry (land-locked) region where there was not enough water to float a large boat (Genesis 6:13-17). It must have taken several decades or longer for Noah and his sons to gather the materials and build the ark.

## 4. **We need to have enduring faith:**

When we are (tested, trialed, suffering): Luke 22:31-32. (1, 2 and 3 denials) 22:54-61

Satan wanted to test Peter/disciples hoping to bring them into spiritual ruin 22:31. The Greek word for you here is plural, indicating that Satan had asked permission to trouble all the disciples (not just Peter). We need to have the kind of faith that will be able to stand under the pressures of life/Satan." "That, your faith, should not fail".

## **5. Faith and Fear:**

Proverbs 29:25 says, “The fear of man is a snarl”. The apostle Paul knew this (See Galatians 1:10). Paul said, “If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

We think, ‘what will they say or what will they think’? This stops you cold in your tracks. That is the “fear of man”. Fear and the fear of man can stop you from doing what God wants you to do. I used to have it. Faith and fear cannot be together, they don’t mix very well. It’s like trying to mix water and oil.

## **6. Walking by faith:**

Habakkuk has learned to walk by faith, not by what he could see (3:17-18). Habakkuk knows that disaster and ruin are coming to his nation (Judah).

In the beginning, Habakkuk is perplexed and questions God. But at the end of the book, his faith is “rock solid” in God. Habakkuk has learned to walk by faith and not by what he could see (see 2 Corinthians 5:7). He has learned that the just shall live by faith, or better put; by his Faith.