

# THE DESCRIPTION OF FAITH

## HEBREWS 11:01–06

### *Introduction*

This is one of the great chapters in the Bible. It is known as *God's Great Hall of Fame*. Men and women who have *believed* God down through the centuries are listed as being great men and women of God. The key to greatness with God is faith; the person who truly believes God is *great* in the eyes of God. The key to any of us being great in the eyes of God is faith — faith in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The first part of this great chapter gives us an overall study of faith. It is the description of faith.

- I. The meaning of faith (v. 1).
- II. The reward of faith: God's approval (v. 2).
- III. The basic understanding of faith: God made the world (v. 3).
- IV. The spiritual power of faith (v. 4-5).
- V. The necessary beliefs of faith (v. 6).

### **I. *Hebrews 11:01 The Meaning of Faith***

What does faith mean? This is the only time the Bible ever defines faith. Time and time again, the Bible discusses faith and the great importance of faith. The Bible tells us that we must have faith — we must believe God — and it tells us the great things that happen to those who do believe God. The Bible also gives example after example of men and women who have and have not believed God and shows in clear terms what happened to each. But nowhere does the Bible define faith except here. Thus it is important that we clearly see just what faith means. The Biblical definition is this (see Heb. 11:1 in each of the following author's commentaries):

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (v. 1).*

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (v. 1, New American Standard).*

*“Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality — faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses” (v. 1, Amplified New Testament).*

*“Faith means that we are certain of the things we hope for, convinced of the things we do not see” (William Barclay).*

*“Faith is a hope that is absolutely certain that what it believes is true, and that what it expects will come” (Barclay says this is what faith is to the writer of Hebrews).*

*“Faith is trust in the unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, for we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye” (Wycliffe Bible Commentary).*

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That great servant of God of a former generation whom so many appreciate so much, Mathew Henry, makes some excellent statements that are well worth our thought:

*“Faith and hope go together; and the same things that are the object of our hope are the object of our faith.”*

*“It [faith] is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that He has promised to us in Christ; and this persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul...possession...of those things.”*

*“Believers in the exercise of faith are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ dwells in the soul by faith; and the soul is filled with the fullness of God.”*

Now, what is faith? Look at the Biblical definition again.

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (v. 1)*

The word “sure” (hupostasis) means the foundation, assurance, title-deed and guarantee of things hoped for. The word “certain” (elegchos) means conviction.

According to most commentators, this is what is meant by these two words. Therefore, faith would be defined as: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Look closely at what is being said and note that faith is being described as an act, an act of the mind and heart. That is, our heart and mind believe something and we have assurance and conviction that it is true. This is certainly true; faith is an act of the mind and heart. But many of the earlier interpreters understood “sure” (hupostasis) to mean *real being, substantial nature, the real nature of a thing*. Vincent points this out and even says that it suggests the real sense, but he backs off of the meaning and concludes that faith is basically an act of what he calls “moral intelligence directed at an object” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 510).

This is not to argue with God’s dear servants who stress that faith is primarily an act of the mind and heart. It is only to say that Scripture seems to be saying that faith is more than an act. Scripture seems to be saying that faith is the *actual possession* of reality. Is this not what the definition “title-deed” is saying? The person who holds the title-deed to property actually possesses the property. It is his already. Certainly from God’s perspective, we already possess His promises; He has already seated us in the heavenlies, and we already possess eternal life. It is not that we are going to possess it; we already possess it. The point is this: holding the title-deed to property and possessing something is more than assurance and conviction. It is possessing reality, actually holding something that is substantial and real. It is possessing the land, the promises of God. Faith is possessing the substance of the promises of God, the actual evidence of things not seen. If I possess them, the substance is there; the evidence is there. The substance and evidence, the fact that I already possess them, are my assurance and conviction. This is important to note and bears repeating: the substance and evidence, the fact that I already

possess eternal life, is the basis of my assurance and conviction, of never tasting and experiencing death.

Now, what does all this discussion mean? It means this: faith is *being sure, the actual possession*, of what we hope for, the *certainty and reality* of what we do not see. It is *both an act and a possession* of the thing believed. It is believing and trusting in that which actually exists — in that which we can possess. We may not be able to see it, but it is real and existing, and we can possess it by believing and having faith in it. We can possess it now — we cannot see it, but we can actually possess the very substance of it by believing and entrusting our lives to it.

=> Faith is *trusting and possessing* all that God is and says.

=> Faith is *believing and possessing* all that God is and says.

=> Faith is *having confidence in and possessing* all that God is and says.

=> Faith is *hoping for something and possessing it* because God exists and has promised it.

**Thought 1.** Note what Biblical faith is not. It is not...

- “I think so, I hope so.”
- “It may be so; it may not be so. ”
- “It might be true; it might not be true.”

Biblical faith does not deal with what is unreal, imaginary, fanciful, visionary, superficial or deceptive. Biblical faith is the knowledge, experience and possession of things hoped for. True Biblical faith deals only with truth and reality. It is...

- knowing what is real.
- experiencing what is real.
- possessing what is real.

## II. *Hebrews 11:02 The Reward of Faith*

What is the reward of faith? God’s approval. God is pleased, very pleased, when we believe Him and His promises. This is the point of this verse. The elders, great men of God who lived in the past, believed God and followed God. They turned away from the world and its possessions and pleasures and followed God. They believed God, that He had much more to offer — that His promises of an eternal land and of eternal life were true. Therefore they staked their lives, all they were and had, upon that hope. And their faith in God pleased God to no end. Therefore, God accepted their faith and has honoured them because of it. He has, of course, honoured them by recording their faith in His Word and using their example as a challenge to believers of every generation. But God has also honoured them by fulfilling their faith; God has taken them on home to be with Him.

**Thought 1.** The reward of faith is God’s approval, and when God approves us, He accepts us into His eternal presence. This simply means that God looks after and

cares for us, giving us victory over all the enemies of this world — including death — and He does it for eternity. The approval of God means that God fulfills all His promises to us. The promises of God become a living reality in our experiences, both daily and eternally.

**John 3:15-16** *That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

**John 5:24** *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

**Acts 16:1-2** *He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.*

**Rom 1:8** *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.*

**2 Cor 8:18** *And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.*

**Eph 1:6-7** *To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

**3 John 1:12** *Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone — and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.*

### III. **Hebrews 11:03 The Basic Understanding of Faith**

The basic understanding of faith — that God has made the world. Note the word “understanding” (noeo). It means to perceive with the mind, to understand, to know a true fact. Some say the belief that God made the world is only an assumption, that it is the beginning point in building the Christian's beliefs and theology. There is both truth and error in this charge. The error is found in the word assumption. The truth is this: the Christian begins with a fact that is true: *God did create the world*. The Christian believer's starting point is more than an assumption — it is an understanding, a true fact, the very basic fact that God did create the world. This understanding is based upon four things:

- => The world itself: looking at and observing the world, and studying and thinking about its origin, purpose, and end.
- => The Bible, the Word of God, the written revelation of God.
- => The Lord Jesus Christ, the living revelation of God.
- => The witness of the Holy Spirit who is given to every believer. He bears witness that Jesus Christ and the Word of God are true. This is critical, for it is *a fact*, as any

true Christian believer can testify. When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, God puts His Spirit into the heart and life of the deliverer. The Holy Spirit seals, guarantees, bears witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that the promises and teachings of God's Word are true.

The point is this: the Christian believer has four strong sources that show the origin, purpose, and end of all things; and all four are undeniable. How can this be said? How can we say that these witnesses are undeniable?

- => Because we can look and observe the world. The world is real; it is truth. The world does exist.
- => Because we can look and observe the Bible, its teachings and promises at work in human lives — the lives of those who believe it. The Word of God sitting there and working itself out in lives is real. The Word of God is truth; it is absolutely true that it exists and works in human lives just as it claims.
- => Because we can know the Lord Jesus Christ through a study of the records of His life. He lived, and the fact that He lived is truth. But we can also see that the very things He claimed are at work in human lives. Jesus Christ can be studied and known in the lives of those who truly believe and follow Him. For Jesus Christ lives in the lives of true believers and followers of His.
- => Because we can know and see the work of the Holy Spirit in lives as discussed above. Again, the believer has four strong witnesses that testify that God exists — that He exists and that He has created the worlds. Where did the worlds come from? A chart is probably the best way to grasp what the believer understands as opposed to what the unbeliever understands.

*When a believer looks at the origin of the world, he sees...*

1. God
2. God's Word — God willed and spoke
3. Matter appeared, the worlds were created by God's Word
4. The things seen were made by God

*When an unbeliever looks at the origin of the world, he sees...*

1. Nothing — absolutely nothing
2. Nothing — absolutely nothing
3. Matter appeared; some gas or force formed out of absolutely nothing
4. The things seen were made by just appearing out of absolutely nothing

The point is this: we were not here when God created the world, but we believe that a Supreme Being, God Himself, created the world.

=> The world says that a Designer made the world.



=> The Bible, the Word of God, says that God made the world.

=> Jesus Christ says that God made the world.

=> The Holy Spirit testifies to the believer's heart that the claims and promises of the Word of God are true.

Therefore, the basic understanding of the believer is that God exists and that He has created the world. God is the Person who is behind life and the world of life. God gave breath to man and His world. He made the things that are seen.

**Thought 1.** Mathew Henry has an excellent exposition on this point that merits our study.

*“By faith we understand much more of the formation of the world than ever could be understood by the naked eye of natural reason. Faith is not a force upon the understanding, but a friend and a help to it. Now what does faith give us to understand concerning the worlds?...”*

1. *“That these worlds were not eternal, nor did they produce themselves, but they were made by another.*
2. *“That the maker of the worlds is God: he is the maker of all things.*
3. *“That he made the world with great exactness; it was a framed work, in everything duly adapted and disposed to answer its end.*
4. *“That God made the world by his word, that is, by his essential wisdom and eternal Son, and by his active will, saying, Let it be done, and it was done, Psa. 33.*
5. *“That the world was thus framed out of nothing, out of no pre-existent matter... [by] God, who can call things that are not as if they were, and command them into being. These things we understand by faith.*

*“The Bible gives us the truest and most exact account of the origin of all things, and we are to believe it, and not to wrest or run down the scripture-account of the creation, because it does not suit with some fantastic hypotheses of our own, which has been in some learned but conceited men the first remarkable step towards infidelity, and has led them into many more” (Mathew Henry's Commentary, Vol. 6, p. 938).*

**Thought 2.** William Barclay also has his usual practical comments that are helpful in the personal application of this point to our lives.

*“The writer to the Hebrews goes further. He says that it is an act of faith to believe that God made this world. Then he goes on to say that the things which are seen emerged from the things which are not seen. Now when he said that he was aiming a blow at current belief. It was current belief that God created the world out of already existing matter, and not out of nothing. Further, it was current belief that this existing matter was flawed and that therefore from the beginning this is a flawed world because it is made from flawed material. The writer to the Hebrews insists that God did not work with existing material; God created the world from nothing.*

*Now when he argued like this he was not interested in cosmological speculation. He was not interested in the scientific side of the matter. What he wanted to stress was the fact that this is God's world. If we can grip the fact that this is God's world, that God is responsible for it, then two things follow. First, we will use it as such. We will remember that everything in it is God's and we will try to use it as God would have us use it. Second, we will remember that, even when it does not look like it, somehow God is in control. If we believe that this is God's world then there comes the faith and the hope which enable us to do the most difficult thing in the world — to accept what we cannot understand. If we believe that this is God's world then into life there comes a new sense of responsibility and into life there comes a new power of acceptance, for everything belongs to God, and all is in the hands of God" (The Letter to the Hebrews, p, 147f).*

**Gen 1:1** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

**Neh 9:6** *You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*

**Job 26:7** *He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.*

**Psa 33:6** *By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.*

**Psa 95:5** *The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.*

**Psa 102:25** *In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**Psa 104:5** *He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.*

**Acts 4:24** *When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them."*

**Acts 7:50** *Has not my hand made all these things?*

**Acts 14:15** *"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."*

**Heb 11:3** *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

#### **IV. Hebrews 11:04–05 The Spiritual Power of Faith**

The power of faith is the message of the glorious gospel, the glorious hope that God has given from the beginning of time. The power is twofold and it is given in the most

meaningful way possible, by showing how the power takes effect in the lives of believers. Two believers who experienced the power of faith were Abel and Enoch.

1. Faith has the power to be counted as righteousness. No greater gift could be given us than to give us the glorious privilege of being counted righteous by God.
- => To be counted righteous is the great need of man, for we are not righteous. And unless some way can be found to cause God to count us righteous, we shall never be allowed to live with God.

Abel tells us there is a way to be counted righteous. How? By approaching and worshipping God exactly like He says, that is, by the sacrifice of blood. What does this mean?

When Adam and Eve sinned, they became aware of their nakedness. Nakedness is a symbol of their being aware and conscious of sin (cp. Gen. 3:9-10). God loved them; therefore, He provided clothing to cover their nakedness. Note what the clothing was. It was coats or skins from animals, a symbol that sin had to be covered by the shedding of blood. This was a symbol that pointed to the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of God's Son, that had to be shed in order to cover the sins of men.

The point is this: from the very first parents on earth, God laid it down that the sin and guilt of man had to be borne by either man himself or by a substitute. Man had to die for his own sins or else a substitute had to be sacrificed for his sins. Adam and Eve taught this to their children. Note what happened.

*Gen 4:1-8 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the first-born of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.*

*Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*

The difference between the two offerings was this: Abel believed God and approached and worshipped God exactly as God said: through the sacrifice of another, the sacrifice of an animal. But Cain did not believe God. He did not accept God's Word;



he did not approach God through the sacrifice of another. He made a material sacrifice and offering to God: he approached God through money and earthly gifts, through the efforts and fruits of human works, the fruit borne of the earth, the fruit borne by his own human, frail, aging and dying hands.

Very simply, Abel believed God. He recognized just what Scripture says: that he was sinful and imperfect and that he could never be acceptable to God who is perfect and holy, not until his sins and their guilt had been paid for and removed. Abel knew that his sins had to be removed — that he had to be counted righteous before he could ever be accepted by God. Therefore, he believed God would count him righteous if he let another bear his sins for him. He believed exactly what Scripture proclaims to us.

*1 Pet 2:24-25* “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

*1 Pet 3:18* For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

This is the power of faith: faith gives us the power to be counted righteous.

*Gen 15:6* Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

*Acts 13:39* Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

*Rom 3:23-24* For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

*Rom 4:3* What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

*Rom 5:1* Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Rom 5:9* Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

*Rom 6:7* Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

*Rom 8:33* Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

*1 Cor 6:11* And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

*Ga1 2:16* Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified’.

*Ga1 3:6* Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

**Gal 3:24** *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

**Phil 3:9** *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

**Thought 1.** Note that Cain approached God; he was religious. But his religion was a formal religion:

=> a religion of ritual, form, and ceremony.

=> a religion of personal sacrifice and works, of doing good and even of sacrificing in order to do good.

=> a religion of man, of his own choosing, of his own ideas and imaginations as to how he was to approach God.

What an indictment of so many religions! What a challenge to search our hearts and lives to make sure that we are worshipping God through His own dear Son who died for our sins.

2. Faith has the power to give us a day by day walk with God and to deliver us from death. What a glorious gift: the presence and power of God as we walk day by day and the eternal deliverance from death. Enoch illustrates this:

**Gen 5:24** *Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*

**Heb 11:5** *By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*

Enoch believed God, believed that if he walked and fellowshiped with God day by day then God would look after and care for him. Therefore Enoch walked with God and God looked after and cared for him. God even conquered death for Enoch. When Enoch was ready to go home to God, God transferred him right on into heaven, right into God's very own presence. Enoch experienced the promise that is made to every believer: we shall never taste or experience death.

=> Enoch's faith gave him a day by day walk with God — the knowledge and fellowship, care and provision, protection and deliverance of God.

**John 15:4-7** *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

**Acts 17:27** *God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.*

**1 Cor 1:9** *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

**Col 2:6** *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,*

**James 4:8** *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

**1 John 1:3** *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

**1 John 2:6** *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

**Rev 3:20** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

**Psa 34:18** *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

**Psa 145:18** *The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

=> Enoch's faith gave him the longed for deliverance from death.

**John 3:14-15** *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up. That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

**John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*

**John 8: 52** *At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death.*

**John 17:3** *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

**Heb 2:9** *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

**Ga1 6:8** *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

**Thought 1.** Oliver Greene has an excellent application on Enoch that stirs the glorious hope of conquering death:

*“It has been said that Enoch was walking with God one day, and they walked and talked so long in such sweet fellowship that near nightfall God said to Enoch, ‘It is nearer to my house than to your house, so let us go on to my house.’ That is a wonderful way to think about it, but the Bible simply tells us that ‘Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him,’*

*“...the record of Enoch, though very brief, is in a very unique place in the Word of God. In Genesis 5, beginning with verse 5, we read:*

*‘And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years — and he died.’*

*‘And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years — and he died’ (v.8).*

*‘And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years — AND HE DIED ’ (v. 11).*

*‘And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years — and he died’ (v.14).*

*‘And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years — and he died’ (v.17).*

*‘And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years — and he died’ (v. 20).*

*‘And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God, and he WAS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM ’ (vv. 23, 24).*

*‘And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years — AND HE DIED’ (v. 27).*

*‘And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years — AND HE DIED’ (v.31).*

*“From these passages we note that Enoch lived in one of the darkest periods of human history, he lived in the midst of dying men, and yet he did not die. He was translated; God took him to heaven — alive.*

*“Enoch is definitely a type of the New Testament saints who will be translated when the church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, in the midst of an age of wholesale death and in an hour darker than any yet known to man! Surely that hour is upon us. Surely these are the days known as ‘the beginning of sorrows.’ The darkest hour is always just before dawn, and surely the night is far spent. Surely Jesus will come quickly. We do not know the day or the hour of His coming, but we do believe He is coming soon” (The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, 1965, p. 448f).*

## **V. Hebrews 11:06 The Necessary Beliefs of Faith**

This is one of the great verses of Scripture, a verse that should be memorized and held within the heart of every believer, layman as well as minister:

***Heb 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

1. It is impossible to please God without faith. By faith is meant a living, active faith, a faith that knows and follows God, communes and fellowships with God. It does not matter what a person does; without faith he cannot please God. It is utterly impossible to please God without faith. What does this mean? The person will never be acceptable to God nor accepted by God. Without faith the person will never live with God, not in this world nor in the next world. Without faith, a person has to plough through this life all alone and handle all the trials, temptations, sufferings, accidents, diseases and death by himself. Without faith, a person stands all alone in this world — utterly without God. It is impossible for him to please God. The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest says:

*“The writer lays down an axiomatic truth. He uses the aorist tense in the infinitive ‘to please.’ The statement is universal in its application and timeless. The idea is, ‘Without faith it is impossible to please Him at all’ (Hebrews, Vol. 2, p. 198).*

**John 3:11** *I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.*

**John 3:18** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.*

**John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.*

**John 8:24** *I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

**Heb 3:12** *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

2. The person who comes to God must believe two things.
  - a. He must believe in God — that God is — that God exists. The words “must believe” (pisteusai dei) mean necessary and essential, absolutely necessary and essential. A. T. Robertson says it is a “moral necessity to have faith....The very Existence of God is a matter of intelligent faith...so that men are left without excuse (Rom 1:19f)” (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 420f).
    - => A person must look at the worlds (heaven and earth) and at himself — at the existence, design, order, and end of all things — and believe in God.
    - => A person must look at the Word of God, the Holy Bible, and believe in God.
    - => A person must look at Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, who reveals God to man, and believe in God.
  - b. He must believe that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Note the word “earnestly” (ekzetousin). It means to seek out God; to sincerely seek to find Him



and to follow Him. God does not reward the sleepy-eyed, complacent, non-thinker, half-interested, worldly-minded, pleasure seeker. God rewards those who earnestly seek to know and follow Him. The idea is that we must be in earnest and persevere and endure to the end. What is the reward to those who earnestly seek God? It is the same reward given to Abel and Enoch: righteousness and God's care in this life and deliverance from death unto eternal life.

**Luke 11:9** *“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

**John 6:28-29** *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

**Acts 17:27** *God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.*

**Rom 10:17** *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*

**1 John 3:23** *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

**Deu 4:29** *But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.*

**2 Chr 7:14** *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

**Prov 8:17** *I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.*

**Jer 29:13** *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ■*

## HEBREWS 11:06 FAITH

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. **Hebrews 11:06***

A person can *grow* in faith and power. Faith and power can be developed by doing two things.

1. By practicing hope (Heb 11.1), that is, by hoping for something and claiming it because God has promised it.
2. By earnestly seeking God (Heb 11:6). Christ tells us what is meant by earnest *seeking*. It means...
  - a. To “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Mt. 5:6).
  - b. To “ask...seek...knock” (Mt. 7:7-8).
  - c. To “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Mt. 6:33).

The person who needs something and lives on his face in prayer before God (asking, seeking and knocking) will experience God answering his need. Thus he will be encouraged to trust God, that is, to seek and knock even more and more. A genuine *faith in God* lives before

God. That is what faith is: living before God. Faith is entrusting one’s life to God. It is trusting God, depending upon God, believing God, seeking God, conversing with God, sharing with God, and fellowshiping with God. A person who really believes that God exists will do these things.

The greater the need, the greater amount of time *true faith* spends alone with God discussing the need. The greater the need, the more earnest true faith seeks the answer to its need.

What happens is this: as a person earnestly seeks God, he discovers that *true faith* diligently lives before God in prayer and devotion and is given what it hopes for. There fore the person learns to trust God more and more. He grows in faith.

One thing, however, always needs to be remembered. God is not going to reward sinful, carnal trust, nor is He going to reward a doubting trust. If He answered a doubting trust or a carnal hope and prayer, then the doubting and carnal person would begin to think that the life he is living is acceptable to God. God does not approve sinful and carnal living, nor does He approve a doubting heart. God honours righteous living and a believing heart. It is the person who truly lives righteously and believes enough to earnestly seek God who grows and grows in faith (Jas. 4:3; 1 Cor. 3:1-3. cp. Mt. 20:21.) □