

## Lesson # 3 -- The Object of Faith

### Introduction

- A. The Bible reminds us that there are some truths we must understand and practice in order to live a normal Christian life. One of the most important has to do with the virtue of faith. In Hebrews 11:6 we are told that without faith it is impossible to please God.
- B. When faith is considered as a relationship between friends it appears very easy and simple. Actually -- it is much easier to trust God -- when the truths regarding faith are understood.
- C. The principle before us in this lesson is very important. We are constantly reminded in the Bible that the object of our faith is a PERSON. He is the True and Living God, the Creator of all things, infinite in wisdom, power, truth, love, and holiness. He is worthy of all our trust and devotion.

### I. The Biblical Instruction

- A. God is the object of our faith because of His divine character.
  - 1. He is the eternal, infinite perfection of love.

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jer. 31:3

Comment: The truth that God is love means that He will always be to us the fullness of Goodness. All of His plans and actions are the expressions of His lovingkindness. He has our best interest in mind and delights in our happiness. We can trust Him.

We must confess the terrible error that implies God is a cruel monster. Such a concept is not only a great sin, a serious barrier to a successful Christian life, it is unworthy of God.

- 2. He is the eternal, infinite perfection of truth.

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Exodus 34:6

Comment: Because the LORD God is truth He is the infinite fullness of wisdom and faithfulness. What He says to us in His Word is truth, His actions are always in harmony with His person and word, and He is fully trustworthy.

We can trust God because He is all wise (never makes a mistake), and is faithful (never failing). To know that He is also all powerful and constantly with us (omnipresent) -- makes us ashamed of our doubt.

3. God is the eternal, infinite perfection of holiness.

For I am the LORD your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy . . . For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God, ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Comment: The holiness of God means, in part, that the LORD God is separate from everything -- absolutely everything that would be unrighteous or unjust. Because He is holy all forms of sin, (including the lack of love and truth), are repugnant to Him and under His holy judgment.

We can trust God because everything about Him is characterized by holiness.

B. God is the object of our faith because He has spoken to us.

He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he (God) had promised, he (God) was able also to perform. Romans 4:20,21

Comment: Abraham believed God (the object of his faith) because he had been given the promise regarding the birth of Isaac. He laid hold on the loving and holy faithfulness of God through that promise.

A part of what it means for God to be the God of truth is that He upholds His Word. No promise or commandment has ever failed. Because God is trustworthy -- His Word is trustworthy.

One of the most serious hindrances to living the normal Christian life -- is that we do not know the Word!

C. God is the object of our faith because faith is personal involvement.

1. The invitation/exhortation of the Lord Jesus.

Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. John 14:1

Comment: The context of this verse indicates its importance. Judas had just left to betray the Savior. He had now told Peter that he would deny Him. The disciples were all gaining the impression that a great tragedy was about to happen. In these desperate moments in the life of the disciples -- the Savior asks them to trust Him.

2. The counsel of the apostles Paul and Silas.

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:31

Comment: Paul and Silas had been imprisoned for preaching. In the night there was an earthquake and the prison doors were opened. The jailer, ready to kill himself, asked the apostles how to be saved. The above verse is a summary of the apostolic preaching: Jesus Christ is the Redeemer -- believe on Him as Lord and Savior.

Summary: When we speak of Biblical faith it is quite impossible to believe in a thing -- only a person. It is a relationship that is highly personal (I-Thou). The word "involvement" can and should be used to describe such a relationship. This principle indicates why so many believers have difficulty with this very important area of their life -- they have never learned to be involved in a personal walk with God.

II. The Biblical Illustration

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul thou must be brought before Ceasar, and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Acts 27:20-25

Comment: The seriousness of the situation described by Paul can be easily imagined. The small size of the sailing vessel, the force of the great storm, the heroic efforts already made by the sailors, all contributed to a loss of hope. In the midst of such a plight the Lord spoke to Paul and his response was that of simple faith -- he believed God!

### III. The Biblical Explanation

#### A. True faith is not faith in faith -- but in God.

Jesus said unto her (Martha), I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. John 11:25

Comment: Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary had died. The Lord Jesus was going to bring him back to life. He had told Martha "Thy brother shall rise again." Her reply indicated she believed in a coming resurrection but also revealed how she overlooked the truth that the Lord Jesus was sovereign over death. He asked her to believe in Him -- not a doctrine about the future -- but in Him since He was the resurrection and the life.

#### B. True faith finds its source of strength in God its object.

Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Hebrews 11:11

Comment: Our ability to believe -- and to live the Christian life -- does not come from ourselves but from the One in Whom we put our faith. Sarah believed the promise God had given her and she trusted Him for the ability to have a child. It was "Through faith" she "received strength." This is a pattern for every believer.

#### C. True faith opens the door to divine power.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. I Thess. 2:13

Comment: The apostle Paul could not forget the way the people at Thessalonica responded to the preaching of the Bible. They received the Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God -- which it is -- and that opened the door to divine grace and power. When a believer wants the will of God, and is willing to obey and live by faith, then God can begin to work in his life.

#### D. True faith is inseparable from knowledge.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Comment: Because faith is an ability or function which is given in the new birth, it is possible to "use" faith in an erroneous manner. We can "believe" (convince ourselves) of something and be dead wrong. When we do this we are responding more to our desires and emotions than to the Word of God. True faith believes God -- with the content coming from the Bible. We must learn to ask -- Do I have a Biblical basis for this item of faith?

E. True faith is an expression of worship and confidence.

And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots . . . And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee. II Chronicles 14:9-11

Comment: In this expression of faith, king Asa was saying to God, "You have the wisdom and power to deliver us, and we trust You to carry out Your will in this battle." When our faith is Biblical we are doing much more than asking God for help -- we are performing an important act of worship.

IV. The Biblical Application

A. The serious question: Is God the object of my devotion?

1. One of the most common hindrances to a genuine life of faith has to do with the failure to give the True and Living God His rightful place as the sole goal -- object -- of our daily endeavor and entire worship.
2. Too often we find we have a good, or even a religious goal, that goes "beyond" or is different from God Himself. Example: many people have the goal of getting to heaven. The obvious way of achieving that goal is to worship God! In such a life God is being "used." The first commandment is a warning here.

B. The important affirmation: I will worship only the True and Living God.

1. We must learn about the greatness of God and how worthy He is of our entire devotion.
2. We must daily practice the Biblical meaning of worship and faith. It will help to choose to obey God -- trusting Him for the enablement -- so He will be glorified.