

Helps and Hindrances for Faith

Introduction

- A. Faith is one of the most important products or activities in the life of the Christian. Only love is given a higher place in the Bible (I Cor. 13:13). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
- B. Biblical or saving faith is not shared by all members of the human race. Only the Christian has entrusted his soul to Jesus Christ in faith. The non-Christian may believe in God, the need to come to God and other related subjects, but is without that essential inner, wholehearted surrender to the person of Jesus Christ that the Scripture speaks of as faith*
- C. Since faith is so important for the well-being of the Christian it would well to ask what will help us and what would hinder us regarding faith.

I. Divine Help Regarding Faith.

- A. Faith is the gift of God in salvation, Ephesians 2:8,9.

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves» It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Observation: One of the terrible effects of the Fall of Man is seen in our natural inability to respond to God in faith* No man can come to God unaided by the grace of God, John 6:44,65. In our salvation we have been given the gift of faith and can now respond to God. Faith is an ability, a function, whereby we can choose to take the Word of God and put it into practice.

- B. Faith is given a basis in the Scripture, Romans 10:17.

So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Observation: The Bible not only gives us the content of our faith (what we are to believe as doctrine), it not only serves as a blueprint as to how we are to believe (repent, obey, serve), it not only presents the motivation to believe God (love), it also gives us many promises to claim so that our daily needs may be met (Matt. 7:7; Phil. 4:6-9,19; I John 5:14). God expects us to respond to Him on the basis of these promises.

- C. Faith is explained in the Bible as a decision, Hebrews 11:2»

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them. But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Observation: This is one of the most important passages in the Bible regarding faith. It teaches us that faith is a decision and is related to the Bible as obedience is related to commandment. To please God -- we must choose to put His Word into practice -- and translate this into action.

II. Sinful Hindrances Regarding Faith.

A. Pride – which led to a failure to believe the truth, . Matthew 21:32.

For John came unto you in the way of righteousness and ye believed him not. But the publicans and the harlots believed him, and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Observation: The Jewish people received many indications that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. They had the Old Testament, were taught by John, looked upon and heard the Lord Jesus, observed His miracles, and saw the benefit of faith in the lives of those who believed. They still refused to believe. Pride stood as a barrier before them. They chose not to believe (John 5:40) because of pride.

B. Fear – which led to a failure to act on faith, Mark 4:37-41.

And there arose a great storm . . . He was asleep . . . they awake Him . . . He arose and rebuked the wind . . . and He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?

Observation: When we fail to put faith into action – and accept fear – we are in trouble. Fear and faith are incompatible. We must learn to reject fear and choose to believe God. The presence of fear does not mean we are failing – as long as we do not practice fear.

C. Laziness – which led to a failure to search out the truth, Luke 24:25.

Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?

Observation: Since faith is based on accepting the truth of Scripture it is important that we know the Scripture* We all have a tendency to be spiritually lazy in this area.

D. Wrong values – which led to a failure in priority, John 5:44.

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Observation: Faith, to be genuine, must be based on the authority of God and His Word alone. When we believe or wait to believe because we need further "proof" or confirmation of the truth – we throw up a barrier to faith. Too often, again, it is pride. If believing was held as important among men – we would all hasten to believe. Since faith is despised by "important" people – our wrong priority stands in our way.

E. Unconfessed sin -- which led to a failure to live correctly, I Timothy 1:5,19.

Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned. . . Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.

Observation: When we do not have a "good conscience" our life of faith with God is greatly hampered. A full confession of sin and willingness to make restitution is often a necessary condition for faith.