
Chapter 8 Faith toward God

Faith is vital because no one is justified or lives faithfully before God apart from it (Romans 5:1; Hebrews 10:38; 11:6). Yet faith is often misunderstood. Faith is only as reliable as its object. Hebrews does not describe it as confidence in confidence, a power of the mind, or a spiritual law that forces results. The foundation is “faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1)—trust directed to the God who has spoken and fulfilled His saving promise in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Biblical faith means taking God at His word because He is truthful and faithful. It is not pretending that problems are unreal, suppressing every question, or producing a particular feeling. A believer may confess weakness and still bring that weakness honestly to Christ: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Numbers 23:19; Mark 9:24; Hebrews 10:23). Faith looks away from the strength of self and rests in the character, work, and promise of God.

Faith Responds to God's Word

Biblical faith does not create truth; it receives God's testimony as true and acts upon it (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:18-22). Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). This means faith requires knowledge of what God has actually said. Confidence in something God did not promise is presumption, even if it sounds spiritual (Matthew 4:5-7).

Faith Has Content, Trust, and Loyalty

Saving faith includes knowledge, agreement, and personal trust. A person must know the Gospel, agree that its message is true, and entrust himself or herself to Jesus Christ (John 20:30-31; Romans 10:9-13). The demons know true facts about God but do not lovingly trust or obey Him (James 2:19). Biblical faith therefore involves more than saying that Christian claims are correct; it receives Christ as Savior and submits to Him as Lord. Living faith begins to produce faithful action, although those actions never become the basis of justification (James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Saving Faith and Daily Faith

We are saved through faith in Christ, and we continue to live by faith after conversion (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6-7). Daily faith trusts God enough to obey when obedience is costly, to wait when an answer is delayed, and to remain faithful when circumstances are confusing. Faith is not a one-time decision that makes trust unnecessary afterward; it becomes the continuing posture of a life dependent upon God (Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:7).

Faith in Suffering and Delay

Faith does not guarantee that believers receive every desired outcome in this life. Hebrews 11 celebrates people who saw miracles and others who suffered without earthly deliverance; both groups were commended for faith (Hebrews 11:32-40). The difference was not that one group had faith and the other lacked it. Faithfulness may look like receiving deliverance, and it may look like enduring without denying Christ. Faith trusts God's character and final promise when circumstances remain painful (Habakkuk 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-39).

Faith Can Grow

Believers may honestly ask Christ to help their unbelief (Mark 9:24). Faith grows through Scripture, prayer, remembered faithfulness, obedience, and fellowship with other believers (Psalm 77:11-14; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 10:23-25). Its security rests in the faithful God, not in a perfectly steady emotion (2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 10:23).

Faith and the Gift of Faith

Every Christian must trust Christ for salvation and continue walking by faith (Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:7). First Corinthians 12 also names faith among the Spirit's gifts. These should not be confused. Saving faith is the response through which a person receives Christ. Daily faith is the continuing trust and obedience of Christian life. The gift of faith is a special enabling the Spirit may give for a particular need or ministry within the body (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

The gift does not create a superior class of Christians, and it does not give anyone authority to promise outcomes God has not promised. The same Spirit distributes gifts as He wills, and every gift must serve the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Whether God grants unusual

confidence in a particular moment or calls us to ordinary perseverance, faith remains dependent upon Him.

Faith Prays under God's Rule

Jesus' model prayer teaches the order of faithful prayer. It begins with the Father's name, kingdom, and will before asking for daily bread. It also includes forgiveness and deliverance from temptation (Matthew 6:9-13). We may bring specific needs to God with confidence, but prayer first seeks His honor and rule: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Faith asks boldly while remaining surrendered to the Father's wisdom (Matthew 26:39; 1 John 5:14-15).

Philippians 4:6-8 tells believers to replace anxious brooding with prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving. Its immediate promise is that God's peace will guard the heart and mind in Christ; it does not promise that every request will be answered in the exact way desired. After praying, believers are to direct their thoughts toward what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy. Faith therefore brings the need to God, gives thanks, receives His peace, and keeps the mind anchored in truth.

KNOW THE WORDS

WORD	PLAIN MEANING
Faith toward God	Personal trust in the God who has revealed Himself and fulfilled His saving promise in Christ (Acts 20:21; Hebrews 11:6).
Faithfulness	Steady loyalty and obedience flowing from trust (Galatians 5:6; Revelation 2:10).
Doubt	Uncertainty or divided confidence that should be brought honestly to God and answered by His truth (Mark 9:24; James 1:5-8).
Faith	Trusting God because He is truthful and faithful, relying on His word and acting upon it (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:1, 6).

THINK IT THROUGH

Q Does Faith Guarantee Healing or Wealth?

No. God heals and provides, and believers should ask Him confidently rather than praying as though He were unwilling or unable to help (Matthew 7:7-11; James 5:14-16). Confidence, however, is confidence in God—not certainty that our preferred outcome must occur. Jesus teaches us to seek the Father’s kingdom and will before our comfort and to trust Him for daily provision (Matthew 6:9-13, 31-33).

Faithful believers may experience healing and abundance, but they may also experience weakness, persecution, loss, delayed answers, or a request God answers differently (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Philippians 4:11-13; Hebrews 11:35-40). Philippians 4:6-8 commands prayer with thanksgiving and promises God's guarding peace; it does not make prayer a guarantee of wealth or freedom from suffering. Biblical faith submits every desire to God's wisdom and will rather than treating Him as a system that human words or certainty can control (Matthew 26:39; 1 John 5:14-15).

WATCH FOR COUNTERFEITS

Word-of-faith teaching may treat faith as a force released through visualization, declarations, or positive speech. Scripture commands faith in God, not faith in words or inner power (Mark 11:22; Romans 4:20-21). Words matter morally, but human speech does not possess God's creative sovereignty (Proverbs 18:21; Isaiah 46:9-10).

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose one promise in Romans 8:31-39. Write what God actually promises, what the passage does not promise, and how that truth should affect your response to a present difficulty.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. Why must faith be grounded in what God has spoken?
2. What is the difference between faith and presumption?
3. Why are works evidence rather than the basis of salvation?
4. What does Hebrews 11 teach about faith and suffering?
5. How do the Lord's Prayer and Philippians 4:6-8 shape the way believers bring requests to God?

FIVE DAYS IN THE BIBLE

Day 1: Abraham Believed God — Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4:13-25

Identify the promise, obstacle, and basis of Abraham's confidence.

Day 2: Faith and Works — James 2:14-26

Explain how living faith becomes visible.

Day 3: By Faith — Hebrews 11:1-40

Notice the different earthly outcomes experienced by faithful people.

Day 4: Help My Unbelief — Mark 9:14-29

Observe honest weakness brought to Jesus.

Day 5: Pray with Trust — Matthew 6:5-13,
25-34; Philippians 4:4-9

Notice the priorities, promises, and practices that guide faithful prayer.