

Understanding Faith

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by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

These verses I chose to begin with this morning give us some insight as to the importance of faith in our lives.

Virtually everything good in life and beyond comes either by faith, through faith, of faith or in faith.

From the perspective of personal blessing and benefit, faith is without question the most important subject in the Bible.

And certainly, God is very interested in your blessing and benefits.

In one form or another the subject of faith is mentioned in the New Testament over a thousand times.

Today's message may turn out to be more of a lecture than a sermon on how to have faith.

God says the just shall live by faith. How am I supposed to live by something unless I understand it?

Sadly, we toss around Bible terminology like everyone ought to automatically know and understand what we are talking about.

Well, they don't; and often we succeed only in further confusing those we are assigned to teach.

So today, I will attempt to clear up some of the misunderstandings about one of the most important aspects of Christian life.

I. Understanding faith is made more difficult by translation into English.

A. Our New Testament was written in Greek.

This is what it means “to live by faith”.

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe [trust to save you] on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe [trust all His promises to live by] on the name of the Son of God.

Let me clear up one last misconception:

Even though the Bible says in numerous places that our faith saves us; each one of those statements is prequalified by other facts.

For Example:

Romans 5:1 says: **Romans 5:1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:9 says: **Romans 5:9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Which saves us; our faith or His blood?

It's what our faith is in that saves us, not our faith in itself.

1. I make no claim of being a scholar in the Greek language, however I have studied and read enough to realize that in Greek, there is a flow and an interconnection that is lost when the language is translated into English.

2. The most common Greek word that is translated into the term “faith” is this one:

πίστις

pistis

pis'-tis

From [G3982](#); persuasion, that is, credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

Total KJV occurrences: 244

(Notice that Pistis is not a primary word but is a variation of another word; see where it says “From [G3982](#)”).

3. [G3982](#) is peitho.

πίθω

peithō

pi'-tho

A primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively to

assent (to evidence or authority), to *rely* (by inward certainty): - agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) content, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield.

Total KJV occurrences: 55

4. This is most often translated “to persuade” or “to be persuaded”; also, *confidence* or *assurance* or *trust* or *trusting*.

B. All these Greek terms that teach us faith are forms and variations of a single term; however, when we arrive in English, the terms go all over the place.

1. What must I do to be saved?

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

2. **Galatians 3:26** For ye are all the children of God **by faith** in Christ Jesus.

3. Which is it? Are we saved by believing or by faith?

4. While the American speaking English may be confused, the student speaking Greek smiles and says, “What a dumb question; it is the same thing”.

5. That word **believe** is [G4100](#)

πιστεύω

pisteuō

6. Once you have trust in the facts, (first trust)... And then you have heard and understood of the gospel.

Then and only then you can put your trust in Jesus to save you.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Conclusion:

Then you can begin to live by faith.

First Trust:

You have the facts; now you know that God’s Word is true.

Second Trust:

Upon learning the message of the gospel; the death and burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus according to the Scriptures Christ paid for all our sins; we then put our trust in Him to save us then and there from our sins.

Third Trust:

Now we live our lives by trusting God’s promises. This is the verb again; we act upon His promises by meeting the conditions of each.

2. [G4276](#) προελπίζω

proelpizō

pro-il-pid'-zo

From [G4253](#) and [G1679](#); to *hope in advance* of other confirmation: - first trust.

Total KJV occurrences: 1

3. There is something you must have hope or confidence in before or in advance of trusting Jesus to save you.
4. Only after you are confident that the Bible is the Word of God can you act on that confidence and put your trust in the Jesus of the Bible to save you.
5. This part of the process is also described in John chapter 1.
 - a. The Word was God.
John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - b. As many as received Him (the Word), were given power to become God's children.
John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name*:
 - c. Where in the Word is that power?
Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel** of Christ: for **it is the power** of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

pist-yoo'-o

From [G4102](#); to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), that is, *credit*; by implication to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ): - believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with.

Total KJV occurrences: 248

5. Oh look, [G4100](#) (believe) is from [G4102](#) (faith).
 6. One, [G4100](#) is the verb telling you to put your trust in Jesus.
 7. One, [G4102](#) is the noun form of the same term stating that you now have trust or confidence or persuasion in Jesus.
- II. To understand faith, you must get away from all the broad definitions applied in English and stick to the narrow and much more specific definitions of the original language.**
- A. You must re-learn what it means **to believe**.*
1. In English, "to believe" may mean nothing more than to accept something as factual.
 2. In English, "faith" by definition, is belief that is not based upon proof.
 3. That is certainly NOT what the Bible teaches about either of these terms.

B. The primary Greek definitions must be adhered to.

1. The primary and most prevalent application of the word “believe” and exclusively as applied to what one must do in order to be saved is; **“to put in trust with”**.

2. **This term is a verb. It describes a specific action** that occurs at a specific place at a specific time in regard to a specific subject.

3. The primary and most prevalent application of the word “faith” is belief; the state of having believed or trusted in something or now believing or trusting in something.

4. **This term is a noun. It describes the state that now exists** after having believed or trusted in something.

5. **Galatians 2:16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

III. How then does one come to live by the faith of Jesus Christ?

A. The process begins with Gr. “peitho”.

1. Peitho is “persuasion”, or “the state of being persuaded”.

2. The Lord Himself is the author of this process.

3. The Lord draws us to Himself.

4. We observe creation and we know there is a God.

5. We have many spiritual experiences, including the experience of being in the presence of the Lord, as you are today.

6. We see evidence all around us.

7. This process of persuasion brings us to accept the Bible as truly being the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 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.

B. This brings us to a state of being described by an entirely different Greek term called “first trust”.

1. **Ephesians 1:12** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.