

A GOD-PLEASING FAITH!

Hebrews 11 begins with a basic description of what faith is. Faith is taking God at His Word even when we can't see. It was faith of this nature that defined the OT saints. And it is faith of this nature that believes God for the creation account as seen in Genesis 1. No one was there at the beginning of Creation except for God Himself. So, by faith we understand that the world was framed by His Word. God simply spoke creation into being by His Word (Ps. 33:6).

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Without faith no one ever pleases God. No matter what else they do – if they don't have faith, God is never pleased. Relationship with God starts with faith! Without faith it's absolutely IMPOSSIBLE to please God. God demands faith!

The word faith in Hebrews (*pistis*) is only surpassed in usage in the NT by the book of Romans. It is used 31 times in Hebrews and 35 times in Romans.

When he says, “**comes to God**” note that the word “**comes**” is the same word used” in 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, and 22. It is also translated as “**draw near**” or “**approach**”. It is used in the sense of “**worship**”. Hebrews 7:25 says Christ is “**able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him**”. Hebrews 10:22 exhorts the believer to “**draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**”. The sense then is that of approaching God in worshipful belief (cf. Jn. 4:23-24). This is the stuff of saving faith that honors God and that God is pleased with. Without this kind of faith, it is impossible to please Him.

And then the writer brings out two related components that define this type of God-pleasing faith. First, in approaching God one must believe that He is. Of course, this means that the person must believe in the reality of God. Certainly, faith believes in a supernatural supreme being in keeping with Romans 1. But there is more in the word “**is**” than that. To believe that God is – is to believe in Him for Who He reveals Himself to be. After all, even the demons believe in His existence but they are not saved (cf. Ja. 2:19).

“To believe that ‘He is’ means much more than assenting to the fact of a ‘First Cause’ or to allow that there is a ‘Supreme Being’; it means to believe

in the character of God as He has revealed Himself in His works, in His Word, and in Christ.” – **A.W. Pink**

To merely believe in God as you conceive Him to be would be idolatry. It would be a god of your own making – of your own imagination. Lots of people believe in a generic god in this way, but they don't believe in the God of the Bible. They believe in a false god of their own making.

To believe in God for Who He is – is to believe in Him as He has revealed Himself to be. As we find at the outset of Hebrews God has spoken to us in Son. This is His ultimate, final, and complete revelation (cf. Heb. 1:1-3). Thus, to properly believe God is – is to believe in Him through the lens of His revelation in the Son (cf. Jn. 17:3). He is the ONE true God Who is totally unique (cf. Isa. 46:9).

Secondly, faith comes to God believing “**that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**” In view is a saving faith such as Moses had when it says in 11:26 that “**he looked to the reward.**” Faith says, “It will be worth it all”. God will make faith worthwhile. This is the spirit of 10:35 which says, “**do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.**”

The reward is to share in the eternal inheritance. In Genesis 15:1 God told Abram, “**I am... your exceedingly great reward.**” In a sense the reward is God Himself, and in a faith relationship with God we have everything. We are now heirs of God. Romans 8:32 says that in Christ He freely gives us all things. Revelation 21:7 says, “**He who overcomes shall inherit all things**”. How is that for a reward? The reward in view is what God has in store for His people of faith.

But then he further clarifies that this kind of faith “diligently seeks Him”. The word **seek** is in an intensive form in the Greek. It is a determined effort to find something out or look intently for. This is the sense of Jer. 29:13.

Jeremiah 29:13 (NKJV)

13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

This is the stuff of God-pleasing faith that does not draw back.

Remember this whole discussion in Hebrews 11 is a springboard off of 10:38-39 where the issue is that of a saving faith that perseveres.

Could it be that so many people who profess to be Christian don't continue because they have never had a sincere seeking faith to begin with? An

Easy Believism doesn't continue because the person was never saved in the first place. Saving faith is a serious thing. It takes God seriously.

The examples of faith in Hebrews 11 all have a testimony of faith that shows they are approved as people of faith. They had the real deal. A good testimony of faith (Heb. 11:39) is a valid testimony! In this (the Hall of Faith chapter), we constantly note the **active nature** of true faith that is a good testimony. A living faith is active by nature.

Genuine faith demonstrates itself in the life. That is why James says that faith without works is dead. A dead faith is not a saving faith (cf. Ja. 2). The gospel of John is the gospel of BELIEF. When John uses the word believe he consistently uses it as a verb. A living faith is lively and active by nature! This is shown by example after example in Hebrews 11 – the great HALL OF FAITH chapter! This is the kind of faith that is pleasing to God!