

What is a Biblical Definition of Faith?

What does the Bible say about faith?

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(https://escapetoreality.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/faith_banner.jpg).

What is faith?

We talk about faith all the time, but what is it? Do you know what faith is? Of course you do, right?

Are you sure?

Maybe a better question to ask is, “Do I have a Biblical definition of faith?”

Contrary to what you may have heard, faith is not wishful thinking or some sort of spiritual currency that you trade for heavenly favors. Nor is faith something you manufacture through sheer determination.

So what is faith?

Here’s my definition: Faith is knowing and trusting your Father’s love. Faith is resting (<https://escapetoreality.org/2013/08/15/faith-is-a-rest/>) in the confident assurance that God is good and he longs to be good to you.

What, too gushy? Not Greek enough for you?

In the original language of the New Testament, there is a family of words that are translated as faith (*pistis*), believe (*pisteuo*), trustworthy (*pistikos*) and faithful (*pistos*). Then there is another family of words that can be translated as unbelief (*apistia*), unbelieving (*apistos*), disbelief (*apeitheia*), disbelieve (*apeitheo*),

and unpersuadable (*apeithes*).

All these words derive from a common word (*peitho*) that means to convince, win over, or persuade.

Abraham “was fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (Rom. 4:21). That’s faith. Faith is being fully persuaded or convinced that God is good and trustworthy and that he cares for you.

Abraham’s faith

Manmade religion preaches blind faith, but Biblical faith is based on knowing God. Faith is not a leap in the dark, it’s walking in the light of God’s love.

Again, consider Abraham. God said go and he went (Gen. 12:1). When Abraham got to Canaan, God said stay and he stayed. That’s faith.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise... (Hebrews 11:8-9)

Then God said “I will bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars,” and Abraham said “okay.” Also faith.

We tend to overthink faith, but faith is saying yes to God. When we pray [the prayer of faith](https://escapetoreality.org/2017/07/13/the-prayer-of-faith/) (<https://escapetoreality.org/2017/07/13/the-prayer-of-faith/>), we are simply saying yes to the Lord.

[Sidebar: When you agree with God [that’s called confession](https://escapetoreality.org/2014/09/04/myth-post-2-hyper-grace-preachers-are-against-confession/) (<https://escapetoreality.org/2014/09/04/myth-post-2-hyper-grace-preachers-are-against-confession/>). Agreeing with God makes you right with God and that’s called righteousness (Rom. 3:28). Good things happen when you agree with God.]

Where does faith come from?

Manmade religion says you have to *faith* your way into heaven, but that’s not how faith works. True faith is always a response to something God has said or done.

We might say that faith stems from [hope which comes from love](https://escapetoreality.org/2016/04/07/how-to-cultivate-hope/) (<https://escapetoreality.org/2016/04/07/how-to-cultivate-hope/>). It’s the unfailing love of God that inspires us to trust him. Here’s a verse that explains the proper order:

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. (1 John 4:16)

God loves us (that's the first bit), then we come to trust in his love (that's the faith bit). His love for us inspires our faith in him.

And since the love of God is revealed in Jesus Christ (John 17:26), we can also say that faith comes from hearing the good news of Jesus:

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

We don't get faith from hearing a good sermon; faith is a gift we get from hearing the good news of Jesus. Faith is not something we manufacture; it's something we receive.

When we hear about the love of God that is revealed in Jesus, our faith is activated. "Wow! God is so good! How can I not trust him?" In the Bible, believing in Jesus is called the work of God (<https://escapetoreality.org/2021/08/18/what-are-works-of-faith/>).

Are you starting to see what faith is? Let's finish with some quick contrasts:

Religion says, "you need to believe," without giving you a reason to believe, but the gospel declares "God is good and completely trustworthy."

Religion says "impress God with your faith," but the gospel says we have been justified "by the faith of Christ" (Gal. 2:16). We love because he loves us, and we believe because God believes in us (<https://escapetoreality.org/2014/06/24/god-believes-in-you/>).

Religion says "faith comes from within," but the gospel reveals Jesus "the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

He is truly the supplier of our faith, hope, and love.

Faith is...

Tradition portrays faith as a damp ticket to heaven that may or may not be valid for entry, but the faith that God gives us is nothing like this.

Faith is not just the means by which we come into union with Christ (<https://escapetoreality.org/2016/01/07/your-unbreakable-union-with-christ/>); faith is the very flavor of our relationship.

Faith is living each day in total dependency on the One who spoke the universe into existence and flung the galaxies across the heavens.

Faith is knowing your heavenly Father has great dreams and good gifts for you.

Faith is an invitation to smile at the storm, stride over the mountains, and live supernaturally here and now.

How boring life would be without faith.