



LESSON THREE - FAITH TOWARD GOD

Abstract

The second foundation mentioned in Hebrews 6:1 is "faith toward God." How does Satan and the world attack this foundation stone? It is by creating doubt in God's Word, just as he did when he said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1, KJV)". Why is the teaching of evolution so detrimental to our children? Because it produces doubt in the Word of God.

Faith Toward God

What is the definition of faith? Here are definitions from several writers including one of my own.

- Webster - faith is allegiance to duty, or person, loyalty, or trust
- Evans - faith is a resting or believing in the soul, not blindly but resting in the best evidence, the Bible.
- Paul, the apostle - faith is reasonable reasoning (2 Thessalonians 3:2)
- Paul, the apostle - faith is the substance (assurance, title deed / *amplified version*) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)
- Paul, the apostle - calling those things that are not as though they were (Romans 4:17)
- Paul Davis - confidence, relying in, full surrender, yieldedness, and obedience to all known truth
- Luther - rejected the interpretation of faith as being *assent* to a known fact, but rather the *response* to that assent as evidencing faith

How Important Is Faith?

The scripture declares that "without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to

God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6) And in Romans we read, "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17, Habakkuk 2:4). Living by faith is like living by the Word. It dictates our actions, thoughts, loves, and responses to circumstances in our lives. Let's consider a few things about faith.

Faith determines our convictions. So be careful that your faith rest upon the Word of God. Strong faith, as opposed to weak faith spoken of in the scripture, in order to be strong, must rest upon the strong foundation of God's Word. The reason why many can so easily lose their moral compass is that their conviction rest upon the teachings or traditions of man which make the Word of God of none effect. For example, there are some Apostolics that preach against the wearing of beards. Although it is reasoned that it was because of the hippy era that beards became a symbol of rebellion (and that is a man's opinion) - to preach that wearing a beard is a sin is more of a sin than wearing the beard. Why? Because it is a lie not supported by scripture. To preach it as a sin does damage not only to the integrity of the ministry as being faithful stewards of God's Word, but it produces condemnation in souls that leads to guilt not intended by the truth in God's commandments.

This lesson is not intended as a "holiness" lesson, but conviction (an element of holiness) must be clearly associated with faith - because faith "comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17).

Peter and Abraham

Let us do a study on two Bible characters which had great faith - and both men at times demonstrated weakness in faith. At the same time, it is interesting to note the contrast between Peter's faith and Abraham's faith. First let us look at Peter.



In Matthew 14:28-33 we have the story of Jesus's walk upon the water. Let me say that Peter had a "walking on the water" kind of faith also. His faith, however, would be likened unto "blind faith" or "impetuous faith". On the one hand, it was in response to the word of God, for when Jesus said "come", Peter stepped out of the boat and began to walk toward Jesus.

However, Peter's faith waivered, which is the contrast that I want to show here. There is only one thing that causes faith to waiver, and that is *fear*. Fear is a producer of doubt when not overcome. We all experience fear at times. We might experience it in sickness or circumstances. It is a natural element of adversity. But fear is conquered by faith.

Peter looked at the circumstances around him (the storm) and took his eyes off of Jesus Christ. Many sermons have been preached on this wonderful illustration of what taking our eyes off of Jesus can do. It causes us to sink. But there is more to this story in the Bible. When the Lord reached out and took Peter's hand, he gave Peter a time to restore faith. "Peter - you failed the test, but now you get a second chance. You get to walk back to the boat (on the water). This time, however, I am holding your hand."

In Romans 4:13-22 we find that Abraham's faith contrasted with Peter's. The faith of Abraham was one that did not waiver. He did not look at the circumstances. In verse 19, we read, "he considered not his own body now dead...neither the deadness of Sarah's womb." It was faith that rested in the Word of God (v.3), was "against all hope" (v.18). He "staggered not at the promise". One writer (Iverson) commented that Abraham's faith was one "that refused the evidences of the senses." This is a key element of true faith. It does not require natural sight, or natural hearing, or natural feeling. One man once told me that he could not believe unless he could see a miracle. I

responded that he had it backwards. God did not say see a miracle and believe, he said believe and see a miracle. All too often men are surprised when God works a miracle, when they ought to be surprised when he doesn't.

How do we build our faith?

- Since Romans says that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God", here are some steps that appropriate the Word of God to build our faith.
- Locate the promises of God's Word that fits the need. (Examples: Philippians 4:19, James 5:14)
- Fulfill all the conditions (James 5:14, Isaiah 1:19-20, Psalms 37:5)
- With patience, accept the trying of our faith and God's testing of the faith in His word (James 1:3-4, Hebrews 6:12-15)
- Positively claim the fulfillment of the promise (1 John 5:14-15)