

1. **Introduction:** How do we please God? We begin with faith. *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him”* (Heb 11:6).
2. *“... the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men”* (Rm 14:17-18).
3. **Biblical Faith:** *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”* (Eph 2:8-9)
 - God gives us the faith that enables us to receive His pardon from sin’s eternal penalty as well as gain new life. Our conscious walk with God begins with and is sustained by faith.
 - Faith is believing God, trusting He is who He says He is and has done what He says He has done.
 - Many people say faith is an illogical belief in the improbable – or that faith is wishful thinking – or credulity – or mere optimism.
 - But the Bible presents faith as reasonable trust. Faith and rational thought belong together. Believing is impossible without thinking. Faith is meaningless without a foundation of reasons on which trust can stand.
 - Think about the message of Mt 6:25-34. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says the Lord’s teaching in this passage is that faith is primarily about thinking.
 - In this passage, Jesus says *“do not be anxious about your life... which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ... seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*³⁴ *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*
 - A person of “no faith” isn’t thinking – fails to be observant and draw logical conclusions.
 - The Bible is full of logic, and we must pay attention and think to receive its message.
 - Jesus says look at the birds and think about what you are seeing. Look at the grasses of the field and consider carefully what you observe.
 - Then, draw logical conclusions about God’s provision for you considering the relative importance of birds, grasses, and people.
 - Sometime people and circumstances seem to so beat us up intellectually that our emotions dominate us, we forget the truths we know and become irrational in thought and behavior.

- Faith brings our mind under control. God says “remember” and “think.” A person of little faith doesn’t control their own thoughts. Instead, they are tossed to and fro, controlled by circumstances, and they worry.
 - The essence of worry is to go around in circles. Worry is not rational thought, but a failure to think rationally.
4. **Heb 11:1:** “...*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*”
 5. **Rm 14:23:** “...*and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*”
 6. **Gal 5:6 :** “...*The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*”
 7. **1Jn 5:4:** “...*This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*”
 8. **James 2:15-17:** “*Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*”
 9. **Rm 1:17:** “*For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’*”
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 - Faith’s importance is overwhelmingly evident. From Heb 11:1 and 11:6, we see that faith is related to belief, trust, confidence, and assurance.
 - In broad terms, faith is a confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Every action must be taken in the present, but the results of that action always lie in the unknown future.
 - God is trustworthy. Other objects of faith are not necessarily trustworthy. Not all risks are equal. Not all risk taking is reasonable.
 - Prudent actions are actions compatible with the trustworthiness of the object of faith.

- Faith involves intellect (knowledge and wisdom), affections (emotions), and decision-making (will/volition).
- The intellect must always have information it accepts as reasonable and sufficient evidence to justify trust in the object of faith, even if the information is known to be incomplete, not verifiable beyond reasonable doubt, or both.
- The affections add evidence for trustworthiness through a “feeling of rightness, a feeling that everything fits.”
- Every action requires commitment to act before knowing the outcome of that action. Therefore, all action involves an assumption of trust and the reality of risk-taking.
- Faith enables risk taking! Is all faith valid? What determines the validity of faith?
- Faith always has an object. All faith is “faith in something.” Faith’s validity depends on the trustworthiness of faith’s object.

16. **Ron Dunn’s True Story:** Ron Dunn was visiting friends in the Colorado mountains. The area he was visiting had several small lakes. While driving around one day, his friends suggested that Ron walk out on one of the lakes. Ron didn’t think much of the idea, but the friends persisted telling him that this was probably his only chance to walk on water.

- So, Ron relented and inched out a few feet onto the ice. Stood there a moment watching anxiously for cracks in the ice and then quickly scrambled back up on the bank. They had a good laugh and went on their way. Soon they passed another lake and out in the middle of the lake sat a man on a wooden crate fishing through a hole he had cut in the ice. The man looked so at peace that Ron felt embarrassed over his own timid excursion on the ice and his fear that the ice wouldn’t support him.
- What is the point? The man sitting in the middle of the frozen lake demonstrated great faith in the ice – right! Ron had almost no faith at all. Who was the safest? The man with his great faith or Ron with his tiny faith? Surely the man’s great faith made him more secure. But of course, that’s nonsense. Faith didn’t support either of them. The ice, the object of their faith supported both of them.
- So, what is the advantage of having a great faith? Picture Ron on the ice, afraid to venture very far, constantly looking for cracks in the ice, fearing that at any moment the ice would betray him and dump him into the icy water beneath.
- Know any Christians like that? Timid, nervous, afraid to venture out on the Word of God, their eyes constantly searching for cracks in God’s promises, for crevices of error in his Word, fearing that God may at any moment abandon them. There is little joy or excitement in their walk. That is the life of little faith.
- Now picture the fisherman. There he is, unafraid to step out onto the ice, boldly venturing to the very center of the lake, enjoying himself.

- You know a few Christians like that; they boldly step out on the promises of God, unafraid in the middle of His will, filled with joy and satisfaction, resting on the Word of God who cannot lie. That's a life of great faith.
- As they drove on, Ron said, "I wonder where he got enough nerve to do that." His friends answered immediately, "Oh, he lives around here. He knows the ice."
- He knows the ice. And that is the difference between faith and no faith, weak faith and strong faith. The Psalmist said, ***"Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you"*** (Ps 9:10).
- The strength, the power of faith lies in the attributes of the object of faith. Or to say it another way, faith is authenticated by its object. God is the only object of faith that never fails. The secret of great Christian faith is an intimate, thorough knowing of God.
- Faith involves the intellect (knowledge), affections (emotions), and volition (will).
- The intellect must always have information it accepts as reasonable and sufficient evidence to justify trust in the object of faith, even if the information is known to be incomplete, not verifiable beyond reasonable doubt, or both.
- If the intellect has sufficient reasonable evidence, and the affections have right "feelings," the will then inclines toward confident trust in the object of faith.
- Evidence that seems contrary causes doubt about trusting the object of the faith.
- The affections add evidence for trustworthiness through a "feeling of rightness, a feeling that everything fits".
- Based on the intellect's sufficient reasonable evidence and the affections' right "feelings", the will inclines toward confident trust in the object of faith.
- Future contrary evidence may cause doubt about trust in the object of the faith.
- When circumstances cause us to doubt, God's revealed character is a powerful truth to help us stand firm.