

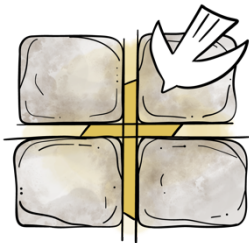
What is faith?

In exploring biblical truths, we confront the reality of sin and its universal grip on humanity, leading us all to deserve the just punishment of hell. Yet, amid this bleak outlook, we witness the profound grace of God, who responded to our dire state by sending his Son, Jesus, to atone for our sins and grant us the gift of eternal life with God. This act of divine mercy brings us to a pivotal question: **“If Jesus paid for everyone’s sins, doesn’t that mean everyone will be saved?”** The answer to this question hinges on the key concept of God’s gift of faith.

Often misunderstood, faith is often viewed as living the gospel by following the commandments, acting upon our beliefs through righteous works, developing an unshakable testimony of the gospel, exercising our agency to choose the right, even when it’s hard, and acting in confidence based on our spiritual witness of truth. However, these views don’t capture the essence of faith as presented in the Bible.

The Bible teaches that faith is a gift from God, intricately linked with the grace he has shown in Christ. First and foremost, faith is not about our actions or decisions; it’s about receiving and resting on what Jesus has done for us. This article sheds light on faith not merely as a series of actions or a strong belief but as a transformative gift that enables us to grasp and hold onto the gifts of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life offered through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

What does the narrative of the Bible show us about faith?



In Genesis, the concept of faith emerges through the patriarchs, with Abraham as a pivotal figure. His trust in God’s promises, including the promise of a son and a nation, exemplifies justifying faith — a faith that trusts in God’s word and promises despite visible circumstances. Abraham’s faith, credited to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6), establishes the foundational principle that faith, not works, justifies before God. (See more about Abraham’s faith below)

This theme is echoed in the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, each illustrating that faith is an active trust in God’s promises, even amid life’s uncertainties and trials. Their stories reinforce the understanding that faith is rooted in God’s faithfulness and promises, not human merit or achievements.

Exodus further illustrates faith in action. Moses’ leadership and the Israelites’ journey from Egypt, especially their crossing of the Red Sea, demonstrate faith as trust in God’s deliverance, even when human reason doubts.

Throughout the periods of the Judges and the Kings, faith is continually tested. Figures like David, who trusts in God’s sovereignty against Goliath, exemplify faith as reliance on God’s power and promises rather than human strength or wisdom.

The prophetic books deepen this understanding of faith. The prophets call for a faith that goes beyond external observance, focusing on a heartfelt trust in God’s redemptive plans, even amidst

judgment and exile. This trust is rooted in the assurance of God's steadfast love and mercy, pointing towards a future hope.

In the New Testament, faith reaches its full expression in Jesus Christ. The Gospels depict Jesus teaching about faith as integral to the kingdom of God and commend individuals for their trust in his saving work and authority. This faith is characterized by a personal reliance on Jesus, acknowledging him as fulfilling God's promises.

The apostle Paul's writings further illuminate the doctrine of faith. He emphasizes that faith is the means of justification before God, a theme central to understanding the relationship between law and gospel. By faith, apart from works, believers are united with Christ and partake in the righteousness of God (Romans 3:22-28; Galatians 2:16). This faith is not a human work but a gift from God, received through the hearing of the word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9).

The culmination of the faith narrative is found in Revelation, where faith is portrayed as an enduring commitment to Christ amidst trials, embodying the hope and assurance of eternal life with God.

The Bible presents faith as more than mere belief; it is a living, active trust in God's promises, fulfilled in Christ. From the patriarchs to the prophets, from Christ's teachings to the apostolic message, the biblical story of faith is a journey of trust in God's grace and mercy, a central theme that shapes the entire Christian doctrine and life.

What is a simple definition of faith according to the Bible?

Faith is trust in the promises of God revealed in the Bible (Hebrews 11:1). It is complete reliance on and devotion to God and his gospel of salvation by grace alone through Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). True saving faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit working through God's word (Romans 10:17). Faith receives God's blessings promised in Christ (John 3:16-18).

If Jesus paid for everyone's sins, doesn't that mean everyone will be saved?

Firstly, it is true that Jesus Christ made a complete atonement for the sins of the whole world through his life, death, and resurrection. This fundamental truth is expressed in Scriptures like 1 John 2:2, which says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." This verse demonstrates God's boundless love and grace, offering forgiveness and eternal life to everyone.

However, whether someone will spend eternal life with God is another matter. The Bible teaches that while eternal life is provided for all, it is received through faith. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." This well-known verse highlights that faith in Jesus Christ is how we receive the benefits of his atoning sacrifice.

So, while Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient for all and available to all, not everyone benefits from this gift. Some reject it, choosing to rely on their own efforts or rejecting God's grace altogether. The

Bible speaks of this reality in verses such as John 3:36, which says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.” This verse clearly illustrates the critical importance of faith in Jesus Christ for eternal life and the consequences of rejecting him.

Another verse that reinforces this point is 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might.” Here, Paul emphasizes the severity of not acknowledging God and disobeying the gospel, underlining the eternal consequences of such actions.

These verses collectively underscore the significance of receiving Christ’s sacrifice through faith. They serve as a solemn reminder that while God’s offer of salvation through Jesus is universal, its acceptance is contingent upon individual faith and recognition of Jesus as Savior.

Thankfully, faith itself is a gift from God, as Ephesians 2:8-9 explains: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” It’s important to understand that faith is not simply intellectual assent or a one-time decision but a living trust in Christ and his promises, which transforms our lives.

In essence, Jesus’ atoning work on the cross is complete and sufficient for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all of humanity. However, personal reception of this salvation comes through faith, trusting in Jesus Christ as one’s Savior and Lord. This faith, a gracious gift from God, connects us to Christ and all the blessings of his redemptive work, including eternal life.

What does faith mean?

Faith is the belief or trust we place in something or someone. Just as a solid foundation is crucial to a building, the strength of our faith lies in what we put our hope and trust in. True biblical faith finds its potency not in the believer’s merit but in the steadfast reliability of the truths they hold onto. Thus, the power of true faith rests not in the subject, the one believing, but in the timeless and unshakable truths of God’s word fulfilled and accomplished in Christ Jesus.

In our relationship with God and the promise of eternal life, the Bible emphasizes that our complete trust and foundation should be in the immovable object of Christ’s saving work alone.

Jesus has done everything to reconcile us to God, wiping away our sin debt and attributing his perfect obedience to us. The only obstacle remaining is our need to believe in Jesus and receive the benefits of his perfect life and sacrificial death (John 3:18).

Faith, however, is not something we generate on our own or a decision we can make in and of ourselves. Instead, it is a divine gift from God (Ephesians 2:8) and a work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (1 Corinthians 12:3). Faith is a response to God’s grace and revelation and the Father drawing someone into a relationship with him (John 6:44). We don’t come to faith on our own by making wise choices or right decisions, instead as Paul says in Romans 10:7, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”

The merits of his saving work become ours through faith in Christ alone. Those who trust Christ's work alone receive the full benefits of his sacrificial offering, including reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, adoption as his children, and the inheritance of eternal life with God. This God-given faith provides us complete certainty and confidence in God's promises, as expressed in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Our confidence and certainty in eternal life with God depend on where we place our trust. Suppose our faith partially relies on our efforts or righteousness. In that case, we will find ourselves lacking certainty and security (Galatians 5:4). Therefore, God encourages us to place our complete trust in the redemptive work of Christ for our eternal life.

Placing our complete trust in Christ alone brings certainty and security, knowing that our salvation rests securely in his hands. Faith, therefore, is not based on our worthiness or efforts but on the all-sufficient work of our Savior, Jesus Christ, that will lead to a life of thankfulness and good works.

Where does faith come from?

Faith does not originate from within us but is God's gracious gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith in Christ by granting spiritual rebirth and renewal (Titus 3:5-7, Romans 10:17). We cannot come to faith by our own reason or strength, but God must give it freely.

How does someone get faith?

We receive the gift of faith by hearing the gospel—that Jesus died for our sins and gave eternal life to all who trust in him (Romans 10:17, John 3:16-18). The Holy Spirit works through God's word to create justifying faith in Christ in those who hear it (1 Peter 1:23). Faith comes by God's grace as he grants spiritual renewal and rebirth (2 Corinthians 5:17, Titus 3:5).

What does faith do?

Faith receives the merits and benefits of Christ's redeeming work, through which believers are granted forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life (Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9). Faith also unites believers to Jesus Christ, so his perfect life is credited to them (Romans 4:23-24). True faith bears fruit in a new life of Christian service, but it does not earn or merit gifts from God.

What is the "object" of a Christian's faith?

In Christianity, the term "object" of faith refers to the focus or target of one's faith and trust. The object of a Christian's faith is fundamentally Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice, as revealed in the Bible. Passages like Romans 3:22 and Acts 16:31 underscore that it is through faith in Christ alone that one is accounted righteous and receives salvation.

The cornerstone of Christian faith is the centrality of Christ's work — his sinless life, his sacrificial death on the cross, and his triumphant resurrection. Therefore, saving faith is characterized by

reliance not on one's achievements or any other entity but on Christ's complete and finished work of redemption. It is a faith that looks away from oneself and rests solely on the merits of Jesus Christ for salvation.

This understanding of faith and its object emphasizes that salvation is a gift received through faith in Christ, not a status earned by human efforts or adherence to the law. Christian faith is not a belief system based on principles or moral codes but a personal trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

To illustrate this more clearly, consider the following analogy:

Would you rather zipline across a canyon on a string of dental floss or a steel cable? Unless you have a death wish, you'd choose the cable! But what if you had faith that the floss, representing faith in personal efforts or things other than Christ, would hold you? Despite any belief in the floss, it would inevitably fail under the weight, akin to relying on our works for salvation.

Now, consider the cable, symbolizing faith in Jesus Christ and his finished work. Even if you questioned its strength, the cable's ability to support you doesn't waver. This cable is much like Christ's work, which remains sufficient for salvation regardless of the individual's faith strength. The steel cable, solid and reliable, can bear the total weight of all who trust in it, illustrating that the object of our faith, Christ himself, is consistently capable of bringing us across the chasm of sin and into salvation.

What is the object of your faith? Is it akin to the fragile dental floss — yourself and your actions? Or is it the robust and reliable steel cable—Jesus and his completed work? Remember, in Christianity, it is not the intensity of your faith but the object of your faith—Jesus Christ and his redemptive work—that is paramount.

How do I know if I have *enough* faith?

This question reflects a common concern about the adequacy of one's faith. Yet, Jesus provides a comforting perspective on the nature of faith in Matthew 17:20, where he indicates that faith, even as minuscule as a mustard seed, is sufficient to do the unimaginable.

The emphasis in Jesus' teaching is not on the amount of faith but its effectiveness regardless of size. Faith's potency is not derived from its volume but from its focus—the power and faithfulness of God. It is not a question of whether we have enough faith by our estimation; it is about recognizing that even the slightest measure of faith is robust when it is placed in Jesus Christ.

Jesus' statement is an encouragement that the measure of faith required is not vast but trusting; it is not about our capacity to believe but about the one in whom we believe. Our assurance comes from knowing that Jesus is sufficient and that our faith, no matter how small, when placed in him, connects us to the power of God.

Does faith come to those who pray for it?

While prayer is a vital part of the Christian life, the Holy Spirit works justifying faith in a person's heart through the word of God, not through human initiative or effort (Romans 10:17). We cannot

attain saving faith by our reason, strength, or decision. It is Christ's gracious gift through the Spirit's power.

If someone is compelled to ask God for faith, this very act is a testament to the presence of faith within them. The prayer itself expresses trust in God and recognition of one's need for him. The heart's cry, "Lord, I believe, help me overcome my unbelief," as seen in Mark 9:24, reflects a sincere acknowledgment of faith seeking to grow. This plea is an honest expression of a believer who has faith but desires a more profound, more vital trust in God.

Do I need to say a specific prayer to come to faith?

There is no required prayer, technique, or ceremony necessary to receive justifying faith, only hearing the good news that sinners are rescued by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Romans 10:17). The Holy Spirit works faith through exposure to God's word, the Bible.

What can I do to strengthen my faith?

In seeking a more robust faith, it is critical to understand that the essence of faith is not found in the accumulation of personal achievements or the strictness of one's religious observance. Faith is not a commodity that we generate through our efforts or piety.

True faith looks away from oneself and is firmly rooted in the accomplishments of Christ. It declares, "Christ has done this. Christ will do that," placing all hope and trust in God's action and promises. This kind of faith acknowledges human weakness and relies wholly on the strength and righteousness provided by Jesus. It is a trust that is confident in what Christ has done and will do, rather than what we ourselves can manage.

Having a stronger faith is not about reaching a state of spiritual self-sufficiency; instead, it is about recognizing one's continual need for God's grace through Jesus Christ. It is not about the strength of our faith but about the faithfulness of our God, and this is the assurance that can bring us peace.

To strengthen faith, then, is to grow in dependency on God. It involves letting God's word convict and comfort you, exposing sin and weakness but also assuring you of God's grace and mercy (Hebrews 4:12, Romans 3:23-24). It means finding rest in the knowledge that his grace is sufficient (Titus 3:7), and his power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10). As one confronts their frailties, turning to God's promises and truths can illuminate the path and reinforce faith.

In practical terms, this faith reinforcing can be done through regular engagement with the Bible, prayer, and participation in a Christian community where God's grace and truth are proclaimed and lived out. In these moments of seeking and depending on God, faith is often deepened, reflecting the Biblical principle that even our ability to serve and love is a result of his power at work within us (Philippians 2:13).

Can I lose my faith?

We have the assurance that faith, worked by the Holy Spirit through the gospel promises, endures forever (John 10:28-29). God completes the good work he begins, keeping us secure in faith by his grace (Philippians 1:6). However, we can fall into sinful unbelief if we persist in rejecting God's word. Saving faith is God's enduring gift.

A Closer Look: Faith

Abraham, often referred to as the Father of Faith, provides a powerful illustration of what faith is and what faith does. His journey with God, as recorded in the book of Genesis, James, Romans, and Hebrews, exemplifies the essence of true faith.

Abraham's faith was not in his abilities or accomplishments but in God's promises. When God called Abraham (then Abram) to leave his homeland and go to an unknown land, Abram obeyed in faith, trusting God's guidance and provision (Genesis 12:1-4). Abram's faith was anchored in the character and faithfulness of God, even in the face of uncertainty.

Later, when God promised Abram descendants as numerous as the stars, though he and his wife Sarah were well advanced in years and childless, he believed God's word (Genesis 15:5-6). His faith resulted in righteousness, not because of his works, but because he believed in the one who justifies the ungodly, God himself (Romans 4:3-5). Abraham's story demonstrates that faith brings us into a right relationship with God, not through our efforts, but by trusting in his grace and provision.

Furthermore, when God tested Abraham's faith and asked him to sacrifice his long-awaited son, Isaac, Abraham obeyed without hesitation (Genesis 22:1-3). His faith led him to act in complete surrender to God's will. Ultimately, God provided a ram for the sacrifice, affirming Abraham's unwavering faith (Genesis 22:11-14). Finally, in the book of James, Abraham's faith is shown to be active and genuine, as it produced good works. His willingness to offer Isaac on the altar demonstrated his faith was living and transformative (James 2:21-24).

What does faith mean for you?

Just as Abraham, the Father of Faith, trusted in God's promises with unwavering devotion, you, too can find profound comfort in knowing that Jesus is enough. By placing your trust in Christ, the merits of his saving work become your own, and through faith in him alone, you are redeemed and granted eternal life. Rest assured that salvation is not attained through your efforts or merits but rather received as a gift of grace (Galatians 2:16).

- **Faith is not about striving to achieve God's gifts through your efforts, achievements, or righteous deeds.** Instead, it is receiving God's gift of grace and eternal life through Christ because no one is justified before God by relying on the law, but the righteous live by faith (Galatians 3:11).

- **Faith is not about having all the answers but trusting the One who does.** Place your complete trust in the Lord, acknowledging him in every aspect of your life, and he will guide your path (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- **Faith is not a feeling but a firm conviction in the midst of emotions.** It is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).
- **Faith is not about achieving a certain level of righteousness; instead, it's about clinging to the righteousness of Christ.** Be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of your own based on works, but the righteousness that comes through faith (Philippians 3:9).
- **Faith means that your justification, reconciliation with God, and eternal life assurance are gifts through your trust in Christ.** Your salvation is not earned through your own works but rather by the grace of God. It is a gift that comes through faith alone, not by any human effort, so no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **Faith trusts that Jesus is who he says he is and will fulfill all his promises.** In Christ, all of God's promises find their fulfillment. By putting your faith in him, you can confidently say 'Amen' - 'let it be so' to God's faithfulness (2 Corinthians 1:20).
- **Through faith in Christ, you are justified freely by God's grace and redeemed from sin.** By trusting in Jesus, you acknowledge that righteousness is granted to all who believe, regardless of their background, for all have fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:22-24).

Release any anxieties or doubts you have about your faith being faithful enough, for your eternal life is secure in Christ. Nothing can separate you from God's love, and his saving work brings complete certainty and confidence in your eternal destination (Romans 8:38-39).

Let this transformative faith guide your life, drawing you closer to the One who is faithful to complete the good work he began in you. Jesus is enough; in him, you have the hope of eternal life, and you are made complete by his grace. Trust in him wholeheartedly, for his love is unchanging, and his grace is more than abundant to sustain you in every circumstance. Jesus is enough.

Bible Verses about Faith

- Galatians 5:4
- Ephesians 2:8
- 1 Corinthians 12:3
- Hebrews 11:1

Songs about Faith

Great Is Thy Faithfulness by Thomas Chisholm proclaims the faithfulness of God and encourages believers to trust in his unwavering love and care.

My Faith Looks Up to Thee by Ray Palmer is a prayer of surrender and trust, declaring that the believer's faith looks to God for guidance and strength.