



about work and service. Finally, He explains, “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’” (17:10). Jesus never uses the word “faith,” but He describes the attitude, the mindset, the service, and obedience that a pleasing faith will demonstrate. Obedience is “our duty to do.” It

But will he not rather say to him, “Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink”? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not (17:8-9).

How will this increase their faith? He is talking

doesn’t merit anything—obedient servants are still “unprofitable servants” but servants who don’t strive to do “all those things” which they “are commanded” don’t have a faith that pleases God. What kind of faith do you have? What kind of faith do I have?



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4700 Andrews Ave.
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Faith That Is Pleasing to God

By Kyle Pope

Faith is at the heart man’s relationship with God. The Hebrew writer taught, “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” (Heb. 11:6-7, NKJV). With the coming of Jesus, the character of the type of faith that pleases God became much more focused. This side of the cross, faith means more than just believing there is a God—Jesus said, “no man comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). That means now in order to please God one must believe in Jesus.

Does that just mean believing that Jesus was a real person? No, the kind of faith one has in Jesus must also be focused. 1 John 5:5 asks and then answers the question, “who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” That tells us that the type of faith that is pleasing to God, doesn’t just believe Jesus was a good man, or a wise philosopher, or a prophet—but “the Son of God.” Sadly, many people in our world believe in a Jesus who is not Divine. That is not the Jesus of the New Testament, nor the character of the faith that pleases God.

Scripture, however, focuses this even further. Peter and Paul both quote Isaiah 28:16, “whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame” (Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6). How does one believe “on” Je-

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
 9:30 AM
 10:30 AM
 Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter
 Brady McAlister
 Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight
 Blake McAlister
 Walker McAnear
 Sam Nunn
 Lance Purcell
 Justin Smiley
 Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

sus? The Bible teaches that, **“the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jer. 10:23). Human beings do not have an innate guidance system within us, nor are we capable of erasing our own offenses that are committed against God. The preacher in Ecclesiastes asked, **“consider the work of God; for who can make straight what He has made crooked?”** (Eccl. 7:13). When God defines behavior that we have committed as **“crooked”** we cannot make it **“straight.”** This is the problem of sin. All morally capable and accountable souls at some point in life sin—**“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). How then can one be made

“straight” in his relationship with God? He must believe **“on”** Jesus as the source of atonement, redemption, and reconciliation.

This is where Jesus’s teaching comes into play. Jesus taught:

And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day (John 12:47-48).

Believing **“on”** Jesus means that one believes and trusts His word. If I should say to myself, “I want salvation—so I will believe in Jesus, but I don’t have to accept and follow everything He taught!”—I don’t really believe **“on”** Jesus.

That tells us that part of having a faith that pleases God means that I must **“diligently seek Him”** as we noted above. This is not something distinct from faith but how the kind of faith pleasing to God is actualized. Remember, the Hebrew writer said, **“without faith it is impossible to please Him,”** then explains the kind of faith that pleases God—**“for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”** (Heb. 11:6-7). If I don’t believe **“that He is”** I don’t have a faith that pleases God. If I don’t believe He rewards **“those who diligently seek Him”** I don’t have a faith that pleases God. Through seeking to know and understand God’s revealed word in the Bible one is **“diligently”** seek-

ing Him. Through striving to carefully and obediently follow what is found within Scripture one is **“diligently”** seeking Him. Sadly, many misunderstand this and say, “that’s legalism!” But we aren’t talking about trusting in ourselves. Instead, the way that we demonstrate love for and faith in Jesus is by a diligence to understand and follow all of His will.

The Bible refers to personal faith, and to the system of faith revealed in the gospel. Jude wrote that Christians must **“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”** (Jude 3). To have a faith that pleases God one must not **“depart from the faith”** (1 Tim. 4:1) as Paul foretold that some would do. To have a faith that pleases God one must have courage to confess this faith before others (Matt. 10:32). To have a faith that pleases God one must remain **“steadfast in the faith”** (1 Pet. 5:9). These things make it clear that saving faith (or pleasing faith) is more than just a condition purely within our minds. James declared that demons believe, but their faith is not pleasing to God (Jas. 2:19). Some of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus, but out of fear refused to confess Him (John 12:42). Jesus taught, **“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”** (Matt. 10:32-33). So pleasing faith **“on”** Jesus involves certain actions that demonstrate that faith.

Is that meritorious salvation? Is that salvation by works? No, but it is a type of faith which meets God’s definition, not man’s definition. When our world advocates “salvation by faith only” they are using a definition of faith that is never taught in Scripture. Many don’t realize that the only passage in Scripture where we ever see the phrase “faith only” does not teach that salva-

tion is by “faith only.” James 2:24 declares, **“a man is justified by works and not faith only.”** Only a few verses before this James explained it further by using the example of Abraham—whose faith in God throughout Scripture is offered as an example that all true believers should follow. James taught that his, **“faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect”** (Jas. 2:22). The kind of faith that is pleasing to God is **“made perfect”** (or made complete) by works of obedience. Obedience doesn’t merit anything, it is simply the duty of those who serve God in Christ.

In Luke 17, His apostles pled with Jesus to, **“increase our faith”** (17:5). After describing the great power of faith (17:6), He asks, **“And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat?’”** (17:7). What does this have to do with faith? He asks further,