

# Biblical Principles

ONE IN A SERIES

PUBLISHED IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING  
BY PLYMOUTH ROCK FOUNDATION

## Faith . . . and Works

**FAITH**, n. L. *Fides*; It., *fedi*; Arm., *feiz*. 1. Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without further evidence. 2. The assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief in the Scriptures of the being and perfection of God, and the existence, character, and doctrines of Jesus Christ. 3. An entire trust and confidence in God.

“Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report (God’s approval). Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (He spoke and it was), so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:1-3).

### The Biblical Principle

By God’s grace through faith are we saved, not through works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9). However, true faith is an action word; for the person who is saved by His grace, faith carries with it the responsibility of good works for Christ.

Consider the words of James, the brother of Jesus:

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:17, 18).

There is much preaching of the faith of our fathers in the land in this day; there is far too little of the works of that faith; far too little of Christian faith in action. It is true: Actions speak louder than words. As James emphasized, works make faith perfect, make it complete (v. 22).

### The Power of Faith

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world and the things of the world (1 John 5:4). Where

there is the deep, abiding faith in Christ, there is power, and there is victory.

The greater the faith, the greater the power. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens (empowers) me” (Philippians 4:13).

Where there is no faith, there is no power, no real hope—and, most often, no victory.

That little band of Pilgrims who left their mother country and braved the raging winter seas to settle in a strange and desolate land is an example of true and abiding faith. They knew Whom they believed, and were persuaded that He would keep that which they had committed unto Him—and that made all things possible.

This sad old world is a basket case. Why? Because it has departed from—and often denied—the Word and ways of God and has put other gods before God. Thus the world at large has reason for a diminished faith and a clouded outlook. But what is difficult to understand is why so many who profess to believe on Christ Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, seem to be just as anxiety ridden and hopeless as those who are without Christ.

Is it that they lack faith? Or do they fail to realize and appreciate the power of faith—and the

commission to put the power of faith into works for Christ—to work to change the world as did Jason and the others (Acts 17:6, 7).

Let there be 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:18-40). Let there be a thousand satanic princes and a global union of godless principalities. Let the heathen rage and roar and roam the earth. Let them, separately or together, stand against the power of the King. All they can muster, all they can purchase and purloin . . . all that is theirs, is nothing in face of the power and the promise of the one true God.

Faith brings the victory.

That is a fact! To the person who belongs to Christ Jesus, that is a blessed assurance!

What, then, is the cause among Christians for fear, for concern, for anxiety?

If we know—if we truly truly know in our heart of hearts—Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him, then we know that His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory—forever!

Why is this a basic Biblical principle? It is because we who are His are to work unceasingly to advance His kingdom. Know you not His Great Commission? The followers of Christ are to be leaders of men and nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Without faith, true and abiding faith and the employment of the power of faith in works of faith—we will not be found good and faithful servants of the Living God.

### The Attributes of Faith

Faith is an *action* word. It empowers. It produces. It attracts. It is the savor of the salt, the light on the candle that will pierce the darkness. Faith is the power that moves mountains.

We who claim to be His are to live by such faith! We are to win the world through such faith!

Without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). The whole range and reach and rigors and works of faith are central to living in Christ, to living for Christ. Consider, then, the spectrum of faith; the attributes, the dimensions, and requirements of our Christian faith.

*Faith trusts.* It does not doubt. It does not question God's Word. It embraces His covenant without reluctance or reservation. It places no limit on His Sovereign grace or power.

For this reason I also suffer these

things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day (2 Timothy 1:12; see also Romans 8:38, 39).

*Faith obeys.* Faith impels obedience to God, without hesitation, without reservation. Its all-consuming desire is to bring into captivity every thought to obedience to Jesus Christ—walking according to His Word, keeping His law, obeying His commandments.

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? (Romans 6:16).

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:15).

*Faith lives.* Faith is dynamic. Those who are faith-full are to be dynamos for Christ—bold but not abrasive, discerning but not contentious, aggressive but not arrogant. Faith does not act unseemly (Romans 3:8). By faith we seek to live for (and be like) Jesus Christ (Colossians 3).

According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:20, 21).

*Faith grows.* It matures. It builds; it is not stagnant. It seeks a spiritual fullness through the study of His Word and through increasingly yielding to Him and His law-Word, His will, and His purpose.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him . . ." (Colossians 3:16, 17).

*Faith empowers.* It strengthens. Faith does not surrender the world to Satan or any of his magistrates; it has not abdicated His sovereignty!). Faith

is the power to overcome all obstacles in the service of the King. Faith provides that inner backbone and that outward courage to withstand the hatred of man and the temptings of Satan.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).

*Faith endures.* Faith is constant. It is not on-again, off-again. It has staying power. It perseveres, persists, stands fast, is courageous. The faith-full person keeps his eyes upon Jesus.

*Faith attracts.* It invites, encourages, is winsome. Faith rejoices. It glorifies God. Those who are faith-full walk as children of God; Jesus said they are the light of the world. Transformed. To be transformers. *For Him!*

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (respect) (1 Peter 3:15).

*Faith loves.* For there abides faith and hope and love—and faith is a product of love. Those who truly love Jesus truly believe in Jesus! And, if we love Him, we seek to keep His commandments. We love our brothers and sisters in Christ. And more: we love the unlovely and the unlovable even as we love ourselves.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (Colossians 3:12, 13).

*Faith produces!* Faith is not dormant. It manifests itself in works. It bears good fruit. Why? Because those who are faithful, those who hold fast to the faith are branches of the True Vine in which they live and breathe and have their being.

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:19, 20).

## The Works of Faith (Applying The Principle)

Of all the deceits foisted on Christendom, surely one of the most deadly is this: Since we are saved by grace (not works), we need not be concerned with works.

Those who would minimize the importance of good works in the life of the Christian generally refer to the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Paul's admonition did not stop there, he went on, and so must we if we are to live by the whole Word of God:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (v. 10).

And, in his letter to Titus, Paul again emphasized that we who are slaves to the Master must understand and apply the essential linkage between salvation and works:

. . . our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:13b, 14). (See also Titus 3:5-8, wherein Paul emphasizes that we must always "be careful to maintain good works.")

What, then, of that faith which is devoid of works? Is it not a dead and deadly faith—a pernicious force which gives the unsaved person reason to doubt the power and the purpose of the Christian faith? Without doubt, it is! For, as James concludes in chapter 2, verse 26 ". . . as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (Indeed, our Savior is the ultimate Authority on this. Read Matthew 25:31-46).

The world judges a faith by those who profess to be faithful!

Faith demands works. The greater the faith, the greater the works, the greater the impact on the world.

Yes, we are saved by grace. But here is the rest of that eternal truth: Because we are saved by His grace, we must be about His works.

A Christian life devoid of works is a disobedient and an unfruitful life. It is a withered branch unworthy of the True Vine. In fact, it gives rise to questions about the validity of the profession of faith. It is fit only to be cut off and cast aside. Strong words, especially in this day of "easy believism"? Perhaps. But, they were spoken by our Savior and our Lord (John 15:1-6).

The faith set forth in John 3:16 is not that of the modern "easy believism." It is not some passive, one-way gimmie-gimmie proposition. The faith in John 3:16 is a living, working faith (Galatians 5:6, 13, 14; Hebrews 13:20, 21).

It is a passionate state of heart and mind in the new man and the new woman who would turn the world right-side up for Christ.

A fruitless faith produces no works. It has no impact. It moves no mountains, generates no witness, contains no challenge, obtains no victories. It lends aid and support to those who boast that "God is dead—or irrelevant."

### How Great The Need!

The need for Christian works is great—and getting greater. It is needed in every area of life—in private lives and public squares, in the academies and in the pulpits and body of Christ's church . . . yes, especially in Christ's church!

If we fail in our obedience to the Lord God, if we fail to be about His work in all fields and all dimensions and tasks, Caesar will become even more powerful—indeed, all-powerful and all-consuming.

Thus will these generations raise up a god that brooks no competition, permits no diversity, acknowledges no personal liberty, permits no other authority—allows no other faith but Caesar's.

We, as a nation (and, indeed, as a world), now enter a system-shaking, society shattering, family-busting age—a time of tremendous change—an age of computers, robots, artificial intelligence, geopolitical strife, and global dictators. The stresses and the strains will be heightened by the magnitude of the changes and the speed of events caused by the compression of time.

It is not only coming that we must choose who

we will serve (have we not already made that choice?). It is more that we and our children must decide whether Christians will be leaders or slaves; whether we will be molders of, or molded by, the superstate.

Those decisions will be affected, in large measure, by whether we put our faith into works—everyday works:

- in the church and in the community;
- Christian works of compassion and love;
- works of service to God and man;
- works of statecraft based on Biblical principle;
- works of education and communications in God's Word;
- works in all areas and in all things, for, is He not to have such preeminence?

Or, shall we, like Peter, sleep in some misdirected, self-centered assurance that because we are saved by grace we can be above the fray while the church is manacled, the state is subverted, our treasury is stolen, and millions are aborted, or starved, or medically expended as useless and expensive aging relics. Let it be said again and again: *The followers of Christ are called to be leaders of men and nations!*

In 1843, Alexis deTocqueville wrote that "in no other country in the world does Christianity have as much influence as it has in the United States."

Faith—and the power of faith. Faith—and the works of faith.

What would deTocqueville write today about the Christians in this nation?

(NOTE: All Scripture is from the New King James Version.)

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