

EXERCISING FAITH

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INTRODUCTION

Faith is an important word in Christianity.

Faith has meaning for ongoing Christian experience.

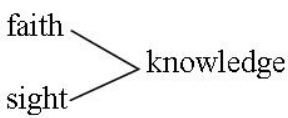
- Nature of faith - what it is
- Necessity of faith - why we have to have it
- Nurture of faith - how we develop it
- Results of faith - what it produces

I. NATURE OF FAITH

Faith is . . .

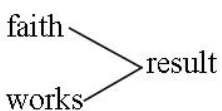
A. Trust in someone else (interpersonal)

1. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
 Hebrews 11:1
 11:3
 11:7
 Cp. 2 Peter 1:8



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graph LR
    faith --> knowledge
    sight --> knowledge
          
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2. Romans 4:2-5
 (James 2:21-23)



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graph LR
    faith --> result
    works --> result
          
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A person stands in the gap between the would-be knower and the thing known.
 the would-be doer and the thing done.

Faith and knowledge do not correspond with religion and science. The contrast is between faith and sight, not faith and knowledge. It is a contrast in how people come to know rather than in degrees of certainty. Knowledge by experience is direct; knowledge by faith is indirect through someone else's testimony. Knowledge by faith applies to the past, the future, and all the present that is beyond our direct experience. There is even a knowledge by faith in what we do directly experience if it needs to be explained—as in what is going on, say, in a complicated football play. Sometimes we do not know where to look for the main features of what we are watching. Consequently, we know more by faith than we do by sight.

B. Active relationship: James 2:21-23 (Romans 4:2-5)

C. A degree matter

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:3
2. 2 Corinthians 10:14b-15a
3. Matthew 17:20 (Luke 17:6)

D. Faith is not

1. Uncertainty
 2. A blind leap
 3. A divine deposit
 4. Being gullible
 5. Throwing away inhibitions
 6. Living by impulse, urges, promptings
 7. Mind over matter (cp. Mark 11:23)
 8. Sheer mental assent
- but 9. Trust in another as a way to know.

II. NECESSITY OF FAITH: 2 Corinthians 5:7

A. Everyone must live by faith.

1. Not religion (faith) vs. science (sight)

Direct experience cannot deal with past or future, but only with recurring natural process.

2. Added resources

- a. Resources of others
- b. Resources of the future (Faith buys time.)
- c. Resources in ourselves (We would not try otherwise.)

B. Illustrations

1. Going to the grocery store
2. Buying gas
3. Eating your wife's cooking

III. NURTURE OF FAITH: Luke 17:5, 6

A. We start with what we have, and DO SOMETHING WITH SOMEONE

In response to his disciples' request, Jesus did not say, "*Okay, here.*"

1. We interact with God:

We listen to what he has already said in his word: “Faith comes by hearing” (Romans **10:14**, 17).

We trust him by trusting in his way of living.
 spending time with him in prayer, thought, and Bible
 reading.

2. We interact with God's people; we put trust in trustworthy people.

- B. We start with a little, and it will develop into a lot.

example: courtship \longrightarrow marriage \longrightarrow married life

1. We trust a little; we find out that we did not get betrayed,
2. When we find out that we did not get betrayed, we take a bigger step of trust.

Interpersonal relationship means there must be action taking place between persons; so trust can grow by degrees through the give-and-take of that interaction.

Increasing faith is not something done to us but with us.

Faith grows through personal interaction.

IV. RESULTS

- A. We learn what we could not otherwise know.
B. We receive what we could not otherwise have.
C. We accomplish what we could not otherwise accomplish.
D. We become what we would not otherwise be.

Conclusion

Growing Degree	interpersonal "	action action
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reciprocal causation: one side affects the other side, which turns around and affects the first side, and so on.