

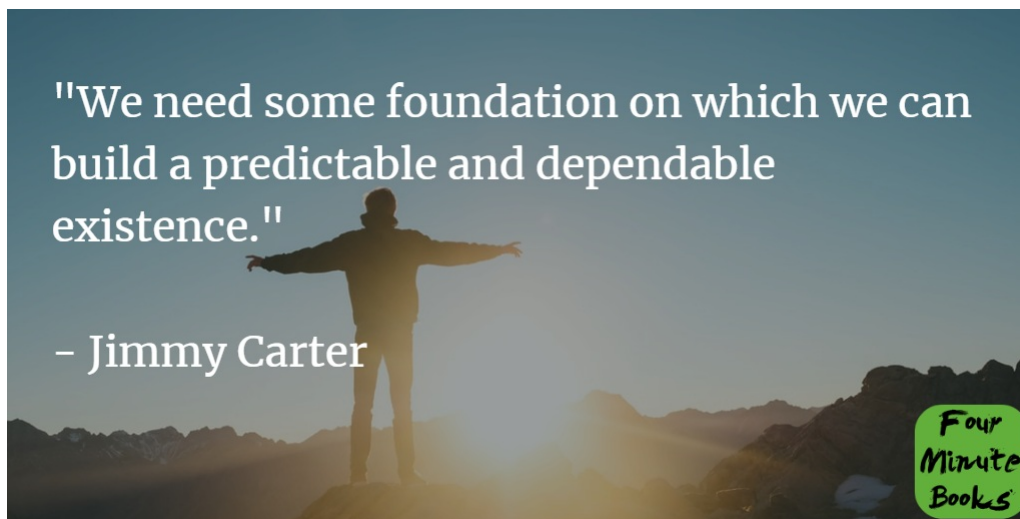
Faith Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Faith is an in-depth exploration of the many meanings of faith and the various ways it affects human life, backed by the personal account of the former US President, Jimmy Carter.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



The thirty-ninth president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, published *Faith: A Journey for All* at age 94. His experiences as a devout Baptist, Nobel Peace Prize winner and the head of a world superpower all shine through the very personal narrative of this book.

What is important, this is not a one-dimensional take on faith. Carter tells real-life stories and gives examples to show that faith is not just a religious concept. Taking many forms, it influences most aspects of human existence. In fact, sometimes we direct our life with faith so instinctively, that we don't even realize it.

In his book, Carter doesn't remain only within the theoretical realm. Rather than just playing around with concepts and philosophies, he shares a great deal of his experience to illustrate how faith can help individuals and societies on a practical level. He highlights the links between what we believe in and the state of our democracies, human rights' execution, and personal relationships.

Here are the 3 most important takeaways from the former US president:

1. Faith isn't limited to religious belief.
2. Doubt can help you strengthen your faith.

3. Science and religion complement, rather than contradict each other.

Ready to look for answers to some serious existential questions? Then let's join Jimmy Carter on his quest to find out what faith means!

Lesson 1: Faith can extend far beyond religion.

Upon hearing the word "faith," most of us immediately think about religion. Atheists may say that they don't embrace any faith, just because they don't believe in God.

However, according to Carter, the concept of faith is not limited to religious belief and permeates virtually all areas of human life. Almost everybody holds faith in *something*.

Consider a country you live in and the values upheld by its constitution. As a citizen of that country, you most likely have faith in at least some of these values, as well as the institutions reinforcing them. The concept of faith also applies to global agreements, which unite people worldwide in respect of basic principles like human rights protection.

On an individual level, Carter says, the first kind of faith we develop is the one for our mothers. We trust that they will protect and feed us, even before we have the mental capacity to realize it. Later on, we develop faith in other people from our most intimate environment: our father, siblings, friends, and teachers.

Finally, there is also the religious faith which is the most common connotation of the word. Religious belief, according to Carter, is not about a fixed set of dogmas that one accepts and never questions. Rather, religion should be a constant search for higher truth.

But such seeking doesn't come without moments of doubt.

Lesson 2: Doubt can be seen as an opportunity, rather than a threat to your faith.

Carter doesn't shy away from talking about the moments when he felt doubtful about his faith and God. Instead of being embarrassed, he frames it as a natural element occurring throughout a sincere religious search. Moreover, he shows that doubt can also be used as an opportunity to enhance one's faith.

His own life has always been guided by Christian values, teachings, and support. From his upbringing in a small Christian community in Georgia, he felt that religion gave his life a profound meaning. Jesus and God provided a sense of stability even when times were tough.

However, when his father died at the fairly young age of 59, Carter experienced a period of doubt and questioning. He couldn't understand why God would take his father from him so early on. However, rather than allowing the event to erase his faith, he began to search for answers even more avidly than before.

His search eventually led him to study the ideas of theologians, such as Reinhold Niebuhr. Theology encouraged him to develop a more open-minded approach to his faith. This was very much in line with his original Baptist denomination which doesn't reinforce a supreme religious authority over the faithful.

Carter's story of religious doubt, search and enlargement of his faith seems to be a great illustration of Jesus' famous words:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Lesson 3: If you look closely, science and religion are two complementary ways of exploration.

Before he became president, Jimmy Carter worked as a nuclear scientist for the US government. His technical education combined with devout religious faith gave him a distinct voice to speak about the relationship between religion and science.

In *Faith*, his stance is that the two are complementary to one another. One doesn't have to choose between having faith in either religion *or* science. Each serves a purpose in describing the human experience. They just cover different areas of it.

Carter explains that the purpose of science is to investigate the phenomena that can be grasped and understood. Its mission is to make the universe more knowable and to use this knowledge to improve upon our collective experience.

However, there are also aspects of human life that aren't observable by the scientific method. This is where religion serves us well. It allows us to acknowledge the indescribable.

There are also areas in which religion and science can collaborate to make our lives better. As science helps us grasp the principles of evolution, we can imagine and intentionally plan for the future of humankind. In order to fulfill this future, religion-derived values can be very helpful.

The same rules that prevent us from killing, stealing, lying and other hurtful behaviors, empower us to create a better tomorrow.

Faith Review

Faith is a personal account of a long life of serving society through diligent execution of Christian values. The numerous examples from Carter's own life and the US society clearly show how faith, in all its facets, can be a helpful drive in human life. My most important takeaway is that faith is not a primarily institutional matter. Instead, it's an individual quality that you can cultivate with passion and intention. Just like Jimmy Carter did.

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Who would I recommend the Faith summary to?

The 40-year-old atheist who recognizes the need to explore the spiritual aspect of his life, the 30-year-old human rights activist who likes to ponder on the philosophical aspect of her actions, and any religious believer who wants to explore the role of faith in their life.