

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Carswell, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Degrees of Faith

By Derek Long

Faith is essential to pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6). As a result, the Bible has much to say about the subject of faith. One of the things the Bible teaches regarding faith is it is something there are different degrees or types of. All faith is not of the same variety as we can see from a study of the verses in the Bible which speak about faith.

The Bible will speak about people who have "no faith." Deuteronomy 32:20 speaks prophetically of how the children of Israel would eventually act. The nation would reach a point where it would be viewed as, "children in whom is no faith." Our world contains people who have no faith. Atheists would certainly fit into a category of people possessing no faith. Religiously ignorant people would fall into the category of people possessing no faith. If faith is essential to pleasing God, we certainly do not want to be in the category of people who have no faith. Jesus points out His own disciples can reach a point of having "no faith" (Mark 4:40). In other texts, Jesus would call the disciples faith on this occasion, "little faith" (Matthew 8:26). "Little faith" and "no faith" are often closely related in the eyes of God obviously. Is our faith so little Jesus might

would speak of us as having “no faith”? Perhaps it is possible for a person to possess “little faith” and “no faith” because one has faith in certain situations but lacks faith in other situations. The disciples may have had faith in Jesus typically but on this occasion they did not have faith. Is our faith like their’s at times?

Jesus, as we have already seen, would at times people of those who have “little faith.” “Little faith” is a problem the disciples of Jesus possessed at times. In Matthew 16:8 Jesus rebukes the disciples little faith because they are worried about not taking bread after they had witnessed miracles demonstrating Jesus’ power to provide bread for large multitudes of people. In Matthew 14:29-30 Peter went out the boat, walked on the sea toward Jesus, saw the wind, became afraid, and began to sink. Jesus will speak of Peter’s faith at this point as “little faith” (Matthew 14:31, NKJV). Peter perhaps had more faith than the other disciples in that he was willing to get out of the boat and begin walking toward Jesus. Peter’s faith was not sufficient though. When we, like Peter, take our eyes off of Jesus our faith lessens and it can become “little faith.” Jesus explains why it is people worry. He speaks of those who worry as having “little faith” (Matthew 6:30; Luke 12:28). Is our faith in God “little”?

One of the great things the Bible teaches us about faith is our faith can grow. It does not have to remain little. The disciples made the following statement, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5, NKJV). Faith is something which can be increased. It was said of the Thessalonians, “your faith grows exceedingly” (2 Thessalonians 1:3, NKJV). Is our faith increasing and growing exceedingly? A person might wonder how to increase their

faith or cause their faith to grow exceedingly. Romans 10:17 supplies the answer by saying, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (NKJV). We increase our faith by hearing the word of God. Are we spending time listening to the word of God so our faith will increase and grow as it ought?

In contrast to a “little faith” Jesus would speak of some who had “great faith.” The centurion whose servant was sick and ready to die had great faith. In fact, Jesus would say of his faith, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” (Matthew 8:10 [NKJV]; Luke 7:9). Jesus would say of the woman of Canaan’s faith, “O woman, great is your faith!” (Matthew 15:28, NKJV). One of the things which impresses me about these two examples of what Jesus calls “great faith” is they come from what many might think are unlikely sources. Most people would not expect to find great faith in a centurion or Canaanite woman. Yet these are the people Jesus speaks of as having great faith. Here are people who trusted in Jesus power to do something in situations which might have appeared to be hopeless. Here are people who recognized the great power and authority Jesus possessed. The book of Acts may not use the phrase “great faith” but will use a similar phrase in speaking of those who are “full of faith” (Acts 6:5, 8; 11:24). Let us seek to be people of “great faith” or “full of faith”! Let it be possible for someone to speak of us as abounding in faith (2 Corinthians 8:7).