

"CONVICTION OF THE TRUTH"

Faith is the "conviction of the truth of anything, belief.." Faith toward God includes "trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it." Finally, it is a "conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ.." (All quotations taken from the New Strongs Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Sec. 4102 - Greek; Excerpts from Vine's Expository Dictionary).

This introduction to the discussion of "Faith Toward God" is explanatory only, not the work of a scholar. It is simply an attempt to understand the nature of faith and the things God expects us to believe about Him. Two Scriptures can help us to grasp more of that understanding:

(1): "No one has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) This means that faith is the only way we can know God because our inability to see Him eliminates visible proof that He exists. Although we see His creation, no one has ever seen Him.

(2): "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He (exists) and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Even though we are unable to see God, He still demands that we believe in His existence because He does not have kind words for those who refuse to do so, but God also insists that we believe Him to be a rewarder of all who seek Him diligently, with persistence.

One of the first men of the Bible to learn that God is a rewarder of great magnitude was Abram (Abraham). In Genesis 15:1, God revealed Himself to Abram (in a vision) as Abram's shield and great reward. God also promised Abram a son that would be the beginning of many promised descendants. At that point, it is recorded that Abram..."believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Imputed righteousness by faith would become a major theme of the Bible from that time to the present, both before and after Christ.

After God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Genesis 17:5), the child of promise (Isaac) was born: "Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was still a young boy by ordering Abraham to take Isaac to a distant mountain to slay him as a sacrifice.

Abraham obeyed God completely in every detail - all the way to raising his knife to slay his son, his beloved son of promise. At that time, the angel of the

Lord stopped Abraham from slaying his son and said: "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me" (Genesis 22:12).

This same incident is described in Hebrews 11:17-19 as follows: "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."

Abraham's obedience to God was the result of unflinching faith toward God and his faith was the result of persistent obedience to God. One augments the other. The same mutual augmentation is true in the present day. Faith and obedience to the demands of the gospel of Jesus Christ are just as important now as the faith and obedience displayed by Abraham then.



THINKING ABOUT IT:

1. When it comes to your faith, is it backed up with obedience to God?
2. Has God ever asked you to do something that perhaps didn't make sense? What was your response?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your trust in God (especially when you are being tested in an area?) He does have His ways to get at our true heart issues.