

BY FAITH

The Bible teaches that “without faith it is impossible to please Him [*God*]: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). Faith is a necessary component in God’s plan to save man and no man can be saved without it. Since faith is so important, we must study the subject meticulously in order that we can attain such faith as is pleasing to God. The inspired James states, “even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone...Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:17, 24). The Scripture plainly teaches that man is not saved by “faith only.” Therefore, in order for our faith to be pleasing to God, it must be accompanied by works of obedience, as is evidenced by the example of Abraham recorded in James 2:18-23.

Hebrews chapter 11 is many times referred to as the “Faith Hall of Fame.” God has both the ability and desire to reveal His message to man. Therefore it makes complete sense that God explains what it was that pleased Him about the faith of those named in Hebrews 11.

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- “Abel *offered* unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (11:4).
- “Noah...*moved* with fear, *prepared* an ark to the saving of his house” (11:7).
- “Abraham...*obeyed*; and he *went out*, not knowing whither he went...he *sojourned* in the land of promise...For he *looked* for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:8-10).
- “Abraham, when he was tried, *offered up* Isaac” (11:17).
- “Isaac *blessed* Jacob and Esau” (11:20).
- “Jacob, when he was a dying, *blessed* both the sons of Joseph; and *worshipped*” (11:21).
- “Moses...*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; *Choosing rather to suffer* affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; *Esteeming the reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he *had respect* unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he *forsook* Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he *endured*, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he *kept* the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
- “They [*Israel*] *passed* through the Red Sea as by dry land” (11:29).

It is more than obvious that the one attribute that made the faith of these individuals pleasing to God was that they all acted in obedience. I highlighted the action verbs in each verse above to emphasize this fact. Had these individuals had faith without works of obedience, their faith would have been dead (Jam. 2:17) and thus not pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6). Likewise, if any today desire to have faith that is pleasing to God, (i.e. the faith that will save), one must obey God’s commands.

Today, there is only one way that man can get faith. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). That faith must lead to acts of obedience as is established by the record of Hebrews 11. One will obey God’s command to repent of past sins

(Luke 13:3, 5). One will obey God's command to confess that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). One will obey God's command to be baptized (immersed) in water in order to have his sins washed away by the blood of the Lamb of God (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rev. 1:5). After one obeys these initial acts, God adds that individual to His Church (Acts 2:47). From that time forward, God requires continued service and obedience (1 John 1:6-9). If this describes your faith, you can know that you are pleasing God. If your faith cannot be defined in this Scriptural manner, please take the appropriate steps needed so that you may one day hear, "Well done, thou good and **faithful servant**" (Mat. 25:21, emphasis B.G.).

- Brad Green