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Faith that Pleases God

—Three qualities of true faith

The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible also shows us that not just any faith will do. We cannot expect God to be pleased with a faith just because we approve of it. The faith that pleases God is a belief that comes from God, not from some other source or from within ourselves.

So what is the faith that pleases God? What is the belief that God teaches us to have? In this lesson we look at three characteristics.

1 *Must be Faith in Christ*

There is a popular idea that you need a genuine and enthusiastic faith of some kind, but it doesn't really matter what you believe. It could be a belief in yourself, or your guardian angel, or the spirits of your ancestors, or in the earth Mother, or in a god, or in some Great Teacher. God teaches us however, that only faith in his Son Jesus Christ will be pleasing to him.

- Essential for all people to have faith in Christ (John 14:6 3:16)
- John the Baptist said the same even before the cross (John 3:36)
- Even much further back, Abraham had this faith (Romans 4:3, Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:8)

2 *Must be an Obedient Faith*

Another popular idea is that faith stands alone and is not complemented by anything, certainly not by anything we do. It is a belief without works, and cannot be perfected by works. Is this true? No it is not.

The Bible certainly teaches that works on their own, without belief, are useless. Paul especially makes this clear. However this does not mean that works are out of the question, because the Bible also certainly teaches that belief on its own, without works, is equally useless. James especially makes this clear. So we need to know that neither works alone nor belief alone will please God.

- Faith without works is dead (James 2:20).
- The example of Abraham. Faith perfected by works (James 2:21-24, Genesis 22:16-18).
- The first acts of faith (Acts 2:38, Romans 10:10).

3 *Must be a Faith that Passes the Test*

One more popular idea is that faith makes all troubles go away, and if you have troubles then this shows a lack of belief on your part. This was not true for Job. His troubles came because he had faith rather than because he lacked it. The same was true of Paul the apostle.

Disciples of Christ may find their belief tested by troubles. This is not a time to question your belief, but rather a time to lean on it. A faith that endures through trials is pleasing to God.

- Faith in temptations and trials (James 1:2-3).
- Not tempted beyond our endurance (1Corinthians 10:12-13).
- The encouragement that faces reality (Acts 14:22).
- Closing reading (1Peter 5:6-11).

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