

## GROUP QUESTIONS

April 25, 2010

*God's Answers in Romans: Why faith and not works* Romans 4:2-5, 13-16; John 6:28-29

1. Please read Romans 3:21-5:2. While you read, see if you can identify how the word "law" is used to refer to 4 different concepts.

2. Was there anything in the sermon that concerned you, helped you or confused you? What challenge to your faith are you currently facing?

3. Discuss some of the different definitions people use for the words "faith" and "believe" in the following phrases or statements:

- I only believe in what I have seen with my own two eyes.
- You can't know. You just have to have faith.
- Take a chance. Take a leap of faith.
- It's not important what you have faith in. It's just important that you have faith.

4. How do you feel about the following statement?

Within the context of the New Testament, true faith always includes the following:

- A. CONVICTION regarding who Jesus is and what he has done, the Person and work of Christ.
- B. CONFIDENCE in him as your Savior; reliance upon what he has done; trusting him
- C. COMMITMENT to him as Lord, God, King, Master; restored relationship.
- D. CHANGE flowing from the inside to the outside; transformation.

5. To assure us that our faith is real New Testament faith, the Bible tells us what some of the characteristics of true believers are. Read the following sets of verses from 1 John and summarize the characteristic each set describes: what discuss how each set helps us to understand something that is true of all believers.

Set A: 1 John 1:6-7; 2:3-6; 2:29; 3:3; 3:6-10; 3:24; 5:2-3, 18-- summary: \_\_\_\_\_

Set B: 1 John 2:9-10; 3:14-15; 4:7-8, 12; 4:16, 20;-- \_\_\_\_\_

Set C: 1 John 3:24; 4:13; 5:10-- \_\_\_\_\_

Set D: 1 John 2:22-24; 4:14-15; 5:1, 5, 10, 13-- \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it important to be certain about whether or not you have true faith as described in the New Testament?

6. "...the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring..." (Rom 4:16)

Since the work of Christ is applied to us if we have faith, how can a system based on faith guarantee that anyone will be saved? (Rom 12:3-4)

7. Why is it important to understand that our salvation is all provided by God from first to last? What practical impact should that have on our lives?

8. Discuss what types of things tend to indicate to you that you are "forgetting" the gospel and its implications at that moment. (in your family relationships, work relationships, comparison of yourself to others, worry, compensating behaviors, self-medicating, anger, etc.)

9. How can we pray for you?

John 6:28-29

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Eph 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Is it possible to believe what's right **about** God without being right **with** God?

There are two systems:

1. SELF-SALVATION through WORKS.
2. RELYING on a CHAMPION, Jesus, as our SUBSTITUTE.

It's not about trying. It's about trusting.

Supplemental materials:

## FAITH

pistis NT:4102, primarily, "firm persuasion," a conviction based upon hearing...

The main elements in "faith" in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from "faith" in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb, pisteuo; they are (1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth, e. g., 2 Thess 2:11-12; (2) a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12; (3) a conduct inspired by such surrender, 2 Cor 5:7. Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context. All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good "faith" without necessary reference to its proof. The object of Abraham's "faith" was not God's promise (that was the occasion of its exercise); his "faith" rested on God Himself, Rom 4:17,20-21. --Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

## BELIEF, BELIEVE, BELIEVERS

1. pisteuo: "to believe," also "to be persuaded of," and hence, "to place confidence in, to trust," signifies, in this sense of the word, reliance upon, not mere credence. It is most frequent in the writings of the apostle John, especially the Gospel. He does not use the noun (see below). For the Lord's first use of the verb, see 1:50. Of the writers of the Gospels, Matthew uses the verb ten times, Mark ten, Luke nine, John ninety-nine. --Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

The distinction between matters of faith and matters of knowledge must not be drawn too rigidly, inasmuch as all matters of knowledge are in some measure matters also of faith. The distinction, when properly made, chiefly recognizes the different objects to which our convictions relate, and the different methods by which we arrive at these convictions. The convictions themselves may be as strong in the one case as in the other.--The New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Faith is not saving faith unless it includes repentance. --E. McChesney

...the chief element of N.T. faith as unconditional trust.--McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia

To place one's trust in God's truth; one who takes God at His word and trusts in Him for salvation.

Mere assent to God's truth is not saving faith, according to the Bible (John 8:31-46; Acts 8:13-24; James 2:14-26). Neither is total commitment of oneself to Jesus as Lord a form of saving faith. Such a view places too much emphasis on the act of belief, as opposed to the object of belief-Jesus Christ. This view also goes beyond the biblical evidence of faith as reception of a gift (John 4:1-42; Eph 2:8-10).

A belief that saves is one that rests in the finished work of Christ; it trusts God alone for salvation (John 3:16). Believers are those who have trusted God with their will as well as their mind (Rom 1:16; 3:22; 1 Thess 1:7).

Some of the classic New Testament references dealing with belief, or faith, are John 3:16,36; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:21-5:1; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10; and 1 John 5:1.--Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

One can have faith with or without direct perception or experience with some area:

John 11:45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

John 4:42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

John 8:31-32

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:45-47

45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Rom 1:16

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes

Rom 3:22

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

John 3:36

36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Acts 16:31

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household."

Gal 2:15-16

know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 13:5-6

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?