

Great Faith

What is faith? The Biblical Definition Hebrews 11:1 (Amp) *Now faith is the **assurance** (the confirmation) of the things we hope for, being the **proof** of things we do not see and the **conviction** of their reality [perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the physical senses].* Hebrews 11:6 says without faith it is impossible to please God. We want to please God.

According to Romans 12:3 we are all given a (the) measure of faith at salvation. Can Christians have different measure of faith as they walk with the Lord?

Are there degrees of faith?

Four times in Mathews Jesus rebuked His disciples because of their little faith.

Matt 6:25-34 He was talking about having faith of God's provision for tomorrow. He said **worrying** about that (not trusting Jehovah Jirah) was an expression of little faith.

Matt 8:23-26 The disciples were afraid of the storm and Jesus said their **fear** was an expression of little faith.

Matt 14:28-31 Peter doubted Jesus' Word "Come" and Jesus said his **doubting** was an expression of little faith.

Matt 16:5-12 When the disciples were reasoning among themselves because of their lack of bread Jesus said, knowing He had multiplied loaves on the past, their **reasoning about their lack** was an expression of little faith.

So we see the Bible gives us examples of little faith. If there is little faith is there great faith? If so, how can we have it?

Increase our faith

Luke 17:1-6 Jesus is teaching about forgiveness and the disciples found it necessary to ask Jesus to increase their faith so they could forgive as He taught. What was Jesus answer? You don't need MORE faith! You need to **use the faith you have**.

What interferes with faith?

Is it fair to say another word for faith is believing?

Mark 5:21-23 You can see Jairus believed (had faith – assurance of what he hoped for) if Jesus would touch his daughter she would be healed. There seems to be no doubt here. But by the time vs 35 comes around (after the delay of healing the woman with the issue of blood) he received a bad report – his daughter is dead.

Notice vs 36. Before Jairus could say a thing Jesus looked to him and said "Don't be afraid, only believe". What did Jairus say? He just heard his beloved daughter had died! What did he say? Nothing!!! Jairus had faith to start and Jesus was warning him not to allow fear from a negative report to interfere with his faith. **Faith mixed with fear is ineffective!**

Four times Jesus tells a person to receive what they requested **according to their faith**
Matt 9:22 (also Mark 5:34), Matt 9:29, Matt 15:28, Mark 10:52

Matt 17:20 What stopped the disciples from casting out the demon? Their unbelief. If a tiny mustard seed of faith works what can stop it? Unbelief!!

So we see fear and unbelief can interfere with faith.

Examples of Great Faith

There are only two examples in the Bible where Jesus identified Great Faith in a person. Let's examine these examples and learn what it is to have Great Faith.

Matt 8:5-10 (also Luke 7:9) Here we have a Roman centurion (a man who leads many soldiers) coming to Jesus to ask for healing for his servant. Romans were over Jews at this time. For a leader of the Roman army to come to a Jewish "teacher" was unusual. He understood that all Jesus had to do was *say the word* and his servant would be healed.

What characteristics do you think this man displayed? Humility, submission, faithfulness, love for his servant

Matt 15:21-28 A woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon, from the land of Canaan, not a Jew, came to Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. She persisted in trying to get Jesus' attention but He ignored her. Why? Because He said He came to minister to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not to any other people group. When she heard this, what was her reaction? Was she offended? Did she give up? No, she chose to worship Him. It was only after she worshiped Him and cried out that He responded to her. And what did He say? He called her a little dog (this phrase means a puppy in the Greek)! Listen to her response. Did she take offense at being called a little dog? No, she said "truth", agreeing that while she was not a Jew she would be content to take a crumb that falls off the table. Jesus acknowledged her great faith and her daughter was healed.

What characteristics do you think this woman displayed? Humility, persistence

Conclusion

Go back to the definition of Faith. Faith is being FULLY CONVINCED what we hope for from God's Word WILL come to pass.

The prayer of faith begins where the will of God is known. The Centurion KNEW if Jesus gave the word what He said would come to pass. Believing His Word, without wavering, is an expression of great faith. The Canaanite woman knew she did not deserve to make a request from Jesus yet she believed if she could get Jesus to respond to her request what He said would come to pass.

I want to encourage you to find what God's Word has to say about your situation, humble yourself before Him and only believe.