

The Nature of Faith

Heb 11:1-2 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. NKJV

1. Faith is a vital connection with the ultimate Source of reality. Doubt isn't the *opposite* of faith; it is an *element* of faith.
2. Faith is the flowing attitudes that takes us from where we are to where we want to go.
 - a. From this perspective, we can say that faith contains a *vivifying power*, something that could be called the *exhilaration of uncertainty*.
 - b. Faith carries us on where we have no proofs or ultimate conclusions. Faith is the spiritual power that embraces mystery.
 - c. Faith is an essential element in our relationship with God.
3. Faith is a mental attitude, so inwardly embodied that our mind can no longer deny it.
 - a. But sometimes the mind does deny it. Our faith can be shaken.
 - b. This, however, is part of faith's nature; it ebbs and flows like tides.
4. Faith is "build-able." It is possible to do things that generate faith.
5. Can we also think of faith as settled knowledge or belief? Many tend to view "faith" and "belief" as synonymous. When faith is converted to a religious system and set of doctrines we talk about "our faith" or "belief."
 - a. What we must be careful of is subtly losing the exhilaration of uncertainty that brings creativity and vitality in our exercise of faith.
 - b. When that happens our belief systems have robbed us of genuine faith.

- c. When we no longer ask questions, faith becomes essentially dead.
 - d. Science, or religious doctrines for that matter, may serve as intellectual companions of faith, but they can never replace faith.
 - e. It is faith that wants more than knowledge or beliefs, it wants God.
6. Here is the problem of faith. The very quality that gives it creativity and vitality is the most difficult to maintain. Why is it so hard to hold onto that hungering desire for spiritual awareness?
- a. Perhaps it is because *reason always wants to overpower mystery.*
 - b. Since the Mystery will not yield to reason, then the energies of reason draw us away from the mysteries of faith.
 - c. As we flow in the energies of faith, we discover it is we who must align ourselves with the mystery of God.
 - d. The river of faith is a way of surrender, of dying to ourselves.
7. *Arrival at "certainty" opens the door to a greater uncertainty.* So it is in the life of faith.
- a. There is no magical place of arriving in our Christian life. Faith is a forever relationship moving into the future with God.
 - b. Truly following God requires renewing faith in our own mysteries, going beyond who we thought we were.
8. Anytime we seek to close the gap between "things hoped for" and "things not seen," faith has entered the picture.
- a. The spiritually healthy person is the one who is seeking.
 - b. To live in faith is to embrace the mystery.
9. It is the nature of faith to quest and explore. *When the mind seeks satisfaction, it is faith that fires the heart.*