

Where Does Faith Come From?

Faith is one of the most misused words in the English language. Or maybe I should call it one of the most abused words. Faith is an incredible thing, but far too many of us make faith whatever we want it to be. We give faith our own definition and assume everyone is just fine with that.

But what makes faith faith?

Many often refer to faith as their religious practices—*I practice the Mormon faith*—or a religious group they belong to—*I'm of the Hindu faith*. Others see faith as a set of tenets they hold to. *I believe the Christian faith*.

Our faith should be seen in what we practice and do. Faith should draw us into a group of like-minded believers. Faith should be grounded in what we believe, but all those fall woefully short of what the Bible calls faith.

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith in this way: “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”

Don't read “hope” in that passage as we often use hope. *“I hope my team makes the playoffs.”* We often use hope as what we really, really want to see happen. We've relegated faith into just wishful thinking. Even worse, some will mix in New Age theology, thinking if they believe hard enough, what they hope for will happen.

That's baloney. That's placing faith in your ability to believe. We need to place our faith in something a whole lot more solid and reliable.

But what is that belief and hope grounded in? Faith—our belief and hope are to be grounded in God's Word. Faith is our response which takes God at His word and acts upon it.

Hebrews 11 gives us several examples. Read through the men and women listed there, and

while each situation is unique, they shared one thing in common: they took God at His word and trusted Him. In Hebrews 11 you see those who conquered kingdoms by faith in God or displayed God's power in some incredible way. You read of others who died by the sword; some were cut in half, and others were grossly mistreated. They all took God at His word and trusted Him. No matter what they experienced—great victory or horrible death—they took God at His word and trusted Him.

This gets me back to my original question: where does faith come from? It comes as we read/hear God's Word. “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

As we move into 2024, I pray that you grow in your faith. Growth in faith will happen as you read God's Word. Make it your goal to read God's Word this year. But don't just read it. Respond to it. Take God at His Word and act upon what His Word says.

In Luke 5, Simon Peter and others allowed Jesus to preach from their boat. Meanwhile, they mended their nets. They heard truth coming from Jesus's mouth, and a faith in Him began to stir. When Jesus told them to set out for deep water to fish, the directive sounded odd to these men who just spend a fruitless night fishing. But they had already heard Jesus teaching, believed what they heard, and therefore, they were willing to trust Him in this command. That's faith. They took Jesus at His Word and acted on it. Jesus blessed their obedience with abundance.

I can't promise you that kind of abundance if you embrace God's Word and act upon it. But I can promise you an abundant life. As Jesus said, “I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance” (John 10:10).

That kind of abundance and faith begins when you open God's Word.