

Faith and Works

b y D e r e k P r i n c e

FAITH AND WORKS

As we continue laying a biblical foundation to our Christian life, we expand our study of faith into one of the most vital themes of the New Testament—Faith and Works. It is a theme to which Paul devoted an entire epistle—the epistle to the Galatians. Paul emphasized that a proper understanding of this topic was absolutely critical for their spiritual survival; and I believe it is no less serious for us today.

“Faith toward God” is the second in the list of Christian foundational doctrines enumerated in Hebrews 6:1–6:

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. The doctrine of baptisms (plural)
4. The laying on of hands
5. Resurrection of the dead
6. Eternal judgment

In our previous study, *Through Repentance to Faith*, we considered certain biblical aspects of true faith.

First, repentance must precede true faith. Repentance is a change of mind followed by a change in our actions

or the direction of our lives. It is basically a change from trusting in ourselves and acknowledging the lordship of Jesus Christ over our lives.

Second, we considered four aspects of true faith.

1. *Faith relates to the unseen.* The Scripture tells us, “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:6). If we can see, we don’t need faith. Therefore faith is always tied to the unseen realm.

2. *Faith is primarily character.* Faith is not a matter of proper doctrine or emotional fervor. Faith comes from the heart and it is a matter of continuing on, or being “faithful” to believe the words of Jesus.

3. *Faith brings confession.* True faith will lead us to speak with our mouths that which we believe to be true. Jesus, as the High Priest of our confession, will only function as our High Priest in that which we confess.

4. *Faith will be tested.* Faith that is not tested is of no value to God. We should approach the testing of our faith with joy—not with dread. Why? Because God is working something of great value in us—the gold of true faith.

Turning to our topic of faith and works we first see these are two simple words that are used very commonly in the New Testament. Yet it is truly amazing how many of God’s people do not have a clear understanding of the relationship between faith and works.

By *faith* we mean simply “that which we believe.” By *works* we mean simply “that which we do.” This study will primarily deal with the correct relationship between what we believe and what we do.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Many of us use the phrase “the gospel” as if we knew clearly what we were talking about. In fact, though people