

- **“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1)** A few verses later, we learn that, **“without faith it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb. 11:6)** Its pretty obvious that faith is important. It would be more accurate to say that faith is of the utmost importance because the Hebrew writer tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. More evidence for the importance of faith can be found in **Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** and **Ephesians 2:8, “for by grace you have been saved through faith.”** I certainly want to please God and be justified in His sight and I’m sure you do as well, so we must understand that faith is absolutely necessary.
- That sounds all well and good, but why is it that we have so much division over the issue of faith? I’ll suggest that we have such a divide in the religious world on the issue of faith because we can’t come to an agreement on what acceptable faith before God is. Some would say that just acknowledging God is an acceptable amount of faith. Others would disagree and say that you need to say a prayer on top of that and have a spiritual/emotional experience. Some other people would say that you just need to do the right type of things so you can mark them off your check list as a “faithful” person. So what exactly does God expect of us? Is it just one of these things, some combination of them, or is it all of them combined?
- These are vitally important questions that deserve an answer, so let’s spend our time studying this idea of an acceptable faith. We’ll refer to it as a “Saving Faith” because, after all, we want to be pleasing before God so He will save us from the wrath of hell. We will study this idea of a “Saving Faith” from the text of **James 2:14-26**. Please open your Bibles here and let’s consider 3 aspects of this saving faith that the text provides for us.

### **3 Aspects of Saving Faith**

#### **I. Intellect**

- A. The beginning point of having faith is to establish the knowledge of God.
  - 1. **“So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)**
  - 2. Jesus taught that those heard and were taught of God could come to faith in Him. **(John 6:44,45)**
  - 3. The natural world teaches us that there is a Higher Being and we have no excuses for not knowing of and acknowledging God. **(Romans 1:20)**
- B. Is simply having a knowledge of God enough to save a person?
  - 1. James asks if faith (Knowledge and belief in God) alone could save a person. **(v.14)**
  - 2. Paul says that the knowledge of God was not enough to save the Gentiles. **(Romans 1:21)**
  - 3. King Agrippa was taught the Gospel by the Apostle Paul, but that did not make him a Christian. **(Acts 16:28)**

#### **II. Emotion**

- A. A knowledge of God should lead us to a emotional response.
  - 1. The emotional responses can vary greatly.
    - a) Happiness (for the love of God)
    - b) Gratitude (gratitude for Jesus’ sacrifice)
    - c) Unworthiness (realization of sin in one’s life)
    - d) Sadness (for Jesus’ death because of the sin of man, our sin)
    - e) Fear (like the demons because we are not in a relationship with Him and spiritual death awaits us)
  - 2. Much of today’s religion is driven by emotions. (soothing music, dimmed lights, motivational talks, ext.)
  - 3. The charismatic movement has been successful because it touches people’s emotions.
  - 4. We must have faith based emotions and not an emotionally based faith!
- B. Emotional responses will not forgive sins.
  - 1. Emotions are temporary and can change over time.
  - 2. The demons believe in God and they shudder because they are scared. They recognize God’s power. **(v.19)**
  - 3. Many demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God and they were fearful, but that didn’t save them. **(Luke 8:28)**
  - 4. The demons have a stronger faith than many who profess themselves as people today because some don’t even have an emotional response to the knowledge of God.
  - 5. Paul was not pleased just by the sorrow of the Corinthians. **(II Cor. 7:8,9)**
  - 6. But still, knowledge of God and an emotional response does not justify a person before the Almighty God.

### III. Will

- A. Knowledge of God coupled with a logical emotional response should lead to an action of will.
  - 1. This is the point of **James 2:14ff**. How can you say that you have faith without having any emotion or action? Knowledge of God is only useful if there is the appropriate emotional response that leads to faithful action of will!
    - a) If we see a brother or sister in need, then we should feel compassion for them, and act on it! (**vv.15-17**)
    - b) The demons know God, they fear God, but they are rebellious against God!. (**vv.18-20**)
    - c) Abraham knew of God, feared and respected God, and because of that he was willing to offer his son up for God. (**vv.21-24**)
    - d) Rahab had heard of the God of Israel, she was scared of His power, and that led her to aid the spies of Joshua. (**vv.25,26; Joshua 2:1-16** **“I know that the Lord has given you the land....When we heard of it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” vv. 9,11**)
  - 2. Why is James emphasizing these points concerning knowledge, emotion, and will?
- B. We will only be saved by a faith that has all three of these aspects involved.
  - 1. We must know of God and His Son.
  - 2. We must fear and respect God and His Son.
  - 3. We must humbly obey Them in all that we do and not just be hearers, but doers of the Word of God. (**vv. 1:22-24**)
  - 4. We must strive to have our faith perfect and complete and lacking nothing. (**v.1:4**)

What about you this morning? Where is your faith? How far along is it? I'd guess that just about every competent person here knows that there is a God. We've been reading many words out of His book, today. You have seen the clarity of His will. There might even be some today that feel a respect for God. You love God, and you realize that He is to be served. However, you haven't brought your faith to full form because you haven't acted upon that knowledge and emotion. You know what you should do, but you might have some reasons for not acting. You might feel unworthy. We are unworthy, but God loved you enough to die for you anyways. You might recognize that you're going to have to give up some stuff for God. Some of the rulers of Jesus' day believe on Him, but they didn't act because they were scared of the Pharisees. Don't fear those who can only ridicule you! Fear God, who can condemn you to be with those fearful demons in eternal hell. God is worthy of our respect and obedience. Know Him. Fear Him. Obey Him, today through repentance, confession, and baptism. Make your faith whole and stand before God justified and pleasing in His sight.