

# What does it Mean to Have Faith?

What does it mean to put your faith in Jesus?

This question caused tension in my life as I was growing up. You see, I had many experiences with God through Bible studies and church groups that left me feeling very spiritual, but then months, even just weeks later, I was back to my old way of doing life. It seemed like my relationship with God depended more on my feelings and experiences rather than true faith.

True faith, what does that even mean? Was I suppose to blindly accept what I heard about God and the Bible from church and friends? Should I have a funny feeling in my stomach or be able to perform miracles? It was all very confusing.

Many people in my hometown claimed to have faith, but their lives looked very similar to those who didn't believe in God. Outside church attendance, nothing about their lives demonstrated the faith they claimed to have.

This caused me to investigate the question: what does it mean to have faith in Jesus? I believe the answer to this question can be summed up in three steps.

## THREE STEPS TO FAITH

1. **Hear** - The true message of who Jesus is must be told to us through something or someone (Romans 10:14).
2. **Believe** - To accept something as true with your mind (John 1:12).
3. **Trust** - To commit to something through your actions (Luke 9:23)

These three steps must all be present to experience true faith. Imagine a military general standing before 100 soldiers as he prepares them for battle. With a look of determination and grit, he stares over them and says, "Tonight, we will march together into battle! It will be tough, some of you will lose your life, but without victory we will never experience freedom!!!"

After finishing his speech, the 50 soldiers sitting at the front of the group cheered with excitement and passion while the 50 soldiers sitting in the back quietly stared at the grass beneath their boots. The soldiers were dismissed and told to return at 6 pm to march into battle.

That evening the General was shocked to see that only 25 soldiers had come prepared for battle. There was no option to turn back, so the General marched into war with the army that he had.

Let's use the soldiers in the hypothetical situation to help us diagnose true faith. After the General finished his inspiring speech, 50 of the soldiers sat quietly. Why? Because they were in the back of the group and couldn't hear the General. They didn't show up for the battle because they weren't aware a battle existed. Many will never experience an authentic faith in Jesus because they will never hear the truth about Jesus.

The 50 who heard the speech shouted with passion and excitement because they had intellectually agreed with the General's statements. They agreed that it was necessary to go into battle to win their freedom in their minds. Therefore, they heard, and they believed. Many people who claim to have faith are in a similar situation. They have heard the story of Jesus through their parents or a church group. They have been to Sunday school and know all the right answers. Not only that, they agree with what they have learned.

Yet, only 25 of the 50 soldiers who heard and believed showed up to march into battle. Why? Because only 25 of them trusted. It wasn't enough to hear and believe. True faith only comes to fruition when we have all three steps: hearing, believing, and trusting. The same is true when it comes to putting our faith in Jesus. To experience the fulfilling life that Jesus has to offer us, both here on earth and in heaven for eternity, we must have all three steps.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What do you think the difference is between believing and trusting?
- Which of the three steps have you taken in your life up to this point? (hearing — believing — trusting)
- Why do you think it is not enough to hear and believe?
- Based on the article you just read, do you think you have true faith?
- What would be a good next step in light of how you answer the questions above?