

What Faith Is

Last Sunday morning we examined a universal principle, the *Law of Expectations*, and ascertained that what we confidently expect becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This law or principle is very powerful as it works both in the positive and the negative. Hence, good expectations produce good results but bad expectations will produce bad results. Either way, your confident expectations will not disappoint you.

In our recent study we also identified that there's a direct correlation between "faith" and "expectancy." It became clear that "faith" and "expectancy" complement and complete each other through mutual reliance. That is, "faith" is dependent on "hope" (which is *a favourable and confident expectation*), and "hope" requires "faith" to give it substance.

Therefore, if "faith" brings into being what we *confidently expect*, then it's important that we know *what faith is*. With this in mind I felt it necessary to conclude our biblical exercise by providing an accurate *description* of "faith" so that we can apply it correctly to every positive expectation we have.

Hebrews 11:1 states, ***"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*** The Moffatt's translation says, ***"Faith means that we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see."*** The Message puts it like this, ***"Faith is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see."***

So what is faith? How do we apply faith? To find out we'll need to go back to **Hebrews 11:1** and extract as much knowledge as we can.

This verse is not a formal definition of faith; rather it is a description of what faith does for us. It makes things hoped for (confidently expected) as real as if we already had them. And faith also provides unshakeable evidence that the unseen, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus are absolutely certain and undeniable. In other words, it brings the future within the present and makes the invisible seen.

The bottom line with faith is; *"absolute confidence in the trustworthiness of God."* It is the total conviction that what God says is true and that what He has promised will come to pass. To operate correctly faith must first have some revelation from God, some covenant promise of God as its foundation. It is not a leap in the dark. Faith demands the surest evidence in the universe, and it finds it in the infallible word of God.

Faith is not limited to possibilities, but it invades the realm of the impossible. Someone once said, *"Faith begins where possibilities end."* If it's possible through human endeavour there's no glory for God in it! George Muller said, *"Impossibilities are food for faith to feed on."*

Last week the principle was made clear to us, that is, *"faith makes every favourable and confident expectation a reality."* But note although faith has the power to 'make real' every favourable expectation, this is not what faith is. Faith is ***"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."***

The Greek word translated **"substance"** literally means *"the real nature of that to which reference is made."* That is, *"it's very essence."* In this verse reference is being made to ***"things hoped for"***, or *"favourable things confidently expected."* So, faith is the real nature (the very essence) of favourable things confidently expected. Quite simply, faith's divine nature is what your confident expectations are really made of - their true substance!

Let's quickly review what we have discovered so far:

1. Faith is absolute confidence in the trustworthiness of God and total conviction that what God says is true and that what He has promised will come to pass.
2. Faith is the real nature (the very essence) of favourable things confidently expected.
3. Faith is not limited to possibilities as it invades the the realm of the impossible.

4. Faith demands the surest evidence in the universe, and it finds it in the infallible word of God.
5. Faith is founded on some revelation from God and some covenant promise of God.
6. Faith makes every favourable and confident expectation a reality.
7. Faith provides unshakeable evidence that the unseen, spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus are absolutely certain, accessible and undeniable.

Faith starts with God and ends with God! No one else has the means by which to invade the realm of the impossible. Therefore, faith (like God Himself) has limitless possibilities. It's through the eyes of faith the unseen becomes visible! Therefore, you must first gaze at the invisible in order for the impossible to become a reality.

“Faith is (present tense) **the substance of things hoped for** (past tense), **the evidence** (natural) **of things not seen** (spiritual).” Therefore, faith brings past expectations concerning the future into the present, and it makes visible the invisible blessings of God. Faith operates in every timeframe and all dimensions - past, present and future; natural and spiritual. Faith is not limited to possibilities; it is not hindered by the past; it is not fearful of the future; and it is not defined by what is seen. Faith is truly miraculous!

Looking back at some of the qualities *faith* possesses, we can see that, *“Total confidence in the trustworthiness of God is the very essence of things confidently expected, and this provides unshakeable evidence that the unseen blessings of God are absolutely certain and real.”*