

DO YOU BELIEVE?

John 16:31

Introduction: Jesus asked the question "Do you believe? Many are quick to say "yes" but in reality have no idea what they "believe" or what the meaning of that word is. Everybody "believes" in something at sometime or other. But what exactly does that word "believe" mean in regards to "faith?" Is there a difference between "belief" and "faith?" Let's consider Jesus' question "Do you believe?" and see what is connected with "belief."

I. NOT ALL BELIEF HAS FAITH

1. Many think that they "believe" when they are totally destitute of genuine, real faith.
 - The nature of faith is understood very little.
 - Many people agree that the Gospel is real, it is true, thus a "belief" yet do not accept it as a principle/guide for living one's life led by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - *Philippians 1:29*
 - Sadly, countless people think themselves to be "believers" when they agree that they need to correct some of the things in their lives but have no idea whatsoever that they need to have instruction in regard to their "faith."
 - Jesus encountered such views when He met Jews who trusted Moses, believed his writings, but rejected Jesus, therefore they didn't really believe the writings of Moses for he foretold of Jesus.
2. There are those who have some "faith" but are much more under the influence of unbelief.
 - The unsaved have no faith whatsoever although they may agree to many biblical truths, they don't feel any need to make changes or experience any influence of those truths.
 - Many forget or are not even aware that when they are saved and faith is installed in their soul, unbelief is not totally erased.
 - *Galatians 5:17*
 - The disciples are examples of how the two natures of the saved battle with each other and there is conflict within a saved person. Paul had much to say about that, too.
3. Heavy trials will uncover/discover the real state of one's soul in respect to his/her faith.
 - Affliction, trials, difficulties will try one's "faith."
 - If one's faith is strong, he/she will stand up before God but if his/her faith be weak, then he/she will be faint at the approach of any trial or danger.
 - *Matthew 14:30-31*
 - If one's faith is false, then as soon as storms, difficulties and temptations come which may be of spiritual nature, then he/she will run from God and reject God's grace.
 - *Genesis 3:8*
 - If one's faith be not increased in proportion to his/her trials, then he/she will surely faint in that time of trial.
 - *2 Corinthians 13:5* - Examine YOUR faith and see if you are really in the faith or not.

II. HOW TO EXAMINE ONE'S FAITH

1. Examine the reality of your faith.
 - Where did you get your faith?
 - Real faith is not part of one's natural human make up.
 - Real faith is not a lesson taught in a class room.
 - Real faith comes from acknowledging one's lost, unbelieving condition before God and asking Him to save and to impart a living faith in the heart by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - If a person has never been convinced of his/her unbelief that that person has no real faith.
 - ***John 16:8-9***
 - Genuine faith will overcome the world and work by love and purify the heart.
 - ***1 John 5:4***
 - Not everyone has real faith.
 - ***2 Thessalonians 3:2***
 - Genuine, real faith produces fruit.
2. There are degrees of faith.
 - Keeping one's eyes on God and keeping Heaven in view, how one maintains his/her hope under discouraging circumstances determines the degree of faith one has.
 - Abraham's faith was marked by keeping his eyes and heart upon God.
 - ***Romans 4:18-20***
 - Does one stay sturdy, dependable, diligent in the way of duty under difficulties?
 - The more faith one has, the greater will be one's activity in every good work.
 - ***1 Thessalonians 1:3***

CONCLUSION:

1. Trials, difficulties and hardships will come upon every person sooner or later and nothing but real faith will support and get one through.
 - ***1 Peter 1:5-7***
2. One's progress in hardships will be in exact proportion to his/her faith.
3. Let us all pray along with the apostles: ***"...Lord, increase our faith that through it we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand..."***
4. As YOUR faith is, so it will be unto you.