

EXCURSES: FAITH AND TRUST AND FALSE FAITH

- This is the 3rd aspect of faith on page 122-123 in our notes.
- Often times referred to as *The Volitional Element* of faith. It is the aspect of faith that **trusts** the Lord Jesus with their life.
 - There is no more reliance on ourselves for our salvation and we trust the Jesus is going to take us home.
- In Scripture, *faith* is defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” ([Hebrews 11:1](#)). In other words, faith involves trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove. Faith is inseparable from trust; it’s the confidence that God can and will do what He says in His Word. Faith includes both intellectual assent to something and trust in it. So we believe something to be true, and we also place our trust in it—we rely on it. Faith recognizes that a chair is designed to support the person who sits on it, and trust demonstrates the faith by actually sitting in the chair.¹
- Faith without trust is not faith. Belief without reliance is empty. Many people believe certain facts about Jesus Christ, but knowing those facts to be true is not what the Bible means by “faith.” The biblical definition of faith requires trust in—a commitment to—the facts.²
- An example of the relationship between faith and trust is a trust-fall. You have faith that your friends will catch you even though your back is turned to them. You believe they will not let you hit the ground. The act of falling—as the name of the exercise implies—is trust. You demonstrate the faith you have in your friends. Trust in God is a core aspect of biblical faith.³
- **Trust in Christ:** “This is the heart of faith. Although ‘trusting in Christ’ is not a predominant expression in the New Testament, these words certainly focus attention on a central feature in biblical teaching. It was because this element was lacking in the ‘faith’ of those who believed in Jesus only because of his mighty works, that he declined to entrust himself to them.”⁴
 - **John 2:23-25** “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. {24} But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, {25} and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.”
- Trusting in Christ is also evident in our abiding in Him and living by faith in Him:

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/difference-faith-trust.html>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ferguson, *The Christian Life*, 61.

- **John 15:5** “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
- “Therefore, because he continues to sin against God and others, he must continue to repent. In a believer’s life, a spirit of repentance must be as indwelling as is his remaining sin. The same is true for faith. The familiar words of Habakkuk 2:4, “The righteous shall live by his faith” (cf. Rom. 1:18; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38), speak not of a momentary act of believing but of a living, enduring trust in God. Hebrews 3:14 emphasizes the permanence of genuine faith. Its very durability is proof of its reality: “We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” The faith that God gives can never evaporate. And the work of salvation cannot ultimately be thwarted (1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:22–23). The apostle Paul summarizes the totality of the Christian life when he declares, “The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20; cf. Heb. 10:39). The Christian’s life is to be distinguished by daily confession of, mourning over, and turning from sin, as well as a persevering faith in the person of Christ and the promises of God.”⁵

Examining a false faith in Christ for salvation

- Just as important as it is to know what true saving faith looks like, it is also important to understand that many who profess to be followers of Jesus, disciples of Jesus, even those who love Jesus...truly are not born again and will not find themselves in heaven.
- We have many warnings in the Bible about false faith / false conversion:
- **Titus 1:16** “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.
- **Matthew 15:7-8** “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: {8} 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.’”
- **Luke 6:46-49** “Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? {47} "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: {48} he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. {49} "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”
- **Matthew 7:21-23** “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. {22} "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord,

⁵ MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, 602.

Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' {23} "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

- **1 John 1:6** “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth...”
- What is the common thought in all these verses? If we profess to know Christ, to have faith in Christ, yet live in accordance with our old, dead, sinful man, we are fooling ourselves.
- A life of obedience to Christ is a sure fruit of salvation.

Examining a True Faith in Christ for salvation⁶

- This is a simple walk through 1 John to help determine if one is saved...or in the faith. This is in addition to pages 119 – 123 in your class notes.
- “Do I have confidence or condemnation?”
- **The first sign of a true saving faith is a theological sign.**
- **1 John 5:11-13** “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. {12} He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- God’s desire is that you know that you are saved. That you know and have an assurance because you are believing the truth about who God is and who Jesus is.
- **The second sign is moral**
- You should have confidence if you live a moral life.
- **1 John 3:6-9** “No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. {7} Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; {8} the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. {9} No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
- “Those who practice wickedness, who plunge headlong in sin, who not only stumble but habitually walk in wickedness, should not be confident.”
- “And lest this standard make you despair, keep in mind that part of living a righteous life is refusing to claim that you live without sin and coming to Christ for cleansing when you do sin (1:9-10).”

⁶ Headings, notes, and other ideas taken from Kevin DeYoung, *Impossible Christianity*, 25-27.

- **The third sign is social**
- “You should have confidence if you love other Christians.”
- **1 John 3:14** “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.”
- “If you hate like Cain, you do not have life. But if your heart and your wallet are open to your brothers and sisters, eternal life abides in you. One necessary sign of true spiritual life is that we love one another.”
- These are not *3 ways to earn your salvation*. These are simple ways that you and I can examine our lives and see if we are truly in *the* faith.
- As DeYoung says, “...we know we have eternal life if we love Jesus, we love his commands, and we love his people.”

Encouragement for the road ahead.

- We must not get *perfection* and *sincere obedience* confused and fall into despair.
- This is going to be a very long topic when we work through the doctrine of sanctification, but it is best to at least present the topic at this point.
- “...following Christ is never easy, but it does not have to be impenetrably mysterious, exceedingly complex, and relentlessly guilt-producing.”⁷
- “The Spirit works within us. The word moves among us. The love of Christ compels us.”⁸
- God’s grace saves us, but also moves us along in our growth day by day.
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”
- We will never be perfect in this life, but we will be changed.
- We can do that which is genuinely good and that which is pleasing in the sight of God.
- We can know the blessings of a clean and pure conscience before a holy and righteous God.
- We can know true life by losing the sinful one we had.
- “In the simplest terms, all Jesus asks is that we trust him enough to walk with him, listen to him, and depend on him for everything.”⁹
- When you are called upon by Christ to do something hard, to do something that you are not comfortable with, to do something that goes against what you think...as a disciple, the step of faith is one of the many fruits / proofs that even through you don’t know, you follow.

⁷ Kevin DeYoung, *Impossible Christianity*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.