

HOW DOES FAITH WORK?

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Question: I've used the word FAITH in many ways and on many occasions, but I honestly don't know how it works. How does faith work?

Answer: Faith, as seen in the Bible, has two main implications.

The first aspect of faith is called assent (i.e., belief). Assent is an act of the mind, a judgment of the intellect that a particular idea or statement is true. The assent aspect of faith is represented by the phrase "believe that." Hebrews 11:6 says that we must believe THAT God exist and that He rewards those who seek him. Jesus said those who do not believe THAT he is who he claims to be will die in their sins (John 8:24).

The second aspect of faith is called trust. Trust is a decision of will to act upon the truth assented to. It is a personal surrender to the implications and consequences of this truth. To trust a person is to surrender ourselves or something in our power to that person, as when we place our health and life in the hands of a doctor, or our children into the care of a baby-sitter, or our country into the hands of a particular presidential candidate.

Faith that is a condition for salvation includes such trust, specifically, a decision of the will to surrender everything about ourselves--our time, our possessions, our abilities, our life itself, and our eternal destiny – into the hands of Jesus Christ.

Trust is the decision to rest our hope of eternal life upon the saving power of Christ's cross and resurrection. It is the decision to say with Paul, "*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day*" (2 Timothy 1:12)

Trust is "believing in" or "believing on" the person and work of Jesus Christ himself (cf. John 3:16; Acts 10:43).