

# By Faith

**Key Verse:** “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*”

—**Hebrews 11:1**

**Selected Scripture:**

**Hebrews 11:1-16**

## **IN OUR LAST LESSON WE**

the message of salvation preached by the Apostle Paul and prophesied by the writers of the Old Testament. That message was the Gospel of Christ. Today we consider how redemption through the value of Christ's death is accomplished by faith.

In our Key Verse, the Apostle Paul tells us that faith is the substance, or basis, of our hope. There are two essential aspects of this faith. First, faith must be a matter based on an understanding of the truths contained in the Word of God, which abides forever. (I Pet. 1:23) For example, we read in the first chapter of the Bible a description of the creation of all things. Although no human was there to witness these things, through observation of the world around us, we see in the whole realm of nature the evidence of an intelligent Creator. Nature testifies that there is an intelligent, wise, and powerful God who formed the universe. The evidence is so palpable and irresistible that the Scriptures declare the man a fool who says there is no God.—Ps. 14:1

The second aspect of faith deals with its effect upon our heart, thoughts and actions. In last week's lesson we learned it is necessary for all to call upon the name of the Lord to receive salvation. (Rom. 10:13) It is also necessary that we profess belief through our heart and our words: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your

faith and are saved.” (Rom. 10:10, *New International Version*) If the heart is not right toward God, human intellect is easily biased toward its own preferences. Therefore, without a proper condition of heart, our mind gropes in darkness concerning those things which pertain to eternal life and godliness. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”—Rom. 8:7

The Bible states that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6) Further, we are taught that “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:17, *English Standard Version*) If faith without works is of no advantage, the inference is plain that without works it is equally impossible to please God. It is essential, therefore, that we not only have faith, but also produce works which are the outgrowth of proper faith. Being both a matter of mind and of heart, true faith brings about a conviction of things unseen, based on the foundation “substance” of the Scriptures.

Faith is described by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 13 while addressing the relationship between faith, hope and love. He states: “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (I Cor. 13:13, *ESV*) Our faith today includes the yet unrealized hope which we have before us. Thus, both faith and hope are required at the present time. However, when this age ends and the promised kingdom is established, our hope will be realized, and faith will be turned to full knowledge. Love, however, will abide forever. Jesus attested to this when telling the scribes that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” The scribe correctly replied by saying that love was more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. Jesus then confirmed the scribe’s understanding of faith saying, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”—Mark 12:28-34, *ESV* ■