

# Bite Size Bible Study

Faith #155 By Pastor Lee

From time to time I have to consider how much Faith I have. I see on the news, people who can go through horrendous trials and their faith is still strong, or even stronger. Then again I see people who have a trial and their faith seems to be dashed on the rocks.

Is our faith that fickle? And what is faith anyway? Hebrews 11:1 says: *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

For many people the opposite of faith is doubt. If someone starts to question their faith in something, is that a sign that their faith is waning? We often think so; especially if it is our religious faith we are questioning.

Is doubt or questioning really a lack of faith or a mechanism for that faith to become stronger? Rob Bell says: "Doubt is often a sign that our faith has a pulse that it's alive and well and exploring and searching. Faith and doubt aren't opposites: they are, it turns out excellent dance partners."

When we question something our faith is not diminished because of the questioning. It often will strengthen our faith by either reaffirming the questioned idea or in some cases will make our faith even stronger. By questioning something we are forced into learning more about it. That new information may lead us to a deeper faith or may show us that our faith is misplaced.

Let's take the question many people ask at several points in their lives. "Does God exist?" There are people in this world that will be willing to die for the "Yes" answer. They are so strongly convinced that they will submit to any conditions to maintain that belief. On the other hand there are people who say that they could be wrong, but they are still willing to continue believing. Still others adamantly say God doesn't exist.

Faith attitudes need to be held on to, but not so strongly that it cannot be made fuller and more complete by new information and understanding. Do you see God the same today as you did in your youth? Probably not!

There is your proof that by allowing your faith to be open, you have reached a new level of faith that could not have been reached if your faith attitude was set in stone.

Conviction and humility are those "dance partners" again. You have questioned, doubted and been open to new ideas: all of which have made your faith stronger and given more direction in your life.

Not that all new information is correct; but even if you determine it as false, it will strengthen your faith by the fact that you have been exposed to it and now regard it as false and not to be trusted in the future. It is much like when our bodies are exposed to a disease, the body learns that it is not good for it and sets up defenses to combat it.

We almost completely consider faith as something we need to have. But consider the faith of the One we are to have faith in. Does God have faith in us? Does He have faith that we will succeed or does His faith fall short and expect that sooner or later we will fail and He will have to reject us? How far will His faith in each individual extend to ensure that that person will succeed?

He has faith in Israel, His chosen people; to spread the understanding of His principles of successful living. They continually fell short of that, but He didn't give up. He has faith in them. Our faith may wane, but His never will.

He has faith in David, but David fell short of that expectation time after time. But God's faith never waned. David will rule over Israel in the future as a vassal king under Jesus the suzerain King of kings.

Simon was hot and cold during his time with Jesus but He never gave up on him. His faith in him prompted Jesus to designate him to be a leader in His future kingdom.

And the list goes on, right down to the last individual.

*"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:20-23 NIV*

God has complete faith in us. Isn't it reasonable that we work to complete our faith in Him?

Faith and Doubt will be our dance partners as we learn to perfect our trust in HIM.

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