

# The Greater the Faith

Faith, which along with the love that we possess, may be the `saving grace` for many of us true Christians when we finally get to appear before our God and Creator Jesus Christ at the time of our `assessment`. I use the word `assessment` advisedly because I`m sure that most who are reading this article will be aware that all *true*, baptized Christians are already being judged during this our present lifetime upon this earth, which is why it is vitally important that we keep in *daily* contact through prayer with our God in order to confess our sins to Him and to humbly ask for forgiveness of those sins. Now the reason for this is so that when we do appear before Him, hopefully, we will be in the Lord`s eyes sin-free because our sins will have been forgiven us throughout our lifetime. Let`s read from **1 John 1: 9**. `If we confess our sins, (to Jesus) He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness`. Being a *true* Christian is not an easy `ride` for most of us, and indeed it was never meant to be, because the rewards that we are to receive for overcoming the `flow` of this Satanically driven world are going to be so unimaginably great for us. We are all sinners in the eyes of our great God, no matter how tempted we may be to think that we are somehow better or more righteous than the next man, and as sinners we are all worthy of death, the God ordained penalty for all sin, no matter how great or small any particular sin may appear to be in the eyes of man, and we can find an indicator to this fact in the book of **James 2: 10**. `For whosoever shall keep the whole law, (the ten commandments) and yet offend in one point, (break just one commandment) he is guilty of (breaking) all`. Now let`s read the words of our Lord God in **Ezekiel 18: 4**. `Behold, all souls are Mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sins, it shall die`. And now words spoken to the unbelieving people and to the priests when Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem, **John 8: 24**. `I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins: for if you do not believe that I Am, you shall die in your sins`. The meaning of the words of Jesus in that last portion of scripture, given a bit of thought, are obvious, if a person does not believe that Jesus Christ *is* God, then how can that person pray to Him throughout their lifetime for the forgiveness of their sins? No right-thinking person should want to appear before the Lord God carrying with them a whole heap of unrepentant-of sin and then feel compelled to say to Him, `I`m sorry that I ignored You during my life on earth but. . .`. The danger in this lifetime for many people, including true Christians, is that we may come to regard some sin as not really worth being considered as *real* sin, that is to say sin that is sin worthy of the death penalty. After all, how many true Christians are murderers, rapists, child perverters or molesters, or thuggish brutalizers or malicious liars? But then again, how many of us are `inadvertent` thieves, adulterers, coveters or idolators in the eyes of our God? So how, you may well ask, can a person inadvertently be any of these things? Well think, when was the last time you took that paper-clip or elastic band from your workplace, or used a single piece of office paper for your own use, or didn`t replace that office pen which you pocketed, or hired something and went over the allotted time for that hire, or stared at that person of the opposite sex just a little bit longer than you should have, or looked longingly at that car you can`t afford, or looked adoringly at that film or pop `star`? Yes, all trivial things and yet all failings to keep *all* of the commandments and all ammunition for the arch demon Satan to use against us when he stands to oppose us in front

of our God. From the book of Revelation we can read this, **Revelation 12: 10.** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our bretheren (Satan) is cast down, who accused them before our God, day and night`.

Even so, it is not so much the crime committed or the commandment broken that is of real interest to our God, but it is the intent of the heart of the commandment-breaking individual concerned. For example, a penniless man may steal a packet of cigarettes to satisfy his nicotine craving, whilst another may steal cigarettes just because the opportunity arose, and yet another because he had planned to do so all along. Somebody may commit an armed hold-up with the intent of stealing thousands of pounds just because it is an easier alternative for them than having to work, or another because of health reasons that prevent them from working, whilst yet another may steal thousands of pounds to help pay for an urgently needed operation to prevent a loved one from dying. These are all commandment-breaking crimes but all committed for different reasons, only God is wise enough to discern the intent of the heart and to forgive us our sins. No true Christian should become complacent about sin but neither should we begin to despair when we realise that we cannot help but sin in this life, remember what Jesus said about the woman of ‘doubtful reputation’ who washed His feet with her tears? Let`s read those words in **Luke 7: 47-48.** Wherefore I say to you, Her sins which are many, are forgiven; because she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves (the forgiver) little. And He said to her, Your sins are forgiven`. and in **verse 50.** Your faith has saved you, go in peace`. We are encompassed about with all manner of ‘little’ temptations to commit sin, one of the most common being that of adultery. It is very difficult for anybody male or female, but I think more especially the male, not to commit adultery, even on a daily basis, for as we know, it does not require us to actually commit the physical act. Jesus Christ has indicated that fact to us in **Matthew 5: 27-28.** You have heard that it was said by them of old time, you should not commit adultery. But I say to you, That whosoever looks on a woman and lusts after her, has committed adultery with her already, in his heart`. Hopefully for the *true* Christians of this world, our steadfastly grounded faith along with our love will be enough to keep us from the judgement that the rest of the world will have to undergo, let`s read **Hebrews 10: 38.** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, (because of doubt) My soul shall have no pleasure in him`. Hebrews 11 is known to many as ‘the faith chapter’, because in it are mentioned the deeds of some of those who throughout the scriptures have battled on valiantly in faith, not receiving or expecting their reward (promise) in this lifetime but in the hope (faith) of receiving it in the next after their resurrection. I think it can be best summed up in **Hebrews 11: 13.** For these all died in faith, not having received the promises, (rewards) but having seen them afar off, and they believed that these rewards existed for them, and so they embraced the hope of attaining them, and they realised and confessed that (in this present lifetime) they were but strangers and exiles upon this earth`. If we are exiles, as that scripture mentioned, then this *present* earth is not our real or our permanent home and we hope in faith for the *much* better one that is to come.

Let`s refer back to the title of this article, ‘The Fewer The Answers, The Greater The Faith’, now this raises the point that there must be by association to ‘few answers’, a lot of unanswered questions. Well of course *this will always be the case*, there is no true Christian church or church member who will be able to supply all of the answers to all of the inevitable questions that many people ask about God or about biblical prophecy. There is no flesh and blood human being upon this earth who has been given *all* knowledge, spiritual or otherwise, and their never will be! But this fact should never prevent the true Christian in their personal quest for biblical and spiritual

knowledge. The Lord will give to each and every one of us all that we need to know in our lifetime, and so when we come together in fellowship each of us has the potential of being able to offer some new revelation from the word of the Lord to give towards the spiritual growth of the church of God, and we can all share in the satisfaction of that fact, no matter how big or little our individual contribution may be. Let`s look at **Romans 12: 3-6.** `For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is amongst you, not to think more highly of himself than he should, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we represent the many parts that make up the one body in Christ (the church), all parts do not have the same function. So then, we being many, make up the one body in Christ, and everybody part of one another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given us. . .` The question must be asked, is a person`s faith diminished or strengthened because of their continuing striving to come to a better understanding of the word of God and the many questions that it will raise within that individual? The reading of and the desire to understand biblical scripture is often the first challenge that any would-be Christian will have to face, and the Lord designed it to be that way so that the faint-hearted will be weeded out from the very start. Because of hard to understand scripture and unanswered questions many people give up reading their bible and become lazy in their faith and start to rely on others such as false `christian` clergy to erroneously interpret the word of God for them. Many, because of their lack of staying power, never come to realise that for a much more complete understanding of the Lord`s holy scriptures, a person needs to undergo total-immersion baptism in order to receive God`s holy spirit which will then in time begin to open up the scriptures to those who earnestly seek genuine spiritual understanding.

To live a peaceful life as best we can with our neighbours is the reward that true Christians should seek in this lifetime, the apostle Paul goes even further stating that we should live peaceably with all men but at the same time he accepts that it may not always be possible as we can read of in **Romans 12: 18.** `If it be possible, as much as you are capable of, live peaceably with all men`. Hope for a *much better* reward than *just* living peaceably in the next life, is one of the driving forces behind every true Christian. Let`s read this next scripture, **Romans 8: 24.** `For we are saved by hope, but hope that is already experienced cannot be hope, for if a man has already experienced it then why should he still hope for it?` Two of the Oxford dictionary`s definitions of the word `hope` are: `feel fairly confident that`, and, `a feeling of trust`. Now it should come as no surprise to us to find that the same dictionary`s definition of the word `faith`, is in part: `a reliance or trust`. So, faith and hope, both `unseen` but one, it must be stated, having so much more substance or `weight` for the true Christian, than the other. As many of us probably know from experience, our `hopes` can be dashed, ruined and destroyed, but we still survive, we carry on, but on the other hand, if it were possible and our true Christian faith were to be destroyed then we would indeed be in a pitiful state, we would be `lost` to the Lord God and we would leave ourselves open to all manner of demonic temptations, distractions and possession. The Lord God bestows on each and every one of His servants various and differing types of `gifts`, but the one that all true Christians do have in common is the gift of faith, but in most cases in differing `strengths`. Let`s read **1 Corinthians 12: 1.** `Now concerning spiritual gifts, bretheren, I would not have you not knowing about them`. The apostle Paul then goes on to outline some of these spiritual gifts given to individuals which include prophecy, healing, interpretation of languages and of course faith. (obviously all true Christians possess faith, but in differing degrees) `Oh`, some reading this may think, `I haven`t been given any of these gifts except perhaps a little faith`. Well do not despair, faith can be strengthened and it can grow,

indeed it will grow just as long as it is not abandoned, faith is as it were, self-fuelling, it feeds on itself. The apostle Paul then goes on to say this of true Christians, **1 Corinthians 12: 29-31.** `Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gift of healing? do all speak different languages? do all interpret? But you should earnestly seek the best gifts, (we should recognise that the best is an unwavering faith) and yet show I to you a more excellent way`. Now

we can't simply go out and acquire any of these gifts by buying them at our nearest convenience store or supermarket or by achieving them at university etc., but we can acquire them through prayer and by the keeping of as best that we can, the Lord's commandments. But even so, it is the Lord who will decide which one of us gets any specific gift(s) and I would think that the more that a person earnestly desires a spiritual gift then the better the chance that that person will have of obtaining it. Now although steadfast faith is the greatest gift, it and everything else that an individual has that is right in the eyes of the Lord God is counted as worthless before Him if love is lacking in that individual, indicating that love is not a gift and neither can it ever be because it is, when everything else is stripped away, who and what that individual really is. We can get an idea of how important love is from the reading of

**1 Corinthians 13: 3.** ` . . . And although I give all of my possessions away in order that the poor may be fed, and although I give my body to be burned, if do not have love, it will profit me nothing . . .`. And from **1 Peter 4: 8.** `And above all things, have fervent love amongst yourselves, because love will cover a multitude of sins`. The Lord God is the epitomy of love. GOD IS LOVE. Satan is the epitomy of no love whatsoever! Therefore it follows that the greater the love within a person then the closer that person is to the Lord, the less the love that is within a person, then the further away they are from the Lord.

It is the way of not only true Christian's lives but almost everybody's lives that more questions will always arise than there will be answers to those questions. True Christians should take comfort in the fact that the Lord lets us know all that we need to know, and this is where an individual's faith comes into play because it overcomes the overbearing desire and drive that some people have to try to provide for themselves a reassuring, but not necessarily true, answer for every question that they allow themselves to become obsessed by. True Christians will at various times in their lives find themselves subjected to cleverly constructed questions that have been devised specifically to ensnare them with words and make them appear foolish because of their faith. (Always remember, people who have no faith in the Lord God are more often than not intensely jealous of or irritated by, those of us who do possess it!) We will not always be ready enough, or indeed knowledgeable enough to provide an answer to some of these questions, however, one answer to every `unanswerable` question is to say this: `I have faith that one day the Lord will answer all my questions, and this being the case, if you really want an answer to yours, then you may one day ask it of Him`. Even Jesus Christ was tempted by Satanically inspired questions which were put to him by the Pharisees as we can read of in the book of **Matthew 22: 16-22.** `And they sent out to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth, neither care you for (the opinions of) any man, because you do not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore what You think of this. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why do you test Me? You hypocrites. Show me the tax money, and they brought to him a penny. And He said to them, Who's image is this and who is this writing upon it relating to? And they said to Him, Caesar's. Then He said to them, Give therefore to Caesar that which is Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's. When

they heard these words they marvelled, and left Him, and went on their way`.

We can appreciate that Jesus Christ, being very God in the flesh, had an answer for every malicious and craftily devised question that was put to Him, but it cannot always be so with most of us. We will find ourselves being asked questions by `antichrists`, those who have no interest whatsoever in the truth but who want to see a true Christian `caught out` and appear to be unworthy of his or her calling. There is a common mistake that many people make and that is in thinking that there is only, or to be only, one `antichrist`, but this is not so, there are many antichrists amongst us already just as there were thousands of years ago as we can read of in the book of

**1 John 2: 18.** `Little children, it is the latter days, and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, but even now there are already many antichrists, and this fact indicates that we are in the latter days`. These anti-Christ's enjoy bullying Christians and trying to trap them in corners by their seemingly `scientific` and `reasonable`

questioning most of which will be done when there is a ready audience to witness it because they do not want a one-to-one debate because they are not interested in the answers to their questions, that is not their purpose. Their purpose is to try to make any true Christian appear small, silly and nothing more than a worthless dreamer. It is at times like this, should they happen, that a true Christian`s faith *will* sustain them. I am not suggesting that faith alone will provide an answer to all questions asked but it should prevent the true Christian from shrinking away from the questioner in floundering embarrassment and instead enable them to stand face to face with their inquisitor informing them that at the present time you do not have an answer to their question but that if they are sincerely in need of one then you will be able to provide one for them at a later date.

So once again, back to the title of this article, `The Fewer the Answers, the Greater the Faith`. I should think that every true Christian when confronted with a deliberately aimed and difficult to answer question, that just because of that question, their faith would in no way be dented or diminished. If we failed miserably from now on until the day that we died to successfully answer even just one more question about the Lord and the holy scriptures, that failure on our part should in no ways lessen or weaken our faith. Unanswered or unanswerable questions will not destroy a true Christian`s faith, only self doubt will do that! Faith is one of those things that, if we endure suffering, will grow and grow and go from strength to strength, the apostle Paul suffered much but his faith was strong and remained rock-steady, let`s read about *some* of his suffering from the book of **2 Corinthians 11: 23-27.** `Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more so in works abundant, in lashes above measure, in prisons more often, enduring the threat of death more frequently. Of the Jews, five times I received thirty nine lashes of the whip, three times I was beaten with rods, once I have been stoned, three time I suffered shipwreck, and a night and a day I was in the deep. In many travels, in perils in the waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the hand of my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false bretheren. In weariness and painfulness, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and in thirst, in fastings often, in cold and in nakedness`. and **12: 9-10.** `And He (Jesus) said to me, My grace is sufficient for you; because My power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore, will I rather boast in my weaknesses so that the power of Jesus Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ`s sake: because when I am weak, then I am strong`.

The `Strong`s Biblical Concordance` definition for the word `faith` is: `To trust and also to

believe`. In the book of Hebrews it is described as, **Hebrews 11: 1.** `Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the conviction for things that are not yet experienced`. To underline just *how important* faith is the apostle Paul goes on to say in **Hebrews 11: 6.** `Without faith it is impossible to please Him (the Lord), because he that approaches God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him`.

The spiteful antichrists and`Christian baiters` of this world are all too quick to demonstrate that because of *their* lack of faith no particular harm has befallen them and so it is a worthless and in this present life, a troublesome thing (for them) to possess. Indeed, the only use *they* have for a true Christian`s faith is to try and use it as a weapon against them by constantly trying to undermine it. It is a sad but common fact of life that anything that one person possesses and that another person realises that they can never possess (in the case of faith it is mostly because they don`t really try), then often the person that lacks that which another has will either be jealous of it or will want to try to destroy it or at the very least will rejoice if that person loses that which they once had.

Some people who have been staunch disbelievers or antichrist`s all of their lives, suddenly, when they are gravely ill and/or at death`s door, develop `faith`. But this `faith` is not to be confused with *true* faith, it is merely an individual`s last ditch effort to `grasp at straws`, it is a *false* comforter, and this especially applies to those who once had faith but then lost all trust in it, let`s read **Hebrews 10: 38.** `**Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back,** (have no trust in his faith) **My soul shall have no pleasure in him`.** And anyway, faith should be a constant companion of the living not just something that is suddenly remembered and desired by the gravely ill and the dying. Genuine, unmoveable faith cannot suddenly come upon a person, true some are born to have faith, they have believed in and trusted God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son since they were old enough to think properly, but even this faith has to be developed and allowed to grow otherwise it will perish. For most true, mature Christians their faith has developed and strengthened over the years because of their many differing life experiences. Some disbelievers will say that a Christian`s faith is really nothing more than that person `hedging` their bets on the off-chance of there being a better life after death than the life which they are living now. In effect, to the non-believer, faith appears to be nothing more than a troublesome and ultimately unnecessary `insurance policy` that they do not want to have because of the terms and conditions attached to it. So what if any are the `terms and conditions` attached to having *real* faith? If we read from this next scripture it will give us an indication, **James 2: 14, 18, 20.** `**What does it profit, my bretheren, if a man says that he has faith but does not have any good works to back up that faith? can faith alone save him? Yes a man may say that he has faith, and I may say that I have faith and also good works; so then I shall say to him, Show me your faith that does not have any good works, and I will demonstrate to you my faith by the good works that I have done. Will you believe, O foolish man, that faith without good works, is dead?` As we can see from the reading of that scripture, suddenly developing or re-developing a long abandoned `faith` on a death-bed for example, is it would seem, an empty and a pointless thing for any person to do.**

A true Christian`s faith is to be an active faith and not just an attitude of mind. If our faith actually contributes to the well-being of the lives of others, and it will if it has love as its` companion, then we will not be a disappointment in the eyes of our Lord God, and amongst the majority of people who we come into daily contact with we will find that the negative and hostile questions which may have been present before, have now become more friendly and positive. But even so, we should still be on our guard, because if and when Satan sets somebody `on your

case`, and the Lord God allows it to be so to see how you cope, then you will have a real battle on your hands and the sneers and the hard to answer (and often downright stupid) questions begin once more. But take heart, the Lord will not desert any of His children, He will not let Satan have the final word.

And so to sum up. If a well grounded and living faith resides within us then we should never become disheartened at the prospect of awkward questions concerning the scriptures or of even potentially embarrassing personal questions concerning our past lives which Satan will use to try and make some of us appear unworthy to our calling. The true Christian should never doubt their ability to manage situations and questions which are unexpectedly thrust upon them, and should always bear in mind these next two scriptures, firstly, **Hebrews 13: 5-6.** `Let your conversation (conduct) be without covetousness, and be content with such things that you have, for He (Jesus) has said, I will never leave you or forsake you. So that knowing this we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me`. And now words spoken directly by Jesus in **Matthew 10: 17-20.** `But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to appear before the authorities, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings (rulers) because of your faith in Me, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. (the unbelievers) But when they deliver you up, do not take any thought about what you should say, because it shall be given to you at that time (by the Lord) that which you should speak`. All true Christians should be mindful of and take comfort in that last scripture. If we have read the scriptures daily, both old and new testaments, then when the time for having to answer questions arises, we will be surprised to discover that many of the answers to those questions are already buried within us and all that the Lord has had to do is to unearth them for us. Now for one last scripture for this article, and it is once again from the book of Hebrews, **Hebrews 12: 1-3.** `Wherefore seeing that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us put aside every weight, and the sin that so easily does beset us, and let us run with endurance the race that has been set before us. Looking to Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the torture of the cross, scorning the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (the Father). Think upon Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, in case (or when) you become wearied (feel like giving in) and faint in your minds`. Remember, if we are always here for Jesus, then Jesus is always here for us, all that we need to do in times of trouble is to call out for Him, and to have the faith that He *has* heard us and will help us. We will also come to realise that *we* do not *need* an answer for every question that arises within *us* as regards the scriptures, because our faith is our answer.