

Who Is the Person of God-Pleasing Faith?

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“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction [or evidence] of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is also the means of gaining God’s approval, “for by it the men of old gained approval” (11:2). Furthermore, faith is the *only* means of gaining God’s approval, for “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (11:6). But one question remains:

What does God-pleasing faith look like?

In our culture, the person who believes in just about anything is often called “a person of faith,” and is included in something called “the community of faith.” It doesn’t seem to matter what the object of his faith is, or how his faith is lived out. As long as he speaks positively and sincerely about whatever kind of “faith” makes him happy and fulfilled, he is considered a member of this ever-broadening and increasingly undiscerning community.



Both this vague understanding of “faith” and this all-inclusive definition of “the person of faith” are miles off the mark. Many kinds of “faith” make people feel good about themselves, but only one kind makes God feel good about people.

Compare your concept of faith and of the person of faith with the following descriptions of God-pleasing faith from Hebrews 11:

1. The person of God-pleasing faith believes the Bible’s account of the origin of the universe. “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (11:3).

2. The person of God-pleasing faith takes seriously, and acts upon, God’s warnings about the judgment of sinners. “By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (11:7).

3. The person of God-pleasing faith obeys God even when the end of that obedience is not fully known. “By faith Abraham, when he was called,

obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going” (11:8).

4. The person of God-pleasing faith obeys God even when obedience seems counter-productive. “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants shall be called” (11:17-18).

5. The person of God-pleasing faith gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (11:24-26).

6. The person of God-pleasing faith fears God more than men. “By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen” (11:27).

7. The person of God-pleasing faith does not insist on being rewarded in this life. “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having witnessed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had the opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them” (11:13-16).

Is your faith this kind of faith? Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God and therefore true in every detail? Do you tremble with reverence when contemplating the judgment of sinners? Is Jesus Christ your greatest treasure, so much so that you faithfully endure the reproach that tests all who love Him? Does your faith make you willing to do hard things for Jesus—things other people consider risky, foolish, or unnecessary? Does your faith make you long for everlasting righteousness and eager to reject the passing pleasures of sin?

If so—and *only* if so—then God is not ashamed to be called your God.