



# Survey In Basic Christianity

## Lesson 11

### Believing on Jesus Christ

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The jailer at Philippi asked, “What must I do to be saved?” The Apostle Paul answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:30-31). But what does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

Some people have unbiblical ideas about what it means to believe on Him. Here are some common but wrong ideas. If one were to ask, “Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?” they might say, “I believe:”

- Because they acknowledge that Jesus lived and died here on earth
- Because they admire the morals and ethics of Jesus
- Because they joined a religious group
- Because they pray to God
- Because they repeated a prayer, doctrinal statement, or formula

But do these answers reflect what the Bible means by “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?” Does this kind of belief change a person’s life? Does it give solid assurance of going to heaven?

## What is Faith?

Believing on Jesus Christ for salvation involves faith. Faith is our response to God. Biblical faith includes the ideas of trust, personal confidence, persuasion, and reliance. It is the opposite of doubt. Faith is not gullible or naïve. Faith depends entirely on what the Bible says and agrees with the truth about Jesus Christ and what He has done and can do for you. Faith has the following components:

### 1. Faith Has an Object

Faith is in someone or something. For Christians, this someone is a living Person, the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:29). The Lord Jesus asked the blind man, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (John 9:35). To be accepted into Paradise (Heaven), the thief on the cross had only to believe on Jesus (Luke 23:42-43). This trust in Jesus is at the heart of the gospel message (Acts 8:35-37; 1 John 5:13). It is not how much, but in whom we believe. Faith receives Him (John 1:12).

### 2. Faith Requires Content

Faith does not rely on ambiguous feelings but requires a clear message to be believed. We must hear the word of the gospel and believe it (Acts 15:7). The Apostle Paul said that the gospel message “is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians, resulting in their salvation. That gospel is “good news,” and the gospel message that saves a person is carefully defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Trusting Christ

comes after hearing the gospel, called the word of truth (Ephesians 1:13). This gospel is so precious and vital that any man or angel who alters it is under a curse (Galatians 1:6-9).

### **3. Faith is Built on Truth**

Faith demands truth, and that truth comes from the Bible, which is the word of God (Romans 10:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Faith accepts God's word and believes that God is true, though every man may be a liar (Romans 3:3-4). We are not "leaping into the dark," exercising blind faith, or trusting in our emotions. We believe and rely entirely upon the truth of God's word.

### **4. Faith Brings About Action**

We may think that faith is merely a mental agreement with a particular statement of facts, but that is not so. Notice the action words in the following verses: people came to Jesus, fell down before Him and obeyed His word; He told a man to stretch forth his hand (Matthew 12:13); He said to another to take up his bed (Matthew 9:6); He commanded another to wash in a specific pool of water (John 9:7). Repeatedly He called for action. Faith believes the truth and responds to it.

Abraham is the model of a man who believed in God. When comparing Genesis 12:1-4, Acts 7:2-3, and Hebrews 11:8, we read that Abraham heard God's word and responded by leaving his hometown without knowing where God would lead him. This believing response demonstrated his faith.

The faith that saves is a faith that produces action. Saving faith has never been merely a passive, mental assent to historical facts. Any so-called "faith" which does not produce works is a "dead faith." When a person truly believes in Christ, the result will be a life of good works. (See James 2:14-26 for an obvious contrast between *saving faith* and *dead faith*). Saving faith is more than believing *that* the facts about Christ and His death are true. We believe *in/on* the Son of God, being committed personally to Him.

### **5. Faith is Trust in God**

It is striking to read about Abraham's simplicity of faith. One night, God said to Abraham, "'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:5-6). Abraham was declared righteous because he believed God's promise.

Abraham was justified (declared righteous) by faith. This fact is stated in Genesis 15:6 and is so vital that it is repeated three times in the New Testament. "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Romans 4:3). And we read, "Just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Galatians 3:6). Once more, we read, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23).

## **Examples of Faith**

Examples of faith fill the pages of the Bible. Hebrews 11 is known as the *Honor Roll of Faith* because it lists some outstanding men and women who had a living and active faith. Review the chapter and mark the actions taken by each person of faith.

Jesus marveled at two notable examples of faith. The first is the faith of the centurion in Matthew 8:5-10. The centurion believed that Jesus did not have to be physically present to heal but could merely say the word and heal his servant. The other example is the faith of the woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-28). She pleaded that the Lord would deliver her daughter from demons. Her faith was humble and persistent.

# How to Come to Christ

When we come to Christ for salvation, what happens?

## 1. The Spirit Convicts us of Sin

Only sinners need a Savior. The Spirit of God faithfully shows us that we are sinners in need of the Savior (John 16:8-11). Once we understand that our sin separates us from God, we acknowledge our sin to Him and seek His forgiveness (Luke 15:18; 18:13-14).

## 2. We Repent of Our Sins

Repentance is a change of mind. We have been convicted of our sin and know the penalty for sin is death. We now want to be saved from our sin and desire to leave our sins in the past. Repentance is a change of mind that ultimately leads to a change of action (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30; 20:21).

## 3. There is an Understanding of the Gospel

We must believe the gospel message to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 1:13). The heart of that message is what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us; He died on the cross, was buried, and rose again the third day.

## 4 We Believe God's Word

The message of the gospel comes from the word of God. We hear the word preached or spoken to us and believe its message (Mark 4:20; John 5:24; Romans 10:17).

## 5. We Receive God's Son by Faith

Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6). Thus, faith's response to the gospel message is to *receive Him* as you would receive a gift; to *believe in Him* as the only One who can save you; to *confess* that He is God and *believe in your heart* that God raised Him from the dead (John 1:12; Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 5:12-13). This trust in Him is saving faith.

## 6. We Become His Follower

The natural response of a true believer is to follow the Lord Jesus. The Bible illustrates this as sheep following the voice of the Shepherd who loved them and gave Himself for them (John 10:4-5, 27; Galatians 2:20).

## 7. We Confess Him Before Others

A true believer will want to confess Him before others. To *confess Him* means to *openly declare* our allegiance to Him as our Lord and Master (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9).

Saving faith rests its entire weight upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work. God offers salvation as a gift of His grace to us, and by faith, we receive it. Faith is the instrument, the means, and the channel through which the grace of God flows. Faith is not the source of salvation, nor is it an act of merit. It is the empty hand that accepts what God freely offers. The urgent message to believe delivers a person from his sin and the vengeance that awaits those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Sadly, some claim to have faith in Jesus Christ but are imposters, including many religious charlatans. These frauds may claim to know Jesus Christ and may even be religious figures who seem to do mighty works, but the Lord will expose and reject imposters (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:28), for these are tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30). ("Tares" are likely darnel, a worthless weed that resembles wheat).

True saving faith gives all the glory to God. It can be exercised by all classes of people of varying ages, positions, and intelligence. It is universally available. Faith transforms a person's life (Hebrews 6:9-10).

That transformation occurs because the Bible says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). God gives believers new desires they did not have before, and these desires increase as we mature in our faith. Some of these new desires include:

- A desire to abandon sinful behavior (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 John 3:9-10)
- A passion for fulfilling God’s purpose in life (Ephesians 2:10)
- A hunger to practice righteousness (Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 John 3:7, 10)
- A willingness to obey the word of God (1 John 2:4-5)
- A love for other believers (1 John 3:14).

God has spoken in His word and invites you to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ today?



