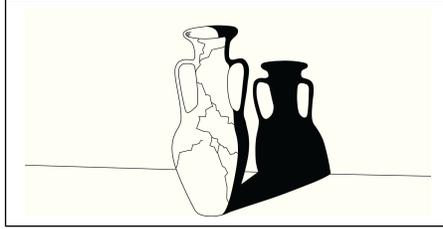


Faith Is Impossible - Paul David Tripp -



Faith Is Essential

Faith is at once a very important and very confusing word. I once tried to get a definition of faith out of a small group of people I was speaking to. We walked a circle of synonyms that led us back to the original word—belief, trust, faith. As we arrived back where we began, it hit me that these people heard and used this word all the time, but didn't understand it. The word *faith* was in the Bible that they read, in the songs of worship that they sang, and in the sermons that they heard, but it still wasn't clear to them. Yet God, in his word, gives it an extremely high level of importance.

Habakkuk 2:4 says, "The righteous shall live by his faith." Just as you cannot physically live without breathing oxygen, you cannot spiritually live without exercising faith. Faith is breathing in the oxygen of God's grace, giving life to my once-dead heart. What could be more important than that? Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him" (God). You and I will never be what we were designed to be and live as we have been called to live without faith. It is faith that propels us to live in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. What could be more important than this?

Here is why faith is so essential in God's redemptive plan. Sin has rendered us incapable of pleasing God on our own. On our best day, with our best intentions and exercising our best efforts, we fall horribly short of God's holy and wise standard. We can't even keep our own laws, let alone his. That is why God sent his Son. Jesus measured up to God's standard in all the ways that we are unable to and he paid our penalty with his own life. So God doesn't ask us to perfectly obey his law in order to please him. No, what God asks of us is this one simple thing, faith.

Faith is more than intellectual assent to God's existence. It is more than committing yourself to a community of faith and a regular set of religious habits. Faith is more than developing biblical literacy and doctrinal knowledge. Faith is not saying, "I believe that," when it makes little difference in the way you think about yourself, the way you relate to God, and the way you live your life. Faith is something that shatters you and rebuilds you. Faith is a transaction of your heart that will radically alter the way you live your life.

Faith is abandoning your own righteousness and entrusting the hope of your soul, in this life and the one to come, to the righteousness of another. Faith is the willingness to confess, without excuse or shifting the blame, sins that you once denied or hid. Faith is abandoning your own wisdom and feeding your heart on the wisdom of God. Faith is giving up on your delusions of control and resting in God's sovereign authority. Faith is admitting your weakness and crying out for the strength that only God can give. Faith is refusing to be a glory thief any longer and living for the greater glory of God.

Faith Doesn't Come Naturally

Faith is taking up your cross, dying to yourself, and committing yourself to live as a disciple of Jesus. Faith is letting the cross of Jesus Christ and his empty tomb define your identity and your hope. Faith is much more than a one-time decision; it is a lifestyle lived with the presence, promises, and call of God always in view.

I'm about to write something that will surprise you. Faith is impossible. It is unnatural and counterintuitive for us all. Self-trust is natural. Fear is natural. Worry is natural. Self-righteousness is natural. Doubt is natural. Autonomy and self-sufficiency are natural, but faith isn't natural. So here's where the call to faith always leads you. Faith, properly understood, always leads you to cry out for God's grace. It takes grace to have the faith to entrust yourself and everything you are and have to God and his grace. Faith is important because it is the only pathway to finding and receiving God's greatest gift, his grace in the person of his Son, Jesus.

This article is adapted from [40 Days of Faith](#) by Paul David Tripp.