

WHAT IS FAITH

(**Bold type** and underlining of scripture text have been added for emphasis)
(Your questions and comments are welcome)

There are differing systems of theological thought and practice within Christianity. Generally, these different systems are the result of what people believe. However, this consideration will be an inquiry into the scriptures explanation of the meaning and application of the words “faith” and “believe”. As one reads the scripture, these two words occur frequently and have obvious significance. What is their meaning?

In a quest for the answer, there are some preliminary points to be considered. **1.** With few exceptions, the Greek word translated “faith” is pistis, and also, (but for one other Greek word) generally, the Greek word translated “believe” is pistueo. Pistueo means “to have faith”(Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible) and derives from pistis. **Thus, we learn that the words “faith” and “believe” have virtually the same meaning.**

It is my understanding that a word being defined should not be used in its definition. Therefore, the word believe should not be used when defining “faith, nor should the word “faith” be used when defining “believe”. **So, one definition applies to both words.**

2. a. Faith has an intellectual basis-“***faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17)

b. Faith has a volitional basis-“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:11-12)

c. Faith is an internal matter-“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness***” (Romans 10:10)

3. For what purpose do we seek to know the meaning of the word faith?

The apostle Paul informs us at: **Romans 4**

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

16 Therefore it is **of faith, that** it might be **by grace**; to **the end** the promise might be sure **to all the seed**; not to that only which is **of the law**, but to that also which is **of the faith of Abraham**; who is the father **of us all**,

Romans 5

1 Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God

The apostle Peter explains the essential role of faith for inheritance when Christ returns: 1 Peter 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are **kept by the power of God** through **faith** unto **salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your **faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet **believing**, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the **end of your faith**, even the **salvation of your souls**.

Here we learn that God's plan for fulfilling his promises to man is realized, *from the perspective of man's responsibility*, on the basis of *faith*. On this basis, God by his grace (His divine power toward, upon, and in man) accomplishes in and through the Person and work of Christ, **man's deliverance from both the penalty and the power of sin, the ultimate benefit being an everlasting inheritance in God's kingdom**. Therefore, whatever faith is, *it is the divinely conceived means through which God, exclusively by his wisdom and power*, will fulfill his desire for and his purpose with man, the highest order of his physical creation.

The beneficial purpose in understanding the meaning of the term faith is that we might know how to live by faith, and also, that we might know, whether or not, we are, in fact, living by faith. The above referenced scriptures, as well as others not cited, leave no doubt that a pursuit of the Lord on any other ground than faith is futile. God's pleasure in man is founded on faith. *God exercises his beneficial wisdom and power on man's behalf only because he sees faith in him*. This fact is so clearly illustrated when the centurion's servant was sick and near death. **In regard to the centurion's servant, we read at: Matthew 8**

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great **faith**, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and **as thou hast believed**, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

While scripture refers to faith in various contexts, it does not provide a precise definition thereof. However, there are many and varied accounts in scripture that show a person's **inward posture toward God**, which accounts are revealing concerning the meaning of faith. By reviewing a few, from among the many, of such scriptures we can learn the rather simple and precise meaning of faith.

At Hebrews chapter 11, verses 33 and 34, we read, in reference to some of the faithful of the Lord, "Who through faith***stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword***".

In the book of Daniel there is the account of King Nebuchadnezzar ordering all of the people to fall down and worship the image that he had made. When the three Hebrew men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not comply with the king's command, they were brought before the king and he said unto them: Daniel 3

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, **ye fall down and worship the image** which I have made; well: **but if ye worship not**, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and **who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?**

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve **is able** to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that **we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image** which thou hast set up

If we were to continue with the account, we would learn that God did deliver the three men from the burning furnace, unhurt by the fire.

Referring back to the passage in Hebrews eleven, we may recall that "through faith" the violence of fire was quenched.

It should be noted that under the law in the Old Testament it was commanded that the Hebrew people must not bow down to images or worship other gods. These Hebrew men had knowledge of God's will in this matter.

Several observations from the passage in the book of Daniel are:

- .Painful death was declared by the king to be the consequence of defying his order.

- The men's confidence was **in God's ability to deliver them**, and **not that he would deliver them**.
- Whether or not God chose their deliverance, **they would not** worship the image made by the king.

From this account of scripture, it is evident that the **attitude, or inward posture** of these men was one of unwavering commitment and devotion to God. *Such inward posture is faith*. The *outward demonstration* of their faith is evidenced in that:

They were careful to **observe their duty to do God's will** by not bowing to and worshipping before the king's image.

They had unwavering **loyalty to God** by being steadfast in their relationship with him in the face of temptation to renounce, or at least to ignore such relationship.

They depended on God for the outcome, rather than taking the proffered way of escape of bowing down to and worshipping the image.

Faith as an inward matter is seen in the scripture account of the three Hebrew men **by their attitude of commitment and devotion to God**, being **expressed** in their observance of duty, and loyalty to, and dependence on God. **This attitudinal posture is faith**. *This inward position is volitionally taken, and maintained, based on a person's knowledge of God's will*.

Another account that manifests faith is recorded in the book of Daniel. The leadership in the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians desired to bring Daniel into disfavor with the king. We read at: Daniel 6

4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as **he was faithful**, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, **except we find it against him concerning the law of his God**.

6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, **that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God** or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

10 Now **when Daniel knew** that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and **prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime**.

(**The significance** of praying toward Jerusalem is expressed in Solomon's prayer to dedicate the temple in 1 Kings chapter eight. If any of the people

were carried captive to a distant land, they were to pray toward Jerusalem and the temple that Solomon had built.)

Then, these leaders when they saw Daniel praying before God, came to the king and told him, at: **Daniel 6**

13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, **That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.**

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God **whom thou servest continually**, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, **because he believed in his God.**

In Hebrews 11:33, we read that **“through faith***stopped the mouths of lions”**. Here, as with the three Hebrew men previously mentioned, **Daniel, knowing** that God had commanded that his people pray toward the land, Jerusalem, and the temple, showing **fidelity to duty, was careful to observe God’s will**. Also, **knowing the consequences** for praying to his God, Daniel was **loyal to the relationship**, not ignoring it even when confronted with being cast into the den of lions. Further, Daniel **depended on God** for the outcome. ***We see in Daniel the same attitude toward God of commitment and devotion, which is faith.***

This same attitude is seen in Esther, a Jewess, who was queen in the vast kingdom of Ahasuerus. A decree was sent to all the provinces of the kingdom, that all Jews would be killed on a particular day. Mordecai, a

devout Jew, charged Esther to petition the king to spare the Jews. There was a law that anyone who entered the king's inner court, **not being called**, would be put to death, except to whom the king would hold out the golden sceptre, that the person not be put to death. **Esther, knowing the requirement of the law and not being invited**, went in to make request to the king for the deliverance of the Jews. Before presenting herself to the king, she asked for the people to fast and pray for her. She and her maidens would fast likewise, and she said, **“***so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”** (Esther 4:16)

In support of these scripture accounts showing commitment and devotion to God, it should be noted that the Greek word “pisteuo” is translated commit and committed in several passages of scripture:

Luke 16

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will **commit** to your trust the true riches?

Romans 3

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were **committed** the oracles of God.

Also, the apostle Paul refers to his preaching of the gospel as something God has committed to him:

1 Corinthians 9

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is **committed** unto me.

Galatians 2

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was **committed** unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

1 Timothy 1

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was **committed** to my trust

Titus 1

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is **committed** unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

This use of the word pisteuo, and the accounts in scripture that demonstrate the meaning of faith, show that faith or believing is a more comprehensive inward transaction, and not only an inward acceptance of the gospel as absolute truth. The passage in Luke chapter 16 equates “faithfulness” to commitment. If one is not faithful in temporal things, who would commit to that person eternal things? Thus, we see how commitment is essential to faith.

In the above passages we see that, both, with Israel and with the apostle Paul, God delivered his greatest treasure to them in a capacity of trust. At Titus 1:3, we learn that God's word was entrusted to Paul. And this

trust was for the benefit of others, including deliverance from sin's power and sin's penalty that they might live by faith in the light and power of God. The eternal well-being and destiny of a multitude of mankind rested on Paul's **faithfulness in his proclamation of, and his living according to God's word.** Paul's commission required utter **fidelity in his transmission of God's word,** lest the hearers be misled. Likewise, in the face of fierce opposition to Paul's proclamation of the gospel, **only intense loyalty would secure his performance of what God had committed to him.** *Thus, we see that God believed in Israel and in Paul. Israel as a nation betrayed God's commitment; however, Paul did not.*

God's committing of his word for mankind to an individual, such as Paul, involves a sacred trust on the part of God, and a grave responsibility for the individual. *This engages God and the individual in a highly defined relationship.* God has committed his honor and dignity, and that of his Son, to his children, *which defines the commitment that we must have to him.* To suggest that God's children, without our own faithfulness to him, can realize the benefits provided to us in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus manifests, to say the least, an inadequate understanding of what we are called into in God's Son.

The central role of faith in man's relationship to God is clearly evidenced throughout scripture. The following references are but a few of the scripture passages showing the **centrality of faith in the divine purpose for man.** And if the meaning of faith as hereinbefore explained is correct, we could insert "**commitment and devotion**" for the words, "**faith**" and "**believe**". For example:

Ephesians 2

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith[*]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

*[through commitment and devotion to God]

John 6

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth[*] on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

*[and is committed and devoted to him]

Romans 3

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth[*] in Jesus.

*[which is committed and devoted to Jesus]

Romans 4

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith[*] is counted for righteousness.

*[his commitment and devotion is counted for righteousness]

Romans 4

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith[*] was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

*[commitment and devotion was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness]

These scriptures leave little, if any, question that faith is an integral part of man's relationship with God. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to understand what faith is. And, because of differing theological explanations of faith, it is also important to understand what faith is not.

John Calvin states, "We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that **it is a firm and sure knowledge** (emphasis added) of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit." (Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. 1, Chapter 11, Sec. 7, p. 475) It is to be noted that in this statement, Calvin **defines "faith" to be "knowledge"**. However, **not just any knowledge**, but a **particular knowledge** that is "firm and sure", and of "the divine favor toward us". And again, in the same volume at page 53, Calvin says, "**This is the meaning of faith*** when, *** he perceives that he is reconciled to God*****".

I hesitatingly take issue with the likes of Calvin, but without disrespect, there is constraint to declare that **faith and knowledge are separate and distinct, but related, phenomena**. As hereinbefore mentioned, **one comes inwardly to a position of faith, through knowledge**. We read in scripture, **Romans 10**

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they **believe in him** of whom they **have not heard**? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then **faith cometh by hearing**, and hearing **by the word of God**

The plain meaning of this passage, and I am not aware of any scripture that contradicts it, is that there is an intellectual basis for faith. Faith comes **through knowledge. *Knowledge is an understanding that a person acquires, either directly or indirectly, from the word of God*. *Faith is an inward commitment and devotion to God, based on such knowledge*.**

Such inward positioning involves both, the Spirit's enlightenment through scripture, and an individuals volitionally committing oneself to the Lord on the basis of the knowledge that the Spirit ministers to him. *Knowing God's will is not faith, but the inward commitment to Him for its accomplishment, is*. **Obedience is the actual doing of it. Thus, *faith is not***

what one knows, nor is it what one does, but rather, **faith** is the **inward disposition** to perform according to what we **know** to be **God's will**.

Further, concerning faith and knowledge, *faith through which we access God's grace to become a child of God, is no different than the faith by which we should live our life as a child of God*. **That is to say, faith** (an inward posture toward the Lord of commitment and devotion) **is always just that** (and inward posture toward the Lord of commitment and devotion). *However, as we increase in knowledge by the Holy Spirit's ministry to us through the scripture, we will realize a growing and more comprehensive relationship with the Lord*. **Some of the additional knowledge will present a challenge to our faith** (inward posture toward the Lord of commitment and devotion).

Another broadly held proposition is that faith is a gift divinely implanted within one's heart. There are many proponents of this "faith is a gift" concept.

The primary scripture cited to support this concept is Ephesians 2

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Their explanation of this passage is that the phrase "it is the gift of God" refers back to "faith". While some proponents of this "faith is a gift" concept hold strongly to this interpretation of verse 8, others suggest only that it is a plausible interpretation.

The plain reading of this passage shows that the subject is "salvation", and that salvation is: by grace, through faith, not of ourselves, it is a gift of God, and not of works. Other scripture supports an interpretation of gift referring to salvation.

John 4

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest **the gift** of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee **living water**.

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall **give** him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall **give** him shall be in him a well of water springing up into **everlasting life**.

Romans 5

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free **gift** came upon all men unto **justification of life**.

Romans 6

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the **gift of God** is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord

Proponents of the "faith is a gift" view also cite passages in Romans chapter 12, and 1 Corinthians chapter 12 for support. **Both of these**

passages are referring to faith in the context of gifts for ministry. These scriptures are:

Romans 12

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God hath dealt** to every man **the measure of faith**.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

1 Corinthians 12

8 For to one is **given** by the Spirit the **word of wisdom**; to another the **word of knowledge** by the same Spirit;

9 To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit;

The Romans' passage is instructing the Lord's people to use the gift of ministry according to the measure of faith that God has given them for the particular service. If one's ministry is teaching, then engage oneself in that particular gift for ministry.

The passage in 1 Corinthians is referring to faith as a specific gift for ministry. Neither of these passages is referring to faith as it relates to the gift of salvation, which is the subject matter of the passage in Ephesians cited above. At 1 Corinthians 12, one receives the **gift of faith** by the same Spirit as does one receive the **gift of healing**. Certainly the passage is teaching that **all do not have this endowment of faith, nor do all have the gift of knowledge or of healing**. This is not an untenable distinction to justify an interpretation, but rather, **these distinctions are evident within the cited passages.**

The proposition that faith is an infused gift from God is negated by evidence in scripture that faith has a volitional basis as before noted. The fact of faith having a volitional basis is evidenced at John 1

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name

In this passage we are told that Jesus came to "his own" (Israel), but some of them refused him. However, to those who received him, he gave power to become the sons of God. Both the rejection and the reception were acts of the will. Those to whom he came made a choice concerning his invitation. As used in this passage, the term "received" is equivalent to the term "believe". Thus, we see that believing is a volitional matter and is incongruous with the concept of faith as a divinely infused gift.

The scripture instructs us that the Father draws men to his Son by his Spirit. God's word is the vehicle that the Holy Spirit uses to give us the knowledge of his promises and provision in Christ. *On the basis of this knowledge some receive Him, while others do not.*

Scripture explains that there are two separate courses according to which people are inwardly disposed to live.

The course taken apart from the grace of God is seen at Ephesians 2

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein **in time past** ye walked according to **the course of this world**, according to **the prince of the power of the air, the spirit** that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation **in times past** in the **lusts of our flesh**, fulfilling the **desires of the flesh** and **of the mind**; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Ephesians 4

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that **ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk**, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The other path is accessed and traveled by God's enabling grace through faith:

Ephesians 2

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

8 For by **grace** **are ye saved** through **faith**; and that **not of yourselves**: it is the gift of God:

2 Peter 1

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through **the knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as **his divine power** hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through **the knowledge** of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the **divine nature**, having escaped the **corruption** that is in the world through **lust**.

Let us conclude by saying that those who are not God's children, and those of His children who are unfaithful, are inwardly committed and devoted to fulfilling the interests and desires that are according to the nature that we inherited from Adam, while those of His children, who live by faith, are committed and devoted to doing the will of God according to the divine nature that they partake of in Christ. These two opposing dispositions are unbelief and belief, respectively.

In the epistle by James we read: **James 1**

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in **faith**, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷ For let not that man think that he shall **receive any thing** of the Lord.

⁸ A **double minded** man is **unstable** in all his ways.

James is telling the **Lord's children** that if they lack wisdom they should ask of God, who will readily give it to them, **if they ask in faith**. However, **apart from faith**, one will receive nothing from the Lord.

Further, James describes **the doubleminded man** as unstable as a shifting wave of the sea. Such a man **shifts between the desires of the Adamic nature and the interests of the divine nature**. *These "brethren"(v-2) are not committed to the Lord only, and are in a state of unbelief.*

The apostle Paul also warns of the necessity to **continue in faith** at: **Colossians 1**

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you **holy** and **unblameable** and **unreproveable** in his sight:

23 **If ye continue in the faith** grounded and settled, and **be not moved away** from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister

Here we learn that our **commitment and devotion** to the Lord is a **volitional** matter, and that **we are responsible to continue** in such commitment.

The epistle by James states further at: **James 2**

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;

notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 **Even so** faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will **shew thee my faith** by my works.

Thus, we can see what faith is by observing in scripture those faithful servants of the Lord. They show us faith by their faithfulness in the circumstances with which they are confronted. Employing the herein explanation of faith, this passage is showing that **a claim to an inward commitment and devotion to God is credible only if accompanied by: careful observance of duty to do God's will (fidelity); steadfastness in one's**

relationship with Him when there is temptation to renounce or ignore it (**loyalty**); and waiting on the Lord for the outcome in life's situations (**dependence**). *Faith is always accompanied by faithfulness*. **Living by faith is simply holding this position. On this basis, God gives us grace according to his will for us-Romans 5:2.**

At the beginning of this consideration it was noted that Christianity consists of differing systems of *theological thought and practice to which people are committed*. However, the scripture is quite clear that the words “faith” and “believe” are referring to *ones devotion and commitment to a living and personal God and His Son*. By continuing in such devotion and commitment to the Lord He will, by enlightening us through His word and freeing us from our carnal ways (salvation), **fill us or make us complete in “the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”-Colossians 1:9,10.**

One final scripture and comment:

John 5

⁴⁴ How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Certainly, in this question Jesus is not seeking information, but rather, He is informing His audience that embracing honor from others (pride is the motivation for this) is a direct contradiction to an **inward posture** of devotion and commitment to God. However, seeking only that which God honors and esteems coincides with believing. If one's concept concerning “believe” and “faith” does not necessarily preclude, knowingly and willingly, the indulging of pride or any other indulgence of the flesh there is a basis for a scriptural examination of such concept.