

# Hebrews 11:6

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**INTRODUCTION** – Hebrews 11:6, *“and without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

## **PRINCIPLE #1 – WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD.**

**EXPLANATION** – Biblical faith is the act of believing, trusting, and relying on God and His Word. And this verse tells us that absolutely nothing from men can please God apart from believing, trusting and relying on Him. In other words, true Biblical faith is made up of three things:

- 1) *Knowledge*; A person cannot believe in what they do not know. If I don't know it, I can't believe it.
- 2) *Agreement*; A person can know something and yet not believe it. Therefore, agreement must go with knowledge for Biblical faith. I know something and I agree with it.
- 3) A *commitment* to trust in it, to act on it and live in light of it. I know it. I agree with it and I commit myself to it.

## **THE ONLY WAY FOR A PERSON TO OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE IS THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.**

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

Ephesians 2:8-9, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works that no one should boast.”*

Galatians 2:15-16, *“We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”*

Let's imagine a fire breaks out on the first floor of a two story house. A child is trapped in the second story and is crying for help from the window. If the infant jumps he will be killed because the window is too high. But there is a strong fireman standing on the ground yelling at the infant to jump and he will catch him.

In order to be saved from the fire by faith in the fireman the infant must know that the fireman is on the ground yelling at him to jump and he will catch him. The infant must believe that the fireman is strong enough to catch him. The infant must exercise his faith in the fireman by jumping into the fireman's arms in order to be saved from the fire. Committing himself to jumping out of the second story window and into the fireman's arms is proof that the infant has faith in the fireman to save him.

In the same way a sinful human being may know that the Bible teaches that Lord Jesus Christ was God in the flesh who lived a sinless life, died on the cross as their substitute to pay the penalty for God's wrath for their sin and rose physically from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven. They may wholeheartedly agree that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's one and only savior provided for sinful human beings and that Christ is able to save them from the penalty of their sin, but they are not saved until they put their trust in Him as their savior and cling only to him for salvation.

**APPLICATION** – Have you been saved and obtained eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Acts 10:43, *“All the prophets testify about Him (Jesus Christ) that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”*

### **ONCE WE ARE SAVED. WE ARE COMMANDED TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BY FAITH**

Galatians 3:11, *“The righteous shall live by faith.”*

Paul said that he and his partners walked by faith. Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

2 Corinthians 5:7, *“We live by faith not by sight.”*

Ephesians 6:16, *“. . . take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

What does it mean to live by faith? It means believing that God always keeps His promises and obeying His commands because He will bless us for our obedience. It means believing that the only living and true sovereign eternal God who is all wise, all loving, and all powerful is actively working all things together in our lives for our good and His glory. It means believing that God will give us wisdom, guidance and strength as we live our lives. It means believing that God will sustain us, protect us, and guard us as we live our lives. It means believing that our Heavenly Father will supply all our needs in this life as we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. It means believing that God will never leave us nor forsake us in this life and when we experience physical death we will go immediately into His presence. It means believing that God hears our prayers and answers them for our own good and His glory. It means believing that He will never let anything come into our lives that we cannot bear. It means believing the warnings about God's just judgment and living in light that fact.

God wants us to mature to the place where we have such an abiding trust in Him that the highly anxious moments of life (death of a loved one, loss of job, an unexpected illness, an accident)

can be faced with calmness. He wants us to believe that He is a good Heavenly Father who takes good care of His children.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Hudson Taylor’s faith was tested one night when a poorly dressed man came and asked him to come and pray for the soul of his wife who was dying. Hudson agreed to go and pray for her, but as they were walking to the man’s apartment, he began to wonder if he had made the right decision because the gentleman told him that he and his family had no money left at all. Hudson reached into his pocket and felt the one solitary coin in his pocket. It was all he had; besides he was starving himself and except the two bowls of porridge in his room, he had neither food nor money. Surely, God wouldn’t want him to give away the only coin he had. If only he had two coins, he would be happy to give the man one. When Hudson arrived at the man’s home, the dim light from a cheap candle revealed an exhausted woman and a baby not two days old, lying on a thin straw mattress in a corner. Standing or lying on the floor, were four or five other children in old clothes, without shoes or socks, and large hungry eyes.

Hudson thought, “Oh if only I had two coins. I would certainly give one to these poor people. But I only have one.” He began to tell these people about God, “You know, things are very bad for you now, but you must not be cast down. We have a Father in heaven who loves us and cares for us, and if we trust Him. He couldn’t go on. The words seemed to stick in his throat and something inside him seemed to say, “You hypocrite! How can you tell these people about a kind and loving Father in Heaven who can be trusted when you’re not willing to trust him yourself, without your money?”

Hudson gave up trying to preach and felt very depressed. He thought, “They don’t know that I only have one coin left in the whole world. If only I had more, I would give something to them, I really would.” He turned to the man, and said: “You asked me to come and pray for your wife. Let’s pray.” No sooner had he begun to pray than that accusing voice within said again, “... that coin in your pocket.”

He kept praying however, feeling more and more miserable. When he had finished, the man said to him in desperation: “You can see what a terrible state we’re in, sir. For God’s sake, help us!”

Suddenly Hudson remembered something he had read in the Bible, “Give to the one who asks you...” (Matthew 5:42) There was nothing left to do. The coin would have to go. Slowly he put his hand in his pocket, pulled out the coin and gave it to the man. Surprisingly, he began to feel quite cheerful. He told the man, “You may think I’m well off but that’s all the money I have in the world. But what I’ve been telling you is true. God really is a Father, and we can trust Him. I can trust Him and he realized he could. Hudson found himself speaking with great assurance and confidence about trusting God, now that the money was out of his pocket and in the man’s! He was amazed at the difference it made in his feelings. He felt great. As he made his way home, he didn’t have a care in the world. He held his head high, had a skip in his step and sang as loud as he could sing.

That night he remembered a verse in the Bible, “He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.” (Proverbs 19:17) So when he knelt to pray before going to bed, he asked God to repay the loan soon, otherwise he would have no dinner for the next day!

The following morning as he looked at his last bowl of porridge, he wondered when God would repay that loan. Within a few seconds his landlady appeared at his door. “Here’s a little package for you, Mr. Taylor,” she said. “Oh thank you!” replied Hudson, rather surprised. He took it from her, and looked at it. It was addressed to him all right but he did not recognize the writing. The postmark was blurred, so that did not help him, either. He decided to open it. Slitting the envelope, he drew out a sheet of paper. Inside was a pair of gloves and a gold coin. He stared at it in amazement; looked through the paper wrapping for a letter; scanned the handwriting and the postmark for a clue as to where it came from. At that moment he did not really care. As far as he was concerned, it had come straight from Heaven! It dawned on him that not only had his silver coin been returned, but ten times more!”

If we are going to please God, we must believe, trust, rely on and act on His promises concerning giving.

**APPLICATION** – Have you ever failed to obey God because of fear? How does that make you feel? How do you feel when you obey God? Is God pleased with your faith? Do you have enough faith in God to step out and take a small risk? Are you willing to test His promises to find out if they are trustworthy? Jesus said in Luke 6:38, *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

## **PRINCIPLE #2 – FAITH BELIEVES THAT GOD IS STILL THERE EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE HE ISN’T.**

**EXPLANATION** – Some false teachers in our day say that if you have faith, you’ll be healthy and wealthy. But that is false teaching. The people the author wrote this verse to were undergoing furious persecution simply because they were Christians and they demonstrated their faith in Christ by enduring their sufferings for His namesake. That is why the author of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 10:32-34, *“Remember those earlier days after you received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.”*

Because of these hard times the Hebrew Christians were almost ready to throw away their faith in God. So the author wrote Hebrews 11 to remind these fellow believers that God in times past has proven himself faithful even when the prospects for deliverance were bleak.

**ILLUSTRATION – ABRAHAM** – He was promised a son with his wife Sarah when he was about 70 years old. He waited 30 years for God to keep his promise. As he aged he never stopped believing God’s promise. Romans 4:18-21 tells us, *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed*

*and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver in unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."*

**APPLICATION** – How do you react when your circumstances look as though God has abandoned you? Do you grow stronger in your faith? Or do you grow weaker in your faith? Do you waver in unbelief and even begin to question the existence of God? Or Are you fully persuaded that God exists and has the power to do what He has promised?

### **PRINCIPLE # 3 – FAITH BELIEVES THAT GOD IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM.**

**EXPLANATION** – In order to please God, it is necessary to believe that He is moral and just and that He will reward faith in Him. We must believe that God is personal, loving, caring, gracious and merciful toward those who come to Him.

It is a shame that Satan has deceived so many people into believing God is not a rewarder of those who seek Him. Many people are afraid that God will ruin their lives. They think God will require them to give away their wealth, their friends, their habits, and take away all their fun and even make them endure tragedies.

But again and again the Bible teaches that God is a loving God who rewards those who seek and obey Him.

*Psalms 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart."*

*Psalms 34:10, "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing."*

*Psalms 84:11, "No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly."*

*Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things (food, shelter, clothing) shall be added to you."*

The Bible says that if you obey the Lord you will prosper spiritually and you'll enjoy the assurance of your salvation. You'll have peace and joy in the midst of the trials in this life. You'll find that the Lord is faithful to keep His promises.

**ILLUSTRATION – BROTHER ANDREW** – p.66 - at Bible School or seminary.

It soon came time for me to head out on the first of several training trips in evangelism. "You're going to like this, Andy," said Mr. Dinnen. "It's an exercise in trust. The rules are simple. Each student on your team is given a one-pound banknote. With that, you go on a missionary tour through Scotland. You're expected to pay your own transportation, your own

lodging, your food, any advertising you want to do, the renting of halls, providing refreshments...”

I said, “All on a one - pound note?” “Worse than that,” replied Mr. Dinnen. “When you get back to school after four weeks, you’re expected to pay back the pound!”

I laughed, “Sounds like we’ll be passing the hat all the time.” “Oh, you’re not allowed to take up collections! Never. You’re not to mention money at your meetings. All of your needs have got to be provided without any manipulation on your part or the experiment is a failure.”

I was a member of a team of five boys. Later when I tried to reconstruct where our funds came from during those four weeks, it was hard to. It seemed that what we needed was always just there. Sometimes a letter would arrive from one of the boys’ parents with a little money. Sometimes we would get a check in the mail from a church we had visited days or weeks earlier. The notes that came with these gifts were always interesting. People would write, “I know you don’t need money or you would have mentioned it. But God just wouldn’t let me get to sleep tonight until I had put this in an envelope for you.”

Contributions frequently came in the form of produce. In one little town in the highlands of Scotland we were given 600 eggs. We had eggs for breakfast, eggs for lunch, and eggs as hors d’oeuvres before a dinner of eggs with an egg white meringue dessert. It was weeks before we could look a chicken in the eye.

But money or produce, we stuck fast to two rules; we never mentioned a need aloud, and we gave away a tithe of whatever came to us as soon as we got it - within 24 hours if possible.

Another team that set out from school at the same time we did was not so strict about tithing. They set aside their ten percent all right, but they didn’t give it away immediately, “in case they ran into an emergency.” Of course they had emergencies! So did we, every day. But they ended their month owing money to hotels, lecture halls, and markets all over Scotland, while we came back to school almost ten pounds ahead. Fast as we could give money away, God was always swifter, and we ended with money to send to the Lord’s work overseas.

**APPLICATION** – Do you believe that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him? Or do you think he wants to ruin your life? Do you have a desire to know and walk with God? Do you seek Him diligently?

Ron Dunn says, “If I had written this verse I would have worded it like this. “He is a rewarder of those who seek the reward.” That makes sense to me. After all, if what I need is the reward, shouldn’t I seek the reward? If I need money shouldn’t I seek money? If I need a healing shouldn’t I seek healing? Not necessarily. This verse says that the reward goes to those who seek not the reward, but the rewarder. If you want peace, love, joy, happiness, shouldn’t I seek them? No they are given to us by God as we seek Him.”

As God's children we are to seek Him and Him alone. We are to seek His face, not his hand. And as we seek Him we will be rewarded not only with a close relationship with God, but his best gifts as well.

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**PRINCIPLE #2 – FAITH BELIEVES THAT GOD IS STILL THERE EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE HE ISN'T.**

**PRINCIPLE #3 – FAITH BELIEVES THAT GOD IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM.**

**SPECIFIC APPLICATION** – Ask God to increase your faith. Read the Bible to know how God loving, good, powerful and trustworthy God is. Learn his promises and trust in them. Learn his commands and obey them.

Perhaps our reward for seeking God is in heaven rather than on earth. But as Jim Elliot a missionary who was martyred in the 50's said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Hebrews 11:6, *"and without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*