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Faith Fixes Everything

*"If you just had enough faith: life would be good /
You will get what you want...if you just have more faith. Faith fixes everything."*

Was the Apostle Paul a man of Faith?

Myths About Faith:

1) Faith's aim is always to produce good things (as we judge good).
as if Faith's one aim is a life of ease and bounty / comfort and affluence.

2) Faith is the same as belief (giving mental assent to a list of
doctrinal truths and creeds).

c.f. John 3:16 = If I just believe the right facts about Jesus, I'm in / I'm a
Christian... right?

James 2:19

*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and
shudder.*

Faith includes beliefs but Faith is not simply a mental acknowledge of a set of
facts.

3) It is a blind leap into the unknown.

4) Faith is just strong belief / a devotion to anything. i.e. the object of
your faith doesn't matter.

Popular today: "faith is a positive mental attitude"

*"A positive attitude won't let you do anything. But it will let you do everything
better than a negative attitude will." Zig Ziglar*

This idea that faith gets you any dream / goal / solves any issue...

Does it fit the portrait of faith we have in Heb 11 (a section of Scripture
often referred to as: Faith's Hall of Fame or The Roll Call of Faith)?

What the Bible actually says about faith in this chapter on faith:

1) It is the only life that connects us to & pleases God

Heb 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.

The only way I can please God is to live by faith – the finite trusting the infinite one and this chapter lists those who did just that:

Heb 11

- 4 - By faith Abel
- 5 - By faith Enoch
- 7 - By faith Noah
- 8 - By faith Abraham,
- 20 - By faith Isaac
- 21 - By faith Jacob
- 22 - By faith Joseph
- 23 - By faith Moses' parents
- 23 - By faith Moses...

2) Faith involves responding with confident action

Heb 11

4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

23 By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born,

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt,

Heb 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
² This is what the ancients were commended for.

Faith is not tied to an outcome but on the surety that God can be trusted... He is the surety that we set our hope on.

Heb 11:11

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age — and Sarah herself was barren — was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Dan 3:

King Nebuchadnezzar Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – who are refusing to bow down to the golden image he erected.

¹⁵ *But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"*

¹⁶ *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."*

Faith is not believing hard enough that everything you want will happen in every situation.

Faith is believing no matter what happens God has a plan and whether you make it through the furnace or not – that He's got you covered.

c.f. Rom 8:28

3) Faith is seen in the lives of ordinary people

Faith is seen in the lives of real people, expressed by real pilgrims who have yet to reach home. People like us!

Were they heroes of the Faith because they were perfect or because they believed God?

4) Faith has a variety of outcomes and may or may not fix your immediate problems.

How does the myth ("if you just have enough faith you can fix anything in your life... you can have a life of ease / bounty...) **hold up in this Chapter?**

The author works through a list of faithful people - the 1st group

Heb 11

7 By faith Noah – spend decades building a boat

8 By faith Abraham, made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents,

22 By faith Joseph, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones. (400 years later)

24 *By faith Moses, 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt,*

The writer is running out of space so he says,

Heb 11:32-35

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jeph/thah, David, Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again.

Sounds good! Give me the life of faith that fixes everything... gets you the results you want... but it doesn't stop there.

Heb 11:35-38

Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. 37 They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Who are these people - The faithless?

Heb 11:39

*These were **all commended** for their faith,*

I want to be in middle group who:

<i>conquered kingdoms</i>	--	<i>gained what was promised</i>
<i>shut the mouths of lions</i>	--	<i>received back their dead</i>
<i>became powerful in battle</i>	--	<i>escaped the edge of the sword</i>

We all want to be in middle group.

But it doesn't read like that does it? It doesn't fit the widely circulated myth about how faith guarantees you the American dream of success and prosperity.

So - Was the Apostle Paul a man of Faith?

2 Cor 11:23

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

2 Cor 11:24-29

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

So why does one who lives by faith have the mouth of the lion shut and another, who lives by faith, eaten by a lion on the coliseum floor? I don't know – it comes down to trusting in the unseen God who loves me and has already secured the best for my life.

Rom 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5) Faith is tied to eternity – not a Luxury car or a pressure free life.

Heb 11:39

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

Heb 11:13-16

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Heb 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (God is perfecting your faith)