

Bible Study # 102
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Hebrews 6 Series—Doctrine # 2: Faith toward God

Let's get into the Bible study this evening. We started in Hebrews 6.

Hebrews 6:1-2, we saw that Paul says, "Therefore, leaving [going on from] the discussion of the elementary principles [the beginning, the foundation, the foundational principles, the beginning words of the doctrine] of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

If you notice, you will find that there are six foundational doctrines and resting on these six foundational doctrines is the seventh, which is "go on to perfection"—going on to completion and maturity as a Christian.

We will go through these seven doctrines step-by-step. We will go through the six foundational doctrines. They serve a very important part. They serve a very important part because everything else rests on the foundation. Going on to perfection rests on the foundation.

The first part of the foundation is "repentance from dead works." We went into that last time. Tonight we're **going to look at the second foundational doctrine of "faith toward God" and what is involved in faith toward God.**

Let's go to the book of James and see what does *not* constitute faith toward God. Does faith toward God merely mean that you believe that there is a God? Is just the fact that you're not an atheist all there is to this doctrine? Various opinion polls have been taken. I think the Gallop Poll took one and about 95 percent of the people in this country believe there's a God.

James 2:19, James writes, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" Oh! So, faith toward God must be a little more than simply believing that God exists. Over 90 percent of the people in this country claim to believe God exists.

2 Timothy 3:5, the Apostle Paul warned about those who have "a form of godliness but denying its power [authority]." This nation is filled with people who claim to believe there's a God. If you were to stop people along the street and say, 'Are you an atheist?', very few people, a very small percentage of the population, would claim

to be atheist. Paul says they have a form of godliness. They have an outward display, an outward manifestation of godliness, but they deny the power and the authority.

You believe there is one God? So does the devil. If all you do is simply believe that God is, you're not even one up on the devil.

Let's notice what it says in James 2.

James 2:14-20, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

Faith that is not accomplished by works is a dead faith, and a dead faith can't save anyone. What kind of faith is required for salvation? Faith toward God is one of the foundational doctrines. Faith toward God is the foundational part of the message for God's people. *The kind of faith toward God that is required is a living faith—a faith that includes and is manifested by works.* A faith that is not accompanied by works is a dead faith, and a dead faith can't save anyone.

Verses 21-26, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 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. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

The kind of faith that we are to have toward God is living faith. It is a faith that has life. It is a faith that is demonstrated by actions. That is a very important point.

Matthew 7:21, notice what it says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." So, it's not

enough just to profess Jesus Christ and say, 'Oh, yes, I believe in Jesus.' Is that all there is to being saved? Is that all there is? A lot of people think that salvation is sort of a one-time emotional experience. All you have to do is go down the aisle, join the church and say, 'Oh, I believe in Jesus.' And the preacher says, 'Oh, well, you're saved brother.' Is that what the Bible says? No, it doesn't say anything of the kind. It says, "faith without works is dead." It says, "not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father in heaven." The kind of faith that is talked about is the kind of faith that trusts God and is yielded to the will of God—the kind of faith that believes God. Salvation is not a one-shot thing. Salvation is a process.

Matthew 24:13, that's why it says, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Endures what? —He that holds on to the way of God, to the truth of God. He that endures through difficulty, adversity, persecution or whatever it is that may come. He that holds on faithfully to the Word of God and continues to walk with God in the midst of whatever confusion the world may have.

Down through the centuries, different ones of God's people have gone through different things—some more and some less. How long do you have to endure? You have to endure to the end. For some people, the end may be a few weeks, a few months or a year or two. For others the end may be 30, 40 or 50 years. We have to endure to *our* end. We have to endure to the conclusion—either the end of our life or the end of this age—whichever arrives first.

Matthew 7:21-22, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders [KJV, "wonderful works"] in Your name?'" "Oh, we did all these great things. We went out and we did this and we did that. We did all these wonderful things and we were doing it in Your name. Isn't that wonderful?"

Verse 23, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" It's not enough just to go out and do nice things. Here are those who work iniquity—they practice lawlessness. They disregard the law of God. They may do all kinds of things. They may talk about God. They may talk about Jesus Christ—"Do you know the

Lord?"—and all these wonderful things. They talk about all these things and have all the nice sayings. They do this little nice thing, that little good thing whatever it may be, but they're not keeping the commandments. They're not obeying God. They're just sort of creating their own little religion. A lot of people do nice things. You don't have to be a Christian to do nice things. Christians ought to do nice things; I'll grant you that. That's part of the commandments, too. But you can do nice things and not be a Christian. I haven't known very many atheists, but I'm sure that maybe one or two of them have done something nice for somebody. You can be a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Muslim or whatever, and you may do something nice. That's great! That's wonderful! But that's not what it means. That's not all there is to being a Christian.

Part of the foundation is "faith toward God." We looked at "repentance from dead works" last time, so we're not going to get off into that aspect. This is another part of the foundation—"faith toward God."

Let's go to I Peter. (If I don't move along we're not going to have time to get through faith toward God.)

I Peter 1:18, "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, ..." Our lives haven't been purchased with money.

Verses 19-21, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead [God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead.] and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." We believe in God through Jesus Christ who God raised from the dead and gave Him glory.

Let's understand a little bit about God. Faith toward God means that our faith is directed toward Someone. Who is God? What is God like? The world has all sorts of ideas. Various religions have various concepts of God. The Bible reveals the only authoritative answer to who and what God is. Our faith must be directed toward the true God. *Our faith must be a living faith and must be directed toward the true and living God—the Eternal God that created heaven and earth.*

There are some things that can be understood about God. How do we know about God? **There are two ways that we can know about God.**

Everything we can know about God is only possible because God has chosen to make Himself knowable. We can know what God has chosen to reveal about Himself.

Let's go to the book of Romans and notice one source of knowledge about God.

Romans 1:19-20, "because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." God says there's no excuse for being an atheist. "His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." ***There are a lot of things you can understand about God from creation.*** For one thing, you can understand that creation demands a creator, design demands a designer and life demands a life giver. Those are basic things.

Perhaps you were hiking in some remote wilderness area and were under the impression that you were the first person there, the first explorer there. Maybe you were exploring the North Pole back at the turn of the century and maybe you were Admiral Perry or whoever. You were coming along exploring in some area. All of a sudden, you looked down and there was a watch. What would be your conclusion? Would you marvel at how that rock had evolved into a watch? Of course not! You came back with that watch and said, 'Look at what this rock must have turned into!' That's stupid! Everybody would think that you're some sort of nut. If you looked down and found a watch, a radio or something like that, it would immediately prove to you somebody had been there first. How would you know? —Because what you had in your hand reflected an intelligent design—somebody made this; somebody conceived and manufactured it. You had proof that somebody else was there first because this was something that was made. It didn't just happen. People could look at that in the natural realm and see evidence that somebody was there first.

You go out hiking in the woods, and you look down and see a beer can, which is more likely than a watch. You know that somebody had been there; you know that the beer can didn't evolve. It wasn't a couple of rocks that sort of rubbed against each other over the centuries with the wind, rain and lightning and these two rocks sort of evolved into a beer can. That's insane! Anybody who seriously proposed that would be looked upon as a nut.

Now, if you think a beer can is complicated, what about the human mind? Let's not even look at the human mind; let's look at a cow's brain. I'll tell you what—you can make a beer can a lot quicker than you can make the brain of a cow. There's no comparison. There's absolutely no comparison!

We can know some things about God from creation. We can understand that there is an intelligent Creator. We can understand that God is a God of law and design because we find there are very predictable laws in nature. If you study physics, chemistry, biology or some of the hard sciences, you will find there are physical laws that work. We can calculate and mathematically predict certain things—it works.

When they were ready to launch the spacecraft to the moon, they didn't just sort of aim it up and hope it would hit. They calculated. They didn't shoot it at where the moon was. They shot it at where they knew the moon would be a few days later because it was going to take the spacecraft some time to get there.

When you're hunting and want to shoot a duck or goose on the wing, you don't shoot where it is. At least you're not trying to shoot where it is; you're trying to shoot where it will be. But it's a lot more complicated when you're shooting for the moon. That's something you calculate out mathematically. It's predictable. There are mathematical laws. The only limit to what man can do in that regard is the limits of what man can understand about what God created. So, the creation tells us about the Creator. God reveals Himself through creation. But there are things we can't know about God from creation. You can understand a certain amount, but you can't understand everything about God from creation. ***God has given us His Word, which reveals to us information that we could not otherwise have come to understand.***

Let's notice Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ..." In these two verses we learn about two great Beings. One is called God and One is called the Son. We find that the One called the Son was the instrument of creation—"through whom He made the worlds [universe]."

Let's continue.

Verse 3, speaking of the Son, "who being the brightness of His glory [God's glory] and the express image of His person, and upholding all

things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”

We read of two great Beings who were involved in the creation. We find that God, the One we know as the Father—we’re going to see that in just a moment—made things through Jesus Christ, the Son. We find that Jesus Christ was not simply an angel; He was not some super angel.

Verses 4-8, “having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’ But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.’”

We find that the Son is also God. God, the One that we know as God the Father, addresses the Son and He says, “Your [speaking to the Son] throne, O God, is forever.” Not only is the Father God, but the Son is also God. Does that mean there are two Gods? Well, no. We’re going to see that in just a moment.

Verse 9, “‘You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God [speaking to Christ], The Father addressed Christ as God in verse 8, and now in verse 9, we read of the Father being addressed as God. “...has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” “Messiah,” of course, means “Anointed One.”

Christ is not an angel.

Verses 13-14, “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Our destiny is not to become angels. We are heirs of God. Angels were created as ministering spirits.

Hebrews 2:1, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away [KJV, “let them slip”].”

It comes on down, speaking of these things.

Verse 9, we see, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little [or, “for a little while” as it could be rendered] lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” The angels can’t die. Christ came and

‘He was made temporarily lower than the angels, for the suffering of death. We now see Him, crowned with glory and honor, that He might taste death for everyone.’

Verses 10-11, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author [KJV, “captain”] of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one [of God], for which reason He [Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren...”

Here, we see that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. We see that it was fitting for Christ, “for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory.” God is bringing many sons into glory. He made the Captain of our salvation (Jesus Christ) perfect (complete) in sufferings. Here, we have a little bit of insight into the nature of God.

Let’s go back to the book of John.

John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

In Hebrews, we read about God and the Son. We read that the Son also had the rank of God.

Hebrews 1:8, “But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;’”

Verse 9, “...therefore God, Your God, has anointed [chosen or selected] You [the Messiah]....”

We read of two Beings with the rank of God. We read that Christ is the Captain of our salvation. God is “bringing many sons into glory”—His heirs.

John 1:1, we see, “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” So, again, two Beings are described—both called God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [This would be a reference to the One that we know as God the Father.] and the Word was [also] God.”

Verse 14, we find, “And the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Again, we find two Beings described—two Personalities, two Individuals that both hold the rank of God. Does that mean there are two Gods?

Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The word for “God” in the Hebrew language is “ELOHIM.” In the Hebrew language, the “IM” ending is a plural

ending similar to “s” in English. So, when God introduces Himself in the Bible, He introduces Himself by a name that carries the connotation of something that includes more than one Being. There’s one God, but God includes, as we saw in John 1:1 and Hebrews 1, the One that we know as God the Father and the One we know as Jesus Christ, the Word.

Verses 26-27, that’s why it says, “Then God [ELOHIM] said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him;’” Again, we see that God said, “Let Us.” Who are “Us”? We have, here, a description of what is involved with God. We begin to understand a little bit about God. We understand that God is the Creator, God is the Designer and God is the Lawgiver. God reveals Himself to us in the Scriptures as the One who is described as God or as God the Father and also including the One we know as Jesus Christ, the Word—the One who was in the beginning with God, the One who was also God and became flesh and dwelt among us.

There are many other places we could go to, but we begin to understand a little bit about the nature of God. We understand a little bit of God’s very nature.

We are to have faith toward God—the God who is the Creator, the God who is the giver of every good thing. We are to have faith toward Him.

Let’s understand a little bit more about this faith—the kind of faith that we’re to have. We understand a little more about God. God describes Himself in this way.

Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27; John 1:18). The Israelites of the Old Testament period and the Jews of Christ’s day didn’t really understand anything about the Father. There are glimpses and little indications of information about the Father in the Old Testament, but they really didn’t understand anything about the existence of the One that we know as the Father and the One that we know as Jesus Christ. They didn’t really grasp that. Since Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father, we can have a clearer understanding.

Some of the prophets had insight to understand. I think, certainly, Moses and David did and others also. Certainly, God gave them insight to understand some of that, but by and large, the people did not understand. We can understand in terms of faith toward God.

Now, let’s look at the kind of faith—the kind of trust or confidence—that we are to have. **There are several different ways that the word “faith” is translated.** Faith toward God has to do with trusting God, having confidence in God.

Let’s notice something in Matthew 27:20. There is a term in the Greek language that, we’re going to see, is translated several different ways. When we look at all the different ways it is translated, we’re going to have a fuller explanation of what kind of faith, trust and confidence is needed if it’s faith toward God.

First, you have to know who God is, and, secondly, you have to understand the kind of trust or confidence we’re to have toward Him. We’ve already seen it has to be a living faith and it has to be directed toward the Creator God.

Matthew 27:20, “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.” The word “persuaded” is the word I’ll call your attention to. Notice this word “persuaded.”

Now, let’s turn the page and notice some verses. Verses 41-43, “Likewise the chief priests, also mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” The word “trusted” in verse 43 is the same word that’s translated “persuaded” in verse 20. One aspect of faith toward God is being ***persuaded*** of what God says.

In Matthew 27:20, it’s talking about people persuading other people to the wrong thing. You can put your trust—you can be persuaded—of the wrong things. People were persuaded to ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus. They had trust. They had confidence. They had faith. They were convinced. They were wrong! Our faith, our persuasion, our trust must be toward God.

There were individuals that were persuaded by the high priest, but they were persuaded in the wrong thing. They were persuaded to crucify the Messiah and ask for the release of a thief and a murderer. They were persuaded. They didn’t have faith toward God. They had faith and persuasion toward other people—other people who led them astray.

When we look at the foundations in Hebrews 6, where must our faith be toward? Our faith must be toward God. It’s faith toward God. Faith, the kind of trust and confidence we’re to have, involves being persuaded. That’s an important part of faith.

Let's go on to Mark 10 and notice that people have faith in different things; people trust in different things.

Mark 10:23-24, "Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, 'Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!'"

Here, we have the same word; it's rendered "*trust*." It was rendered "persuaded" back in Matthew 27. Here, it's people who have trust in riches. Their faith, their confidence is in material things. They're depending on money. A lot of people put their trust and confidence in the wrong thing—and people have been "burned."

Years ago there were people who had money in the bank. The 30s came and the banks failed. The banks closed in much of the country, and a lot of people lost what they had in the bank. There were people who came out of that and they said, 'Boy, I'm not going to put my money back in the bank.' There were old people that never would put their money back in the bank. They kept it between the mattresses, buried it in the backyard or something. Of course, that wasn't the solution to the problem either because if you put it between the mattresses, somebody is liable to break in and steal it, the house can burn down or any number of things. If your confidence isn't in something that will never fail, then you're in trouble.

Here, it describes people who have their trust in riches. A lot of people have their trust in riches. They depend on money; they think that they can buy their way out of whatever the problem is.

Luke 11:21-22, "'When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.'" Here is a fellow who trusted in his armor. Today we would say he trusted in his semi-automatic weapon or in his gun. He trusted in his "whatever" it may be.

Maybe you've seen the signs. Somebody really "smart" will have a little sign up, "This vehicle is protected by Smith and Wesson," and there will be a little picture of a pistol—their gun, their armor in which they trust. That's all well and good. You can protect your place with that until somebody comes that has a bigger one. 'A strong man guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.' Boy, he's all fortified and locked up. He's all armed and ready. Everything is great

until somebody comes along that's "stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted." They pry his pistol from his cold, dead fingers and then they have two pistols. His armor wherein he trusted didn't deliver.

The point is riches won't deliver and armor won't deliver. People put their trust in that. They trust in what their money can get for them. The trouble is that those things will fail. That's where a lot of people's confidence is. If that's where their confidence is, they're going to be in trouble.

Coming on a little further in Luke, let's notice something else. Here's somebody else that made a serious mistake in what they trusted.

Luke 18:9-10, "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.'" Remember the story?

Verse 11, "'The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.''"

Verse 13, "'And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'"

The Pharisee's problem was he trusted in himself. He was self-reliant. The problem with self-reliance is that you can't see yourself through. You rely on yourself, but sooner or later you're going to fail. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous. The publican was conscious of his spiritual inadequacy.

Brethren, if we see ourselves in proper relationship with God, one of the things of which we have to be fully persuaded is that we are very inadequate when it comes to comparison to God.

That's what it means to be poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3). It doesn't mean to have just a little dab of God's Holy Spirit. It's not saying that you should be impoverished when it comes to the Spirit of God—God's nature and power that He pours out on His people, which we may all be partakers of. We're all partakers of one Spirit.

It says "the poor in spirit." That doesn't mean you ought to make sure you partake in just a tiny bit of it because you're more blessed if you have a little then if you have a lot. No, that's not what it's talking about at all. When it says "the poor in spirit," it's talking about those who recognize their spiritual poverty, those who recognize how totally inadequate they are, of and by themselves

and how totally dependent upon God they are—those who recognize how dependent they are upon God’s grace, mercy and kindness that He extends.

Everything that we know and do is ultimately because God takes the initiative in our lives. We have to respond to God’s initiative. We have an understanding of God’s truth. Why? Is it because we are the smartest, most educated people in the world? It’s because God takes the initiative. He took the initiative with you and with me. He opened our minds to understand the truth and the truth made sense. It didn’t make sense to your neighbor or to your relatives, but it made sense to you. Why? –Because God took the initiative and He opened your mind.

We are dependent upon God—deeply dependent. Here are individuals who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. They depended on themselves. They were proud of what they were.

Isaiah 66:2, we are told, “...‘But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.’” If we want God to take notice of us, we have to understand how limited we are, how weak we are, and how dependent upon God we are for everything. We are not to trust in ourselves. We are not to trust in our armor. We are not to trust in our riches. We are to trust in God.

Let’s notice another aspect of this kind of trust, this kind of confidence. We find it in Acts 5:34; Gamaliel stood up in the council concerning Peter and John.

Acts 5:39-40, Gamaliel told them, “‘but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.’ And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.” Did the disciples quit preaching?

Verse 42, “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” They weren’t going to back off from doing that. Of course not!

Verse 40 says, “And they agreed with him [Gamaliel],” They agreed with him. Now, this word “agreed” is the same word that’s translated persuaded or trusted. So, one aspect of trust is **agreement**. If you trust someone, then you agree with them. You’re on the same wavelength. You’re persuaded that they are right. You’re persuaded of what they say. You agree with what they say. There are different aspects of this kind of trust. You trust them. You

agree with them. You are persuaded of what they say.

Now let’s come on down a little further. Let’s notice a little more about this kind of persuasion.

Acts 18:1, “After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.”

Verse 4, “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.” This is the same term. He persuaded them; they were convinced. They trusted and agreed with what he said.

Come over to Acts 19.

Acts 19:8, “And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.” He persuaded in things concerning the Kingdom of God. Again, the same term. If we’re going to have faith toward God, we must be persuaded of what God says. We must be persuaded of the truth. We must be persuaded of what God says. We must be persuaded of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. We must be persuaded. We must agree with God. That’s all a part of trusting God.

Continuing in Acts 26, we’ll notice another example.

Acts 26:28, “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’” Agrippa was almost persuaded. That’s not good enough. He almost had faith toward God. He was almost persuaded. He was almost in agreement. He almost had trust. Not quite! Being persuaded is a part. Being persuaded, being in agreement and trusting—those are all aspects of faith toward God.

Let’s go to the book of Galatians and notice a couple of more things that are aspects of faith toward God.

Galatians 5:7, “You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?” The word “obeying” is the same word we’ve been reading. “Obeying” is the same word that’s rendered trust, agreed and persuade. “Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

When it comes to our relationship with God, the kind of trust that we’re to have is the kind of trust that Jesus Christ had. That’s what it says. It was used of Him in Matthew.

Matthew 27:43, “‘He trusted in God;’” What kind of trust did Christ have toward the Father? Was it just some sort of vague sentiment? Was it some sort of “nicey-nice” feeling in His heart? No. He was in agreement with God. He was persuaded of what God said. He had trust and confidence in God. He obeyed what God said. If you really trust God, you will obey what He

says. Faith toward God includes and is manifested by **obedience**. If we don't obey Him, then we don't really trust Him. What if God says, 'Come here,' and we don't? We say, 'Well, I trust You. Oh, yes, I have faith. I trust You, but I just don't want to come here.' That's not faith. Faith and obedience go hand-in-hand together. You cannot separate faith and obedience. It's used that way back in Hebrews. We are going to see that as we come on further. We have to obey the truth. The truth is not merely an academic list of things that we believe as a purely academic exercise. The truth must be acted upon and must be obeyed. If you don't obey the truth, you don't really believe it.

James 2:19, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" Just simply a matter of belief, in an academic sense of the word, is not what is meant. You believe that Jesus Christ existed and that He walked the earth? That's great! So do a lot of people. They may say certain things and believe that Christ was crucified and resurrected. So does the pope. At least he says he does. I assume he does. He says he does. So does Billy Graham and a whole host of others. Is that all there is? Is that all that's meant by faith toward God? Well, if that's all that's involved, then we might as well go back to being Baptists or Catholics because it's a lot more convenient, isn't it?

There's a lot more to faith toward God than just simply acknowledging the existence of God or even acknowledging that Jesus lived, died, was resurrected and ascended to heaven. Satan the devil believes that. He watched it happen. But, you see, faith without works is dead (James 2:20). It's not enough simply to believe those things as a matter of history. The kind of faith that God is talking about is the kind of faith that encompasses trust, being persuaded, being in agreement and having the attitude of obedience and surrender. It's a living faith.

Notice in the book of Philippians.

Philippians 1:6, "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ..."

This word "**confident**" is the same term—having trust, being persuaded or being confident. Our relationship with God—understanding who God is, having trust and confidence toward Him, being persuaded that what He says is right, being in agreement with Him and obeying Him—is a natural outgrowth of faith.

Come back to Hebrews 11, the faith chapter. Maybe that's where you thought I was going to stay tonight since we were talking about

faith toward God, but we're only going to touch on Hebrews 11. There's nothing wrong with preaching on Hebrews 11. I've preached many sermons on Hebrews 11 over the years. It's a very inspiring section to go through when you're studying about faith, but there are a lot of other things about faith. As you probably get the idea, we could go through a host of things on faith. We could go through Bible study after Bible study and sermon after sermon on faith.

Hebrews 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured [KJV, "persuaded"] of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." There were individuals who lived in faith. They lived their lives in faith toward God, and they "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them." "Assured" is the same term—they were persuaded of them. Faith toward God involves being assured of what God says. They were agreeing with what God said, obeying what God said, trusting in what God said and having confidence in what God said. These are all aspects of the kind of living faith that we must have toward God.

This is a part of the very foundation of our Christianity. The seventh and final doctrine—going on to perfection—is built up on six doctrines. You can sort of see six piers anchored down that serve as a foundation.

Hebrews 6:1-2, "...let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms,"

We need to go on to perfection. We need to go on to Christian completion and maturity, but you can't go on to that if you don't have the foundation. We need to understand what the foundation is. Faith toward God is a very important part of the foundation. It's reflected in Hebrews 11. Abraham, Noah and others were persuaded. They were absolutely convinced and had confidence in what God said because they were prepared to put their lives on the line. You don't give up everything for something you're not persuaded of. We better know, and we better know that we know, when it comes to the truth of God. Are we persuaded? How much confidence do we have? How do we reflect that? Let's notice one other place.

1 John 3:19, "And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." The word "assure" is the same word we've been looking at—trusting in God, having

confidence in God or being persuaded of what God says. Being persuaded of the truth—faith toward God—has to do with *assurance*.

Verses 18-19 say, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth [You know that you are of the truth.], and shall assure our hearts before Him.” You have trust and confidence.

Verses 20-22, “For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” It has to do with obedience. It has to do with the assurance we can have when we’re walking with God and serving Him in deed and in truth—not merely talking the good fight but acting on what God said.

Faith—real faith—involves action. Real faith is not merely a sentimental feeling. It’s not merely an academic belief. Real faith has to do with confidence, persuasion, agreement, trust, obedience and assurance. It is all wrapped up in what we must do if we truly have faith and confidence toward God because the faith to which God calls us, as His people, is a living faith.

Galatians 3:26-27 say, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Our faith toward God is through Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us. We put on Christ. Christ dwells in us through the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9; Galatians 2:20)—God’s very power and nature. That is the means by which Christ dwells in us and permeates our lives. *Our faith—living faith toward God—is through Jesus Christ our Savior, the Messiah*—the One who gave Himself for us, the One who was glorified and ascended on high through the power of the Father. The One who is coming again to rule the world as King of kings and Lord of lords. The One who is now at the right hand of the Father on high as our High Priest and our Intercessor. We have access to the Father through Him. Our faith, our confidence in God, is through Jesus Christ.

Let’s notice in the book of Hebrews once again.

Hebrews 3:18-19, “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest [speaking of Old Testament Israel; the ones who came out of Egypt with Moses], but to those who did not

obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:1-3, “...let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest....” God’s Word must be mixed with faith.

“The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” They didn’t genuinely believe it. Because they didn’t genuinely believe it, they didn’t act upon it. It’s not enough to simply, academically know the truth. It’s not enough to hear the truth. It’s not enough to read the truth. Faith toward God involves believing the truth with a living faith. A living faith! “The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” Faith toward God is a living faith—a confidence, an assurance.

Let’s notice 1 Peter.

1 Peter 1:21, “who through Him [speaking of Christ] believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

God the Father raised up Jesus from the dead and restored to Him that glory that He shared with the Father before the world began. Remember, in the prayer that Jesus prayed, He asked the Father to give Him once again that glory that He had shared with Him before the world was (John 17:5). Through Him we believe in God—a real belief, a real faith toward God. God the Father raised up Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, restored to Him that glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

Where did He raise Him up to? What did He do? He raised Him up to glory! What did we see in Hebrews 2:9 just a few minutes ago at the beginning of the Bible study?

Hebrews 2:9-10, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Faith toward God involves confidence and *reliance on the promises of God*. Just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the Father and restored to the glory that He shared with the Father before the world began, so is He going to come again. The trumpet will sound, the graves

will be opened and those of us that are alive and remain will be changed in a moment.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, "...we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,"

Hebrews 2:10, 'He will bring many sons into glory.'

Faith toward God is confidence, reliance and trust, coupled with obedience. It is reflected through obedience to the true and living God who has appointed us as His heirs—heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14)—to bring us into His Family, to bring us into glory, to share with us His glory. Faith toward God is a very important part of the foundation of our Christian life.

Next Bible study we're going to look at the third part of the foundation, which is "the doctrine of baptisms." You might notice that the word is plural—baptisms. You may wonder what we have to say about baptisms that can take up a whole Bible study. You'll find that there's more than one—and you don't want all of them. This is one case where two out of three is really good. Next Bible study we'll see what those baptisms are.