



**The Book of Hebrews 11:1\_Now Faith!**  
*The Definition and Characteristics of Biblical Faith*  
April 12, 2026

**Holy Text: Hebrews 11:1**

**Context:**

1. Recall that the author has been encouraging the true believer to hold fast to God and His promises in Christ. He does so via exhortation AND admonition (warnings, cautions)...

**Hebrews 10:23-39 (KJV)** *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* **24** *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

**26** *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

**30** *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*

**35** *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

2. The writer, via the Holy Spirit, says to...
  - Hold fast! Consider! Provoke one another unto love and good works! Do not forsake the assembling! (Heb 10:22-25)
  - He reminds his hearers that there are “some” who forsake, who sin willfully after truth has come, and who will be subject to a fiery judgment. (Heb 10:26-27)
  - He exhorts never to “trodden the Son of God underfoot” and neglect the truth of the Gospel... that Christ poured out His holy blood to save us! (Heb 10:28-29)
  - Those who do so will endure the vengeance and judgment of the living God; such is a fearful thing! (Heb 10:30-31)

- Rather, he encourages the true hearers to remember their former days of courage in the midst of persecution, sacrifice for Christ and His messengers, and their loving care and compassion...and essentially says to them, “Do not quit now!” (Heb 10: 32-34)
  - “Do not cast away your confidence” he exclaims in the Spirit! There is a great reward coming for those who trust the LORD! (Heb 10:35)
3. And then, thankfully, the author encourages the hearer’s heart. He essentially says (and we are paraphrasing and summarizing our applications from preaching through these Texts):
    - You need patience! Difficult times because of the Gospel are here. But hold on! Wonderful promises are ahead! (Heb 10:36)
    - In just a little while, Christ is coming! He will not delay! Either He will return in His Second Advent, or you will go to be with Him! All the pain will all make sense then! All the sacrifice for His glory will be worth it! (Heb 10:37)
    - So since you are the “just” (all true believers are justified freely by His grace and His blood! Rom 3:24, 5:9), you will live by faith! (Heb 10:38a, *pistis* in Greek)
    - Those who are not just will not live by faith. They will draw back unto perdition, proving themselves to be false converts. God has no pleasure in them! (Heb 10:38b, 39)
    - But that’s not who “we” are says the author; WE (true saints of God) are them who believe to the saving of the soul! (Heb 10:39)
  4. This is the context of Hebrews 11:1. Our verse is “Gospel-framed.” It is set in the foundation of Christ’s propitiation and atoning sacrifice for our sins; truly believing that He died and rose again on the Third Day. As the writer put it in the previous chapter:

***Hebrews 10:16-22 (KJV)** This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; **17** And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. **18** Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. **19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; **21** And having an high priest over the house of God; **22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

### **The Biblical Definition of Faith**

1. Our Text gives it:
  - **Hebrews 11:1 (LSB)** *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
  - **Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)** *Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*
2. Over the past couple of generations, the “word of faith” false teaching has spread...that faith is a force and that words are the containers of the force. Teaching says never speak “negative confessions.” Ultimately, according to them, faith is about getting what you want from God.
3. No beloved, biblical faith is ABOUT God. It is about His plan. It is about *knowing* without *seeing*, believing in God and His perfect plan, and trusting Him unto obedience. This is a theme in Hebrews chapter 11, as it lists those who “died in faith, not having received the promises.” (v.13)

4. The word “substance” in Heb 11:1 in the KJV does not mean a literal, physical substance or an invisible, ethereal power. Rather, the Greek *hupostasis* means “a setting or placing under, or substructure or foundation.” (Thayer) This implies the faith sits on something, or more accurately, Someone! This Someone is He in Whom we place our “hope.”

**Romans 8:24-25 (KJV)** *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

**Colossians 1:27 (KJV)** *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

**Titus 2:11-14 (KJV)** *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

**1 Peter 1:3-5 (KJV)** *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.*

5. The word “evidence” in our Text is *elegchos* in Greek, which means “proof or conviction.” (Strong’s Dictionary) Faith knows “that the unseen, spiritual blessings of Christianity are absolutely certain and real. In other words, it brings the future within the present and makes the invisible seen” in our hearts.<sup>1</sup>
6. Biblical faith is a much-needed spiritual shield!

**Ephesians 6:16 (KJV)** *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

**1 Peter 5:8-9 (KJV)** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

**1 John 5:4-5 (KJV)** *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

7. **Our Definition:** Biblical Faith is a living channel of trust from the creature to the Creator, the God of the Bible. It is based upon God’s own attributes (love, sovereignty, unchangeableness, grace, authority, power, etc.) and grows throughout the believer’s life. Biblical faith moves the believer to obedience, sustains peace and joy regardless of circumstances, and defeats the devil!

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from William MacDonald.

### **13 Characteristics of Biblical Faith**

1. It is imparted by God

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV)** 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.

**Philippians 1:29 (KJV)** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

2. It is rooted in Scripture

**Romans 10:17 (KJV)** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**James 1:21 (KJV)** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

3. It rightly understands the Gospel

**John 20:30-31 (KJV)** And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: **31** But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

**Romans 1:16-17 (KJV)** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

4. It is God-centered, not man-centered!

**Mark 11:22 (KJV)** And Jesus answering saith unto them, *Have faith in God.*

**John 14:13-14 (KJV)** *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

**James 4:1-3 (KJV)** From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? **2** Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. **3** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

5. It produces heartfelt obedience

**Proverbs 3:5-7 (KJV)** Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. **6** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. **7** Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

**James 1:22 (KJV)** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

**James 2:17-20 (KJV)** 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. **19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou

doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. **20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

6. It is confirmed and strengthened during hard times

**1 Peter 1:6-9 (KJV)** *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.*

**James 1:2-4 (KJV)** *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **3** Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. **4** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

7. It asks like a child to their Father

**Matthew 7:7-11 (KJV)** *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: **8** For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. **9** Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? **10** Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? **11** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

8. It believes in spite of seemingly impossible situations

**Jeremiah 32:27 (KJV)** *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*

**Jeremiah 32:17 (KJV)** *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*

**Luke 1:37 (KJV)** *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

9. It trusts in the goodness and mercy of God regardless of His answer!

**Psalms 13:5-6 (KJV)** *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. **6** I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

**Psalms 31:19 (KJV)** *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*

**Psalms 52:8 (KJV)** *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

10. It is hated by the world, the flesh, and devil

**John 15:18 (KJV)** *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

**Galatians 5:16-17 (KJV)** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

**1 Peter 5:8-9 (KJV)** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

11. It has as its highest expression, “Not my will, but Thy will be done!”

**Matthew 6:10 (KJV)** *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

**Matthew 26:38-39 (KJV)** *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

12. It expresses itself through praise!

**Psalms 28:7 (KJV)** *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*

**Psalms 13:5-6 (KJV)** *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. 6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

13. It will be rewarded!

**Hebrews 11:6 (KJV)** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

**Hebrews 11:24-26 (KJV)** *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

### **Closing Thoughts and Prayers**

Thomas Watson said, “There are two graces which Christ uses above any other to fill the soul with joy—faith and hope—because these two fetch all their wine of joy without door. Faith tells the soul what Christ has done for it and so comforts it; hope revives the soul with the news of what Christ will do. Both draw at one tap—Christ and His promise.” So true!

A Christ-glorifying response to a message like this might include praying as the apostles did and believing our LORD’s response:

**Luke 17:5-6 (KJV)** *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

Please LORD. For Thy glory! Amen!