

WHAT IS FAITH?

by Guy M. Richard

TO THE READER: A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. The word *faith* can mean many different things to different people in different contexts. If you grew up in the church, *faith* was a word you used. Explain what faith is. (5-6)
2. Read Hebrews 11:1 in several translations. From this verse, how can you prove that faith is more than just wishful thinking? (6-10)
3. Now read Romans 12:1-2, especially verse 2. How does this verse tell us how we can *know* the will of God?
4. Read Acts 2:48. What was it the apostles were “teaching?”
5. What is the relationship between *knowledge* and *faith*? (10-15)
6. What relationship is there between *faith* and *trust*? (15-18)

7. Is faith just what I believe, or is there more to it? (18-22)

8. On a scale from 1-7, how strong would you rate your faith? What can you do to strengthen it? (22-25)

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

Individual: Here is a way to measure your spiritual growth: On the following pages is a chart of the Fruit of the Spirit. How do you honestly rate yourself on each part? On the two you scored yourself lowest, do a study of all the references in the NT where this fruit is explained. Once you understand what God is looking for by this part of the fruit, make a plan to spend a lot of time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal all the ways you can demonstrate this fruit in your life. Then, at this time next year, reevaluate and note your growth in this area.

Group: Think about this together: What things need to be improved in your church in order for it to demonstrate faith? What things can you do as a group to bring this about? This might take a lot of prayer, both as a group and individually. Be realistic, but look for things that could really stretch your faith. Remember, God tells us He wants to do **measurably more** than we ask or could even imagine He would do. He is a big God with big plans. Let this be the motto that drives you: "Attempt such great things for God that they are doomed to failure if He is not in them."

For Further Study

Faith Victorious: Finding Strength and Hope in Hebrews 11, Richard D. Phillips. P&R, 2002.

Legacy of Faith: From Women of the Bible to Women of Today, Lydia Brownback. P&R, 2002.

Treasures of Faith: Living Boldly in View of God's Promises, Sharon & Chuck Betters. P&R, 1998.

Find this and more at www.pcabookstore.com.

PLAN YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

LOVE

How do you evaluate your ability to love unconditionally?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...

JOY

How do you evaluate your ability to “count it all joy”?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...

PEACE

How do you evaluate your relationship with 1) God, and 2) others?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...

PATIENCE

How do you evaluate the degree to which you are maintaining balance with 1) God, and 2) others?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...

KINDNESS

How do you evaluate your ability to be wise and discerning in this area?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...

GOODNESS

How satisfied are you with the way your life reflects the life of Jesus to others?

Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Satisfied

Between now and this time next year, I plan to improve in this area by ...
