

Faith in Jesus Christ

Chapter 18

What Is Faith?

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. It is a spiritual gift, and it is necessary to our salvation. King Benjamin declared, “Salvation cometh to none . . . except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Mosiah 3:12).

Faith is a “hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21; see also Hebrews 11:1). Faith is a principle of action and power that motivates our day-to-day activities.

Would we study and learn if we did not believe we could obtain wisdom and knowledge? Would we work each day if we did not hope that by doing so we could accomplish something? Would a farmer plant if he did not expect to harvest? Each day we act upon things we hope for when we cannot see the end result. This is faith. (See Hebrews 11:3.)

Many scriptural stories tell how great things were accomplished through faith.

By faith Noah built an ark and saved his family from the flood (see Hebrews 11:7). Moses parted the waters of the Red Sea (see Hebrews 11:29). Elijah called down fire from heaven (see 1 Kings 18:17–40). Nephi called for a famine (see Helaman 11:3–5). He also asked the Lord to end the famine (see Helaman 11:9–17). Seas have been calmed, visions opened, and prayers answered, all through the power of faith.

For teachers: This chapter is organized under four section headings. Each heading is a question about faith. You could use these questions as a guide for your lesson. If the classroom setup allows for small group discussion, consider dividing class members into groups of four. Ask each group to divide the sections of the chapter among themselves. Then invite each person to do the following with his or her assigned section: (1) Read it. (2) Find scriptures that help answer the question in the section heading. (3) Think about personal experiences that relate to the section. (4) Share thoughts about the section with the other group members.



As we carefully study the scriptures, we learn that faith is a strong belief of truth within our souls that motivates us to do good. This causes us to ask: In whom should we have faith?

- Think about your everyday activities. What are things you act upon each day that you cannot see the end results of? How does faith move you to action?

Why Should We Have Faith in Jesus Christ?

We must center our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To have faith in Jesus Christ means to have such trust in Him that we obey whatever He commands. As we place our faith in Jesus Christ, becoming His obedient disciples, Heavenly Father will forgive our sins and prepare us to return to Him.

The Apostle Peter preached that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12; see also Mosiah 3:17). Jacob taught that men must have “perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel [Jesus Christ], or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 9:23). Through faith in the Savior and through repentance, we make His Atonement fully effective in our lives. Through faith we can also receive strength to overcome temptations (see Alma 37:33).

We cannot have faith in Jesus Christ without also having faith in our Heavenly Father. If we have faith in Them, we will also have faith that the Holy Ghost, whom They send, will teach us all truth and will comfort us.

- How can faith in Jesus Christ influence us in our Church callings? in our family relationships? in our jobs? How does faith in Jesus Christ influence our hope for eternal life?

How Can We Increase Our Faith in Jesus Christ?

Knowing of the many blessings that come through exercising faith in Jesus Christ, we should seek to increase our faith in Him. The Savior said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20). A mustard seed is very small, but it grows into a large tree.

How can we increase our faith? The same way we increase or develop any other skill. How do we develop skills in woodcarving, weaving, painting, cooking, making pottery, or playing a musical instrument? We study and practice and work at it. As we do so, we improve. So it is with faith. If we want to increase our faith in Jesus Christ, we must work at it. The prophet Alma compared the word of God to a seed that must be nurtured by faith:

“But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

“Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding. . . .

“Now behold, would not this increase your faith?” (Alma 32:27–29).

So we can increase our faith in God by acting on our *desire* to have faith in Him.

We can also increase our faith by praying to Heavenly Father about our hopes, desires, and needs (see Alma 34:17–26). But we must not suppose that all we have to do is ask. We are told in the scriptures that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17). The following story is about a man whose faith was shown by his works.

This man wanted to study the scriptures, but he could not read. He prayed for Heavenly Father to help him learn to read. In time a teacher came to his village, and he asked the teacher to help him. He learned the alphabet. He studied sounds and learned to put the letters together to make words. Soon he was reading simple words. The more he practiced, the more he learned. He thanked

the Lord for sending the teacher and for helping him learn to read. This man has increased his faith, humility, and knowledge to such a degree that he has served as a branch president in the Church.

President Spencer W. Kimball explained, “There must be works with faith. How foolish it would be to ask the Lord to *give* us knowledge, but how wise to ask the Lord’s help to acquire knowledge, to study constructively, to think clearly, and to retain things that we have learned” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 205; italics in original).

Faith involves doing all we can to bring about the things we hope and pray for. President Kimball said: “In faith we plant the seed, and soon we see the miracle of the blossoming. Men have often misunderstood and have reversed the process.” He continued by explaining that many of us want to have health and strength without keeping the health laws. We want to have prosperity without paying our tithes. We want to be close to the Lord but don’t want to fast and pray. We want to have rain in due season and to have peace in the land without observing the Sabbath as a holy day and without keeping the other commandments of the Lord. (See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 142.)

An important way to increase our faith is to hear and study the word of the Lord. We hear the word of the Lord at our Church meetings. We can study His word in the scriptures. “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

- What relationship do you see between our faith and our actions?

What Are Some Blessings That Follow Faith?

Through the gift of faith, miracles are wrought, angels appear, other gifts of the Spirit are given, prayers are answered, and men become the sons of God (see Moroni 7:25–26, 36–37).

“When faith comes it brings . . . apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, gifts, wisdom, knowledge, miracles, healings, tongues, interpretation of tongues, etc. All these appear when faith appears on the earth, and disappear when it disappears from the

earth; for these are the effects of faith. . . . And he who possesses it will, through it, obtain all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has sent—whom to know is eternal life” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 83).

- What are some stories from the scriptures in which people have become stronger because they had faith in Jesus Christ? How have you seen this happen in your own life?

Additional Scriptures

- Hebrews 11; Alma 32 (nature of faith explained)
- Exodus 14:19–22 (parting the waters of the Red Sea)
- Genesis 6–8 (Noah and the flood)
- Matthew 8:5–33 (sick healed, tempest calmed, miracles of faith)
- Mark 5:25–34 (healed by faith)
- Romans 10:17 (faith comes by hearing the word of God)