

## DOING FOR THE LEAST MINISTRIES

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### DEFINING FAITH A LITTLE MORE

In previous articles we defined faith as being sure of what we hope for and certain about what we do not see. (Heb. 11:1). Faith is not based on what our physical sense tells us, but is based on what God has said. One termed it; God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.

I would like to define faith a little more coming from the NewLife Behavior lessons. Faith can be broken down into three distinct ideas. Faith engages all of the human spirit - the mind, the heart and the will.

**The Mind** – Belief is an appropriate word to describe this dimension of faith. Belief, that is to say, what we believe in as Christians. Belief refers to the things, which we intellectually know. Christians believe in some interesting ideas. Ideas about God, Jesus, the church, human life, conduct, hope and others. But more than being interesting these ideas shape the contours of faith. They are: Jesus of Nazareth, teachings and practices of the church. The Bible serves as a foundation.

**The Heart** - another dimension of faith. The reality is knowing God. It is one thing to say “I believe in God” another thing to say, “I believe God.” It is one thing to say; “I know some things about God”, and it is another thing to say, “I know God.” This is where we move from our head to our heart and explore the idea of trusting God. Without this aspect of faith, faith becomes ultimately empty and void of meaning.

All that exists as the content of faith, or belief, calls for a response from us. It is not enough to say “I believe in God” or “I believe in Jesus.” Faith leads us to trust. According to one author, “trust is the deeper intuition of faith that places your life into the care of another.” Trust leads us to act upon the truth we know.

**The Will** – With this aspect of faith we come to explore the connection of faith and obedience. They fit like a hand in a glove. Faith will render obedience if it is real faith and obedience only takes place if there is real belief.

Now having defined faith a little more let’s get into the practical side of faith. Let’s put the boots on faith and GET REAL. We can take what this first part says and learn more about God and Jesus, his word, the church and all kinds of “doctrines”. That knowledge is important; we who teach realize the importance on good study disciplines. But we also realize that’s not all there is to the Bible or Christianity. That’s one of those things you learn down the road when you think you have made it. “You Haven’t!” So you start on a long journey to find out what the problem was. The problem was we just stay in the mind part of faith and don’t move on to the next phase. This is where most contentions come from, just having a little knowledge and try to tackle the big issues.

Let’s look at Martha and Mary the sisters of Lazarus in John 11. (Read the story first.) Martha, primarily, while very sincere had what we could call a Theological\* problem. (Defined below). Martha had her study of God down and answers to religious questions (the mind), but she was still seeing the dead body of her brother. Martha had four days earlier called for Jesus to come and heal her brother saying, “Lord the one you love is sick.”

Jesus gave no response, but waited two more days. He could have come quickly it was only a couple of miles. As the Jews said later, “He healed the blind man, couldn’t he have healed this man?” Martha and Mary said, “If you would have been here my brother would not have died.” Jesus could have healed Lazarus and their faith would remain stuck in theology and false ideas of an earthly messiah and never become real. Martha was stuck in the idea that Jesus could have healed Lazarus and she knew he would rise on the resurrection at the last day. Her faith was in that long time future event, but she was still seeing the dead body.

Jesus then said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He was saying He was the eternal life that was with God and He is that resurrection that death has no power over. He’s saying to her and all people don’t see the dead body, see Me – the Life and Resurrection. He then went to Mary who said the same things and was stuck in the same place as Martha. Both sisters were seeing their physical problem, the dead body of their brother Lazarus. Jesus then goes to the tomb and says, “roll way the stone.” Martha, while wanting to do what Jesus asks, reminds Him it will stink because Lazarus has been there four days. Right again till Jesus speaks.

They roll away the stone and Jesus says, “Lazarus come OUT.” Lazarus comes out wrapped in grave clothes. Jesus said “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” First, he told them move the stone. Move the stone of their limitations. Get past the obvious and believe Him who has power over all your limitations; physical viewpoints and your obvious obstacles. Get down to believing me! Go from your head to your heart to your will.

Now back to us folks. Are we just going to keep Jesus and God in our theological beliefs? We are to move the stone of externals feelings, physical views, and obvious obstacles and let Him raise up a real faith in us that believes in Him who raises the dead. We often want to cover our faith with church-i-anity, holidays and just theological jargon or doing the “things we do.” We can know or have enough knowledge to get us to hell. Knowledge is good and a must, but we have to go from knowing about God and Jesus to knowing him.

Paul states in Philippians 3 that he wanted to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Paul is saying there is more to Christianity than just believing in Jesus. It has to get to the heart and move us to real change. Paul was saying he wanted to know Him deeply, not just know about Him. He sought a knowledge that went far beyond the written page or spoken word.

I believe John says it best in I John 2:6: “Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.” That’s my best aim. As for me, I agree with Paul and though I have not attained it. I must forget what is behind and strain toward the future. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

So many times I find myself like Martha, stuck in my theology. But like her, I need to see Him who is the resurrection and the life. I need to move this old me stuck in the physical or the mind and see the deeper things concerning Him and let that change me!

I hope this can be of use to each one it’s written to, if you have any questions or responses please write back. Too, on our website [www.doingfortheleast.com](http://www.doingfortheleast.com), there is a place to write in questions about anything you are having trouble with. Or you may reply to this email with any question or comments especially regarding the present distress. We, from Doing for The Least Ministries, might be able to help you.

\*Theology – 1) The study of God and religious truth, 2) A system or school of opinions concerning God or religious questions.