

## Greek Word Studies:

**Believe (4100)** (pisteuo from pistis; pistos; related studies the faith, the obedience of faith) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of.

Vincent notes that pisteuo...

means to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading, and so runs into the meaning of to obey, properly as the result of persuasion

In secular Greek literature, as well as in the New Testament, pisteuo (pistis, pistos) has a basic meaning of an intellectual assent or a belief that something is true. Michel says that this use arose during the Hellenistic period. During the struggle with skepticism and atheism, it acquired the sense of conviction concerning the existence and activity of the Greek gods. Thayer calls this the intransitive use of the word which conveys the idea of to be sure or be persuaded that something is a fact. This kind of faith does not require any action on the part of the believer but only an intellectual acceptance. As discussed below, James used this type of faith as an example of a dead faith stating that "The devils also believe, and tremble" (Ja 2:19).

The other secular Greek meaning that is the more common use in the New Testament is the transitive or active use which means to "put faith in" or "rely upon" someone or something. Sometimes it has even stronger meaning: "To entrust something to another." In classical usage it denoted conduct that honored a previous agreement, such as the honoring of a truce between opposing armies (Iliad 2.124). The meaning of entrusting something to someone is found in Xenophon (Memorabilia 4.4.17). An example of this use in the New Testament is 2 Timothy 1:12. Paul said

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (see note 2 Timothy 1:12) (Comment: Here pisteuo means to trust in or rely upon Christ to save us)

Pisteuo means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted. As discussed below Christ is the object of this type of faith that relies on His power and nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that His revelations or disclosures are true.

NIDNTT writes that in classical Greek literature...

pistis means the trust that a man may place in men or the gods (Hesiod, Works, 372; Soph., OT, 1445), credibility (Soph., OC, 611), credit in business (Dem., 36, 57), guarantee (Aesch., Frag. 394), proof (Democ., 125), or something entrusted (IG 14, 2012 A 23).

Similarly, pisteuo means to trust something or someone (Hdt., 1, 24; Aesch., Pers., 800 ff.). It can refer to and confirm legendary tales (Hdt., 4, 96) and mythical ideas (Plato, Grg., 524a). In the construction pisteuo tini ti it means to entrust something or someone to someone (Xen., Mem., 4, 4, 17).

With reference to people, pisteuo means to obey (Soph., OT, 625). The pass. means to enjoy trust (Xen., Anab., 7, 6, 33).

The adj. pistos means trusting (Theognis, 283), trustworthy (Hom., Il., 2, 124). to piston means dependability or the faithfulness of those bound through an agreement (Aesch., Ag., 651; Xen., Anab., 2, 4, 7).

The verb. pistoo has the meaning of binding someone or oneself to be faithful (Soph., OC, 650). In the pass. it means to be sure, to trust (Hom., Od., 21, 217 f.).

The pistis word-group has a special colouring, where it refers to believing doxa (opinion). In such a case dependability is limited (cf. Plato, Phd., 107b). (Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan)

The noun pistis and the verb pisteuo, mean an adherence to, committal to, faith in, reliance upon, trust in a person or an object, to be persuaded of or convinced of something, to place one's confidence in, to trust.

See Spurgeon's sermons on belief...

John 8:30-32 Believing On Jesus, And Its Counterfeits  
Romans 3:3-4 God Justified, Though Man Believes Not

Pisteuo can also mean to be confident about or to be firmly persuaded as to something, and so Paul writes...

One man has faith (pisteuo) that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. (see note Romans 14:2) (Here the believing conveys the sense of having an opinion, thinking)

As noted above, pisteuo can refer to an "heart belief" (saving faith, genuine belief that leads to salvation, this believing involves not only the consent of the mind, but an act of the heart and will of the subject) or an intellectual belief (mental assent, "head" knowledge, not associated with bringing salvation if it is by itself), both uses demonstrated by Jesus statement in John 11,

John 11:26 Everyone who lives and believes (refers to genuine saving faith) in Me shall never die. Do you believe (intellectually) this?

James 2:19 You believe (pisteuo) that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe (pisteuo), and shudder.

Comment: In this passage, James explains that not all believing will result in salvation. The believing he is describing in this passage is a mental or intellectual believing that is not associated in a change in one's heart and thus in one's behavior or actions. Belief in the New Testament sense that effects the new birth denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they are clearly not saved. Genuine belief does involve an intellectual assent and consent of one's mind, but also includes an act of one's heart and will. Biblical saving faith is not passive assent but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God. The respected Greek lexicon author W E Vine defines belief as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Thes 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

Pisteuo can also refer to a committing of something to someone and so to entrust them. And thus we find pisteuo is translated entrust (entrusted, entrusting) 8 times in the NT. Here are 2 examples of this meaning of pisteuo...

If therefore you have not been faithful (pistos) in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust (pisteuo) the true riches to you? (Luke 16:11)

Great in every respect (Paul answers his question of what is the advantage of the Jew?). First of all, that they were entrusted (pisteuo) with the oracles of God. (see note Romans 3:2)

Pisteuo is one of the most frequent and important verbs in the NT used some 241 times Mt. 8:13; 9:28; 18:6; 21:22, 25, 32; 24:23, 26; 27:42; Mk. 1:15; 5:36; 9:23, 24, 42; 11:23, 24, 31; 13:21; 15:32; 16:13, 14, 16, 17; Lk. 1:20, 45; 8:12, 13, 50; 16:11; 20:5; 22:67; 24:25; Jn. 1:7, 12, 50; 2:11, 22, 23, 24; 3:12, 15, 16, 18, 36; 4:21, 39, 41, 42, 48, 50, 53; 5:24, 38, 44, 46, 47; 6:29, 30, 35, 36, 40, 47, 64, 69; 7:5, 31, 38, 39, 48; 8:24, 30, 31, 45, 46; 9:18, 35, 36, 38; 10:25, 26, 37, 38, 42; 11:15, 25, 26, 27, 40, 42, 45, 48; 12:11, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 46; 13:19; 14:1, 10, 11, 12, 29; 16:9, 27, 30, 31; 17:8, 20, 21; 19:35; 20:8, 25, 29, 31; Acts 2:44; 4:4, 32; 5:14; 8:12, 13; 9:26, 42; 10:43; 11:17, 21; 13:12, 39, 41, 48; 14:1, 23; 15:5, 7, 11; 16:31, 34; 17:12, 34; 18:8, 27; 19:2, 4, 18; 21:20, 25; 22:19; 24:14; 26:27; 27:25; Ro 1:16; 3:2, 22; 4:3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24; 6:8; 9:33; 10:4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16; 13:11; 14:2; 15:13; 1Co. 1:21; 3:5; 9:17; 11:18; 13:7; 14:22; 15:2, 11; 2 Co. 4:13; Gal. 2:7, 16; 3:6, 22; Eph. 1:13, 19; Phil. 1:29; 1Thess. 1:7; 2:4, 10, 13; 4:14; 2Thess. 1:10; 2:11, 12; 1Ti 1:11, 16; 3:16; 2Ti 1:12; Titus 1:3; 3:8; Heb 4:3; 11:6; James. 2:19, 23; 1Pet. 1:8; 2:6f; 1 Jn. 3:23; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10, 13; Jude 1:5. The NAS translates pisteuo as - believe(118), believed(73), believers(3), believes(29), believing(10), do (m)(1),entrust(1), entrusted(6), entrusting(1), has faith(1).

Pisteuo is found 24 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Ge 15:6; 42:20; 45:26; Ex. 4:1, 5, 8f, 31; 14:31; 19:9; Num.

14:11; 20:12; Deut. 9:23; 28:66; 1 Sam. 3:21; 27:12; 1 Ki. 10:7; 2 Chr. 9:6; 32:15; Esther 8:12; Job 4:18; 9:16; 15:15, 22, 31; 24:22; 29:24; 39:12, 24; Ps. 27:13; 78:22, 32; 106:12, 24; 116:10; 119:66; Prov. 14:15; 30:1; Is 7:9; 28:16; 43:10; 53:1; Jer. 12:6; 25:8; 40:14; Lam. 4:12; Dan. 6:23; Hab 1:5). The first use by Moses is one of the most important uses of pisteuo in all of Scripture...

Genesis 15:6 Then he (Abraham) believed (Hebrew = 'Āman; LXX = pisteuo) in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Comment: Note that in the OT, salvation was by faith, not works. Paul explains that Abraham heard the gospel - see Galatians 3:8. It is also worth noting that the Hebrew word for "believe" in this verse is 'Āman means to confirm, support or uphold and conveys the essential idea that one remains steadfast. At the heart of the meaning of the root of the Hebrew verb 'Āman is the idea of certainty or firmness. The derivatives reflect the concept of certainty and dependability. In other words faith is not a blind leap into the dark but a confident commitment to the One about Whom abundant evidence bears ample testimony of His eternal, immutable trustworthiness. Faith is far more than mere hope that something unlikely may happen. It is a deep, internal certainty, rooted in our trust of what God has said.)

Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said to Moses "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe (Hebrew = 'Āman; LXX = pisteuo) in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?"

Psalms 78:22 Because they did not believe (LXX = pisteuo) in God, and did not trust (hope) in His salvation.

Psalms 78:32 In spite of all this they still sinned, and did not believe (LXX = pisteuo) in His wonderful works. (In spite of all His works and lessons the generation of Israelites that left Egypt in the Exodus continued to disbelieve and disobey Yahweh)

Psalms 106:24 Then they (speaking of the nation's rejection of Joshua's and Caleb's positive report of the Promised Land) despised the pleasant land. They did not believe (LXX = pisteuo) in His word.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes (LXX = pisteuo) in it will not be disturbed. (quoted in part 3 times in the NT, see notes Romans 9:33; Romans 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6)

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed (LXX = pisteuo) our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (Quoted in NT, see note Romans 10:16)

#### A DISTURBING PASSAGE: TWO TYPES OF FAITH

Biblical faith (faith that truly saves, that truly results in regeneration) is not synonymous with mental (intellectual) assent or acquiescence, which by itself is a superficial and represents outward profession without inward possession (conversion, regeneration, being born again, receiving a new heart, having one's heart "circumcised", etc). For example, the apostle John distinguishes two types of believing using the verb pisteuo, one of which is only a superficial profession...

John 2:22 When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed (pisteuo) the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. (Morris in Defenders Study Bible writes "Note the superior category of faith of the disciples to that of the "many" in John 2:23 who believed "when they saw the miracles," but soon fell away. The disciples did not believe because of the miracles but because of the Scripture and Jesus' words. It is far better to place one's faith in God's Word than in signs and wonders.")

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed (pisteuo) in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. (Note that their belief was associated with His signs)

24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting (pisteuo) Himself to them, for He knew all men (Morris writes "Although many in the Jerusalem crowd "believed in his name when they saw the miracles" (John 2:23), Jesus did not "believe" in them because He knew their hearts and knew their outward faith in Him was only superficial)

25 and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man. (The Ryrie Study Bible notes that "The contrast is between people who put their trust (pisteuo) in Jesus, and Jesus, who does not put His trust in people because He knows their motives and thoughts. Enthusiasm for the spectacular is present in them, but Jesus looks for genuine faith.) (John 2:22-25)

Related Resource: See discussion of False vs True Disciples-The Test of a True Disciple of Jesus

John Piper's comments on John 2:22-23 - John's Task: Belief in Jesus - In John 1:12, John says, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." After the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, John says, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11). Then after he drove the moneychangers out of the Temple and said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," John comments, "His disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22).

So John is on task. He is writing with a view to helping people see the glory of the Son of God, experience his grace, and believe on him as the Son of God and supreme treasure of their lives and have eternal life.

Some Belief Is Not Saving - In view of this, John 2:23-25 has an unsettling effect. What it says, in essence, is that Jesus knows what is in every heart, and so he can see when someone believes in a way that is not really believing. In other words, Jesus' ability to know every heart perfectly leads to the unsettling truth that some belief is not the kind of belief that obtains fellowship with Jesus and eternal life. Some belief is not saving belief.

So there are two things to focus on here. First is the glory of the omniscience of Jesus. And the second is the discovery that there is a kind of faith in Jesus that he does not approve and does not accept.

Faith That Jesus Doesn't Accept - We said there are two things we should focus on in this today's text: The first is the glory of the omniscience of Jesus. Now the second is the discovery that there is a kind of faith in Jesus that he does not approve. This is the implication of his omniscience that John focuses on. He draws out the implication that when Jesus looks into the heart of those who believed, he sees something other than the kind of faith that makes you a child of God.

Remember John 1:12 says, "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). And here in John 2:23 it says, "Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing." It seems Jesus should be thrilled. But he's not. Verse 24 says, "But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people." This is not the way he treats his own sheep whom he calls by name, his own disciples. When Jesus withholds himself from them, he is saying that they are not believing in a saving way. They are not the children of God. They are not doing John 1:12. Whatever their faith is, Jesus does not approve.

Not All That Looks Like Faith Is Really Faith - John is still on task here. The aim of his book is "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). So it's crucial that John clarify that not all that looks like faith is really faith. It is unsettling. But that's the way life is. Better to have Jesus point this out, and help us come to terms with it, than discover it on our own when it may be too late.

What's wrong with their faith? Are there clues here? Yes, there are. The first clue is the reference to signs and what Jesus says about this elsewhere. And the second clue is that this incident is mentioned as an introduction to the story of Nicodemus that comes next. Nicodemus is probably supposed to represent the people (of John 2:23) who believe in one sense but not in the way Jesus approves.

The Faith of Nicodemus - Take the clue of Nicodemus first. Remember chapter divisions are added later. Don't pay much attention to them. John 2:25 ends, "For [Jesus] himself knew what was in man." And the next verses say, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him'" (John 2:25-3:2).

I think this is the kind of faith Jesus sees in the people: "We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (Jn 3:2). This is a great statement of faith. It's what some pious Jews believe about Jesus. It's what Muslims believe. It is a very high view of Jesus. He is "from God." God is "with him." What he does are "signs" of God's power in him. This is significant faith.

Signs Meant to Point to Jesus - But it is not saving faith. Nicodemus was not born again. That is the point of John 3:1-8. Nicodemus, with all his faith, needed to be born again. Nicodemus had no spiritual life. What he had seen was entirely natural, not spiritual. He was still spiritually blind. He did not see through the signs to the

glory of the only Son of God. He only saw the signs, and they were so impressive that the natural mind drew the conclusion they must involve God.

Notice the reference to signs in John 2:23—"this is now the second clue about what's wrong with the faith of John 2:23—"Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing." They believed when they saw the signs. Signs were meant to point people to the true Son of God and what he stood for. But many saw the signs and did not see what they stood for. (For complete discussion please see Dr Piper's message He Knew What Was in Man)

Zane Hodges presents another interpretation (one with which I strongly disagree but present for completeness): (In Thomas Constable's comments, he writes) "Zane C. Hodges, "Untrustworthy Believers" John 2:23-25, Bibliotheca Sacra 135:538 (April-June 1978):139-52 argued that these were genuine believers who were not ready for fuller disclosures from the One they had just trusted" (p148)." (Ed comment: Be a Berean! Acts 17:11 - Even the title of Hodge's article strikes me as an "oxymoron". Clearly Hodges belief is diametrically opposite to that of most conservative evangelical scholars. Only one teaching can be correct. And only one teaching results in eternal salvation. These issues have eternal consequences. See that know one takes you captive through specious reasoning, instead of letting the plain sense of God's Word mean what He says! cp the sobering words of our Lord Jesus Christ - Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note)

Bible Knowledge Commentary: They believed in His name, that is, they trusted in Him. This was not necessarily saving faith as the next verse implies. They believed He was a great Healer, but not necessarily a great Savior from sin. (Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor or Logos)

Adam Clarke: They believed him to be the promised Messiah, but did not believe in him to the salvation of their souls: for we find, from the following verse, that their hearts were not at all changed, because our blessed Lord could not trust himself to them.

Larry Richards: But the belief of the people was shallow; so shallow that "Jesus would not entrust [or commit] Himself" to the crowds as He had to the Twelve. What is a shallow faith? Perhaps it is best to think of it as a faith that exists only as long as its object fits our expectations. These people, who "believed" in Jesus superficially, turned away from Him when He did not speak and act as they expected (see John 6:60-66). They "believed," but not enough to abandon their own notions and submit themselves fully to Jesus' fresh revelation of God. May God protect you and me and those we teach from shallow faith as we study John's Gospel. May He help us be willing to abandon our old ideas when He calls us to submit fully to His Son, Jesus, so that we might find life now. (Teacher's Commentary)

Harold Wilmington: Jesus knew that many of the Jews who professed to believe in him had only a superficial faith, relating to his miracles and not to his deeper ministry of deliverance from sin. John would later come back to this theme of "unbelieving believers" (see John 6:22-66; John 8:31-59). (Wilmington's Bible Handbook.)

KJV Bible Commentary: The word used to express belief (Greek pisteuo) is used in the next verse. But Jesus did not commit himself. Christ did not entrust Himself to them because they were not true believers. He concluded this because he knew all men. These were nominal believers whose only interest was the miracles. He did not need their testimony for he knew what was in man. These people had not accepted Him with saving faith, but rather they accepted Him as a powerful miracle worker. (Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson or Logos)

New American Commentary: The real point is that Jesus did not believe their believing...Accordingly, we need to understand that the living Jesus does not believe everyone's believing because he knows what is in them. Those words ought to stand as a warning to everyone.

Baker NT Commentary: Jesus did not look upon all these individuals as being true believers to whom his cause could be entrusted. The reason why he did not do this was because he knew all men; i.e., knew just what was in the heart of anyone with whom he would come in contact.

G Campbell Morgan: If belief is nothing more than admiration for the spectacular, it will create in multitudes applause; but the Son of God cannot commit Himself to that kind of faith.

Warren Wiersbe: The words believed in John 2:23 and commit in John 2:24 are the same Greek word (pisteuo). These people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them! They were "unsaved believers"! It was one thing to respond to a miracle but quite something else to commit oneself to Jesus Christ and continue in His



Word (John 8:30, 31). (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor or Logos) (Bolding added)

J Vernon McGee: The language that is used here is saying that He did not believe in them. You see, they believed in Him, but He didn't believe in them. In other words, to put it very frankly, their faith was not a saving faith, which He realized, of course. He knew what was in their hearts. This is always a grave danger today for those who say they believe in Jesus. What do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus? Do you mean that you believe in the facts of the gospel? The important question is: Do you trust Him as your Savior who died for your sins? Was He raised for your justification? Is He your only hope of heaven. (Listen to his Mp3 comments John 2:23-25.mp3 )

In another example of believing that falls short of genuine saving belief John records that when Jesus spoke to the Jews "who had believed (pisteuo) Him" (John 8:31-see in depth discussion) but as their subsequent actions demonstrated their belief was not genuine for Jesus accused them declaring "you are seeking to kill Me" (John 8:40) and after several heated exchanges, these same "believing" Jews "fulfilled prophecy" and indeed sought to kill Jesus, picking

up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple. (John 8:59) (Comment: These Jews had a profession but not genuine possession in respect to their belief in Jesus).

Hiebert adds...

That the participle (of pisteuo) is used absolutely, with no indication of what is believed, indicates that from the earliest times faith was recognized as central to Christianity "The believers" is a synonym for Christians. (Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996)

Jerry Bridges writes that faith that justifies...

involves both a renunciation and a reliance. First, we must renounce any trust in our own performance as the basis of our acceptance before God. We trust in our own performance when we believe we've earned God's acceptance by our good works. But we also trust in our own performance when we believe we've lost God's acceptance by our bad works by our sin. So we must renounce any consideration of either our bad works or our good works as the means of relating to God. Second, we must place our reliance entirely on the perfect obedience and sin-bearing death of Christ as the sole basis of our standing before God on our best days as well as our worst...

The gospel of justification by faith in Christ is the mainspring of the Christian life. And like the mainspring in old watches, it must be wound every day. Because we have a natural tendency to look within ourselves for the basis of God's approval or disapproval, we must make a conscious daily effort to look outside ourselves to the righteousness of Christ, then to stand in the present reality of our justification (Ed: Do not misunderstand - Bridges is not saying that making the effort to look outside ourselves merits salvation). Only then will we experience the stability that the first bookend is meant to provide....

Paul (Ed: Phil 3:7-14) utterly renounced his own righteousness as a means of attaining a right standing with God; instead, he relied solely on the shed blood and righteousness of Christ.... (From a book I highly recommend as an antidote for legalism as well as a "listless" Christian life - this book will change your experience of Christ - if you need more encouragement, take a moment to read the reviews - Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington - The Bookends of the Christian Life or e-book)

As an aside, Bridge's description of faith in the preceding paragraph reminds me of the old acronym which you may have heard...

F.orsaking  
A.ll  
I.  
T.rust  
H.im

There is a world of truth in this old acronym, which I had previously failed to see, until Bridges description of faith opened my eyes. And beloved, please remember that the same faith that saved you the first time (justification), is also the same faith that saves you every day (progressive sanctification). Seriously, how are you doing in your daily struggle against the powerful fallen flesh (Been angry yet today? Let an unwholesome

word come out of your mouth? Let an unwholesome image into your eyes? Let unwholesome words into your ears? Loved your enemy? Forgiven seven times seventy? Refused to pay back evil? Prayed for those who persecute you? How did you do on the freeway today?, etc). Faith means you forsake or renounce any intrinsic or inherent ability you think you might possess to overcome your besetting (or intermittent) sin. Only Christ overcame sin and now only His Spirit now enables us to overcome sin, but part of our "actuating" His enabling power is confession of our sin and renouncing our natural tendency to depend on our efforts to conquer the temptation to sin. F.A.I.T.H. needs to be tattooed upon our heart, lest we forget and fail to rely on His Spirit's enabling power. If you are intrigued by these thoughts, let me strongly encourage you to purchase Jerry Bridges book discussed in the preceding paragraph. And don't try to speed read it. I have been chewing it over and over (at least 5 times to date) and I have yet to be bored by their teaching. Try it. You'll like it!

Ryan Habbena addresses the crucial questions of what constitutes genuine faith versus a transitory (non-saving) faith. He concludes that

Authentic Faith Continues in His Word...

Authentic Faith Abides in Him...

Authentic Faith Trusts...

Authentic Faith Loves and Obeys...

Authentic Faith and its Worship are Fixed upon Jesus...

What are the Characteristics of a Transitory Faith? It is safe to assert that transitory or inauthentic faith lacks the above qualities. In other words, inauthentic belief is defined by those who place their faith in Jesus for reasons other than genuine trust and association with Him on His terms. Transitory faith is defined by a reserved association with Christ. As a result, when these underlying reasons for their belief are challenged and undermined by Jesus's teaching, they do not continue. However, beyond simply noting transitory faith is the inverse of authentic faith, it is profitable to note the specific aspects that caused those who had "believed" to be offended and, thus, cease to follow in John's narrative.

The two stark accounts of the failure of transitory faith are in chapter six and chapter eight. In chapter six a primary source of offense was that Jesus taught, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (Jn 6:56). In the wake of this teaching we are informed, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" (Jn 6:66). Whatever we may make of the Eucharistic implications of this text, I think it is clear that, at a cursory level, this text affirms to the reader the need for disciples to continue in the reality of a crucified Messiah; this being central to abiding in Christ.

In chapter eight we read of those that embody transitory faith. In mere moments within the progression of the narrative they move from faith in Jesus (Jn 8:30) to blasphemous unbelief and a desire to kill the Messiah (Jn 8:48, 52, 59). The following exchange served as the source of offense to these temporary converts (For full discussion see Formulating a Theology of Pisteuo (believe) in John's Narrative)

Wuest writes that when pisteuo...

to the faith which a lost sinner must place in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, they include the following ideas; the act of considering the Lord Jesus worthy of trust as to His character and motives, the act of placing confidence in His ability to do just what He says He will do, the act of entrusting the salvation of his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus, the act of committing the work of saving his soul to the care of the Lord. This means a definite taking of one's self out of one's own keeping and entrusting one's self into the keeping of the Lord Jesus. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans or Logos)

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says that...

A belief that saves is one that rests in the finished work of Christ; it trusts God alone for salvation (John 3:16). Believers are those who have trusted God with their will as well as their mind (see notes Romans 1:16; Romans 3:22; 1Thessalonians 1:7). (Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Larry Richards has an excellent discussion on believing writing that...

Originally this word group (pisteuo, pistis, pistos) seems linked with a more formal contract between partners. It stressed faithfulness to the agreement made or trustworthiness in keeping promises. In time the use

expanded. In the classical period, writers spoke of trust in the gods as well as trust in people. In the Hellenic era, "faith in God" came to mean theoretical conviction about a particular doctrine, a conviction expressed in one's way of life. As different schools of philosophy and religion developed, the particular emphasis given pistis was shaped by the tradition within which it was used. The NT retains the range of meanings. But those meanings are refined and reshaped by the dynamic message of the gospel.

The verb (pisteuo) and noun (pistis) are also used with a number of prepositions. "To believe through" (dia) indicates the way by which a person comes to faith (Jn 1:7; 1 Peter 1:21 [note]). "Faith en" indicates the realm in which faith operates (see notes Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:4; 2 Timothy 3:15). The most important construction is unique to the NT, an invention of the early church that expresses the inmost secret of our faith. That construction links faith with the preposition eis, "to" or "into." This is never done in secular Greek. In the NT it portrays a person committing himself or herself totally to the person of Jesus Christ, for our faith is into Jesus. (Ed note: Leon Morris in "The Gospel According to John" agrees with Richards writing that "Faith, for John, is an activity which takes men right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ" indicating that Morris likewise understands the Greek preposition eis in the phrase pisteuo eis, to be a significant indication that NT faith is not just intellectual assent but includes a "moral element of personal trust.")

One other aspect of the NT's use of faith words is fascinating. Usually the object of faith is Jesus. Only twelve verses have God as the object of faith (Jn 12:44; 14:1; Acts 16:34; see notes Romans 4:3, 4:5, 4:17, 4:24; Gal 3:6; 1Thessalonians 1:8 [note]; Titus 3:8 [note]; Hebrews 6:1 [note]; 1Peter 1:21 [note]). Why? The reason is clearly expressed by Jesus himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me" (Jn 14:6). God the Father has revealed himself in the Son. The Father has set Jesus before us as the one to whom we must entrust ourselves for salvation. It is Jesus who is the focus of Christian faith. (Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency)

J. B. Lightfoot discusses the concept of faith in his commentary on Galatians. He notes that in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the definition of the word for faith

"hovers between two meanings: trustfulness, the frame of mind which relies on another; and trustworthiness, the frame of mind which can be relied upon...the senses will at times be so blended together that they can only be separated by some arbitrary distinction. The loss in grammatical precision is often more than compensated by the gain in theological depth...They who have faith in God are steadfast and immovable in the path of duty."

Faith, like grace, is not static. Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural longing to obey. None of those responses can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort.

Mark Dever has some penetrating and sobering thoughts on believe...

One thing I think of as a member of our nations largest Protestant denomination, is that we have a lot of nominalism, in our own Southern Baptist Convention, and in other Evangelical denominations. There are a lot of people who will happily say that they believe in Christ, that they prayed to receive him as their savior, that theyâ€™ve invited him into their hearts, but who donâ€™t give any evidence of truly being converted. So we see lots of peopleâ€™I remember one time picking up a drunk, giving him a ride in my car, I began to talk with him about the gospel. He finished the gospel presentation for me. Said that he believed it. Well, what am I supposed to do? But that seems to be typical of a lot of American Christianity. We have suggested that someone needs to sort of take care of their business with God, and then theyâ€™re sort of done. A good illustration of this is when we were driving around in Northwest DC and there was this beautiful home on the right...the walk came down from it, and there was this nice gate, and I think it was white painted... and we noticed that there was no fence on either side of the gate. There was just no fence... it struck me what a picture that was of so many churches. Thereâ€™s a way in, you have to fulfill some sort of membership requirements (whether its attending a class or being baptized or being confirmed or something, some way in), but once you get in thereâ€™s no distinction between the church and the world (the yard and the sidewalk), thereâ€™s just no distinction. People can live in the church in whatever way they want, regardless of how scandalous it was. So American Christianity may look healthy statistically, but I think that there are some real problems with it. A lot of times I hear Evangelicals say that they think the problem is that there are no good follow up programs... I think the problem may be trying to follow up with people who arenâ€™t truly converted. I think we need to rethink our evangelism, and we need to rethink what exactly the Gospel is (Ed: see Gospel; cp 1Cor 15:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 - see notes 15:1; 15:2; 15:3; 15:4; 15:5; 15:6 ; 15:7 ; 15:8), what does it mean to repent and believe? Well, itâ€™s not simply to assent that Jesus is the Savior in some merely mental fashion. To repent and believe means to be convicted by God of your sin against Him, and for Him to change your heart so that you



trust in Christ. So I think a lot of what's going on in American Christianity in some ways, it appears healthy, but I think there are also some deep problems in what our understanding of what it means to be Christian. (Ref) (Bolding and Scripture references added)

**Recommended Resource** (if you are a pastor or elder I would encourage you to take a moment and go through the marks and examine yourself and your church): **What are the 9 Marks of a Biblical Church**

Faith is manifest not by believing in spite of evidence (there is abundant evidence of the veracity of Jesus!) but by obeying in spite of consequence. John uses pisteuo to demonstrate the relationship between genuine faith and obedience writing...

He who believes (pisteuo - present tense = continuous) in the Son has eternal life but he who does not obey (apeitheo [word study] - present tense = continuously disobey, habitually, as their lifestyle) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

**Comment:** The verb apeitheo conveys more an attitude of unbelief but also involves deliberate disobedience, conscious resistance to authority.

Charles Swindoll commenting on faith and obedience in John 3:36 concludes that...

the one who believes in the Son has eternal life as a present possession. But the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life. To disbelieve Christ is to disobey Him. And logically, to believe in Christ is to obey Him. As I have noted elsewhere,

This verse clearly indicates that belief is not a matter of passive opinion, but decisive and obedient action. (quoting J. Carl Laney)...

Tragically many people are convinced that it doesn't really matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This reminds me of a Peanuts cartoon in which Charlie Brown is returning from a disastrous baseball game. The caption read, "174 to nothing! How could we lose when we were so sincere?" The reality is, Charlie Brown, that it takes more than sincerity to win the game of life. Many people are sincere about their beliefs, but they are sincerely wrong!" (Ed comment: As they will tragically discover when it is too late to repent and truly believe, as they hear one of the most sobering warnings our Savior ever uttered! = Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note) (Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. *Understanding Christian Theology*.: Thomas Nelson Publishers or Logos Bible Software) (This book is recommended if you are looking for a very readable, non-compromising work on "systematic theology". Wayne Grudem's work *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* is comparable and would be an excellent addition to your resource library.) (Bolding added)

Subjectively faith is firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively faith is that which is believed (usually designated as "the faith"), doctrine, the received articles of faith. Click [separate study of "the faith \(pistis\)"](#)

True faith is based not only on empirical (observable - cp Jn 20:30, 31, Lk 1:3,4) evidence but also upon divine assurance (cp 1Jn 5:13, 5:10, "the testimony in himself" = "the Spirit [Who indwells all believers - Ro 8:9-note] testifies" = 1Jn 5:6, Ro 8:16, 17-note)

Spurgeon wrote that...

Faith is the foot of the soul by which it can march along the road of the commandments.

When missionary John Paton was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders, he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted. He said to Paton,

It's so good to rest my whole weight in this chair.

John Paton had his word: Faith is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it.

Nothing before, nothing behind,  
The steps of faith  
Fall on the seeming void, and find  
The rock beneath -- Whittier

Some quotes on faith...

It will not save me to know that Christ is a Savior; but it will save me to trust him to be my Savior. I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come by believing that his atonement is sufficient; but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge, and my all. The pith, the essence of faith lies in thisâ€”a casting oneself on the promise. (C H Spurgeon)

R. W. DeHaan...

I read about an instant cake mix that was a big flop. The instructions said all you had to do was add water and bake. The company couldnâ€™t understand why it didnâ€™t sellâ€”until their research discovered that the buying public felt uneasy about a mix that required only water. Apparently people thought it was too easy. So the company altered the formula and changed the directions to call for adding an egg to the mix in addition to the water. The idea worked and sales jumped dramatically. That story reminds me of how some people react to the plan of salvation. To them it sounds too easy and simple to be true, even though the Bible says, â€œBy grace you have been saved through faith; it is the gift of God, not of worksâ€• (Ep 2:8,9-note). They feel that there is something more they must do, something they must add to Godâ€™s â€œrecipeâ€• for salvation. They think they must perform good works to gain Godâ€™s favor and earn eternal life. But the Bible is clearâ€”we are saved, â€œnot by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercyâ€• (Titus 3:5-note). Unlike the cake-mix manufacturer, God has not changed His â€œformulaâ€• to make salvation more marketable. The gospel we proclaim must be free of works, even though it may sound too easy.

Little faith will bring your soul to heaven; great faith will bring heaven to your soul. (C H Spurgeon)

Never put a question mark where God has put a period. (John R. Rice)

True faith commits us to obedience. (A. W. Tozer)

A faith that hasn't been tested can't be trusted. (Adrian Rogers)

Comment: Adrian Rogers statement is one reason James 1:2-4-note should be verses we memorize, meditate upon and live out, so that the "muscles" of our faith might be strengthened! Remember that the Greek word for "trial" used by James (also Jas 1:12-note) is also the word he later translates "tempt" (Jas 1:13, 14-note, see also peirasmos and peirazo)! So what is the point? God is sovereign and He allows trials and tests in our life, albeit He never tempts us to sin. The crux of the issue is "How do we respond to the tests and trials in our life?" If we respond by trusting in the enabling power of the Spirit of Grace Heb 10:29, He will give us victory in the midst of that trial or test. On the other hand, if we trust in our flesh [in any form - rules, regulations, vows that "I won't do that or say that or react that way."] you have in effect placed yourself up under the law and that will only stir your flesh further and you will fail the test or trial. In that scenario the test or trial functioned in effect as a "temptation." In other words, when the trials or tests come, our choice will determine whether that particular trial trips us up or we walk through it unscathed in the power of the Spirit and with the effect of strengthening our faith. Inherent in every trial or test is the potential for it to be a "temptation" to commit sin. We must chose the God way or our way, the former is filled by the Spirit, we choose to walk by the Spirit. The latter is filled with self, we choose to follow the flesh and we fail the test. Does that make sense?

Faith is a reasoning trust, a trust which reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God. (John R. W. Stott)

Faith is not anti-intellectual. It is an act of man that reaches beyond the limits of our five senses. (Billy Graham)

Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible. (Corrie ten Boom)

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries it shall be done.

-- Charles Wesley

I prayed for faith and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had up to this time closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since. (Dwight Lyman Moody)

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H. A. Ironside tells the story of a new convert who gave his testimony during a church service. With a smile on his face and joy in his heart, the man related how he had been delivered from a life of sin. He gave the Lord all the glory, saying nothing about any of his own merits or what he had done to deserve the blessings of redemption. The person in charge, who was very legalistic, didn't fully appreciate the reality of salvation by grace through faith alone, apart from human works. So he responded to the young man's comments by saying,

You seem to indicate that God did everything when He saved you. Didn't you do your part before God did His?

The new Christian jumped to his feet and said,

Oh yes, I did. For more than 30 years I ran away from God as fast as my sins could carry me. That was my part. But God took out after me and ran me down. That was His part. (cp Jn 6:27, 28, 29, 44)

Commenting on this testimony, Ironside wrote

It was well put and tells a story that every redeemed sinner understands.

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Andrew Murray has a devotional thought on this verse writing that...

THE value of the words of a man depends upon my knowledge of him who speaks. What a difference when a man gives me the promise, I will give you the half of all I have, whether the speaker be a poor man who owns a shilling, or a millionaire who offers to share his fortune with me. One of the first requisites to fruitful Bible study is the knowledge of God as the Omnipotent One, and of the power of His word.

The power of God's word is infinite.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. (Ps 33:6, 9 -see Spurgeon's comments on 33:6)

In the word of God His omnipotence works: it has creative power and calls into existence THE VERY THING OF WHICH IT SPEAKS.

As the word of the Living God it is a living word, and gives life. It can not only call into existence, but even make alive again that which is dead. Its quickening power can raise dead bodies, can give eternal life to dead souls. All spiritual life comes through it (cf John 6:63), for we are born of incorruptible seed by the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever. (see note 1 Peter 1:23)

Here there lies, hidden from many, one of the deepest secrets of the blessing of God's word -- the faith in its creative and quickening energy. THE WORD WILL WORK IN ME THE VERY DISPOSITION OR GRACE WHICH IT COMMANDS OR PROMISES.

"It worketh effectually in them that believe."

Nothing can resist its power when received into the heart through the Holy Spirit

"It worketh effectually in them that believe."

"The voice of the Lord is in power."

Everything depends upon learning the art of receiving that word into the heart. And in learning this art the first step is -- FAITH IN ITS LIVING, ITS OMNIPOTENT, ITS CREATIVE POWER. By His word

"God calleth the things that are not, as though they were."

As true as this is of all God's mighty deeds from creation on to the resurrection of the dead, it is true too of every word spoken to us in His holy book.

Two things keep us from believing this as we should. The one is the terrible experience in all around, and perhaps in ourselves too, of the word being made of none effect by human wisdom or unbelief or worldliness.

The other the neglect of the teaching of Scripture that the word is a seed. Seeds are small, seeds may be long dormant, seeds have to be hidden, and when they sprout are of slow growth.

Because the action of God's word is hidden and unobserved, slow and apparently feeble, we do not believe in its omnipotence. Let us make it one of our first lessons. The word I study is the power of God unto salvation: IT WILL WORK IN ME IN ALL I NEED, ALL THE FATHER ASKS.

What a prospect this faith would open up for our spiritual life! We should see all the treasures and blessings of God's grace to be within our reach.

The word has power to enlighten our darkness: in our hearts it will bring the light of God, the sense of His love, and the knowledge of His will.

The word can fill us with strength and courage to conquer every enemy, and to do whatever God asks us to do.

The word would cleanse, and sanctify, would work in us faith and obedience, would become in us the seed of every trait in the likeness of our Lord.

Through the word the Spirit would lead us into all truth, that is, make all that is in the word true in us, and so prepare our heart to be the habitation of the Father and the Son.

What a change would come over our relation to God's word and to the Morning watch if we really believed this simple truth. Let us begin our training for that ministry of the word which every believer must exercise, by proving its power in our own experience. Let us begin to seek this, quietly setting ourselves to learn the great faith-lesson, the mighty power of God's word. Nothing less than this is meant by saying:

**THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUE!**

because God Himself will make it true in us. We shall have much to learn in regard to what hinders that power, much to overcome to be freed from these hindrances, much to surrender to receive that working. But all will come right if we will only set out upon our Bible study with the determined resolve to believe that

**GOD'S WORD HAS OMNIPOTENT POWER IN THE HEART TO WORK EVERY BLESSING OF WHICH IT SPEAKS.**

(Andrew Murray. The Inner Chamber and The Inner Life)

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**STAYING ON COURSE** - A new device developed by the United States military is now available for use by civilian pilots. Called the Global Positioning System (GPS), the unit utilizes signals from a system of satellites to calculate to within 50 feet the exact location of the plane, as well as the nearest airport.

David Ramsdale could have used such a device on one of his flights. As a pilot for the Jungle Aviation And Radio Service (JAARS) he was flying passengers over uncharted jungle from Yarinacocha, Peru, toward the Brazilian border. After a while, Ramsdale realized he had been following the wrong river and was lost. Daylight was fading and the plane was low on fuel. Radio contact with the base gave no navigational help. Through the dusk, Ramsdale spotted a little river. He followed it to a larger river, and then to a village where he was able to land on a narrow airstrip just as darkness fell.

A similar thing can happen in our spiritual journey. We lose our bearings and get off course. Soon we realize we're going in the wrong direction. But we have a positioning system that will always tell us which way to go -- the Word of God. If we consult it regularly, it will guide our path and keep us from straying. - David C. Egner (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Lamp for the feet that in byways have wandered,  
Guide for the youth that would otherwise fall;  
Hope for the sinner whose life has been squandered,  
Staff for the aged, and best Book of all. --Anon.

To stay on course, trust the unfailing compass of God's Word.

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**TAPPING THE TREASURE** - And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. 1Thessalonians 2:13

Stephen May discovered a treasure while teaching literature at the University of Northern Colorado. In the library, he found 150 boxes of letters, manuscripts, journals, outlines, and notes given to the school by James A. Michener.

Surprisingly, no one was using those materials to write a biography of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, known for his historical novels. After years of research and writing, May produced a new account of the life of Michener from that great treasure.

Each day, you and I are writing the story of our lives by what we say and do. Are we using the great, but often neglected, wealth of the Bible? The psalmist wrote: "I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. . . . Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Ps 119:14-Spurgeon, Ps 119:18-Spurgeon).

The Bible is the written record through which we get to know Jesus Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3-note). Its nuggets of truth are available to us all.

A life well-lived is directly related to a Bible well-read. As we live out our life story, let's be sure to tap the treasure of God's Word every day. --David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

My Bible to me is a treasure house,  
Where I can always find  
Whatever I need from day to day  
For heart and soul and mind. --Anon.

The Bible's treasures are found by those who dig for them.

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**FROG AND THE TOAD** - One of my favorite children's books is Frog And Toad Together by Arnold Lobel. Frog had a garden that Toad admired, and he wanted one too. So Frog told him: "It is very nice, but it was hard work." When he gave Toad some flower seeds, Toad quickly ran home and planted them.

"Now seeds," said Toad, "start growing." He tried very hard to make his garden grow. He shouted at the seeds, read them long stories, and sang songs to them "but they didn't grow."

"What shall I do?" cried Toad. "Leave them alone," Frog said. "Let the sun shine on them, let the rain fall on them. Soon your seeds will start to grow." Then one day, little green plants appeared. "At last," shouted Toad, "my seeds have stopped being afraid to grow! But you were right, Frog. It was very hard work."

So many people think it's very hard work to grow in righteousness. We must spend time reading the Word, praying, and cultivating our faith by being with other believers. But our progress in holiness is still dependent



on God. As He shines His face upon us and rains His love into our lives, we will grow. Then righteousness will begin to "spring forth" (Isaiah 61:11). Don't be discouraged if growth comes slowly. Soon you will have a garden. "David H. Roper (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Within the seed lies God's creative power"  
He's given us the joy to see it grow;  
And when He puts new life within our heart,  
His wonder-working power we can know. "Hess

Spiritual growth depends on the water of God's Word  
and the sunshine of His love.