



# HOW CAN I HAVE FAITH?

## The Alpha Course week 3

**This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!**

*2 Corinthians 5.17 NLT*

A Christian is a **Christ**-ian: someone who follows and puts their faith in Jesus Christ. How that happens varies enormously. For some there is a definite moment; for others it is a more gradual process.

- When you receive Christ, you become a child of God (*John 1.12*)
- God wants you to be sure of your faith
- 'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.' (*1 John 5.13*)

Faith is not a blind leap, but a step based on evidence.

### 1. THE WORD OF GOD

We must not only trust our feelings, which can be changeable and may even be deceptive at times, but instead rely on God's promises.

- "... faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." (*Romans 10.17*)
- "I will come in." (*Revelation 3.20*)
- "I am with you always." (*Matthew 28.20*)
- "I give them eternal life." (*John 10.28*)

### 2. THE WORK OF JESUS

You come exactly as you are. It's not about what you do or what you can achieve; it's about what has been done for you by Jesus on the cross.

- It is a free gift of God (*Romans 6.23*)
- It's free but not cheap: it cost Jesus His life
- We receive it through repentance (turning away from sin) and faith (trust). The prophet Isaiah foretold:  
"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned - every one - to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (*Isaiah 53.6*)

### 3. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When someone becomes a Christian, God comes to live inside them by His Holy Spirit (*Romans 8.9*).

He transforms us from within:

- Our characters (*Galatians 5.22-23*)
- Our relationships

He brings a deep personal conviction that we are God's children.

- Faith leads to knowledge (*Romans 8.15-16*)

Here is a very simple prayer that you can pray to open the door of your heart to Jesus Christ and invite Him to come into your life by His Spirit:

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life**  
*(take a few moments to ask his forgiveness for anything  
particular that is on your conscience)*

**Please forgive me. I now turn from everything that I know is wrong.**

**Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be  
forgiven and set free.**

**Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Spirit.**

**I now receive that gift.**

**Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever.**

**Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS

1. What does faith mean to you?
2. What do you think about the evidence for Christianity?
3. How can you have faith in someone you can't see?
4. What aspects of today's presentation did you find convincing/not convincing?



## WHAT DOES LUKE TELL US ABOUT FAITH?

### A story in Luke's Gospel, Chapter 5

<sup>17</sup>One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal those who were ill. <sup>18</sup>Some men came carrying a paralysed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup>When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

<sup>20</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.' <sup>21</sup>The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, 'Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

<sup>22</sup>Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, 'Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? <sup>23</sup>Which is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up and walk"? <sup>24</sup>But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'

So he said to the paralysed man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' <sup>25</sup>Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. <sup>26</sup>Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, 'We have seen remarkable things today.'

Sometimes we can think of faith in very abstract terms. It's become very normal to describe religions as 'faith groups', and for personal faith to be individualised in a way that does not impact others. However, this always seems to be at odds with what we read in the Gospels about faith. In this story told by Luke, we see faith very much as being more than simply what we believe.

The friends of the paralysed man didn't just have a theoretical belief that Jesus could heal him; they did everything necessary to take him to Jesus because they had total belief that he would be healed. Now that demonstrates amazing faith, but we see that the religious leaders were rattled as much by Jesus' claims as by his actions.

Jesus plays his trump card by saying 'Friend, your sins are forgiven'. Faith isn't just about believing in what Jesus can do; it is knowing that he is God and has authority to forgive as well as to heal. We can be sure that when we ask, he will forgive and heal us.

This paralysed man was never the same again. Not only was he physically healed, in meeting Jesus he received new life and forgiveness. We too can know him.



**Watch this week's video at**  
<https://vimeo.com/250771916>

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. In the book of Hebrews we read 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'. What do you hope for? Do you have faith?
2. Luke shows us that when we take a step of faith towards Jesus, he is always there for us. Have you found this to be true? How has faith shaped your life?
3. In your own words, how would you describe what it means to be a Christian? What does it take to become a follower of Jesus? Do you know him?
4. Has your faith in Jesus changed following this week's Alpha? If so how, and what impact might this have on your life?

***Why not pray (or pray again) the prayer overleaf. In praying and meaning it, you can be sure of God's forgiveness and life.  
You are now a Christian – a follower of Jesus!***

### You might like to read...

**The Reason for God** by Tim Keller

**Is Faith Irrational?** by Nicky Gumbel

**One Step Beyond: One Man's Journey from Near Death to New Life**  
by Gran Seed

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