

If we could narrow down the definition of faith to a simple form, we could say that faith is to believe God at His Word.

In truth, faith isn't simply to believe that we can do or have all things because we feel spiritually strong. That is the equivalent of pride. Rather, true faith is to believe God in Christ, with the result that our life is focused on Him, His Word, and His will, and to totally trust Him.

The reason Pro 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

In essence, we trust God through acknowledging and believing His entire Word.

Rom 10:17 says, "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

We must therefore steadfastly study His Word so we can know what God desires from us.

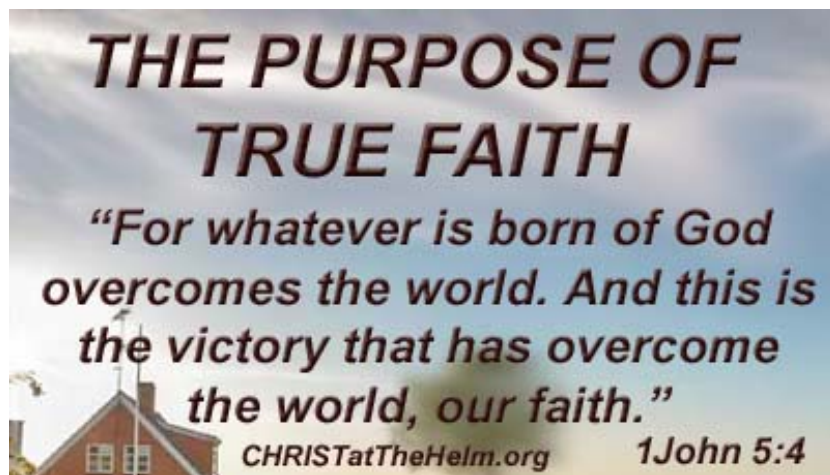
Why?

Gal 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Rom 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Is our faith in God and His Word, or is it in our own power?

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What a powerful truth from the apostle John saying that our faith produces the victory to overcome the world!

Then, Eph 6:16 add: “Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Why?

Heb 11:6: Without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Eph 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

The blessings from living by faith:

John 6:35: “Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

Eph 3:16: “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.”

Rom 15:13: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

1Peter 1:8-9: “Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.”

How strong is our faith to overcome the world right now?

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THE CHALLENGES TO OUR FAITH

***“Watch, stand fast in the faith,
be brave, be strong.”***

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1Cor 16:13

In this life, will we face challenges to our faith?

Here's what Jesus said in John 16:33: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

How must we face those challenges?

Col 2:8: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

1John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

1Tim 6:11-12: "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

Philip. 3:13-14: "No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us."

How steadfast are we to resist the enemy and stand by God's Word?

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HEAVENLY REWARDS FROM FAITH IN CHRIST!

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

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John 3:16

The most powerful blessing for believing in God and Christ is to receive the gift of eternal life.

Are there more blessings?

Jesus in John 7:38 said, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

Deut 31:6: “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

Gal 6:9: “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

Joshua 1:9: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

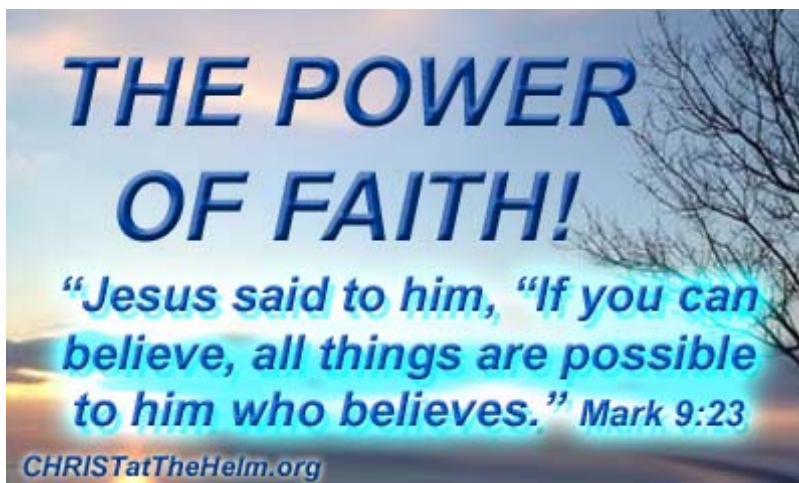
Paul in Gal 3:9 said: “All who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.”

Acts 20:24: “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

If we meditate on this, we can conclude and trust that no matter where we are, at anytime and in all circumstances, Christ is present in the life of true believers.

How strongly anchored is our faith in God and Christ?

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Talk about power! Jesus said that everything is possible if we believe. In Philippians 4:13 Paul said: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Therefore, if it is Christ who strengthens us through faith, we must ask ourselves this question: In whatever we ask by faith, will Christ be honored and worshipped? A clear requirement if Christ is to strengthen us, right?

As well, is our faith in our faith, or is it in Christ who died for us so His light shines through us? Faith is powerful, but it must be to the glory of God.

What is the source of power for faith?

Heb 11:3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."

Again, the power of faith can move mountains, as Jesus said in Mark 11:23.

What does faith accomplish in our life?

2Tim 1:7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."

John 7:38: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Psalms 23:4: "Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me."

Are we living in the power of faith to the glory of Christ?

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A most authentic proof of faith in God and Christ is undoubtedly translated into the commitment to love and serve God from the heart. When asked by a lawyer what he shall do to inherit eternal life, Jesus replied by asking him what the law says, and the lawyer answered in Luke 10:27, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.” To which Jesus answered in verse 28, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”

To love God above all and even ourselves is a proof of true faith. That’s why the apostle in 1John 5:3 said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”

In John 14:21 Jesus added, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

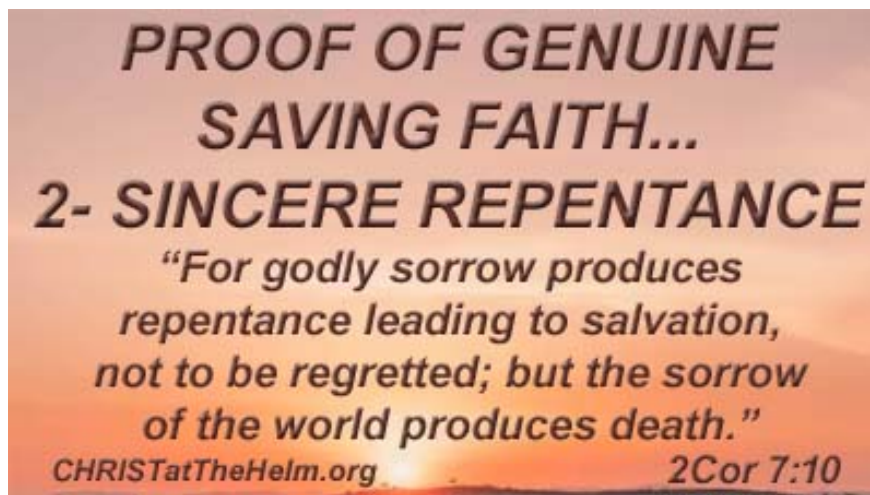
The reason 1John 2:15-17 tells us, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Why?

Rom 8:7: ‘Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.’

How genuine is our faith and love for God and Christ right now?

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The first revelation we get from God when we truly believe in Christ as Savior, it is that “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” as Romans 3:23 tells us.

Therefore we must truly repent because, as Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.”

Why?

1John 1:8-10: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

In Rom 2:4, Paul challenged those who continue to sin saying, “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

In other words, true faith encompasses that we have a repentant heart, proving our authentic confession of belief in Christ.

The reason Jesus said in Luke 13:3: “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” Then in Mat 3:8 He added, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.”

Does the slightest sin in our life instantly produce a repentant heart, or do we just write it off from our minds?

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Two very opposite concepts in life are pride and humility. Very importantly however is that scripture enjoins us to be humble.

How?

James 3:13: "Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom."

Rom 12:3: "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."

Col 3:12: "Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering."

2Chron 7:14: "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

Why must we be humble with God and man?

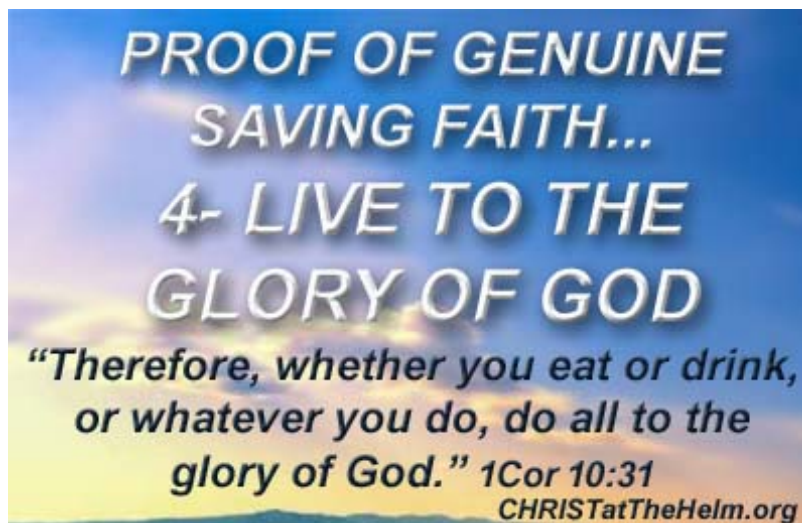
James 4:6: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Pro 11:2: "Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."

Pro 29:23: "A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor."

Do we humbly follow and serve our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ?

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Our world right now is focused on glorifying the flesh in complete rejection of God and in a most decadent manner.

Are we believers in God and Christ?

Then, here's what Isaiah 43:7 says: "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

In all truth, we were created to bring glory to God, and surely not to ourselves.

Next, Jer 9:23-24 tell us, "Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I *am* the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD."

God through the prophet in Isaiah 42:8 said, "I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images."

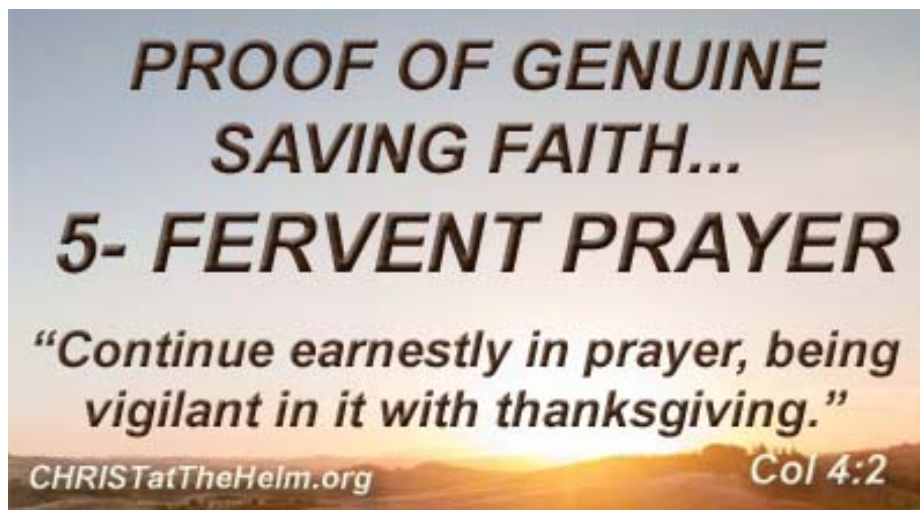
Why?

2Cor 4:6: "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."

Rom 11:36: "For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever!"

Do we emulate the world, or are we living to the glory of God?

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Prayer is a great blessing granted to us by God to share our hearts with our heavenly Father, and seek His will. It may encompass asking God for wholesome desires that would please Him, guidance, comfort in times of sorrow, or uplift people who need His help.

In essence, to pray is to have a conversation with Almighty God through Christ who has saved us, understanding that we are part of the family of God.

Here's what Jesus said on prayer:

Luke 18:1: “Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”

Mat 26:41: “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

Mat 6:7: “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

Luke 18:9: “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

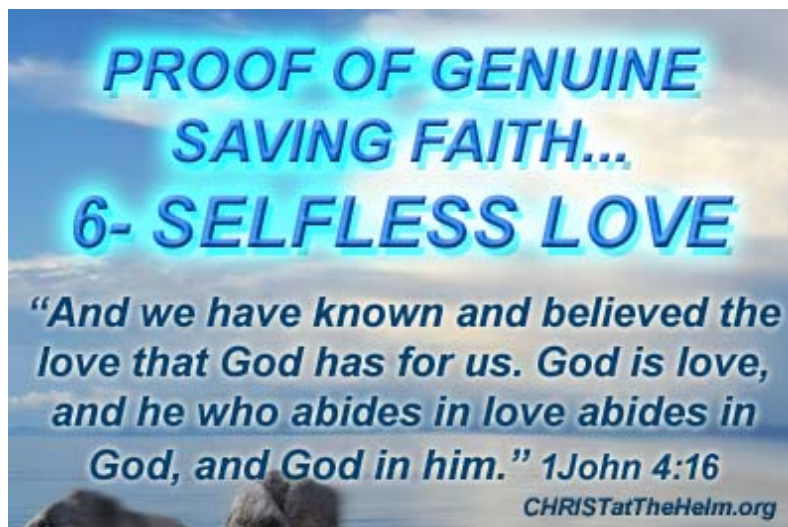
The reason Paul said in Philip 4:6: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

Why should we pray?

Jer 29:12: “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”

Have we made prayer a sought after time with Almighty God to support our authentic faith in God and Christ?

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Selfless love is what God demonstrated to us through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross so we could be saved. While Jesus in Mark 12:30-31 commands us to love God with all our hearts, souls and strength, we're also told to love our neighbor as ourselves so as to shine the light of Christ and honor God.

How is that accomplished?

1Cor 13:4-7: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

1John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

1John 4:7-8: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Where's the proof found?

1John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death."

1John 2:9: "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness."

Why must our life manifest selfless love? Read John 3:16-17 very slowly!

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A long list of scriptures clearly commands us to not follow the world but rather follow Christ. Here are a few:

1John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

James 4:4: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Rom 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Why?

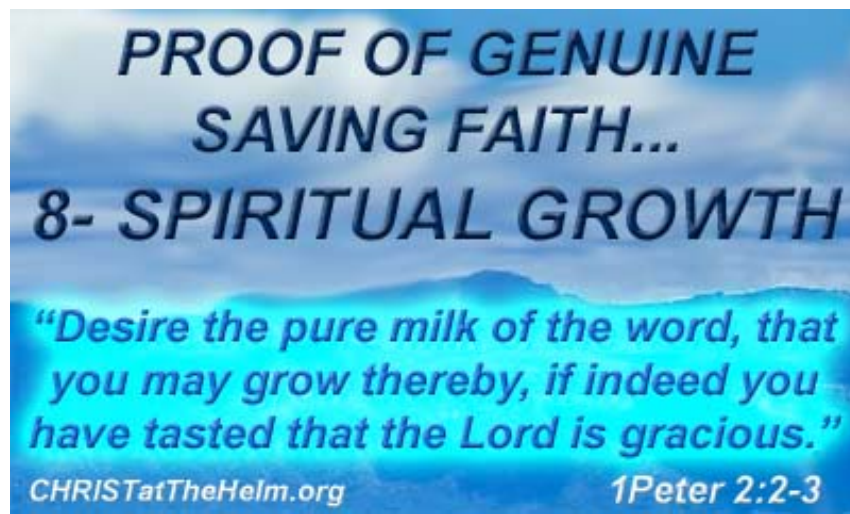
1Peter 2:9-10: "You *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

2Cor 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Philip 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Are we steadfast in following Christ, or do we flirt with the world?

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Just as we do in the physical life, we must grow spiritually in the knowledge of God and Christ.

How?

Col 2:6-7: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

Heb 6:1: “Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.”

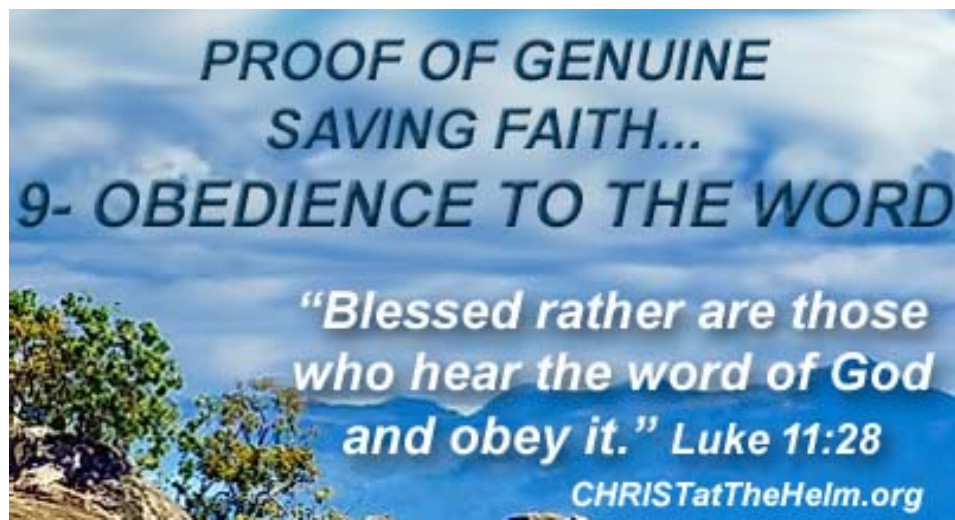
John 15:1-4: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

Why?

Eph 4:14-15: “That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”

On a score of 1 to 10, how would we rate our growth in Christ?

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It is easy to claim that we believe in Christ and are saved. However, does our faith translate into a thirst for God's Word and a desire to obey and follow Christ?

Here's what Jesus said:

John 15:14: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

Luke 6:46: "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Mat 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

John 14:23: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Additionally, as the apostle said in 1John 2:3-5, the proof of authentic faith in Christ is: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."

What's our source of truth?

2Tim 3:16: "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

How obedient are we to follow Christ?

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