

# LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH

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In John 17:11, Jesus prayed to the Father, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one, as we are.*” In verses 20-23, he continued this prayer for *all* of his disciples for evermore: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *that they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; *that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” The foundation for that complete love that we are to all have is our faith (2 Pet 1:5-7). Therefore, the epistle of 2 Peter is written “to them that have obtained *like precious faith* with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:1).

## **From faith to faith**

The word “faith” is used most commonly in the New Testament to describe our belief in God (Jas 2:19), Christ (John 14:1) and the word of God (John 5:47). In this context, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). This is also the kind of faith which is meant in Romans 1:17 where it says the just shall live by faith. But the word “faith” is often used in the New Testament to describe the system of faith which we are under. In this context, it refers to the entirety of the New Testament. As such, there is only “one faith” (Eph 4:5). Both meanings of the word “faith” seem to be in view in Romans 1:17. In the gospel (Rom 1:16) is revealed the righteousness of God “from faith to faith” (Rom 1:17). It is “from” the word of God, *the* faith, that the righteousness

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(continued)

of God is revealed, which leads “to” a proper, obedient faith in God. “From faith” describes the source, the gospel. “To faith” describes the result of hearing the gospel, which is belief. Without such faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6).

## **Faith without works is dead**

But to be a *living faith*, this belief must act (i.e. work). James 2:14-20 says, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.* Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*” That is why the “great company of the priests were *obedient to the faith*” (Acts 6:7). The righteous truly do live by this kind of obedient faith in God (compare John 3:16 with Hebrews 5:9). Our “like precious faith” comes *through the righteousness of God and of Christ* (2 Pet 1:1). The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Rom 1:16). Through hearing the word of God, we obtain faith in God and that very righteousness of God which is revealed in that word (Rom 3:22). This is what we are to hunger and thirst for (Matt 5:6), and seek first of all (Matt 6:33). May we all obtain and never lose this “like precious faith” that truly is one of the greatest spiritual blessings available in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3).