

So long as man walks the soil of this earth, his faith will remain incomplete.

Even though it is a gift from God, it finds an imperfect and fragile home in the heart of man.

the gift of
Faith

Sadly, today it is necessary to define the term "faith," as it has become universal and ubiquitous—that is, an insipid, even meaningless metaphor referring to just about anything under the sun. Our culture today has ground down the hard granite of this word into a fine and worthless powder. We all have heard, and no doubt have used the term, "a person of faith." But what does that really mean? I can have faith in myself; faith in another person; faith in Sobek, the crocodile god of the Nile; or faith in a crystal to cure every ache and pain in my body. All of these would, today, make me a "person of faith."

Thus it behooves the Christian to not just identify himself as a person of faith, but to specify the One in whom his faith has been placed. Does he trust in himself, in another human being, in a pagan deity, or in a faddish device? No, his faith is in the God/Man Jesus Christ, the Son of very God. It is in Him, and Him alone, that his trust is placed.

Faith in anything else is man-made. Faith in Christ Jesus is God-made. Jesus Himself told His disciples, "For this reason I have said to you, that

no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father," and Paul wrote to the Ephesian church,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8-10

Man says, *I believe; therefore I am.* God declares, *I AM; therefore you believe.*

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

James 1:17

Everything that comes from God is perfect, but wherever it dwells on planet earth even the perfect faith that comes from Him—the faith that calls Jesus "Lord"—is not static, but dynamic. Faith is a living, breathing force that takes up residence in believers, and in that fleshly home it may develop and grow into effective maturity, or it may languish

and atrophy from disuse. No matter what happens to faith in the life of a believer, it never remains the same: It is either moving forward, or slipping backwards.

The gift of faith comes from God, but it is up to *us* to use it, to nurture it. It is up to us to lift it out of its infancy in a new believer's heart, to stretch and challenge it, to share it; to take it from its childhood, through adolescence to young adulthood, and on into the profound and substantial depth of its later maturity.

That is a gift we give back to God, in thanksgiving and praise for His gift to us of life-changing faith.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:6-7

