

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living  
Study Guide

## INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

### LESSON 10: THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled Introduction to Evangelism. This series of lessons aims to prepare participants to effectively share the Gospel with others. Understanding how God equips us for ministry and how to prepare our Gospel message for various worldviews will help us bring the unchanging message of the hope found in Jesus Christ to a world that does not yet know Him.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).



# INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

## LESSON 10: THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the concept of saving faith, and to understand how to present the Gospel in a way that appeals to the intellect, emotion, and will.

### JUST SO YOU KNOW...

This lesson examines the difference between faith that is a feeling or wish or a fleeting thought, and faith that saves us. Scripture indicates that not everyone who claims to be a Christian will enter the Kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 7:21](#)). Some people will come to the end of their lives and discover that what they thought was ‘following God’ was not true saving faith. Either they were merely acting like a Christian without true belief, or they thought they believed but it did not impact their actions. It is important to understand that salvation is not simply praying an easy prayer and getting a pass to heaven in exchange. Following Christ means being willing to obey Him and to follow Him. When we share our faith with others, we should not make following Christ sound easy. It is costly and will change a person’s whole life!

## GETTING STARTED

1. Are there people in your life you put faith in? What does it mean to have faith in a friend or a family member? How is it different from having faith in God?

2. Do you know anyone who has tremendous faith in God – faith that sets them apart? Is this faith demonstrated by their words and actions? Why is their faith special or different?



## STUDY

- ❖ **THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION:** Understanding faith is important, and we should strive to have a sincere faith in God which pleases Him. We will look at examples of faith found in the Word of God. The first is the faith of a Centurion. Centurions were commanders in the Roman army, and paid well to supervise a large group of soldiers.

- Read Luke 7:1-10. What was special about the Centurion’s faith? How did the Centurion prove his faith?

- Now read Matthew 7:21-29. How does the faith of the people described here differ from the faith of the Centurion?

- How do you respond to the fact that some people believe they have true faith and even perform miracles in Jesus’ name, but in the eyes of God their faith is false? How can this be?

- ❖ **TWO KINDS OF FAITH:** It appears when reading these verses that there are two kinds of faith. Effective and ineffective faith, or more accurately, saving faith and non-saving faith. Let’s look more closely at the two passages to discover the differences.

- **Saving Faith** – In the story of the Centurion (Luke 7:1-10), we see an example of saving faith. This is the kind of faith that God requires of us.
  - Vs. 6-7 - “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Therefore I did not presume to come to you.” The Centurion humbles himself before God. He demonstrates his humility by sending others on his behalf. He did not assume that Jesus would have time to meet him or would



do as he asked just because he was important. This is particularly relevant since the Centurion would be a wealthy and important man who could easily command someone's presence or obedience.

- Vs. 7 - "But say the word, and let my servant be healed." The Centurion sincerely believes that Jesus can speak and heal his servant. Jesus' word was all he needed; He didn't even need to see the servant.
  - Vs. 8 - "For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes." The Centurion was used to exercising his power and authority. When he tells someone to do something they do it. However, he recognizes that Jesus' power is so much greater than his own.
- **Non-Saving Faith** – The Bible talks about people who profess to know God, but deny Him by their works. Consider [Matthew 7:21-29](#). These verses clearly state that such people are disobedient to God, and their "good works" cannot save them.
- Vs. 22 - "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you...'" There are people who profess to believe in God, yet they also think they are saved by works. They haven't taken the time to learn what God really requires.
  - Vs. 24 - "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock." This verse tells us that we must obey God's Word. Saving faith comes from more than just hearing the words.
  - Vs. 24-27 - Compare the man who builds his house on a rock and is unaffected by rains and floods, to the man who builds his house on the sand whose house falls when the winds and floods come. If you are building your own house and you go to a professional to get advice, they will tell you what will work and what will not work. The advice does not complete your work. You must choose whether to follow their advice or not. If you say you believe the professional and know them to be good, is it not then logical that you would follow their advice and build your house in the manner that they recommend? There are many people who profess to know God and believe His Word to be true, and yet when it comes to making decisions in life, they go their own way without regard for what the Bible tells them to do.
- Consider faith in your own life. What would saving faith look like? What would non-saving faith look like?



❖ **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAITH?** The two passages looked at so far give us a good understanding of the nature of saving faith.

➤ Write down what you learn about faith from reading the following verses.

Romans 10:17	
1 Corinthians 2:5	
Hebrews 11:1	
Mark 9:24	
James 2:24	

Faith comes from God – and by hearing the truth in God’s Word. True faith is faith in the power of God, not in the wisdom of men. If we desire to have greater faith, we can ask God. Our faith will be accompanied by action if it is sincere. It will change the way we see the world, and also how we act in it.

❖ **THE FOCUS OF OUR SAVING FAITH:** Christianity isn’t just about believing in Christ, praying a one-time prayer, or saying ‘yes’ to an evangelist. It is about a relationship with God. People of other worldviews might find this alarming, which is why it is imperative to explain to them this truth.

➤ Read Romans 6:5. What does it tell us about our relationship with Jesus?

➤ When sharing the Gospel we must present the essential truths of salvation. Jesus is the focus. For example, consider the Gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Jesus died for our sins, was buried and then rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. Paul preached the Gospel fully wherever he went (Romans 15:19-20).



- Unless we communicate the full Gospel, people will not be able to process all the facts (Romans 10:17). People must understand that they need a personal relationship with Christ and repent from sin in order to experience saving faith. They will put themselves under His Lordship, and look to Him for direction in their life.
- What does a person need to know and understand in order to put their faith in Jesus Christ?

❖ **WHOLE BELIEF:** We must know how to communicate true faith so that people are not deceived. Communicating a saving faith requires that we appeal to someone's intellect, emotion, and will. A complete picture of the Gospel tells us of God's perfect plan for justice, His great love for humanity, and His requirement of obedience.

- **Intellect:** We must appeal to a person's intellect. People need to be aware of the complete picture so that they can process all the facts. If you tell someone about the love of Jesus but do not share the requirement of repentance, they only know the part of the story that makes a person feel good, not the part that requires action.
- **Emotion:** We must appeal to a person's emotion. God also asks for relationship. The Gospel truth is the story of God's love for us. The Bible is full of God's help and grace. God appeals not only to our intellect but also to our hearts, and He asks us to call out to Him. There are many examples in the Bible of people who called out to God in praise or in distress. God desires a personal relationship with people who want to know Him more and seek His plan for their lives.
- **Will:** We must appeal to a person's will. James 2:14-26 tells us that faith without works is dead. Many say they believe, but without works there is no demonstration of faith or commitment to the Word of God. Just as your works alone will not save you, neither will faith unsubstantiated by works. Salvation is an act of obedience; God calls us to obey the Gospel or face judgement if we reject it (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). We can thus say that saving faith is an act of human will, yielding to the living God and submitting one's own will to Him.



## IN SUMMARY

- ❖ There are different types of faith presented in the Bible. Only true faith in Jesus will save us.
- ❖ The Centurion expressed true faith because He believed in the power of God and it was demonstrated in his actions.
- ❖ The Bible also talks about people who thought they had faith, but actually put their trust in the wisdom of man. These people may have demonstrated some indication of faith outwardly, but in reality they did not obey God's Word.
- ❖ Our faith comes from God Himself through hearing and heeding His Word. We can ask God to increase our faith.
- ❖ The focus of our saving faith must be on Jesus Christ Himself – the work He accomplished on our behalf and His power to save us.
- ❖ Our belief must affect our whole person – intellect, emotion and will.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How can you tell someone how you came to have faith in Jesus Christ, and appeal to their intellect, emotions, and will?

2. What is the relationship of faith and works? Can you have a faith that doesn't include obedience to the commands of God? Is strict obedience to the commands of God enough to receive salvation?