

WORSHIP
THE GATEWAY TO
FAITH

TAPPING INTO
Fully-Persuaded FAITH

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PREFACE

Faith. What a broad and important subject, with so many perspectives and opinions.

Many see faith as the elusive key to heaven's treasures—distant and remote. They seem perfectly content with a faith that rarely, if ever, produces a result. Furthermore, they are amazed and thrilled if it ever actually does.

To many, faith equates to merely hoping for the best. Some are afraid of faith. To them it seems like a mountain they cannot climb. They fear its demand—its required “leaps of faith.” Others find faith simply a religious hot button to be avoided due to the perceived abuses of others. Still more people champion faith as their passion and cause yet will overlook the simple perspective offered in this book.

There is more to faith than simply believing. We will explore the trusting and resting that are essential aspects of fully persuaded faith.

From God's perspective faith is absolutely essential! It is not optional or voluntary. Realizing this, we should become determined to understand faith as clearly and completely as possible.

Within this book, I hope to change your perspective of this kingdom attribute *without which it is impossible to please God*. Faith is not an unscalable mountain—*there is a gateway!* I want you to journey with me on a mission, taking faith from unreachable and unachievable to fully attainable and within your grasp—as an effective part of your daily life.

Jim Burgdorf



GOD'S UNBENDING REQUIREMENTS

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

This verse holds many keys. And we have such a tendency to prematurely place a period at one key point or another and make camp or pitch our tent without following God's directive to completion. Let's slowly stroll through this definitive faith verse, examining every facet.

Impossible

As we discussed in the first chapter, "without faith it is *impossible* to please him." Absolutely impossible. There is no compromise within this phrase; there is nothing vague or uncertain about it. Unless faith is truly an active, daily part of our lives, it is impossible

for us to please God. In other words, he finds no pleasure in the life that lacks evidence of real faith. It is *impossible* to please him without it! Not unlikely, not highly improbable—*impossible*.

For

The little word *for* directly links two statements. Without faith it is impossible to please God—*because, or for a specific reason*. We are about to find out the specific aspects of our faith in which God finds pleasure.

Whoever

“He that cometh to God” indeed means, as most translations say, *whoever* or *anyone* coming before God. This confirms that the points of our discussion apply to *anyone* who comes to God—not just to Old Testament patriarchs.

Must

Again, there is nothing unclear about this word. It indicates absolute finality. We are establishing that anyone desiring audience with God *must*—not *could*, not *should*, but *must*—satisfy certain requirements. This is not a recommendation but a command.

Must what? Anyone who comes to God, anyone seeking audience with God, *must* fulfill the remainder of the verse. This phrase is followed by two qualifications. The use of the word *must* establishes their

necessity. Whoever approaches God *must* accomplish these two essential requirements in order to please him and gain audience.

It is important to note that God chose to use the words *impossible* and *must* in the framing of this verse—a clear indicator of the importance *he* places on this subject.

We now see it requires faith by God’s definition to be pleasing to him.

The first of these essential criteria:

Whoever Comes to God Must Believe He Is

This is the obvious one. Anyone you might ask on the street would to some extent recognize this part. Faith is *believing God exists*.


“Are you a ‘person of faith?’”

“Oh yes, I believe in God.”

The truth in this portion is readily apparent. As Romans 10:14 says, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” Second Chronicles 20:20 states, “Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established.” In Daniel 6:23 we read, “So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.” Anyone coming to God *must believe* he is. Again, to most, this part is readily apparent.

Religion clearly sees this. Unbelievers on the street recognize this, and even the news media distinguish “people of faith” as individuals who believe

in God. The unfortunate aspect is that so many, from non-believers to theologians, inadvertently place a


To most, simply believing in God's historical existence equates to faith.

period after *must believe that he is*. To most, simply believing in God's historical existence equates to faith.

Religion readily concludes its definition at this point. But just five chapters earlier in chapters five and six, the writer to the Hebrews underscore the necessity of continued spiritual growth. These chapters discuss moving beyond spiritual infancy. They describe growing from the milk of God's Word to the meat of the Word—literally growing up spiritually in the Lord. By underscoring the necessity, the writer emphasizes that growing from spiritual infancy to maturity, while required, is by no means automatic.

Hebrews 6:1 states, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God" (NIV). The writer pleads, "Let's not repeatedly lay the same foundation but move on to maturity. Let us not continually deal with repentance from dead works (or sin consciousness) and with foundational faith toward God." This foundational faith toward God is *believing in God*—believing that he is. This is fundamental and elementary.

Multitudes of churches and religious organizations around the world have contentedly dropped

anchor at this point. For many, this identifies the extent of their spiritual growth, yet God is entreating us: "There is more!"

Concluding Hebrews 5, the writer gives us this preface to 6:1, "In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" (NIV). He pointedly adds that anyone who lives on a constant diet of milk is an infant.

My inclusion of the previous two paragraphs may appear to some a bit harsh, but I firmly believe the use of *impossible* in Hebrews 11:6 demands that we address every faith concern with unrestricted honesty and without reservation.

To God, believing he is, is just the first step. James 2:19 states, "Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; the devils also believe." If this is the extent of our requirement, even the devil qualifies.

There is yet another requirement to pleasing him, yet one more mandatory essential, without which God will not be satisfied. "Believe that he is" is followed by a conjunction, not a period. Whoever comes to God must believe that he is.

And

To God, the Moses and Abraham kind of faith goes well beyond this point. He that cometh to God *must* believe that he is—and *must* fulfill one additional criterion. The little word *and* both conjoins and equates. Whoever comes to God must not only believe *he is*


but of equal importance *must believe something further*. This is where we press beyond fundamentals and rudiments into the heart of the matter.

Without this kind of faith, it is impossible to please God. Whoever comes to God must certainly believe that he is *and* must recognize as well as believe that he is a *rewarder* of those who diligently seek him.

Do you suppose it's coincidence that these two powerful foundational declarations appear in the same verse? Do you suppose it is even remotely possible that "Without faith it is impossible to please him" and "he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him" (NIV) are unrelated phrases? Certainly not! God is herein defining faith that pleases him.

He Is a Rewarder

An essential component of the God-pleasing faith is to recognize that he *is* a rewarder! He is *my* rewarder. God *longs* to be a provider, a rewarder in our lives, our all-sufficient supply, and our ever-faithful blessing. He so longs to fulfill this for us that he made it an essential component of our faith identity—


We have no idea how much He genuinely longs to be our rewarder.

a revelation that he is a rewarder. We have no idea how much he genuinely longs to be our rewarder, and

recognition essential to pleasing him. He made recognizing it a *requirement*. Whoever comes to God must believe that he is *and must have*

this is important enough to God that he included it in this verse. He requires and demands that we see him in this light. Furthermore, pleasing him is impossible apart from seeing this.

It has never been God's plan or intent that we accept Jesus Christ only to then struggle through the remainder of our earthly existence until death mercifully beckons us to our heavenly reward. What a tragic deception.

The devil, recognizing how essential this Hebrews 11:6 progression is to God, fervently wants to deceive the Body of Christ in this area. This has to become more than mere information to us. It has to become revelation within our hearts. Whoever comes to God expecting to please him, expecting audience with him, *must* believe that he is, and *must* have a revelation of the principle that *he is a rewarder*. This revelation itself is a requirement.

There are churches and certainly individuals who quickly and forcefully declare, "Yes, we absolutely believe God is!" But the very thought of presuming him a rewarder is like fingernails scraping stained glass. Open hostility can erupt amidst any discussion about God's desire to bless or prosper his children. Many have a firm assumption that heaven alone is the reward, and small wars are waged over whether God actually rewards to any extent this side of heaven. The passage clearly states he *is* the rewarder, not he *will be* the rewarder.

Yet, we must understand what God is saying. Without faith, it is totally impossible to please

him. What kind of faith? The faith that fulfills the following:

- A) Believes that God is
- B) Equally believes and recognizes that he is a rewarder

Campsites

In the body of Christ, we have a great tendency to hastily select attractive campsites. Imagine for a moment hiking several hours through a forest to camp beside a beautiful lake. At midday, within minutes of the scenic destination, your guide stops surrounded by forest to set up camp for the night. How pointless this is! Yet this is an image of how the church often treats God's Word and certainly this sixth verse of Hebrews 11. We often make camp prematurely. We begin to drive stakes, secure tents, and, in reading Scripture, inscribe periods before we actually reach an intended objective.

Faith is a perfect example of that action.

We have already walked through several campsites in this discussion. Moving step by step, point by point, emphasizing words, portions of phrases and thoughts, we have already seen a number of stopping points.

There are campsites strewn throughout the verse. The earliest may be of those willfully reluctant to press forward simply due to the touchy nature of the subject of faith. Most certainly, the largest of the campsites places the premature period immediately

after "must believe that he is." Throughout this verse, we want to remove untimely periods and dismantle hastily fashioned campsites.

We must not let our tradition or religious opinion dictate campsite selection. This is precisely how the traditions of men make God's Word of no effect.² Man's religious tradition can render God's Word completely ineffectual and impotent in our lives.

Rewarder

God is a rewarder. He longs to be our rewarder; in fact, he longs to be our provider in every fashion. If this revelation is indeed growing and expanding within my heart, the desperate trap of the enemy will be to somehow persuade me to prematurely drop anchor—to make an early camp without the revelation being completed in my life. After all, the devil certainly recognizes that without this kingdom principle becoming fully evident to us, it is truly impossible for you and me to be pleasing to God, as Hebrews 11:6 declares. We must ensure that we make no hasty campsites. We must not place a period anywhere in this verse until it's complete.

The body of Christ is beginning to see that God is a willing rewarder, supplier, and blessing in the life of the believer. God is willing to move throughout the life of the believer to bless, to provide, and to prosper with wholeness—spirit, soul... and body. *God longs to bless his children.*

Matthew 7:11 states, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much*

more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (emphasis added).

How much more will your heavenly Father benefit and bless you?

Luke, speaking of God’s provision, also states in 12:27–28, “Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

Four verses later Luke adds, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Lest we consider this as referring only to heaven or spiritual matters, 2 Peter 1:3 clarifies, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” His power *has* given us all things pertaining to life as well as godliness.

This brings us to the edge of the next clearing, the next major campsite. Many become so thrilled about the reward, the provision, and the blessing that they place an exclamation point right here: *he is a rewarder!* This portion of the revelation has become so attractive that they encamp around their reward. For some, the reward becomes the pursuit; the reward becomes the destination. They are perfectly content to locate themselves securely around this facet of God’s intended revelation, not realizing or admitting there is indeed more that God requires.

Within these pages we are not questioning that he is a rewarder any more than we are questioning

that he exists. We are simply declaring God’s directive is not yet complete. Yes, God is a rewarder, and, yes, he longs to be your provider; but he is not just anyone’s rewarder. The verse is not finished. He is not the rewarder of just anyone who names the name of Jesus. God now narrows the scope of what pleases him even more.

Diligence

Here we clearly see another component—a passionate diligence toward his goal. He is a rewarder of the diligent. As we come upon the glowing embers of yet another campfire, we find that there have been countless sermons preached on God’s reward to the diligent. Although God does value and regard diligence in the work of the gospel, diligence alone does not equal God-pleasing faith. If we conclude our definition at the point of diligence, it will inevitably take on a nature opposite of God’s intent. You will unavoidably try to earn your faith label through your own works and efforts.

God is not just interested in work ethic and religious industriousness. If he were, most cults would have a decided advantage over much of the church, based on their religious work ethic.

You know it is entirely possible to be “diligently wrong.” Have you ever traveled confidently in one direction only to eventually discover you were on the wrong road? Have you ever worked hard on a project only to find you were doing it incorrectly? Recall the owner’s manual illustration. Have you ever *fin-*

ished assembling a project and wondered where the remaining pieces should have gone?

As a teenager I rebuilt the carburetor of my 1968 Chevelle, only to discover, to my dismay, one tiny spring remaining after reassembly. I persistently repeated the process several times before the little spring successfully found its rightful home. Over the years, my understanding of faith has paralleled my carburetor-reassembly experience. I have been diligently wrong several times.

As we progress through verse six, we are approaching God's objective. God's pleasure is not stirred by those simply diligent at doing religious things. It is not only possible but, sadly, very common to diligently pursue a noble cause such as building a new church and presume that hard work is *all* God expects. God is not interested in those who are simply active and hard working *in his behalf*. He responds to those in a very select and specific group—and he is their rewarder.

With each individual phrase and step through Hebrews 11:6, God is refining the image we have of faith. He is narrowing our search to our point of access. We are approaching our gateway.

Seek

He is a rewarder of those who diligently, passionately *seek*. Yet again, this is another site where many drop anchor before reaching port. It is entirely possible to seek the wrong thing—even diligently.

Similar to our *rewarder* discussion, there was a

season in my spiritual development when I became so excited about my heavenly Father being a rewarder that I began diligently seeking the wrong objective—my reward. Yes, I was diligently seeking, but my search became misdirected. I became diligently distracted.

I had personally built more than a mere campfire at this point. This demanded significant reprioritizing if in fact I desired to please God.

James 4 clearly illustrates this. Verse three declares, “Ye ask and receive not because you ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts.” Verses seven and eight provide the necessary solution. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil... Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you... purify your hearts ye double minded.” The problem James is addressing is not with the asking but with the motivation behind the request. As we will discuss later in this chapter, it is equally possible to ask nobly and unselfishly and still be wrongly seeking.

A few years ago, the world of Christian literature was taken by storm by a small book proclaiming the value of simply praying “bless me.” Indeed, recognition of God's desire and willingness is one of several important steps in this continuing revelation, but “bless me” is not our destination. In truth, neither “bless me” nor “bless them” is our final objective and purpose.

Journeying step by step through this verse, several of these stopping points have become settlements rather than momentary campsites through-

out the church. Possibly you have located yourself, as have I, either from past distractions or present. Some journey their entire spiritual life without ever truly reaching God's intended destination within this verse.

There is one final distinction that must be made before we can acceptably drop anchor. There remains one final definer of God's demands and expectation.

Worship

He is a rewarder of those who diligently, passionately *seek him*. He is the rewarder of those who fervently

pursue him. He is looking for *worshippers*. He rewards worship! This is entirely a worship discussion. The crux of this entire discussion of faith's foundation

He is a rewarder of those who diligently, passionately seek Him. He rewards worship!

is that God responds to worshipers! Draw nigh to God and he will respond. Real faith is all about true *worship*.

Is it wrong then to ask and believe for personal provision and blessings? Absolutely not, provided the priorities of your heart are in right order. If your heart is focused on personal gratification, then you have a campsite that needs immediate dismantling. You have built a campfire that needs to be smothered. More to the point, you have a heart that needs immediate refocusing, an area of self that needs to be denied.³ God longs to manifest himself as our

rewarder and our all-sufficient supply but within specific restrictions. This subject is extensively examined in the book *Worship, the Gateway to God*.⁴

Ponder these questions. If I diligently seek him *because* he is the rewarder of those who do, am I *really seeking him*? No. I am seeking the reward. Furthermore, if I seek first the kingdom *because* all these things will be added unto me, am I really seeking first the kingdom? No. I am in truth seeking the things. I have mistakenly camped at "diligently seeking."

There are multitudes of wonderful people who, without even realizing it, have established a permanent encampment at "believing he is." There are great numbers of good people who have built their settlements around seeking their reward, around seeking answers to their needs, whether physical, social, financial, or otherwise. Still others are nobly seeking the benefit of their fellow man and the gospel, but seeking the reward nonetheless. While noble, honorable, and seemingly unselfish, it is only pleasing to God if it is not a campsite. It is only effective if seen and practiced through a worshiper's heart.

There are still others whose only passion is that their camp be separate and distinct from all neighboring camps. Unfortunately, camps tend to become encampments. After we've pitched our tent and built the fire, if we become comfortable at our temporary site, the next objective is usually to build a wall. We must grow beyond being

We must grow beyond being tolerant and even comfortable with all our encampments.

tolerant and even comfortable with all our encampments. We must refocus our hearts and purpose on the true destination. Nothing short of our Father's presence, nothing short of the glory,⁵ is satisfactory.

James' Confirmation

Through the lenses of this discussion, consider James' words from the second chapter of his epistle. James 2:14 states, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" The *Weymouth New Testament* phrases it, "If a man professes to have faith, and yet his actions do not correspond?" True faith requires corresponding action.

James continues his confirmation of our discussion:

- 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead ...
- 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!
- 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?
- 21 (AMP) Was not our forefather Abraham [shown to be] justified (made acceptable to God) by [his] works *when he brought to the altar as an offering* his [own] son Isaac?

Verse twenty-two highlights our thought, "You see that [his] faith was cooperating with his works, {we could add 'with his offering to God, his worship'} and [his] faith was completed and reached its supreme expression" (AMP). In other words, Abraham's faith

was completed and reached its supreme expression when he worshiped—when he brought an offering before the Lord. This directly connects (as we will address in greater depth in a later chapter) to Paul's Romans 4:20 portrayal of Abraham that "he grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God."

The Rewarder of the Worshiper

God is not the rewarder of those who simply believe he exists or of those pursuing his reward. Nor is he the rewarder of the religiously diligent—even for noble causes. He responds to one specific group: true worshipers ... those who fervently pursue him.

To establish this truth, we must momentarily examine and clarify the term *worship*—the subject of its own broad assortment of opinion in the church today.