

## Faith: A Clarification

### Why Consider This Topic

The word “faith” is used in numerous ways in the Bible and within the Apostolic Christian Church culture. Over time, many in the church have begun to switch back and forth in their usages of the word “faith” during sermons and conversations. It is assumed that the listeners are able to discern which usage the speaker is referring to but, unfortunately, this is not always the case. By using this word “faith” interchangeably, the meanings of this word have become distorted, resulting in confusion and feeding into doctrinal error and church conflict.

### Three Common Usages of the Word “Faith”

#### Usage #1: Saving Faith

- Clearly, faith in Christ is the basis of salvation.
- Faith in Christ is inextricably connected to justification (*Romans 5:1*).
  - *Romans 5:1-2*, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
  - *Ephesians 2:8-9*, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
  - *Romans 3:22*, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

#### Usage #2: Walking by Faith

- As believers, we live in this present world by faith. That is, as we live for Christ, we trust Him, obey Him, and cling to His promises. Walking by faith is an essential component of sanctification as we grow toward Christlikeness.
  - *2 Corinthians 5:7*, “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)”
  - *Romans 1:17*, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
  - See especially *Hebrews 11* in which the phrase “by faith” repeatedly precedes the descriptions of how the Old Testament patriarchs lived in trust and obedience to God: “By faith Abraham...” “By faith Moses...”

#### Usage #3: Denomination as “Our Faith”

- This usage refers to the cultural practice of referring to our church denomination as “our faith.”
- This usage occurs as a way to express appreciation for and belonging to our brotherhood.
- The usage of the word “faith” to refer to a church, a denomination, or a group of believers never occurs in Scripture.

### What is “The Faith”?

Believers are exhorted to “continue in the faith,” “contend for the faith,” “stand fast in the faith,” etc. In these instances, Scripture is exhorting the believer to continue to stay grounded in core biblical doctrine. It is essential for individuals to understand that “the faith” refers to the core doctrines of salvation through faith in Christ and not to a church denomination. If the reader inserts “The Apostolic Christian Church” as the meaning for “the faith” in these verses, significant doctrinal errors will inevitably occur such as viewing a church denomination as the source of salvation or confusion on topics such as sanctification and how good works are to be viewed in the believers life.