

Just what does it mean to have ?faith??

by Mark Pavilons

It's been said that faith can move mountains.

And most of us, at one point in our lives, take a leap of faith.

But just what is it, and how does it impact our lives?

I don't want to get into a religious discussion, but examining one's ?faith,? is important.

In this article, I?attempt to answer the questions:??Do you have faith??If so, how do you act on faith??

Aside from a belief, trust and loyalty to God, faith can also mean sincerity of intentions; allegiance or duty, fidelity and trust. Of course, human beings sometimes believe in something for which there is no proof.

No matter how you define faith, it seems it's quite a powerful thing, a substance that can guide us on our journey. Faith can be our companion, trusted friend and a shimmer of light in the darkness.

I am going to try to address all of these, in the hopes we can all ?have a little faith.?

The first notation in Section 2 of our Charter of Rights (Fundamental Freedoms) is a ?freedom of conscience and religion? followed up by a freedom of ?thought, belief, opinion and expression ...?

Singer Bon Jovi told us that when we have each other, we can make it, ?livin' on a prayer.?

Keep the faith. A test of faith. It goes beyond a shadow of a doubt, sometimes it's blind.

So, my friends, faith can be total confidence and trust in one another. It can be unbelievable strength when we combine our power and love for a common purpose.

We love our family members and take comfort in the fact that they will be there for us each and every day.?We look forward to seeing their faces when we come home from work. We never contemplate life without them.

When someone we love is fighting a battle, there are many people involved ? the person themselves, their circle of friends and family, and even a handful of acquaintances.

For me in my ?battle? with cancer, I have all of them. I?also have countless medical practitioners, researchers, students, scientists and pharmaceutical companies working on treatments. My faith is in them, and that one day they will have that life-changing ?eureka??moment. I can't wait.

Faith and belief are often used in the same context, sometimes interchangeably, but they are not quite the same thing. Belief is a strongly held opinion about an idea or world view. Beliefs are also opinions that you form about what you read, hear, or see. Beliefs can change over time, as you grow and learn new things.

Religious faith is not something you start and build from; faith can only be received; it must be given by God. True faith can take on doubts and questions, but it remains intact. We can grow in our faith, but the foundation is always the same.

James 2:19 says 'You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that 'nd shudder.' Take that Satan!

I've never been overly religious, but have come to embrace 'belief' through my studies in ancient cultures, and the vast array of religious icons, symbols and figures throughout our history.

To a Christian in the early days of our modern societies, a small, hand-carved wooden cross carried tremendous meaning. It was their lifeline in a very difficult world. It provided comfort that yes, things will work out.

I own several iron and bronze crosses of many designs, from the 1100s through to current times. I find them mysterious, marvellous works of art, and symbols of human faith. I keep one ' dated to the 17th century 'n my key chain and the bronze has become a shiny gold colour from the constant rubbing of my fingers in my pocket. As I hold one of these relics in my hand I wonder about the owners over hundreds of years and what their lives may have been like. I try to connect with them in some sort of spiritual way.

My parents never bought me a cross or crucifix. The first one I possessed was one my wife purchased for my dad ' a real beauty. We wanted him to have comfort in his final years. A biblical definition of faith reaches beyond mere belief 'he simple acknowledgment that God exists 'into the realm of trust. The Hebrew word for faith is 'Emunah,' which is derived from the same root as 'uman,' which means an artisan, craftsman, or practitioner. Faith is an ongoing pursuit, an 'artistry' that gets better with time and practice.

A true believer fixes their gaze on things that cannot be seen. We know that the things we now see will one day be gone, but it's those we cannot see that last forever.

I find the paranormal truly remarkable. And if there are ghosts, imagine the power of love and the energy contained in one's soul, to keep one's essence 'alive' in this world.

Religion and science are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they're complementary.

We think that the universe was created 13.7 billion years ago. The 'Big Bang' model of universal creation makes a number of very specific and numerical predictions which are observed and measured with high accuracy. The Standard Model of Particle Physics employs something known as 'Spontaneous Symmetry Breaking' to explain the strength of the laws of nature. Within the Standard Model the strength of these laws are not predicted. At present our current best theory is that they arose 'by chance.'

The fine tuning of gravitational attraction and electromagnetic interactions ' which allow the laws of nature to enable life to form ' are too perfect and clever to be a mere coincidence. To me, this means that some super-force, with specific intentions, created well, everything. Read into that what you will.

If you ever see photos from Hubble or the Webb space telescopes you cannot help but be overwhelmed by the expansive beauty of it all. Heaven, the cosmos ' creation itself ' it's all very mind-boggling, almost divine.

There is so much we don't understand. And there's so much right under our noses that we ignore.

I believe it's important to have faith ' in ourselves, our fellow men and women, and in something a little bit more.

I don't question anyone's belief, especially when you consider we come from a long line of ancient ancestors who looked up at the sky and wondered.

We still do.

We still have faith that things will turn out okay.