

repentance. The change in action resulting from a repentant heart is a turn from living a life of gratifying-self to living a life glorifying God.

3. **Biblical faith changes one's allegiance:** A book written by Matthew W. Bates entitled *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* argues that Biblical faith can be best defined as allegiance. I am inclined to agree that this definition of faith is Biblically accurate. When you look at the lives of New Testament believers you see not only a personal acceptance of Jesus as the Savior of their souls but you see a public proclamation of Jesus as the Lord of their lives. The Gospel Jesus preached was this exactly. The Gospel message did not only require those of faith to seek Jesus as Savior of their soul but also submission to Jesus as Lord of their life. This is why I believe Christians in the early church were persecuted. The church wasn't pursued by the vicious Roman Army because they shared a personal acknowledgment Jesus that was Lord but that they shared a public allegiance that Jesus was Lord. This was both a life-changing and life-threatening message in a culture where the Roman Emperor demanded allegiance. Their faith would require them to forgo their own future and place it in Jesus' hands. Isn't allegiance what Jesus taught is required of all those who call themselves His followers? Luke 9:23 says, "if anyone would come after me (be my disciple), they must deny themselves daily, take up their cross, and follow me." Once again Jesus says in Luke 14:33, "anyone who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

In Conclusion

When teaching your teenager about salvation avoid using the word **acceptance** and embrace the word **allegiance**.

Teach your teenager that Biblical faith is not just acknowledging Jesus, it's trusting Jesus; and salvation is not just believing in Jesus, it's following Jesus.
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A Better Way to Talk to Your Teen About Faith

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The greatest hope and surest prayer of a Christian parent is that their children will come to have a personal relationship God through faith in Jesus Christ. But how do Christian parents approach the topic of salvation with their teens? How do they lead their children to faith in Christ? How do they teach what "faith" is? Over the years I think there have been a few unhelpful ways to talk about faith as well as many helpful ways.

Scripture teaches all people who are saved are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8). But how does a parent best explain what faith is to their son or daughter? Are there any particular words to avoid that fall short of a true explanation of faith?

In this blog I will first list a few common, yet (probably) unhelpful ways of leading your student through a conversation about faith before writing what I believe to be a more Biblical way to talk describe and dictate Biblical faith.

Three Potentially Unhelpful Ways to Address the Topic of Faith with Your Teenager

1. **Faith is not only "knowledge" about:** While a believing knowledge is most certainly a part of what faith is, it doesn't summarize all that faith is. Scripture teaches us that someone can believe God exists while not having a salvific relationship with Him. For example, James 2:19 tells its audience that even demons, who do not have personal salvific faith in God, have a personal belief in Him. While a knowledgeable belief is certainly an integral aspect of faith, it doesn't work as a defining term to capture all of what faith is.
2. **Faith is not merely "acceptance" of:** Merely accepting a reality is not the same thing as having faith in what is real. I can accept things I don't trust. I can accept something a school teacher or professor tells me without having personal faith it's true. For a long time the phrase, "accept Jesus into your heart," was very popular. While faith encompasses Jesus being at the center of your heart, "acceptance" falls short of the Biblical definition of faith. Acceptance is a very passive term, while the Scriptures define faith as a very active term. While acceptance might acknowledge the existence of God, faith is trusted assurance in God, Himself.
3. **Faith is not a recitation of the "Sinners Prayer":** I believe the sinners prayer can be a helpful tool to lead your child to confess their sin and at the same time express personal trust in the Lord. However, at the same time I believe the sinners prayer if not carefully explained

can be very harmful. Since scripture teaches that we are justified by faith (Eph. 2:8), faith can be understood in some sense as the entrance into God's family. Praying a prayer is not entrance into the family of God. In fact, recitation of a prayer if not taught properly and understood in the context of faith can be misinterpreted as a sort-of mantra. We must be sure we are teaching our kids before we lead them in such a prayer—reciting carefully crafted sentences is not synonymous with personal faith. After all, you don't find a "sinners prayer" in the New Testament, because Jesus never taught it.

What is Biblical "Faith?"

Faith is a gift from God and not something earned, achieved, or attained by any person (Ephesians 2:8).

The Bible describes faith in Hebrews 11:1 as, "the assurance of things hoped for, [and] the conviction of things not seen." Biblical faith is not merely accepting or acknowledging God, it is an assurance of His existence followed by a trusted conviction in His life and teaching. Faith is not merely saying God exists, its staking your life on His existence by convictionally living life defined and determined by Him. I heard a pastor once say, "Faith is not just believing in God; faith is believing God."

Three Ways You Can Help Your Teenager Understand A Biblical Definition of Faith

1. **Biblical faith begins with conviction:** When the apostle Peter preached at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 those listening to the Gospel message were cut to the heart. The Holy Spirit had made clear to them that Jesus Christ, whom they killed, was the Messiah, the son of God. The Bible makes clear that no one comes to the Father unless the Father draws Him (John 6:44). The Holy Spirit, leads men and women to the knowledge of the truth, and convicts the heart of man to trust in who Jesus is and what He has done. Ephesians 2:4-6 makes clear that God in His mercy raises us from death to life (we are "born again," John 3) and our response to this regeneration is faith.
2. **Biblical faith always leads to repentance:** When those who heard Peter's message in Acts chapter 2 were cut to the heart they were told they must repent and be baptized. The gift of faith in Christ always leads one to repent of their sin. Repentance is a radical change of one's mindset that lead to a change in one's actions. Acts 26:20 says, "I declared [the Gospel]...that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their

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