

FAITH IS HARD WORK

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From the following list what do you suppose takes more work?

1. Faith in God and Christ
2. Repentance of your sins
3. Confession of Christ and of your sins
4. Baptism for the remission of your sins
5. Walking worthy of your calling as a disciple of Christ

I suppose you could make an argument for several on this list. For instance, the passage on repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 would make a great case for #2. Repentance is surely hard work when you consider that “*godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation... what **diligence** it produced in you, what **clearing of yourselves**, what **indignation**, what **fear**, what **vehement desire**, what **zeal**, what **vindication!**” That’s hard.*

Some would likely say that #5 is obviously the hardest, since it would require an entire lifetime to obey. Scriptures like 2 Peter 1:5-7 describes adding to our faith the following graces: “*virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.*” Jesus finished the great commission with the requirement for a baptized believer to teach them “*all things whatsoever I have commanded*” (Matt. 28:20). That’s a lot to learn and obey.

I would like to suggest that #1 is probably the hardest work regarding my salvation. This will likely surprise many Bible students, and especially those who make the argument that, “we are not saved by works, but by faith.” In point of fact, true saving faith is extremely hard work! Consider the following:

Read the book of Acts and underline every time Paul preached to lost souls by using the words “*reason*” (Ac 23:28; 26:25), “*reasoning*” (Ac 19:8-9), “*reasoned*” (Ac 17:2,17; 18:4,19; 24:25), and also note “*reasonable*” in Romans 12:1. Think about it. Trying to reason out an argument to its full conclusion is an exercise of the mind that will leave you exhausted. Taking all the facts presented, filtering them all to ensure a right conclusion, then drawing a verdict that convinces you “beyond a reasonable doubt,” is tough stuff. It takes days, weeks, months and sometimes years to accurately build a case for faith in God and Jesus Christ.

If you were sitting on a jury in a murder trial and had to weigh all the evidence to render a verdict of “guilty” or “innocent,” knowing a person’s life is in the balance, you would know much better the meaning of faith and how much work it takes to decide “beyond a reasonable doubt” (which is how a judge will ask you to think). It takes mind-bending work for your decision to be right. How much more when your soul is on trial, and you are being weighed in the balance, do you want to be sure of your faith? Do you see now why it could be that FAITH is the hardest step in your salvation? It is surely WORK, just as James said (Jam. 2:14-26).