I. The meaning of faith.
   A. There are three basic definitions or ideas important to understanding the meaning of faith:
      1. Belief, certainty, or conviction of a truth of a proposition.
      2. There is the confidence in a person’s trustworthiness or in the person himself;
         a. This involves the idea that the object of faith can be counted on to provide what is needed.
         b. A “man of faith” is one who trusts God.
      3. A third basic meaning of faith is fidelity to a trust or commitment.
         a. This involves the idea that the subject of faith can be counted on to do his duty.
         b. A “faithful man” is one who can be trusted by God.
   B. The usage of “pistis” (faith) and “pistos” (faithful) in the New Testament reflects all three ideas of the meaning of faith.
      1. Belief (Acts 8:12; Romans 10:17).
      2. Confidence (James 1:6; Romans 4:3, 18-22).
      3. Fidelity (1 Corinthians 4:2; Revelation 2:10).
   C. This is very significant to us.
      1. The three components are all progressive:
         a. Belief (intellectual acceptance) is the important beginning point (Hebrews 11:1, 6).
         b. Belief grows into confidence (giving oneself to God) (Philippians 4:10-13).
         c. Confidence grows into fidelity (unswerving loyalty to God) (2 Timothy 4:7-8).
      2. Each of these progressive steps is based upon solid evidence concerning the God’s own character.
         a. God has demonstrated His credibility (Titus 1:1-3).
         b. He has demonstrated His dependability (Romans 8:31-32).
         c. He has demonstrated His worthiness of our allegiance (2 Timothy 1:8-12).
      3. We can have faith in God and be faithful to Him because He is a faithful God (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

II. Faith is a way of life.
   A. It is a confessing faith.
      1. The Christian’s faith is a confessing faith - one that is continually confessed by the way we live.
      2. Because of that, perversions of faith must be avoided.
         a. We can’t have a counterfeit faith (Matthew 7:15).
         b. We can’t place our faith in self (Proverbs 16:25).
         c. We must avoid a self-righteous faith (Luke 18:9).
         d. We can’t have a partial faith (2 Chronicles 25:2).
e. We can’t have a skeptical faith (James 1:6).

3. Making the “good confession” implies commitment (1 Timothy 6:12).
   a. It is a complete pledge of faith.
   b. It is one that must be held fast (Hebrews 10:23).

B. It is a life of faith.
   1. To be “in the faith” is also to be “of the faith,” which shows that faith is a real factor in the Christian’s way of life (2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 3:9).
   2. Life in Christ is the life of trusting reliance on God.
      a. We must realize that faith in God is closely tied to love for God.
      b. 1 Thessalonians 1:3.
   3. A person of faith renounces any other means of confidence or security, such as:
      a. The flesh (Philippians 3:3-11);
      b. Self (2 Corinthians 1:9);
      c. Earthly prosperity (1 Timothy 6:17).
   5. Life in Christ is the life of trusting obedience to God.
      a. Abraham is a great example of this (Hebrews 11:8).
      b. Psalm 143:8.

C. We benefit from faith (Romans 15:13).
   1. Joy and peace don’t come from the absence of conflict in life, but from faith’s ability to cope with such.
   2. Faith also imparts other active benefits to life:
      a. Diligence in work (1 Thessalonians 1:3);
      b. Willingness to sacrifice (Hebrews 11:24-26);
      c. Strength and courage (Ephesians 6:16);
      d. Boldness and confidence (Ephesians 3:12).

D. We must maintain our faith (Revelation 2:10).
   1. It is not enough to have had faith at one time.
      a. The life of faith begun is virtually worthless if it is not completed.
      b. Colossians 2:5; Hebrews 6:12.
      c. We can begin well but get hindered (Galatians 5:7).
      d. It is like beginning to build a chair but stop with only two legs in place.
   2. What happens to our faith is crucial.
      a. There must be growth (Luke 17:5).
      b. There must be testing (James 1:2-3).
      c. There must be an adding to (2 Peter 1:5-11).
      d. There must be a standing fast (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).
   3. We need to remember that faith is essentially forward-looking (Hebrews 3:6, 14).
From a sermon by Tom Moore