

# **Faith Once And For All - Shapes Faith Come In**

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Intro:

A. Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to do as they pleased. (Like 10:23-42)

1. Faith is like this.
2. We all want our ideas to be right.

B. Today we want to look at the shapes in which faith comes.

I.) The shape of a thing is important.

A. First, our parents shape our faith in great ways.

1. No child can trust God until he knows the difference between God and parents.
2. No shape of faith is necessarily good or bad.
3. We need to evaluate the faith of our parents.
4. Some defend the faith of parents without thinking about it.
5. Some fight the faith of their parents unthinkingly.
6. Both reactions are wrong.
7. A positive reaction is to examine what is good about the faith of our parents.
  - a. What is helpful?
  - b. What is useful?
  - c. What can we build upon?

B. Secondly, we need to examine the authority of the faith.

1. Think of a doubled up fist.

- a. In Peanuts, Lucy asked and her brother haggles over changing the channel.
- b. He asks by what authority she demands the channel she wants.
- c. Her response is to show him her fist.
- d. We need to appreciate the advantages to the prohibitive aspect off the negative; Thou shall not.

2. It is important to learn that certain things or actions are not appropriate.

C. A third shape of faith is like a blanket.

1. In Peanuts Linus draws security from his blanket.
  - a. When sleepy, tired, or discouraged he grabs his blanket.
  - b. It is good to see faith as a source of security in difficult times.
  - c. It is immature to see faith as only a security blanket.

2. Remaining there prevents growth.

D. A fourth shape of faith is a first aid kit.

1. God is there when we are in trouble.
2. God is there when we are not in trouble.
3. If we think that God is only with us when we are in trouble, however, we fall into the criticism of Sigmund Freud, who said faith is for people who sense a need of help in time of difficulty.
4. First stage religion may be like this, asking for help in time of need.
5. But faith is not primarily a bandage for hurts.

E. A fifth shape of faith is that is of a life insurance policy.

1. Young people are rightfully critical of faith that looks only to the world to come.
2. Placing confidence in God is eternally saved.
3. Faith is more than this, however.
4. In the afterworld each of us will be filled only as far as the vessel God takes from this earth.
  - a. A life insurance kind of faith is comforting concerning the afterlife.
  - b. But this does not speak of a vital relationship with God here and now.

F. A sixth kind of faith is a circle.

1. This indicates a friendship ring.
  - a. Friendship rings are worn as long as both friends like each other.
  - b. In Roman Catholic ceremonies sisters are given a wedding ring when betrothed to Christ when brought in to the order.
2. A ring speaks of inclusion of our relationship to God.

G. A seventh shape is the cross.

1. This is the traditional symbol of Christianity.
2. The cross was not a symbol originally, but it developed into a symbol over time.

H. None of these shapes is all wrong and none is all right.

1. The faith of parents may serve a valuable function a times.

2. The negative prohibition of Thou shall not will serve a valuable function at times.
3. The security blanket can be valuable when others have failed us.
4. The first aid kit can be valuable to give assurance in time of emergency.
5. The life insurance policy is helpful when thinking of our security in the afterworld.
6. The friendship ring can always be worn, though our friendship with God will sometimes be less than perfect.
7. The cross is valuable but we cannot live on a cross.
8. Each shape of faith is important for life.
  - a. It may be immaturity to ask for a security blanket.
  - b. It may be inappropriate to ask for a life insurance policy.
  - c. Yet all are necessary.

## II.) Questions.

1. Are there values to prohibitions?
2. Do we need for our faith to supply us with different resources?
3. What does it mean to say we cannot always live with the demands of the cross?
  - a. Are there times when faith asks more than some are prepared to give?
  - b. What are the implications of this?
4. Which model of faith best describes where you are in your faith right now?
  - a. Do you understand the expression of one young man who said his faith was in the shape of an indistinct blob?
  - b. These shapes are important for us to understand.

c. Psychology teaches us that body image reflects how a person relates to other people.

d. I trust the shape of your faith will become increasingly healthy.

e. Pray that God will help you to find the shape of faith that is most suited to your particular need at present so that you can grow the most effectively.