

# Unhypocritical Faith



Paul, in the introduction of his second letter to Timothy, introduces three examples of great faith: “*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well*” (2Timothy 1:2-5). The first of these examples was Timothy. The second was his grandmother Lois. The third was his mother Eunice. We usually think of those notable ones in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews or of an apostle as great examples of faith—and great they are. Yet, here we find three, of consecutive generations, being commended for their great faith. We ought not to be surprised to find this great faith in three consecutive generations, for great faith naturally breeds great faith. These examples provide some interesting study.

## Faith

What is faith? The writer of the letter to the Hebrews gives a memorable definition: “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1). In this sense, faith is one’s conviction regarding things he cannot see. We are told of that which is said to be a fact. On the basis of the evidence available, we develop a conviction that the claim is so. James gives an expanded definition on faith when he tells us that faith is only made complete when work is engaged (James 2:22). Perhaps one of my seventh graders explained it best: “I heard God, I believed God, and I did something about it.” That is faith. Timothy, Lois, and Eunice had this without doubt.

## Great Faith

The faith of these three was great. It was sincere, unfeigned, genuine (2Timothy 1:5). That Lois and Eunice had such faith is remarkable for several reasons. Even though we are not told that these women were Christians, surely they must have been. From Acts 16:1, we know they were Jews. They must have been of those Jews who had been scattered abroad. Imagine how it must have been difficult for two Jewish women, far removed from their homeland, to have great faith. Yet, many Christians find that having sincere faith is a problem even today. Furthermore, there can be little doubt but what these two had undergone or at least had a relationship with persecution—that was the general rule for those Jews of the dispersion (Acts 18:1,2). Not only that, Eunice had married a Gentile (Acts 16:1). It is not mentioned that he had faith or was even a Christian. It is probable that he was not. His lack of faith aside, his nationality was a mark against her, so far as the law of Moses was concerned, but she was still one of great faith. Christians sometimes marry non-Christians, but indications are that the odds are about three to one that they will not maintain the kind of faith Eunice had, if they had it to begin with. Truly, we have found great faith exemplified!

## What Great Faith Will Do

People, who have the kind of faith these three had, have a faith which will do something. It is a faith which works through love that accomplishes what is needed (**Galatians 5:6**). Consider the examples of great faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and take notice that of each it is said that they believed and obeyed. Remember the lesson we mentioned from James—faith, that does not obey, is not saving faith (**James 2:14-17**).

## Great Faith In What?

In what are people to have great faith? Of course, people with great faith believe in God. *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”* (**Hebrews 11:6**). People, with great faith, will believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. *“Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name”* (**John 20:30,31**). People, who have this great faith, will believe the New Testament is the message of the Holy Spirit (**John 16:12,13; 1Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:3-5**). People, who have this great faith, will believe that faith and obedience in this message will cleanse their souls and make them whole by the blood of Jesus. *“He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith”* (**Acts 15:9**). *“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God”* (**1Peter 1:22-23**). People, who have this kind of faith, will walk by faith in God’s word wherever it leads them (**2Corinthians 5:7**). They will believe that being faithful involves keeping all of the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 7:21-27**).

## Check-up Time

It is time for each one of us to check up on himself. In the days of Timothy, Lois, and Eunice, there must have been others of faith who did not have the unhypocritical faith of these, else the comparison Paul makes has little importance. If one, who could really tell, were to write of us today, would he find us as this family and speak of our unhypocritical faith? If we find ourselves lacking, we must hear God, believe God, and do something about it.