

**J.P. Moreland and Klaus Issler**

***In Search of a Confident Faith:  
Overcoming Barriers to  
Trusting in God***

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Questioning the nature of Christian faith is something rare, and makes an extraordinary hard demand on anyone who is familiar with Christianity. It is true that what is meant by Christianity is only very vaguely understood. A faith that evades to questioning understanding is not real faith. J.P. Moreland and Klaus Issler, as long term educationists, are in agreement that, "The nature of faith is clouded so much in misunderstanding in our culture that it is difficult to grasp what faith really is and how it is related to knowledge and reason" (p.16). This volume is a simple yet powerful invitation to an adventure in understanding the Christian faith. In attempting to answer the question about the nature of the Christian faith, the book is clear in its sense of genuineness, openness, honesty, and expectancy.

*In Search of a Confident Faith* clarifies the meaning of the term faith from a biblical perspective. This meets the need caused by the confusion that prevails in our world today about faith. It is a demonstration of the real essence of biblical faith and how one accesses confidence in God and His truth. Its relevance is reflected in its practicality and the prescriptive measures it suggests on how one can grow in faith. As a means and a tool to increase one's confidence in God, this work shows that Christian faith is concerned precisely with this real life of ours in today's world. The profoundness of the book lies with its combination of both intellectual and emotional strands, which to most people are barriers to faith. These two have been weaved together creatively.

In the first section of the book, the meaning of faith and importance of faith to God is tackled. It does so by discussing three aspects of faith: classical faith, theological and philosophical aspects of faith. Faith as confidence, trust and reliance belong to synonymous class. Faith as knowledge, commitment, and assent belong to the category of theological triad. The three philosophical aspects are degrees of belief, confidence in and confidence that, and changing beliefs. The major thrust of the book is that, "Merely exhorting people to be more committed to God – 'just have more faith' – seldom produce greater confidence and dedicated trust in God. Rather, what is needed is a realistic picture of a flourishing life lived deeply in tune with God's kingdom. . ." (p. 22). The rationale that points us to the necessity of the faith include, the hiddenness of God, faith as the foundation of life and flourishing in the presence of others.

Part one which comprises three chapters explores more about intellectual doubts and emotional barriers to faith. Part two which also contains other three chapters focuses on increasing our expectations of God and building a case for how our God-confidence can grow. This section of the book looks at Jesus' teaching about faith and some New Testament promises that believers need to examine. Moreland and Klaus offer four fundamental points about biblical God-confidence as far as the New Testament is concerned. The first is that biblical God-confidence is belief in Jesus Christ. Second, that our minds can be transformed by God to match Jesus' view of reality. Third, that faith without deeds is dead. God-confidence will affect how we live. Fourth, God-confidence can be strengthened; it can grow. The authors did well to buttress all the points with scripture passages. The strength of the book lies in its proposal of mind renewal which in turn will influence our worldview. The last section of the book provides some contemporary examples and case studies that can help us increase our God-confidence to rely on what Jesus teaches about faith. The final stretch tackles one practical arena in which we can grow in our confidence in God, making life decisions as we seek God's guidance.

It is a book that challenges real doubts as far as faith is concerned. It is alright to doubt but even better to seek ways to adequately deal with doubts of faith. "There are critical moments in our journey in trusting God when we need to step out just like Peter into an

experienced realm, taking God's Word and promises as the 'real' representation of reality" (p.105). The strength of the book lies in its simple, easy to read style and the centrality of scripture in presenting its point of view. Faith, by its very nature, encompasses our intellect, emotions and our daily living. Proposals suggested for personal growth in God-confidence can easily be implemented. Though it addresses challenges in the Western context, the truth implied is universal. It is a book that can truly develop a biblical worldview in anyone who reads it with the seriousness it deserves. Moreland and Issler have not just put forth propositional truth but have also offered deep reflection of their personal commitment to God. They are witnessing to an experienced reality. I strongly suggest it as a text book for spiritual formation.

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