

Revised to include Study Guide  
and Teacher's Notes

# Facets of FAITH

A Practical Look at Our  
Response to Grace



Rodney Shaw

# Facets of Faith

by Rodney Shaw

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PART ONE

# COMPATIBILITY

THE TRESTLE OF FAITH

*And without faith it is impossible to please  
God, because anyone who comes to him must  
believe that he exists and that he rewards those  
who earnestly seek him.*

Hebrews 11:6



*We have gained access by faith into this grace  
in which we now stand.*

Romans 5:2



*How precious did  
That grace appear,  
The hour I first believed*

John Newton

# FAITH

CHAPTER ONE

## Incompatible

Everyone lined up to take a turn. One by one they filed past. From a distance it looked like a funeral, but it wasn't. It was a party. Not everyone was afforded such an opportunity in life. It was rare and precious. This was one of those experiences the grandchildren would never hear the end of (like walking to school in the snow uphill both ways).

There were all sorts of stories about the exhibit. Some of them bordered on the bizarre. Some were probably exaggerated. Nonetheless, it was a piece of their culture, a part of their history. In times of crisis it rallied the people. It was the heirloom of the masses.

The line zigged and zagged until it finally faded into the horizon. Literally thousands of people were waiting. The ones near the front had chill bumps crawling down their backs. Their stomachs were tied in nervous knots. Could it be? Was it really happening? Was it happening to them? Wow!

## FACETS OF FAITH

They waited long hours for a single peek. But that one peek would be the glimpse of a lifetime. What would it *really* look like? Would it measure up to the legends? Rumor claimed that it was stained from years of use. Some said it smelled of smoke. Supposedly, it was rather small.

Would they be disappointed? Would there be a new awakening of national pride? Would tears well up in their eyes? Would it warm their hearts? Perhaps it would provide an opportunity for fathers to share their heritage with their children.

Whatever response it evoked or opportunities it brought, we'll never know. There was an uninvited guest who ruined the party. God showed up and killed them. Thousands of people had lined up to sneak a peek inside the ark of the covenant, but they weren't supposed to do that. They had forgotten that they weren't *compatible* with God.<sup>1</sup>

Human eyes were not to see so much as the physical place where God's Spirit came down once a year, for sinful humanity is not compatible with deity. "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14-15).



The beasts lumbered along, seemingly oblivious to their load. The occasional "Whoaaa" and "He-ahh" of the cowboys seemed to fall on deaf ears. (Cows really don't understand that stuff. It just makes the men feel good.) Another day, another cart, another trip. They would retire to their troughs, eat dinner, chew their cud, sleep, and hitch up again in the morning. No big deal.

There was a lot of commotion, though—festivities, singing, dancing. Excitement hung thick like a fog in the air. They weren't used to parade duty. They were normally in the field pulling plows or lugging goods to market. But this was kinda nice. Not bad . . . just keep a slow, steady pace, and try not to step on anyone. All of the petting felt pretty good too. Not to mention, the bigwigs were out in the party. If they did a good job, maybe they could land a job pulling children's carts or something like that. Just think, their own private stalls! It sure would be nice to sleep inside for a change. This was their moment in the lights.

Then clumsy-foot tripped. Oops! The load is shifting. It's falling. There's chaos. There's panic.

"Somebody grab it!"

One of the men lunged to save the load from falling, but instead, he fell—dead. He had touched the ark, the symbol of the presence, the glory, and the grace of God.<sup>2</sup>

The flesh of a fallen human can't touch the holy things of God. We're not *compatible*.



The sign read, "Three sides brick." It was one of those full-color, fancy home-builder signs. It begged everyone who passed to buy a house. And not just any house, but a house with brick on three sides. (The economy models only have brick on the front.)

There's really no need to brick the back of the house. No one sees it. It serves mostly as a backstop for baseball games and water balloon fights. No need for brick there. It's practical, but it's not the first side of the house you show your guests. You show them the bricked front with the matching planters and statue mailbox. (That costs extra too.)