

Why do some people have faith and others don't? What if I personally don't feel like I have faith?

To answer your first question: Sin. Sin is the reason why some people don't have faith. "But wait!", you cry, "I know a lot of really good people without faith and a lot of really mean people who have faith! How is sin related to all of this?"

Here's how. We were originally created in union with God. Once sin entered the world, that union was ruptured. Among other things, our intellects were darkened and we could not understand what we were originally able (before sin) to grasp. We all inherit this "fallen-ness". So, in a real way, sin has taken its toll on all of us; sin is why we sometimes don't see God very clearly.

But even more close to home, sin is also what keeps ME from God (not just Adam and Eve, but ME).

Never forget: faith is a gift. No one earns it. No one gives it to himself. God gives a person faith. The second super-important point is this: God gives this gift to everyone. God doesn't choose to give it to some and not others. This is the point that Jesus made in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13). In the parable, God is giving the gift of faith (the seed) everywhere. But it was the recipient's response that was crucial in bearing fruit or losing the gift.

God's giving the gift is absolutely necessary, and He has made all the arrangements; if a person is open to faith, it is theirs. But that is the crux: we must receive it and live it out.

If a person sincerely does not believe in God, it is most likely because they don't see the "proof" of God. That's legitimate. I mean, you would think that if God wanted us to believe in Him, He would have made it a lot easier. On the other hand, I personally think that there is plenty of evidence for God's existence (another column perhaps).

But maybe God doesn't just want people to "believe" in Him. I think we sometimes act as if God has nothing better to do than get a bunch of people to believe in His existence. What if God wants something more than our "belief"?

If you are struggling to believe in God, I have this advice: pray. Start living as if God was real. Ask God (in prayer) to draw you closer to Him. Ask God to reveal Himself (on His own terms) to you. If you want the gift of faith, all you have to do is sincerely ask for it. Again, this means you have to begin by actually praying.

Now, this is the moment (the moment of choosing, the moment of taking the risk, the moment of making the decision to act and not just have wishful thinking) when most people get off the boat. It is easy to go on and on and "wonder" at God's existence. It is easy to study the arguments and argue the points. But until a person comes to this point, the point at which a decision is made to engage the will as well as the intellect, they will never have faith.

This is crucial. Because “faith” is much more than “belief”. Simply “believing in God” never saved anyone. If all one had to do was believe in God’s existence or in Jesus as the Son of God, then Satan would be saved. James writes about this in his letter, “You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble.” (James 2:19).

Faith is so much more. According to the Catechism, having faith is when a person “completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, “the obedience of faith” (CCC 143).

Faith is related to “belief”, but the kind of faith that saves a person is more like “trusting obedience”. With that in mind, does it make sense why I said that some people don’t have faith because of sin? At its heart, sin says, “My way”. At its heart, faith says to God, “Your way”. Like love, faith is a decision, not a feeling.

If you don’t feel like you have faith, don’t worry. Be practical. Look at your life. Are you striving to be faithful (obedient) to God? Do you pray every day? Do you feed yourself with Scripture? Do you go to Mass each week? Do you try and love the people around you who need love? When you fail, do you go to Reconciliation? If yes, you have faith. If not, now is the moment to begin. Start by praying at this very instant. Don’t wait. Don’t hesitate. Don’t put it off. Begin now.