

Faith and religion: "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible." –St. Thomas Aquinas

We tend to use words like "faith" and "religion" interchangeably and, generally speaking, there isn't anything wrong with that. But it may interest you to know that for those who study the psychology of religion, these words do have different meanings. Most of us think of "faith" in supernatural terms, such as in "faith in God." Faith, from a more natural perspective, is the search for meaning, purpose and significance. Every human person has an innate sense that "there is something more than just me" and we search for what that might be. Whether people believe in God or not they seek the deeper meaning and purpose of their life. Faith is used with a sense of trust. That sense of hope shows how much we trust someone and/or something. When we have faith, we are truly hoping that our trust is placed correctly. When faith becomes strong and unshakeable, it can lead into religion. That strong faith amounts to the loyalty to God. Religion refers to the community of people who share similar beliefs and who work together to provide spiritual support for not only its members for all people. Religion builds character and morality. Having faith and religion will shape our responses to life. Jesus did and still is inviting people to a life of faith in God. It can be difficult for us because faith is something that is not tangible, whereas, religion is. We can literally use all of our senses with regards to religion. But with faith we depend on God's gracious care. Because Jesus paid the ultimate price for us to ensure our salvation, faith is free and it is powerful and wonderful. Faith has no strings attached. Faith is what you put into it. Faith grows as you grow. Faith flourishes as you flourish. Unfortunately, faith diminishes if we do not exercise it. Faith has nowhere to plant itself if we do not apply it to something and/or someone in our life. We have faith that God will make us effective and holy. Faith trusts that God never abandons us. *-Sherrie Clutts D.R.E.*