



*Women  
Speak of  
God*

## ***Lesson 7: Georgia Harkness – Theologian for the People***

Dear friends,

Georgia Harkness thought it was important for us as a Christian family to talk about what faith is and what faith is not. Faith is one of those church words we can throw around as though we all know and agree on what it means. It can also be one of those church words that throw up a wall to those outside the Christian family. It warrants our attention for several reasons.

Over the last few hundred years, particularly since the Enlightenment, faith has become increasingly identified with belief. Many Christians use the language of belief to convey faith: "What do you believe?" or "I believe in God." These sorts of speech reveal the degree to which, in the last few centuries, faith has been expressed as an idea, an assent to the truth of a claim. Would you agree, however, that the phrase, "I believe in God" is equivalent to the phrase, "I have faith in God?"

When the notion of faith is expressed in the language of belief, faith is confined almost entirely to the realm of the cognitive, as though faith were somehow in our heads. Belief is an important component of faith, and of our Christian walk, to be sure. Belief can guide our experience and witness. But Harkness wants us to see that faith is bigger than belief.

For Harkness, faith is not a disembodied idea. Faith is a way of life. As such, it includes belief, but it doesn't stop there. Faith is believing and living, being and doing, cognitive and experiential. Faith is in our heads and in our hearts. For you, this may be obvious, but for many Christians faith has atrophied to a set of ideas that are generally disconnected from real life. Harkness calls us to consider a robust notion of faith that encompasses trust, adventure, and insight. Faith is deep and wide. Faith is where we live.

Blessings, for the journey,

*Amy*