

HOW FAITH WORKS

The Bible definition of faith is found in **Heb. 11:1**—: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*”. Living Letters translation says—: “*Faith is the confident assurance that something we want, is going to happen*”. Another way of reading this verse might be—: “*Faith is believing in something we cannot see. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we can't see it up ahead; it is knowing without any doubt that something is going to happen*”.

Reading in **Heb. 11:1** “**now**” is present tense, right now, this very moment in time—not five minutes from now or tomorrow or a year from now! Faith believes that what we pray for, what we need, what we hope for—will happen. Faith allows us to believe that what we ask and hope for already exists before we can see it. Once we can see, feel, touch, etc. we no longer need faith, because what we have believed and hoped for has then become a reality. Faith also has **substance**. Faith is not wishful thinking. **Substance** literally means--: “*standing under, or a foundation upon which something is placed or erected.*” If the foundation is strong the building won't fall (**Matt. 7:24--27**). If our faith is strong our hopes and confidence will not fade away. In a way, **Substance** also means “**title deed**”, or ownership. In other words—we have ownership **now** of what we pray, believe and hope for in faith, even though sometimes we may have to wait for the reality to take place. But keep in mind that faith is the assurance that something the Holy Spirit has **confirmed** to us will come to pass.

A word about a rock foundation. In parable Jesus said that believers build their life-foundations on solid rock, not sand. There is no better foundation than the Bible—God's Word to the church, indeed to all humanity. The Bible teaches that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (**Rom. 10:17**). It also teaches that God will not revoke or change His promises (**Isa. 45:23**). Promised blessings appear throughout the Bible, but in **Psalms 103: 1-5** key benefits are summarized: *forgiveness, healing, redemption, loving kindness and mercy, food/provision* (and perhaps proper spoken words), and renewed, *youthful health and strength*. As your understanding of the Bible develops many more provisions and benefits will come to your attention—truly the Bible is a rock foundation upon which your faith and Christian life will mature.

Now a brief word about delay. One of the greatest Bible examples of delayed answers to prayer involves Daniel, a slave in Persia (modern Iran) whom God exalted to a high position in the kingdom. In a future lesson I may share more of the Christian/Bible principles in Daniel's life, but in the **Book of Daniel chapter 10** we discover the truth that **delay is not denial**. Daniel wanted to know God's plan for Israel's future and set himself to fast and pray. After 21 days an angel came to reveal Israel's future, but his first words were that *Daniel was loved by God, Who sent the angel with the message on the first day of Daniel's fast—but the demonic prince that ruled over Persia withstood and delayed the angel, and the answer to Daniel's prayer, for 21 days*. Satanic interference can be one cause for delay, but let me mention other Bible examples.

Abraham waited 20 years for the promised son to be born (the reason is not clear). **Joseph** was sold into slavery by his brothers, was betrayed by his master's wife, and spent years in prison before the inspired dream of his youth came to pass. As the years passed Joseph became the Pharaoh's most distinguished officer and was in the position needed for his youthful dream to occur. Delay was to bring other people and a bigger plan into action. **Hannah** prayed many years for a son and her prayers were answered with the birth of **Samuel**, who became the greatest prophet of his era (again we don't know why the delay). The Bible has many other great examples, and many are recorded in the **eleventh chapter of Hebrews**. When our dreams and prayers are delayed the lesson is to keep believing, no matter how long it takes. In summery, *faith is the very substance or the confident expectation*, that God will keep His promises and we will positively receive that for which we pray, hope and wait; indeed the very assurance in our heart and soul that what we pray for is going to happen.

This discussion of waiting is not to turn us away from immediate results when we pray and exercise faith. The New Testament is filled with immediate results to faith in the ministry of Jesus and the disciples. So it is in our lives today. Some requests qualify for immediate results, and others must wait for God's timing—or our readiness for them. **When a log** rolled on me and I could not breath, I needed an immediate response to my mother's prayer or I would have died on the mountain. **When God spoke** to my heart (a **rhema** word) to sell our home and give the equity to missions, nothing happened for eleven months; but my faith was tested. Finally in desperation I declared: “Lord you can bring a buyer in one day; I want the house sold in thirty days”. The thought came to me (a **rhema** word): “if God can do it in one day why do you give Him 30 days”? I adjusted the time to seven days—my real level of faith—and that was my prayer for the next seven days. On the eighth day I got the call that a buyer had signed the purchase agreement the evening before—the **seventh day!**—and I fulfilled my pledge before the next missionary conference. For eleven months I was trusting the **Logos** word—

the general Bible principle or truth that God answers prayer. Then for eight days I declared the house would sell in seven days—that was a **rhema** word quickened by the Holy Spirit so I could fulfill the **rhema** inspired pledge for missions.

When we are battling in faith we need to understand the relationship and the difference between **Logos** and **rhema**. We need to understand the importance of attitude, what we really believe, and what we speak; and we need to understand what benefits come with salvation—meaning what benefits are included in the atoning work and power of Jesus' death and resurrection. Some Bible promises may be **Logos** until we have a desperate need, and praying the **Logos** word may not get the results we need. As we pray and search the Bible for answers, one or several Scriptures may catch our attention and stick in our mind. Those could become **rhema** words if and when The Holy Spirit directs our attention and prayer focus on them. When that happens our faith kicks in at a higher level and we know what promise to stand on with assurance and expectation until God meets our need. When we are praying **Logos** Scriptures we hope God responds; but when the Holy Spirit turns **Logos into rhema** we can trust God and act with that positive assurance that God will answer no matter how long it may take. When the Holy Spirit quickens a **rhema** word our attitude changes from “*gee, I really hope it happens*” to “*I know it is going to happen*”. Now we really believe and have no doubts. Now we rejoice and begin to thank God for the answer—**our speech changes**. Remember when our house did not sell? I was praying every day, but when the **rhema** word was birthed in my spirit I prayed with positive conviction, “*the house is going to sell in seven days*”. On the eighth day I woke up and prayed, “*Lord, I don't know how you can do it, but I thank you that the house sold in seven days*”. It was evening on the eighth day when the real estate lady called me with the good news, and she informed me that the sale took place the night before—**on the seventh day!**

Rhema words are generally Bible words, but sometimes they can be a word of knowledge or a prophetic word; or they can come in a dream or vision; or they can be words that pop into your head expectedly or unexpectedly—but always **rhema** words are in agreement with Bible principles and/or benefits and/or guidance or information we need to fulfill all or some part of the work God has called us to do. Beware of crazy ideas or interpretations. The devil is a deceiver and he tries to turn people away from God's truth, purpose or assignment. Satan tried to lure Jesus away from His divine purpose by appealing to His pride, or doing some fantastic thing that God had not told Him to do, like jumping off the temple roof (**Matt. 4**). If there is any doubt in your mind concerning a **rhema** word from a non-biblical source, turn to the Scriptures to find affirmation that what you think may be a **rhema** word is in line with the written word. Then when you know you have a **rhema** word—a word quickened by the Holy Spirit to you—stand on that word, and having done all to stand...**stand firm in faith (Eph 6:10-18)**! Much more could be written on this subject, but I believe you are getting the idea. Now I want to turn to a practical look at what I call “**the A,B,C's of faith**”.

Natural vitamins are for well-being, strength and health.

- Vitamin A** is for vision
- Vitamin B** is for nerves
- Vitamin C** is for general good health—anti-cold, anti-infection
- Vitamin D** is for bones
- Vitamin E** is for heart, lungs, burns

Spiritual vitamins are for spiritual well-being—and help explain “**how**” Faith works

Vitamin A **Ask** for whatever you need—**Matt. 7:7; James 5:14 /**

According to God's will—**1 John 5:14**

Without doubting—**Matt. 21:21,22; Mark 11:23,24**

Vitamin B **Believe** God's Word—**Rom. 10:17 /** God's prophets—**2 Chron. 20:20**

God's faithfulness—**Rom. 3:3,4; 1 Cor. 1:9 /** **believe** in yourself—**Phil. 4:13**

You are what God says you are and you **can do** what God says you can do.

(Review Series 2, Lesson 1 “What the Bible says about YOU!”.)

Vitamin C **Commit** your life to pleasing God and obeying what He asks you to do—

Release **Prov. 16:3**

Relax—**JOHN 14:1 /** **Rejoice**—**Phil. 4:4**

Vitamin D **Declare / Speak** God's Word—**2 Cor. 4:13; Ps. 116:10; /**

Command God's, blessing—**Isa. 45:11**

Confess Christ, faults, confidence—**Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9,10**

(**Review Series 1, Lesson 6** “**I can declare!**”)

Vitamin E **Exalt the Lord**—praise of the lips—**Heb. 13:15 /** committed life—**Rom. 12:1**
attitude of the heart—**Matt. 15:8,9**

Respond to the truth in these spiritual vitamins and you will—

- 1 Grow** Eph. 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:18
- 2 Stand** Eph. 6:10-14
- 3 Overcome & conquer** Rom. 8:37
- 4 prosper** 3 John 2

"Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." **3rd John 2**

All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive". **Matt. 21:2**

"Ask and you shall receive." **Matt. 7:7**

BarnabasAD