

UNDERSTANDING FAITH

We have explained what faith is and how it works, this lesson will enlarge upon those themes and give you a list of basic Bible verses on the subject of faith for easy reference. God has not forgotten or overlooked any details so that salvation, forgiveness and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are easily obtainable *“for by grace are you saved through faith”*—**Eph. 2:8**. And **Rom. 12:3** assures us that we have enough faith for this confession because: *“God has dealt to each one a **measure of faith**,”* in other words we are born with the ability to believe (have and exercise faith) for salvation. However, there is one requirement—we have to hear, or in some way know, about what to have faith for. **Rom. 10:17** says that *“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”*. This is the purpose of the Great Commission—to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world (**Matt. 28:18–20**) so everyone can hear. Once someone hears the Gospel, the **“measure”** of faith awakens within them and they must make a choice to exercise that **in-bred faith** to receive the benefit (see benefits in **Ps. 103:1–5**). Someone may not **hear** the Gospel, but for some reason may **read** the Bible or a tract and see what the Bible says, and that brings them to conviction and the **inbred measure of faith** leads them to repentance and salvation.

Read through the list of faith Scriptures below to learn more about faith, how powerful it can be, and some of the benefits we can receive by faith. And notice the warning in **Heb. 11:6**—*“Without faith it is impossible to please God”* or in other words: *“if we don't use/exercise faith we can't please God”* and we can't receive His freely offered benefits. You see, God is benevolent and loving and He has a good plan for everyone; but to receive these good benefits we have to believe they are good—and that God will honor our faith by doing what the Bible says He will do. Read and meditate on the following Scriptures.

- Heb. 11:1** Now **faith is the substance** of the things hoped for **and the evidence** of things not seen.
- Rom. 12:3** God has dealt to each one **a measure of faith**.
- Rom. 10:17** **Faith comes by hearing** and hearing by **the Word of God**.
- Eph. 2:8** For by grace are you **saved through faith**.
- Luke 17:5** The Apostles said to the Lord: **“increase our faith.”**
- Luke 17:6** If you have **faith as a mustard seed**, you can say to this mulberry tree: “be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey.”
- Rom. 1:17** “The righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith**; as it is written: **“The just shall live by faith.”**” See also **Heb. 10:38**.
- Rom. 3:28** A man is **justified by faith**.
- Heb. 11:6** **Without faith it is impossible to please God**.
- Rom. 12:6** Let us **prophesy according to our faith**.
- 2 Cor. 5:7** For we **walk by faith** and not by sight.
- Gal. 5:6** **Faith working through love**.
- James 5:15** And the **prayer of faith** will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.
- Eph. 6:16** Taking the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Sharing personal events will illustrate how faith is sometimes needed in our daily lives; and how important some of the choices we make can be to future events; and the truth that we can't do

some things without divine help—which is available if we can ask, believe and trust in God's faithfulness.

Elsewhere I mention joining the Navy to be a pilot. It was the summer between my Junior and Senior year of High School and I was setting chokers for a logging company. Because it rained that day we left the mountains early and I walked down to my friend's house. As we talked a friend of his from a neighboring town came by. His uncle told him about the Navy recruiting young men to be WW II pilots and wanted someone to go with him to Seattle and apply. As I listened the thought came that I had enough credits to graduate, and this could lead to a better career than logging or farming. As an act of faith I made a quick choice and offered to accompany this man. I passed all the tests, was sent to Cal Tech in Pasadena and realized I would have time to attend college (later), play sports, work and have some leisure time. The war ended, I continued college and graduated to become a high school teacher and coach. God was behind the timing of the rain, the unknown man I met and the opportunity to get a college education. I recognized an opportunity, made a choice in faith, took the right follow-through actions—the Lord helped and guided all the way—**Pro. 16:9** reads: *“A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps”*.

Another act of faith occurred during my first teaching year. After school I went deer hunting in unfamiliar mountains. Following an upward trail for a mile or so I stopped to rest and enjoy a lovely look over a rugged ravine and flowing stream. It was an enthralling view of birds, scattered clouds, rock formations with a gentle breeze to cool my body. I lost thought of time until I suddenly realized darkness was setting in—and I was several miles from the car. I jumped up and began to trot uphill toward the trail. My left foot stepped in a hole and I fell to the ground with extreme pain in my ankle. From sports and coaching I knew this was serious, and knew I had to get back to the car. I arose and took a step and fell again from the pain. Then I made a decision in faith—I could not spend the night on the mountain, I had to run and find the trail before it was too dark. I uttered a prayer and started to take a few painful steps, then I began to trot again ignoring the pain. I found the trail, and suddenly realized I had no pain. I made it back to the car and had no pain or stiffness driving home. Nor did I have pain the next day as I taught and conducted football practice. My faith was activated by a crisis; my only choice was to trust God and He never failed.

Our first son, Gregory, was crossway in the womb and the Dr. thought he might not be born alive. My mother-in-law had a dream of three deaths, and we were young in faith. As I returned alone from church the thought came: *“Your son, and maybe your wife, may die;”* it was a gloomy thought. Then just as suddenly another thought came: *“sometimes the devil appears as an angel of light”*. I rushed into the house and shared these thoughts with Dolores and we prayed that both she and Gregory would come through this experience and live. God answered our prayers—Gregory turned in the womb and a natural birth occurred. **Logos** became **rhema** when the inspired thought revealed Satan's tactics—and our faith was quickened.

On a missionary trip to Cameroon we had a British supervisor who drove a Land Rover. When we finished several healing crusades and pastor's conferences we drove to Nigeria's northern border and spent the night. When we were packed and ready to drive to the border, the Land Rover would not start. We were miles from the crossing point, and miles from a town where a mechanic could help us, and thought our Nigerian contact would be waiting for us at the border. The situation was desperate. We checked the battery cables and water, and didn't have any idea what the problem was. I realized we needed God's help, so suggested we lay hands on the motor section and pray. The superintendent and my fellow evangelist both had looks of stunned disbelief that I would suggest God would answer that prayer. So I stepped forward and prayed a simple prayer asking God to start the car and get us to the border. Then I said: “let us get in and go.” Again a look of disbelief. The supervisor was driver, but he made no effort to get in and start the engine. So I got in the driver's seat and turned the switch and the Land Rover engine started up. I was thankful, but my two friends were still in shock. We made it to the border on time. The engine started when the supervisor left, and he wrote me later that he spent the night along the road and the engine started again in the morning. But the first morning after reaching home the engine would not start until he got a mechanic to fix the problem. In that crisis the Holy Spirit inspired me with a **rhema** prayer—and God was faithful.

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