

WHY DO WE NEED FAITH?

You may ask, “**why do I need faith?**” so I will discuss briefly **seven reasons** why you, and everyone, needs faith.

First: faith is our approach to God: “*For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).*”

Second: We need faith to please God (**Heb. 11:6**). Fathers are happy when their children obey and please them, so it is true with our Heavenly Father. In **2 Kings 20** King Hezekiah was sick and Isaiah prophesied that he would die. But Hezekiah's fervent prayer pleased God who sent Isaiah back with the message “15 more years”. Lack of faith displeases God. He wanted to destroy rebellious Israel (**Num. 14: 11 & 12**).

Third: It is sin not to have faith. **Romans 14: 23** reads: “*whatever is not of faith is sin*”. This statement is in the context of what the Jewish law forbid. The early Christians in Israel were mostly Jewish and the controversy was whether they had to keep all the Jewish do's and don'ts. Paul was teaching that faith freed believers from the bondage of the law. Christians needed to live by the teachings of Jesus which emphasized it isn't what goes into your belly— but what comes out of your heart—and if you don't have the peace faith gives you, what you do is sin.

Fourth: You must have faith to receive anything from God. Jesus did not do many miracles in Nazareth (His home town) because of their lack of faith—but the Gospels are filled with miracles He did throughout the land. One of the greatest miracles was the resurrection of Lazarus who had been dead four days. The key verses for reason # four are **John 11:40—44**. Read beginning with **verse 28, but fix verse 40** in your mind: “*Jesus said to her, did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?*” Dear friends, so much depends upon our ability to have faith for the seemingly impossible situations in life. I have shared some of those seemingly impossible situations in my life in other weekly lessons to verify that the miracle-working Jesus is still working miracles today.

Fifth: God's Word is unprofitable if faith doesn't produce works (**James 2:17, 20 and Heb. 4:2**) but with faith God's Word can be trusted to do what it says. If we don't exercise faith to produce godly works (a testimony to bring glory to the Lord) our lives will not influence sinners to turn to God, or Christians to believe God's Word and let it bring forth righteous deeds in their lives.

Sixth: Every aspect of our Christian life depends upon faith—:

Salvation—Ephesians 2:8 “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*”.

Sanctification—Acts 26:18: “*to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me*”.

Justification—Romans 5:1: “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God*”.

Established and prosperous—2 Chronicles 20:20: “*Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe in His prophets and you shall prosper.*” (when Jehoshaphat met an army)

Stand—Romans 11:20: “*Because of unbelief they (Israel) were broken off, but you stand by faith*”.

Live—Galatians 3:11: “*the just shall live by faith*”.

Overcome—1 John 5:4: “*This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*”

Peace in our hearts—Isaiah 26:3 “*You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You (has faith in You).*”

Holy Spirit baptism: Galatians 3:14: “*that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith*”.

Healing—James 5:15: “*the prayer of faith will save the sick*”.

Defended by the shield—Ephesians 6:16: “*above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*”.

Nothing is impossible—Mark 9:23: “*All things are possible to him who believes (exercises faith)*”.

Seven: We practice faith according to our level of maturity and experience; so use the **measure of faith** you have at every level of understanding, experience, challenge and growth. Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, the more you read the **Bible**, study its message, make notes for future reference and put its principles to work, the stronger your faith will be, the more it will grow, and the more God will give you assignments. Remember that we are fellow-workers with God. There is a lot to do and current events suggest that time is running out for completing our commission to take the Gospel to all the world, save the lost, heal the sick, cast out devils—even raise the dead if necessary. And don't freak out—God will only give you what you are able to handle at each stage of maturity.

One example comes to mind—a sincere woman of conduct and prayer, but shy and not ready to do more than pray and be living an overcoming Christian life. She would listen to sermons and mission reports. She would pray for and support missionaries, but was content to stay in the background. She heard about people taking gospel literature and Bibles into communist countries and faithfully prayed for their safety and success. One day God interrupted her prayer with the question—“*will you go with a gospel literature team*”? She was stunned and quickly put the question out of mind—but it resurfaced again and again until she considered the possibility of actually going.

She made the contacts, got the information, the documents, a team schedule and was surprised to be accepted. The lady went on a mission. Border guards didn't check her luggage too well and did not seize the literature. She passed out literature here and there and once was threatened with imprisonment, but God intervened. When she left the country safely she breathed a sigh of relief; God had been with her at every step and stage of the mission. Her story caught my attention as an example of God inspiring a shy person to do something they never thought they could do. I share this story to reassure you that God won't embarrass you. He knows all about you and knows where to place you. All you have to do is grow in grace and faith, develop gifts and talents, and be ready when God needs you.

This is a lesson on faith. So if we need faith, how do we get faith? According to the Bible, **God is a source:** “*God has dealt to every man and woman a measure of faith*” (**Rom. 12:3**). **Christ is a source:** “*Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith*” (**Heb. 12:2**). **The Holy Spirit is a source:** “*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered*” (**Romans 8:26**). **The Bible is a source:** “*faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God*” (**Rom 10:17**). **Love is a source:** “*faith that works by love*” (**Gal. 5:6**). Using the measure of faith that we have helps faith grow—David used his little measure of faith on the lion and bear before challenging Goliath with big faith. So it is with believers, using our little faith for the little things enlarges our faith for the bigger challenges.

Before I was married I worked a few months in Utah. On my way home for Christmas I forgot to fill my tank with gas. I was on a lonely stretch of road when I looked at the fuel gauge and gulped hard because it said “empty”. On that car it meant “empty” so worry rose fast. I slowed down to save consumption and began to sing and pray. I had no idea how far to a gas station but I knew that it would only be at a crossroads. I was a young Christian with little faith- testing, so I diligently watched as I drove hoping and praying for the best—and I sang worship choruses and prayed. When I finally came to an intersection there was a gas station and small convenience store. I breathed a sigh of relief and to my surprise, when the tank was full and I paid the bill, I was paying for 1 gal more than the tank could hold. It took me a few minutes to realize the miracle—I **had driven 15 or 20 miles on an empty gas tank!** I really thanked the Lord for watching over me, a new convert with little faith.

Some years later I returned from a mission trip to India with the beginning of stomach pain. I knew from experience it was the result of bad dish water, and other food problems. No matter what remedy I tried I could not shake the misery. Some days I went to the office suffering; other days I stayed home. After a month or so I woke up one morning feeling miserable and never bothered to dress or eat. About mid-morning I started to get angry. I threw back the covers and said quietly: “*I have had enough. No matter*

how I feel I am going to the office. Live or die I am not letting this illness keep me from the office and my work responsibilities.” I don't remember the timing, but within a few days I realized I had no pain—the India stomach problem was over. Looking back I think that was a bigger test of faith than running out of gas in Utah, and somehow I passed the test. I have written about bigger faith challenges in some of these lessons, and in my book: **What a Difference a Day Makes** (Amazon). I want readers to realize that the principles and lessons I share have been developed by my own experience, and I want you to know you have a great future ahead of you. God is no respecter of persons. **Mighty Man** in training—according to **Phil. 4:13** “*you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you*”. Start asking and do not doubt—all things are possible to those who believe.

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