

A scenic landscape featuring a vibrant rainbow arching over a range of mountains. In the foreground, a paved road curves through a lush green field. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, suggesting a recent or approaching storm. The entire scene is framed by a blue border.

*Faith*

*to live in the*

**SUPERNATURAL!**

*by*

*A.L. and Joyce Gill*

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## Lesson One

### LORD, I BELIEVE

All faith is from God. The apostle Paul wrote that God gives each of us a measure of faith. However, what we do with the faith we are given is up to us. We are given many opportunities to let our faith grow. As we will learn, the faith that pleases God is a fresh, ever-growing faith.

One of the laws God set in motion is the law of sowing and reaping. Whatever we sow, we will reap. We can be assured that as we study faith together, our faith will grow. Our faith will change, and we will reap faith.

Wherever we are in our walk of faith, we can be challenged to have more faith. Our challenge may be in the area of personal relationships, emotions, finances, or health. But every day, every one of us needs to have more faith.

#### **“Help My Unbelief!”**

There was a demon-possessed boy and his father brought him to Jesus. Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

We can imagine how much this father wanted his son to be healed. How terrifying it must have been for the father to realize his son's healing depended on his faith.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

This father did the right thing. he cried out, "I do believe, but I need more," and Jesus healed his son. Our cry needs to be the same, "Oh, Father, help me have more faith!"

Just as the father had to believe, faith is our part. We must have faith to receive the promises of God. It's faith that brings the supernatural realm into the natural realm. Everything, from the moment of salvation on, we receive from God through faith.

#### **WHAT IS FAITH?**

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When we sit down on a chair, we believe the chair will hold us up. That's natural faith.

This study is not about natural faith. It is about the God-kind of faith that is in the realm of the Spirit. It is the faith that flows between us and God – the faith that

communicates with God and receives from God – the faith that operates in the realm of the Spirit, in the supernatural power of God.

## **Definition**

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives us the definition of faith.

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).**

According to the Strong's Concordance, the word "substance" means "that which has foundation, is firm – that which has actual existence – a substance, a real being."

The Amplified Version of the Bible reads, **Now faith is the assurance ... of the things we hope for... faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.**

The Moffat's Translation reads, **Now faith means that we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see.**

The Webster's Dictionary describes faith as "unquestioning belief in God... complete trust, confidence, or reliance; as children usually have faith in their parents."

Faith is unquestioning belief in who God is, in what He does, and what He says. Faith is believing and acting on God's Word without questioning or trying to understand it.

In the Psalms we read, **Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven (Psalms 119:89).**

## **Source of Faith**

➤ *A Gift from God*

Faith for salvation is a gift from God. **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).**

And we also know we are to be, **Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2a)**

➤ *Comes from Hearing Word*

**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).**

Faith comes in a moment of time – in an instant – when the Spirit of God takes the Word of God we have been reading, meditating on, or hearing, and ignites it like fire in our



spirits. Faith leaps into existence when the Word of God becomes truth for us.

The doctor may say, “You have cancer.” But the Word of God says “By the stripes of Jesus you are healed.” In the moment of faith, the Word of God becomes sharper than a two-edged sword dividing the soul (the mind, the emotions) and the spirit. Our mind may have been accepting the doctor’s words, “You have cancer,” but at the moment of faith, our spirit takes control, our faith reaches out and receives the manifestation of God’s healing power.

## **Foundations of Faith**

### *➤ Based on Knowing God*

True faith will always be based on knowing God.

The value of any promise is only as good as the integrity of the person making the promise. If a person has lied to us in the past, we can’t be sure that they are speaking the truth now.

But God never lies. His promises are always true. His word is based on His purity, and there is no higher standard! We understand this more, we come to know Him more personally.

Daniel wrote, **the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits (Daniel 11:32b).**

If we are going to have a faith that pleases God – a faith that will cause us to be strong and do mighty exploits, then we must spend time in His presence as worshippers of Him.

When we, like Abraham, become “friends of God” and know His character, then we can know the trustworthiness of His Word.

There can be no true faith without an intimate relationship with God which comes by spending time as worshipers in His awesome presence.

### *➤ Based on Integrity of Word*

There is no other book as important as the Bible. The Bible contains the actual words of God. It is our guideline in every situation. God’s Words are spirit and they are life. As we begin to study the Word of God, realizing these are His words written to us, our faith will grow.

In 2 Timothy we read, **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for**

instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

The Amplified Version of the Bible makes it even clearer. Every Scripture is God-breathed—by His inspiration—and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, and for training in righteousness (that is, in holy living in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose and action), So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well-fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

When we hear about God's marvelous power on behalf of others, hope comes. When this happens, our hope may be based on what someone tells us. But when we see it for ourselves in His Word, and we see how it fits with the character of God, that hope turns to faith.

True faith will always be based on God's Word.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

## **Attributes of Faith**

### *➤ Faith Pleases God*

We read in Hebrews that, Without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6a).

It's faith that reaches out and receives salvation. It's faith that receives God's healing power – protection – guidance – His supernatural provision. We are to live in faith, walk in faith, work in faith, do everything we do in faith, if we want to please God.

If we are afraid, if we allow doubt to dwell in us, we cannot please God. When everything looks dark, when it seems there is no hope, we must come to the place that we can say with Job Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him...He also shall be my salvation (Job 13:15a,16a).

Job had lost everything – his family – his friends – his prosperity, but he still knew God. He still had faith in God.

True faith pleases God. It takes faith to live in the realm of the miraculous. It takes faith to reach out and receive all that God has provided for us in His awesome redemption.

➤ *Faith Is a Choice*

Having faith is a choice. Faith means to take it or grasp hold of it. To believe in Jesus means to take Him for all that the scriptures say He is. We can believe he is our Savior, and He is. We can believe He is our healer, and He is. We can believe He is our Deliverer... The list goes on and on. We know that whatever we believe, we can have. It's our choice. For example, a person can say they don't believe healing is for today, and for them it's not.

We have a choice. Isaiah 53:1 starts out with a question. "Who has believed our report?"

Joshua cried out to the people of Israel, **Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve** (Joshua 24:15).

And in Revelation we read, **Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely** (Revelation 22:17b).

➤ *Faith is an Action*

James tells us that faith is always in action. James wrote, **for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also** (James 2:26).

What do we learn from this verse?

- Faith without corresponding actions is inoperative.
- Faith is an action verb.
- When faith comes, it moves us into the action of obedience.

When Jesus spoke to people in need of healing, He gave them an action to perform. "Stretch out your hand." Take up your bed and walk."

**Faith – A Way of Life**

Faith is to be a way of life. It's not a "get help quick" scheme.

Faith is not a "tool" for us to use to coerce God into giving us what we desire. A tool is something we pick up and use to do what we purpose to do. We control a tool. Faith is a gift from God to accomplish His purposes for our lives.

Faith is the only way to live a life pleasing to God. Instead of us "using our faith" for our purposes, it is to rule over our lives. We are to walk by the faith that is given to us by God to accomplish His purposes in our lives

In Galatians the apostle Paul wrote, **But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).**

Paul made it clear that the law could not bring salvation. It is only received by faith. He exhorted us to **walk by faith and not by sight** in 2 Corinthians 5:7.

The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote, **Now the just shall live by faith...** (Hebrews 10:38a).

## **In the Spirit Realm**

Until the moment of salvation, the spirit-person within us was dead (or dormant). But at salvation, our spirits came alive. We received a new nature – a spirit-person.

Our natural senses will war against the things of the spirit. Things in the spirit realm cannot be understood with the natural mind. They cannot be touched with human hands.

As we meditate on the Word of God with our natural mind, our spirit-person reaches out in faith and accepts it. Our spirit-person knows the supernatural, and it understands God's Word in a different way – spirit to Spirit.

Faith is in the realm of the Spirit. It is not a product of the mind. God created mankind a triune being. The apostle Paul wrote, **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).**

We are a spirit (heart), soul (mind) and body (flesh). These words can be used interchangeably – spirit and heart – soul and mind – body and flesh. In scripture, they mean the same. Notice the order that Paul used – first the spirit, then the soul, and then the body. The mind is to listen to what the spirit says, and then the body will do what the mind says.

To be powerful believers, our spirits must be in command of the mind and the body.

God is spirit and we must learn to walk by faith and not by sight. We must move from the natural realm to the spirit realm. We find this truth mentioned over and over by the apostle Paul. In Romans he wrote, **But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you (Romans 8:9).**

And in Corinthians he wrote, Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1 Corinthians 2:12).

## **FAITH IS NOT**

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Sometimes it helps to understand what something is by looking at what it is not. Faith is not holding on, and holding on, and holding on by our own efforts, until God moves on our behalf. Faith is knowing God and His will for our lives, and having a joyful expectancy, knowing He will do what He has said.

Faith is not a magical charm by which we obtain our personal desires from God. Instead, faith means to approach God with firm confidence, humility, and submission, asking for the blessing that is needed in order to fulfill the purpose He has for us – to carry out the mission He has assigned to us and to walk in the fullness of all He has promised in His Word for our lives.

### **Intellectual Belief**

Faith and believing are not the same. A person can believe with their mind that Jesus is the Son of God, and yet never believe with their heart and ask Him into their life and receive salvation. Faith is a step beyond belief. Faith is putting belief into action.

Knowing the Word of God – believing the Word of God intellectually, is not the same as having faith in the Word of God and putting that faith into action. Faith is taking what we believe and acting on it. Faith moves us from the intellectual to the spirit realm.

Believing the Word can be in a general way, but faith is specific.

### **Hope**

When some do not receive an answer to their prayers, they begin to doubt the Word of God is true. But God's Word is always and forever true. It's written in a substance far more firm than concrete. It never changes. So, if we haven't received an answer to our prayers, we are the ones who need to change. One of the most common reasons for prayers not being answered is that people are operating in hope.

Faith is not the same as hope. Hope is good. It precedes faith. But if we stay in the area of hoping for something to

happen in the future, we prevent ourselves from receiving our miracle now. It has been said, "Hope sets the stage, and faith brings the result."

Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24).

Notice that Jesus did not say believe that some time in the future you'll receive them. He said in the present tense, "Believe that you receive them."

Hope is in the future. Hope comes by knowing what the Word says. Hope believes that someday we "will receive."

When faith comes by the Holy Spirit making a Word of God a personal spoken word into our spirits, we suddenly believe that we receive them and we have them. We have moved from the hope of the future to the now of faith. We believe that we receive!

The greatest chapter on faith in the Bible is Hebrews 11. In many translations, it begins with the words "Now faith." If it is faith, it is now!

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).**

When faith leaps into our spirits, the things we have been hoping for becomes substance. Perhaps we have not yet seen that "substance" with our natural eyes, but we have seen it with our spiritual eyes.

The woman with the issue of blood heard about Jesus and His healing power. When she heard about Jesus, faith came into her spirit as a gift from God. She did not say, "Sometime in the future..." She put a time on it. She said, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." She would not be stopped. She pushed her way through the crowds, touched the hem of His garments, and she was made whole. Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well" (Matthew 9:21-22).

Hope is in the future.

~ **Faith is now.**

Hope says, "I will receive it sometime."

~ **Faith says, "I have it now."**

Hope says, "I know it's God's will to heal some, so maybe He'll heal me."

~ **Faith says, "The moment I touch Him..."**

Staying in the area of hope can become a substitute for faith and rob us from having faith.

## **Learned Knowledge**

Learned knowledge is what we have learned from study, from experience, and from others. This knowledge is also called “processed truth.” The interesting thing about processed truth – or truth as we perceive it – is that we can only believe one thing at a time.

For example, if we believe it might be God’s will for us to be sick, we cannot believe for our healing.

Over the years, we all have gained a tremendous amount of learned knowledge, and this knowledge may be true or false. It is important that we have a teachable attitude and are open to the revelation which comes from God’s Word.

Many have been raised in churches, or have even gone to Bible schools that teach that some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit were for another time or dispensation. When these people meet the trials of life, they may not understand that God wants to speak to them today through the marvelous gifts of the Holy Spirit. They may not know that their salvation provides them with a personal, everyday relationship with God – with deliverance – with healing – with everything they need in their walk with the Lord.

They may have a mental knowledge and may be able to quote the Word of God, but have never experienced the tremendous power of that Word. They are like the people described in Second Timothy – **who had a form of godliness but denied its power** (2 Timothy 3:5).

They lack the personal relationship God has for them. Through learned knowledge, processed truth, their eyes have been blinded to the true meaning of much of God’s word.

They don’t understand what Paul meant when he wrote, **Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us** (Ephesians 3:20).

Learned knowledge may be something we can repeat with seeming great conviction of what others teach, but if we have never experienced it, we don’t know it to be true.

Man’s wisdom is often contrary to God’s wisdom.

Believers must know what God's word actually says – not what a person says. Then the Holy Spirit can take the Word and reveal it to them. Then they have faith not in their knowledge, but in His Word. When the Holy Spirit comes in, He takes the Word and reveals God's eternal truths.

Faith cannot function beyond one's knowledge of the Word of God. True faith is always based on His Word. The more we study the Word; the more we can allow the Holy Spirit to make it real to us; the more our faith will expand.

The apostle Paul wrote, I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened (Ephesians 1:16-18a).

Faith comes, not by the wisdom and knowledge of man, but by the Holy Spirit's revelation to our spirit.

## **A Product of Reasoning**

Faith is not the product of reasoning. Jesus said to the disciples "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?" (Mark 8:17).

What we perceive through reasoning or logic is not faith.

Very often faith is the opposite of what is reasonable. The natural man says, "Seeing is believing." The word of God says, "Believing is seeing." The word of God says, Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

When Jesus commanded the man with a withered arm to stretch forth his hand, reason would say, "I can't." Faith says, "I can," and he did.

When they ran out of wine at the wedding and Jesus told the servants to fill the jugs with water and then take a cup of it to the governor of the feast, reason would say, "No way! I'm not taking that water to the governor." Faith said, "Yes, Sir!" and the water was wine.

Faith is not the product of reasoning. Faith comes as a gift from God through the re-born human spirit. It is not a product of the mind, but of the spirit. Faith is a tangible force. It will change our circumstances, our health, our families, and even nations.



## **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Write your definition of faith.

2. Explain the difference between Faith and Hope.

## Lesson Two

### GOD'S GREAT EXAMPLES

#### ABRAHAM – THE FATHER OF OUR FAITH

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##### Our Example

Abraham is referred to as the father of our faith. Because of his faith, nations were established and blessed, and these blessings remain for us.

Abraham is an example for us today. Against all natural hope because of his advanced age, and still without receiving the promise that he would be the father of many nations, he tried to accomplish God's promises through his own self-efforts without faith.

History reveals the heartache and devastating results of faithless disobedience.

We, like Abraham, must learn from the destructive results of our actions of the past – those actions that were a result of doubt and unbelief and self-efforts. We must be like Abraham and learn the way of faith, the way of the Spirit that resulted in his becoming the father of our faith.

And through him all the nations of the world were blessed.

We are his descendants, grafted in to become his spiritual seed. He is our father and our example of faith.

God so honored Abraham that there are twelve verses that summarize his life in Hebrews and six verses that summarize his life in Romans. And in all these verses we read about his faith. As his children in faith, we can read these verses and say, "That's my Father. I can be like Abraham!"

In Romans 4:18, we find a promise for us. The apostle Paul wrote, **So shall your descendants be.** That's God's promise. We can operate in the same kind of faith as Abraham.

Let's take time to read the whole passage about Abraham found in Romans.

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

(As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

And not being weak in faith he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform (Romans 4:16-21).

## Four Steps to Faith

In this passage, we see four steps to Abraham's faith. These same steps will work for us today.

➤ **Abraham heard from God** – "I will make you the father of many nations."

Our faith, also, must be based on hearing from God.

➤ **Abraham believed that word would come to pass** and he continued to believe year after year.

We must believe his Word to us will come to pass.

➤ **He refused to look at the natural circumstances.**

We cannot look around us at the natural things in our lives.

➤ **He started praising God before the answer became fact.**

We are to be strengthened in our faith by "giving glory to God." We are to start praising God when He gives us His word and not wait for the fulfillment of that word.

## How Faith Came

Where did Abraham's faith come from? We can only learn this by studying his life in detail, as it is recorded in Genesis chapters 12 to 25. We suggest you read these chapters.

Abraham had mighty times of victory, and he had discouraging times of failure. The fact that God recorded the failures as well as the victorious times shows us that Abraham wasn't perfect. He was a human being just like you and I, and yet, his faith grew to the point he became the father of faith.

It's time we take off our spiritual blinders and see that all through the ages God uses imperfect humans to accomplish His purposes. That means we qualify; He can use us.

Abraham, like Elijah and all of the great men and women of faith in the Old Testament, had to learn to walk by faith and not by sight.

James wanted us to see these men were human just like us. He wrote, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours... (James 5:17).

➤ *Abraham Obeyed God*

In almost the first verse about Abram whose name was changed to Abraham, God told him to do something and gave him the promise of his future. Abraham heard and obeyed. He didn't question. He didn't complain. He packed up his people and his things and he departed.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him (Genesis 12:1,2,4).

➤ *Abraham Knew God*

Abraham knew God. He is the only man in the Bible to be called a friend of God.

The Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God (James 2:23).

It is those who know God, as Abraham knew God, who can have faith like the faith of Abraham.

➤ *He Worshipped, Built Altars,  
Made Sacrifices, Tithed*

**Built first altar –**

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him (Genesis 12:7).

**Paid Tithes to Melchizedek**

Then Melchizedek, the King of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all (Genesis 14:18-20).

#### **Made Sacrifices –**

And he said, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon" (Genesis 15:8,9).

#### **Interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah – Genesis 18**

#### **Was willing to Sacrifice Isaac – Genesis 22**

Abraham believed God and received the promised son, Isaac. Even when God spoke to him and said sacrifice your son, he obeyed. What happens when God has fulfilled our dreams, and then says, "Lay it all down at my feet"?

Abraham walked out his faith every day, in situation after situation, and as he did his faith grew. Our faith will grow each day as we forsake the natural, and move into the supernatural – into His Spirit.

### **Abraham or Thomas**

For comparison, let's look at Thomas, the disciple of Jesus. Thomas chose not to believe.

The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. ... Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:25-27).

There are two kinds of belief we can follow – the Abraham-belief or the Thomas-belief.

**Abraham said, "I'll believe year after year, and I'll act on that belief because I know what God has said."**

Thomas said, "I'll believe it when I see it."

**Abraham-belief was based on hearing from God.**

Thomas-belief was based on the five senses.

**Abraham-belief was based on the promises of God.**

Thomas-belief was based on physical evidence.

We have an inward man and an outward man. The inward man is our spirit. The outward man is the mind and the

body. To base one's belief on physical evidence is to believe only from the natural, human viewpoint, to believe with the outward man. To believe with the heart means to believe in our spirit – with our inward man.

John tells us "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

Faith flowing out from our innermost being is living water flowing to ourselves and to those around us.

## **MOSES – THE GREAT GENERAL OF FAITH**

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### **Moses' Parents**

In Hebrews 11:23-29 we find another awesome example of faith. The life of Moses could be a complete study in itself.

Moses' parents were not afraid of what Pharaoh might do. In Hebrews we learn that, It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid of what the king might do (v. 23 NLT).

### **Moses' Faith**

Words cannot encompass the faith of this man. After spending forty years in the wilderness, when God spoke, He wasn't afraid to face Pharaoh. He demanded freedom for his people. He stood in the courts where he was once a welcomed son as an ambassador for God.

He led his people for over forty years, having faith in God for their food, their water, their protection, and their laws. From the time God spoke to him from the burning bush, he walked with God in a walk in faith.

It was of faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be treated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.

He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of the Messiah than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the great reward that God would give him (vs. 24-26 NLT).

### **➤ *Forsook Egypt***

It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt. He was not afraid of the king. Moses kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible (v. NLT 27).

➤ *Kept the Passover*

It was by faith that Moses commanded the people of Israel to keep the Passover and to sprinkle blood on the doorposts so that the angel of death would not kill their firstborn sons (v. 28 NLT).

➤ *Passed through the Red Sea*

It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians followed, they were all drowned (v. 29 NLT).

### **Moses Knew God**

God said Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth, and that He talked to Him face to face.

(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) ... Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD (Numbers 12:3,6-8 ).

## **THE FAITH THAT ENDURES**

The apostle Peter wrote about the faith that endures.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:6-9).

### **The Example of Job**

The declarations of Job through his time of testing will always stand as a memorial of faith. Job did not understand what was happening. His friends certainly didn't understand.

In Job 13, verse 15 we read, **Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.**

And what a wonderful declaration of faith we find in Job 19:23-27,

Oh, that my words were written!  
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!  
That they were engraved on a rock  
With an iron pen and lead, forever!  
For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
That in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself,  
And my eyes shall behold,  
and not another.!

And consider the words of Job in Job 23:8-12

Look, I go forward, but He is not there,  
And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;  
When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him;  
When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him.  
But He knows the way that I take;  
When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.  
My foot has held fast to His steps;  
I have kept His way and not turned aside.  
I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;  
I have treasured the words of His mouth  
More than my necessary food.

Job believed in God regardless of what his circumstances were.

## **THE ROLE-CALL OF FAITH**

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Many books have been written on Hebrews 11 and no study on faith would be complete without looking at this marvelous chapter. The words “by faith” are used eighteen times in these forty verses.

Because using a different translation often makes it possible for us to see new meanings in Scripture, we are going to use the New Living Bible for this passage.

What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.

God gave his approval to people in days of old because of their faith.

By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen (Hebrews 11:1-3 NLT).

Faith is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. Hope has moved to confident assurance.



Faith is accepting in the natural realm what cannot be seen. God tells us that even the creation of the universe was by command – by faith. The visible was created from the invisible.

## **Abel**

Cain and Abel made two different sacrifices, but Abel's sacrifice was made in faith. Because it was made in faith, it was received.

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith (v. 4 NLT).

## **Enoch**

It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying - "suddenly he disappeared because God took him." But before he was taken up, he was approved as pleasing to God.

So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him (vs. 5,6 NLT).

## **Noah**

It was by faith that Noah built an ark to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about something that had never happened before. By his faith he condemned the rest of the world and was made right in God's sight (v. 7 NLT).

## **Abraham**

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith - for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent. And so did Isaac and Jacob, to whom God gave the same promise. Abraham did this because he was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God (vs. 9-10 NLT).

## **Sarah**

It was by faith that Sarah together with Abraham was able to have a child, even though they were too old and Sarah was barren. Abraham believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man, Abraham, who was too old to have any children - a nation with so many people that, like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them (vs. 11-12 NLT).

## **Those Faithful to the End**

Because they died in faith, God wasn't ashamed to be called their God.

All these faithful ones died without receiving what God had promised them, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed the promises of God. They agreed that they were no more than foreigners and nomads here on earth. And obviously people who talk like that are looking forward to a country they can call their own.

If they had meant the country they came from, they would have found a way to go back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them (vs. 13-16 NLT)

## **Abraham Offered Isaac**

It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, though God had promised him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted."

Abraham assumed that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead (vs. 17-19 NLT).

## **Isaac Blessed Jacob and Esau**

It was by faith that Isaac blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau. He had confidence in what God was going to do in the future (v. 20 NLT).

## **Jacob Blessed Sons of Joseph**

It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff (v. 21 NLT).

## **Joseph**

Joseph in death believed the Children of Israel would return to the promise land.

And it was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, confidently spoke of God's bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt. He was so sure of it that he commanded them to carry his bones with them when they left! (v. 22 NLT)

## **Walls Fell Down**

Joshua believed God, was obedient to His instructions and led the Children of Israel to their first supernatural victory in the Promise Land.

It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho seven days, and the walls came crashing down (v. 30 NLT).

## **Rahab**

Rahab, the prostitute, in Jericho acted in faith as she welcomed the spies, and risked her life for them, because she believed in the power of their God.

It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute did not die with all the others in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies (v. 31 NLT).

## **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the Prophets**

Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.

By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.

## **The Early Church**

Women received their loved ones back again from death. But others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life.

Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons.

Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated.

They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

## **We Must Finish the Race**

All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. For God had far better things in mind for us that would also benefit them, for they can't receive the prize at the end of the race until we finish the race (vs. 32-40 NLT).

Even though they did not see the promise – they didn't see the coming of the Messiah – the Deliverer – and yet they continued even to death in faith.

### **A Solemn Warning**

Just before the writer of the book of Hebrews wrote the roll-call of those who lived and died by faith in the Old Testament, he gave us a warning.

A righteous person will live by faith. But I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away (Hebrews 10:38).

And in Hebrews we are told that God was not ashamed of these people.

They were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them (Hebrews 11:16).

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. What were Abraham's four steps of faith?

2. How did God describe Moses in the Book of Numbers? Why is this important?

## **Lesson Three**

### **FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH**

Supernatural, earth-changing faith comes because of who we are. We are new creations in Jesus Christ. We can have faith, a God-kind of faith, because we are in Him. We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, and we hear His voice.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones (Ephesians 5:30).

We need to understand that we have two positions in Christ. The first is Positionally and the second is Experientially.

#### **WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST**

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##### **The New Birth**

At the moment of salvation a miracle took place. The Holy Spirit baptized us into the body of Jesus Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

We have a new position in Him. We are born again. We are new creations in Him.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The “old person” we used to be no longer exists. That person has “passed away.” All things have become new.

As “new creations” we are one with Christ. All that He is, we have become. All that He has is now ours. We were spiritually dead. Now we are a living spirit with a whole new identity.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22).

##### **The Righteousness of God**

Some experience feelings of guilt and condemnation which hinders their faith from believing and receiving all that God has promised. The revelation of the new creation is a revelation of righteousness. We are no longer “sinners

saved by grace.” As new creations, we are no longer “sinners.” All of the righteousness of Christ has become ours. We, as new-born spirit beings, are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. We will never be any more righteous than we became at the moment of salvation.

We must know who we are in Christ, if we are to live by a faith that pleases God. It is through a revelation of the new creation that our faith is able to believe that we can have and do all that His Word reveals.

We have a wonderful place, positionally, in Christ at this very moment. When we made Jesus, the only Son of God, our Lord and Savior, we were placed in Him and received many wonderful benefits.

### **Our Benefits**

#### ➤ *Partakers of Divine Nature*

By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature ... (2 Peter 1:4)

#### ➤ *Share Eternal Life*

This is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11-13).

#### ➤ *Share His Righteousness*

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

#### ➤ *Share His Sonship*

...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will (Ephesians 1:5).

#### ➤ *We share His destiny*

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).

#### ➤ *We share His Kingship and Priesthood*

... and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:6).

## **BEING CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE**

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While our spirits are born again as new creations and we have a whole new identity and position in Christ, we still have bodies and souls that need to experientially be conformed to the image of Christ. Our bodies may need healing and our souls may need restoration.

### **Being Set Free**

It is the knowledge of the truth that can set us free in our bodies and souls.

John wrote, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The knowledge of the truth of God's Word will set our faith free to believe, speak, and receive all that God has provided for us as new creations in Christ Jesus.

### **Our Minds Being Renewed**

As we read and meditate on the Word, the Holy Spirit is restoring our souls. Our minds are being renewed to enable us to walk by faith.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1,2).

### **Our Emotions Being Restored**

The emotions of our souls are being restored.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul (Psalms 23:2,3a).

Our souls and our bodies receive all the benefits that we have in Christ.

Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Psalms 103:1-5).

## **Our Benefits Experientially**

### **➤ *Peace***

God has given us a place of perfect peace.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3).

### **➤ *Joy***

A place of inner happiness, or joy

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalms 16:11).

### **➤ *Strength***

Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

### **➤ *Stability***

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe (Proverbs 18:10).

### **➤ *Power***

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you (Acts 1:8).

### **➤ *Place of Impact!***

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4,5)

It makes no difference how difficult the circumstances are – how great the pressures, adversities or the problems of life are. We can have a place of perfect peace. In Philippians we read, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

Notice that our prayer and supplications are to be made with thanksgiving.



## **MOVING INTO ACTION**

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### **The Mind or The Heart?**

There is an important distinction between what we believe with our minds and what we believe with our hearts. With our minds we believe many things and much of what we believe is what we have learned from the Bible.

To believe is good. We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We believe that the worlds were created by Him. We believe that Adam and Eve were created by Him and that He told them to have dominion over all the earth. We believe Jesus healed the sick. We believe Jesus told the disciples that the works that He did they could do also.

We are students of the Word and there are many, many things we believe.

### **Is It Faith?**

Faith, however, goes beyond what we believe with our minds. Faith comes by revelation from the Holy Spirit. It is by this revelation as a personal spoken Word of God that faith leaps into our spirits. It is then we believe with our hearts.

(But what does it say? "The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach) (Romans 10:8).

The word comes by revelation into our hearts.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation (Romans 10:9,10).

Faith is believing with our hearts, not just with our minds.

Faith is taking what we believe and putting it into action. The evidence of faith is an action of obedience. The apostle James wrote, What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? (James 2:14)

### **Corresponding Action**

Faith is always accompanied by corresponding actions. James calls it works. You can read the following passage substituting the word, "actions."

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works (actions), is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works (actions)." Show me your faith without your works (actions), and I will show you my faith by my works (actions).

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works (actions) is dead?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works (actions) when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

Do you see that faith was working together with his works (actions), and by works (actions) faith was made perfect?

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

You see then that a man is justified by works (actions), and not by faith only.

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works (actions) when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works (actions) is dead also (James 2:17-26).

## **The True Test**

If there are no corresponding actions to what we say we believe, then we can know that what we have is head knowledge. Faith comes by revelation into our spirits, and we then believe with our hearts – there will always be an action of faith that will give evidence of the faith that we have received.

## **FOLLOWING OUR LEADERS**

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### **Jesus**

The Scriptures are filled with examples of faith that moves into action, but let's start with our greatest example – Jesus.

➤ *What Ever He Says, Do It!*

In John 2, we read the first recorded miracle of Jesus. It was turning water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana.

What did Mary tell the servants? "Whatever He says to you, do it."

And Jesus did give them instructions. "Fill the waterpots with water." "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast."

I wonder when the water turned into wine. Was it as they filled the water pots, or as they took it to the master of the feast?

In obedience, even if the instructions seemed foolish in the natural realm, they obeyed Jesus and did what He said and the miracle happened.

➤ *Stretch Forth Your Hand*

When Jesus saw the man with a withered hand, His instructions were simple. Impossible in the natural, but simple in a moment of faith.

Behold, there was a man who had a withered hand.

Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other (Matthew 12:10a, 13).

➤ *Take Up your Bed*

Some friends couldn't get their friend with palsy to Jesus to be healed. But they had heard of Jesus' healing power. They believed in that power so much that they went up on the roof and removed the tiles so that they could let their friend down to Jesus. What did Jesus do?

When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." ... "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God (Luke 5:20, 24b,25).

How did Jesus see their faith?

He saw their actions and those actions were faith.

**The Disciples**

➤ *Nevertheless at Thy Word*

Let's look at Luke 5:4-7

Now when He (Jesus) had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other

boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

Simon was the fisherman. Jesus had been a carpenter. Simon could have looked at things in the natural, and not put down the net. His knowledge in this area of fishing was certainly more than Jesus' knowledge. But he heard Jesus' words, and obeying, he let down the net.

Faith is both hearing and doing the words of Jesus.

God is speaking to us today. He is telling us ways that will bring prosperity and health.

In the first healing in the book of Acts, we read about the disciples stepping out in faith. We see them following Jesus' example.

Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them - walking, leaping, and praising God (Acts 3:6-8).

## **The Walls of Jericho**

The Children of Israel had just come into the Promise Land and the fortified of Jericho stood right in front of them. What did God say to Joshua?

And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor (Joshua 6:2).

Now, wait a minute. This was a mighty fortress. The army was inside, the walls were strong, and they were prepared for a siege. But God said, I have given Jericho into your hands. That's past tense. I have already given you ...

And then God gives them instructions that made no sense in the natural. For six days, they were to march around the city, blow the trumpets, and go back to camp. And on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times, and blow the trumpets, and the walls would fall down.

Now Joshua had a choice to make. Would he follow God's instruction? Would he act on the word of God to him and ask all the warriors in his army to act on that word?

He did, and as we know the walls came down.

Has God given us a word, such as **My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19)?**

If you are having financial difficulties, ask God for His instructions on what to do, and then do what He says. When we truly believe what He has spoken with our hearts, we will respond with an action of obedience.

### **Naaman at the Jordan River**

Naaman was a Syrian captain and he had a slave girl from Israel. When she heard that he had leprosy, she told him about the prophet Elisha in Israel; that he could heal him even of leprosy. Hope must have arisen in Naaman because he journeyed to Israel and to the prophet Elisha. He came with his horses, chariots, with his servants, and he expected to be treated with great respect. But what happened?

Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.'

"Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?"

So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (2 Kings 5:9-14).

Naaman was a wealthy man, and it was not easy for him to humble himself and dip in the Jordan River seven times. It certainly didn't make any sense. God had not answered in the manner he expected and he started home in a rage, but then ... he did obey God. He did do what God said. He dipped in the Jordan seven times and he was healed.

## **Fight The Good Fight Of Faith**

The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the telling of men and women who acted out their faith. It is not the stories of people who waited for someone else to have faith for them.

Faith is not, “Oh, whatever God wants...” “I know I’ll be healed some time in the future.” “If God wants me to do something, He’ll tell me.”

Faith is taking charge of our situation – of praying about it until we hear from God – of searching the scriptures until the Holy Spirit points us to the answer.

Remember the words of James, **So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead) (James 2:17 The Amplified Bible).**

Timothy tells us to **Fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12a).**

In Ephesians we read, **Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

**Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:13-16).**

Every day we are in a battle for our health, our finances, our families, our nations. It is time for believers to hear the Word of God – speak the Word of God – and act in faith on that Word.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. List ten benefits of having faith.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Give a Biblical example of faith in action and how it has impacted your life.

## **Lesson Four**

### **SIX BASIC ELEMENTS OF FAITH**

#### **Receiving God's Promise Through Faith**

God's Word is full of promises that belong to every believer. However, to receive the benefits of these promises, we must meet certain conditions based on God's Word. These are the six basic elements of faith. Many, who according to God's Word are already blessed with prosperity and Divine health, are living with poverty, sickness, disease and pain in their bodies because each of these six basic elements of faith are not a reality in their lives. Through these six basic elements of faith every believer can receive and experience all of the benefits of the promises found in God's Word.

The six basic elements of faith are:

Know what belongs to us  
Ask the Father for it  
Believe and receive  
Declarations of Faith  
Act on our faith  
Endurance of Faith

#### **KNOW WHAT BELONGS TO US**

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To have faith, we must first know from the Word of God what belongs to us. We are told the importance of searching the Word to find God's promises by four different men in the Scripture.

#### **Prophet Jeremiah**

The prophet Jeremiah tells us how joyful and wonderful this search for the promises of God were in his life.

Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).

#### **Apostle Peter**

We must find and know the promises of God's Word. We must know what these promises are and we must know that each one of them belongs to us as believers in God's Word.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as his divine power has given to us all things that

[pertain] to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption [that is] in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:2 – 4).

The promises of God are “exceedingly great and precious.” We must search the Scriptures to discover these promises so that we will know what belongs to us.

## **Apostle John**

Our faith can't rise above what we know.

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The knowledge of the truth of God's Word that can set us free can only be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit as we read and study God's Word. The “truth” of God's Word can't set us free unless we know it. Even if what is revealed to us seems foolish to the natural mind; it is the knowledge of the “truth” found in God's Word that will set us free.

## **Apostle Paul**

Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

But God has revealed [them] to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know [them,] because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is [rightly] judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:9 – 16).



## **ASK!**

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We must ask God for what already belongs to us. Many prayers are not answered because we talk about a situation but never get around to praying about it.

The apostle James wrote, ... you do not have because you do not ask (James 4:2b).

### **Jesus said ...**

“Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

“Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:7 – 11)

### **Blessings Are Ours**

God has already blessed us with all that we need to live a victorious life of abundance and health on this earth. Each of these blessings already belongs to us. They already exist in heaven.

Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

### **Whatever We Ask**

However, in order to receive these blessings, we not only must know what they are, we must ask the Father for them.

... Most Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive that your joy may be full (John 16:23b, 24).

God has promised us that we will receive whatever we simply ask Him for. Asking the Father for what He has promised in His Word is another important element of faith that is necessary in order for us to receive the manifestation of any of the promises found in God’s Word.

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matthew 21:22).

## **“But I Didn’t Receive”**

James tells us that there are two reasons we can ask and not receive. The first is that we have not asked according to His will.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures (James 4:3).

The second is that we must ask in faith, with no doubting.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; for he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-8).

## **BELIEVE AND RECEIVE**

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We must believe that we receive God’s promises to us in order to have them.

### **Jesus Said Believe**

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them,] and you will have [them] (Mark 11:24).

In order to receive a promise, we must not only know what the promise is and ask God for the promise, but we must also believe the benefit of that promise is ours and that we have received it the moment we asked for it. Regardless of whether or not the evidence of that promise is already manifested in our lives, we must “believe that we receive.” We must believe that we have already received that promise the moment we asked for it in faith. We don’t believe what we see or feel. We believe what God’s Word says.

For everyone who asks receives... (Matthew 7:8a).

Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

### **Writer of Book of Hebrews**

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that God is the rewarder of those who diligently ask.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

## **DECLARATIONS OF FAITH**

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We must say, put into words, what we believe based on God's Word. Then we will have whatever we say.

### **Jesus Said**

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says" (Mark 11:23).

### **Faith Speaks**

The apostle Paul wrote, ... But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way ... But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:6a,8-10).

By what we say, we are making a declaration of what we believe and what we are believing to receive. Our words are important because they are what we are actually believing.

### **Don't Speak Problems**

We can only receive by faith. If it is faith, then we are no longer speaking the problem, instead we are speaking the Word. By making a declaration of our faith we are creating "by the fruit of our lips."

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of [our] lips, giving thanks to His name (Hebrews 13:15).

### **Speak Faith**

We are to confess with our mouths what we believe in our hearts. It is one thing to believe something with our minds, however, when faith comes by hearing the "Rhema" of God, we are now speaking what we believe in our hearts.

Confession is faith speaking. What we speak must be in agreement with the Word and not our feelings or symptoms. The original Greek word "confess" means "to agree with" or to speak the same thing that God said. Confession brings possession.

## **Our Words Create**

We were created in the image and likeness of God. God created by the words He spoke out of His mouth.

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (Hebrews 11:3).

We too can “create” by the words that come out of our mouth. There is a creative power released when we in faith speak the Word of God out of our mouths.

## **Going Back to Abraham**

God promised Abraham, “I have made you a father of many nations.” He even changed his name from Abram to Abraham which means the Father of many nations. However, Abraham had no children and he was a hundred years old. In the natural it seemed impossible that Abraham and Sarah could ever conceive and have a child.

Abraham didn’t confess what he saw or felt in the natural realm. Instead he confessed what God said. He called “those things which do not exist as though they did.” Contrary to all natural evidence to the contrary, he believed God and in that faith began to say what God had said. He did not waver in unbelief. He was fully convinced that what God had promised was going to become a reality in his life.

Some might ask, “Wouldn’t it be dishonest to say I am healed if I haven’t received the manifestation of that healing?” The answer is “No. It would be dishonest to say I am sick if the Word says I am healed.”

## **ACT OUR FAITH**

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We must act on our faith.

### **Actions Reflect Faith**

There is a progression of each of these elements of faith. After we discover and know what God has promised us, and we have asked for it, and we have believed that we received that promise and are now speaking our faith, we must now act on our faith. Our “works” or “actions of obedience” must come into agreement and accompany what we say we believe.

**James wrote, What [does it] profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?**

**... Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead** (James 2:14).

## **Be Doers of the Word**

We need to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues [in it,] and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does (James 1:22-25).

## **Abraham – A Doer of the Word**

Finally, Abraham received his promise. After so many years Isaac was born. Everything that Abraham believed was wrapped up in his son Isaac and then God called for even more faith when He tested Abraham by telling him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. As hard as this was to Abraham, he obeyed God and took Isaac to Moriah to sacrifice him. Arriving at Moriah, he gave instructions to the two young men who accompanied him and Isaac.

And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you” (Genesis 22:5).

Abraham’s actions reveal he was intent on obeying God. However, his words reveal his complete faith in God to fulfill His promise, even if it meant that God would raise Isaac from the dead when he said, “We will come back to you.”

By Abraham’s “works” or “actions.” he revealed His absolute faith in God to fulfill His promise. In the middle of Abraham’s act of total obedience by taking his knife to slay Isaac, God stopped him and provided a substitute sacrifice.

But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

So he said, “Here I am.”

And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns.

So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided" (Genesis 22:11–14).

Abraham's works, or actions of obedience, came into agreement and accompanied what he said he believed. Remember James said, Faith without corresponding actions is dead. If it is faith, there will be actions of absolute obedience.

## **ENDURANCE OF FAITH**

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Abraham is such an example of the endurance of faith. Year after year, he believed the promise of God. He must have endured the taunts thrown at him by others because he called himself The Father of Many Nations, when he didn't even have a son.

### **Holding Fast to Faith**

And finally, we must "hold fast" to what God has promised, what we have asked for, what we believe, confessed and acted upon. Not all things are manifested instantly. There must be "an endurance" of faith.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

Patience is the ability to endure based on our absolute trust in God and His Word. Dwight L. Moody said, "*If your faith 'fizzles out' at the finish, it had a flaw in it at the beginning.*"

James wrote, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4).

### **Be Confident**

Many times those who have believed God's Word in order to receive healing in their bodies are disappointed if there is no immediate manifestation of that healing having taken place. Many of these "cast away their confidence" with the thought that nothing happened.

In receiving the manifestation of God's healing power in our life, there are times when the manifestation comes instantly as a "miracle." There are also many times when the manifestation of healing comes progressively as "a healing."

It is the same whether we are believing God for the manifestation of healing of our bodies, our relationships, our finances or for whatever we are believing to receive from God. Faith must endure, even if we don't see an immediate manifestation. We must "hold fast" to our faith and do not "cast away our confidence" if the manifestation does not come immediately.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise (Hebrews 10:35–36).

## **Be Diligent**

The writer of the book of Hebrews said, And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:11,12).

When there is not an immediate manifestation of what we are believing God to receive, we must hold on and eagerly wait for it with an endurance of faith.

The apostle Paul wrote, But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance (Romans 8:25).

David said, Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! (Psalm 27:14)

And Isaiah spoke of us as eagles. But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

## **In Conclusion**

As each of these six elements of faith become part of our daily lives, we will move from faith to faith as more and more of the promises of God become a reality in our lives.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

## **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Write, in your own words, what the six basic elements of faith are.

2. What do we mean “The Endurance of Faith?”



## **Lesson Five**

### **AN EVER INCREASING FAITH**

#### **A MEASURE OF FAITH**

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Paul wrote, God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (Romans 12:3b).

In the New International Version we read, For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

We know He has given each person the faith needed to accept Him as their Lord and Savior, for the Bible says, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

#### **Mustard Seed Faith**

Jesus said if we had faith as a tiny mustard seed nothing would be impossible to us. A mustard seed is unique because it starts out so small but grows to be a tree.

Jesus told us, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matthew 13:31-32).

Our faith, regardless of how small it is today, can grow, and grow, and grow through the seasons of life until it becomes like a tree providing strength to others.

As we study these pages, let our prayer be, "Lord expand my knowledge of You and expand my knowledge of your Word. Let my spirit receive, and let my faith grow stronger and stronger."

Faith comes from God. He has given to each one a measure of faith. But it is important that our "measure of faith," like a mustard seed, continues to grow to be an ever increasing faith.

As we go through the circumstances of life and turn each situation over to the Lord in prayer, search His Word, and react in faith instead of reacting to the circumstances, He gives us more faith. Our "mustard seed" faith can grow to be a tree bringing comfort to others

In Hebrews, we read, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2a).

There is no real faith except that which we receive from Jesus. Jesus is not only the author (originator) and giver of our faith, but He is the finisher of our faith.

The finishing process, Jesus is working in our lives, is a step by step process, as we go through the trials of life. With each trial, we can either react in the natural with fear, frustration and anger, or we can act in faith in God and the promises of His Word. With each new faith victory, our faith muscles get stronger and stronger. We move from faith, to faith, to an ever increasing faith, and this is the faith that pleases God.

### **Ask Jesus for More Faith**

Jesus asked the disciples in Mark, "Why don't you have faith?" In Luke, He asked, "Where is your faith?" He must be asking the same of his body of believers today. Where is your strong, mountain-moving faith today?

Let's look at the deliverance of the demon possessed boy in Mark 9.

Jesus said, "You people don't have any faith! How much longer must I be with you? Why do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

They brought the boy, and as soon as the demon saw Jesus, it made the boy shake all over. He fell down and began rolling on the ground and foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" The man answered, "Ever since he was a child. The demon has often tried to kill him by throwing him into a fire or into water. Please have pity and help us if you can!"

Jesus replied, "Why do you say 'if you can'? Anything is possible for someone who has faith!"

Right away the boy's father shouted, "I do have faith! Please help me to have even more."

When Jesus saw that a crowd was gathering fast, he spoke sternly to the evil spirit that had kept the boy from speaking or hearing. He said, "I order you to come out of the boy! Don't ever bother him again."

The spirit screamed and made the boy shake all over. Then it went out of him. The boy looked dead, and almost everyone said he was. But Jesus took hold of his hand and helped him stand up (Mark 9:19-27 Contemporary English Version).

Notice the honesty of the boy's father. He didn't try to deceive Jesus. He wanted his son to be set free, and he cried out, "I do have faith! Please help me to have more."

That should be our prayer today. Lord, help me have more faith.

## **Increase Our Faith**

In Luke the apostles prayed, "Lord, Increase our faith."

And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith (Luke 17:5)

We find many examples of increased faith as we read the book of Acts and the Epistles. With their increased faith from the Lord, the disciples did mighty exploits.

## **WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?**

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### **Jesus Stilled the Storm**

The disciples had been taught by the greatest teacher of all times. And yet, when the crises came, they reacted in fear and came running to Jesus.

Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.

But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.

And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" (Luke 8:22-25)

Their lives had just been saved, and yet the disciples were afraid because even the winds and water obeyed Jesus. What was Jesus response? "Where is your faith?"

### **We Can Do It Too**

Jesus' question implied, "I stilled the storm in faith. Why didn't you do it?"

The disciples reacted to the storm in fear, doubt and unbelief. Jesus acted in faith. When Jesus asked, "Where is your faith," He was telling them that they could have stilled the storm if they had acted in faith.

Jesus made this truth very clear when he told the disciples, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father (John 14:12).**

➤ *True Faith*

Faith comes by knowing God and knowing His will in a certain situation.

What was God's will in this situation?

Jesus had said, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." But they didn't understand who Jesus was. They had seen miracles, but they still didn't understand the power He had within Himself. The Son of Man had said, "Let's go over," and the power of God was in these words.

That day Jesus asked the disciples, "Where is your faith?" Today, He must be asking many of us the same question.

They had the will of God revealed to them, "Go over," but when the testing came, they cried out, "We are perishing!"

Today, we have the written Word of God. We know what God's will is, and yet so many are still perishing.

Hosea wrote, **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).**

To develop our faith, we must first obtain a knowledge of His Word. Then we must believe, meditate, and act on that Word.

True faith is always based on knowing God, and knowing what His will is in our situation.

➤ *Is in Our Mouth*

The disciples cried out, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" In the natural, everyone would have been agreeing with them.

Notice that Jesus did not agree with them. He moved boldly, stood up, acted in faith, and rebuked the winds and the waves.

The disciples cried out in fear. There is no faith in fear. Fear is directly opposite of faith. Fear is moving directly away from faith. Where fear rules, faith cannot be active.

Jesus stood in His authority and spoke in the spirit realm.

When we have faith, we will speak it forth. Faith is in our mouths. Faith comes from our spirits, but it is in our mouths.

But what does it say? "The word is near you, even in your mouth (Romans 10:8a).

## **THE BATTLE IN OUR MINDS**

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### **God-Given Computers**

When God created the human race, he gave us a marvelous, inbuilt computer. It's our mind. It's an intricate, wonderful tool. Most of us have just ignored this tool. We've taken it for granted and haven't taken time to understand how it works.

Computers, as most of us know them, are just about everywhere. Some of these computers can be used for the most complicated mathematical problems. Others can manipulate pictures and graphics and produce catalogs, book covers, or posters. Others do complicated animations. Still others can be used by an architect to design homes, shopping centers, and huge office buildings. Basically, all computers work the same. It's the programs that have been installed, that make the difference.

#### *➤ Garbage In – Garbage Out*

One of the first things we learn about our computers is that if the wrong information is put in, we will get the wrong information out.

Our human computers, our minds, absorb information from the moment of birth – good things, bad things, things we hear, see, smell, touch or see. We learn from those around us, from books, from television. Everything we come in contact with goes into our computers.

Many have been taught that they were failures – that they could never succeed, through their experiences, and through the words of others. "You never could do anything right!" may have been said to them in anger. The sad truth is that once they have accepted this as truth, their minds will make it true from that point on. They will defeat themselves. They will never succeed.

Many have been taught that they were not as smart as others. "How could you be so stupid!" is something they may have heard over and over. And once this image is ingrained in their minds, they will not appear to be as smart

as those around them. The ability is there, but their minds will cause the negative images to become their reality.

The list of bad images we may have been taught is endless. We're fat. We're ugly. We can't make friends. No one really likes us. All of these things, all of the negative inputs, we have received over the years, are really important, until we begin to understanding how our minds work – when we begin to understand the mind God has given us.

We do not have to be the person negative words and actions have made us to be. God has given each of us control over who we are to be.

### **Resetting Our Goal Mechanism**

We have a God-given goal mechanism. Our minds will achieve the goals we set, whether these goals are negative or positive. All that is necessary is that we recognize the goals that have been set which will defeat us, and change them! We need to set new Spirit-led goals.

#### *➤ Meditation*

Some are afraid of meditation, feeling that is part of other religions. But meditation is one of our mind's powerful tools and we are commanded to meditate on God's Word – not on our own goals or dreams, but on His Word, day and night. Meditating on God's Word will cause us to set His goals for our life.

In Psalms we read about the blessed man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night (Psalms 1:2).

And in Joshua we read, This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (Joshua 1:8).

When we mediate on God's Word, it becomes part of us and we will begin to "observe to do" what is written.

#### *➤ Imagination*

Imagining is closely related to meditation. As we meditate on God's Word, we need to imagine, or see, ourselves doing it.

In Genesis 11, God was speaking about a self-willed, arrogant people when He said, and now nothing will be

restrained from them, which they have imagined to do (Genesis 11:6b KJV).

God said that if they could imagine it, they could do it. Now let's turn that to the positive side. Jesus said the works that He did, we could do also. So we should read the Gospels and imagine ourselves doing what Jesus did. Jesus healed the sick. Jesus raised the dead. Jesus calmed the storm. Jesus fed the multitudes.

As we meditate on God's Word and imagine ourselves doing it, as we imagine it happening through our hands, our faith will grow and we will walk in the supernatural, faith-realm God intended for His believers.

Books have been written about the power of positive thoughts and declarations, and they are true. Others say, "We have what we say" and we do. These are principals of the natural minds. This is the way our mind works. This is the process of resetting our minds to positive goals, but there is a step beyond.

## **The Renewing of Our Mind**

There is a renewing of the mind through the power of God's Word. There is a resetting of our mind's goals through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul wrote, *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:2).

### *➤ Setting Proper Order*

Mankind is a triune being. We are a spirit (heart), and have a soul (mind) and body (flesh). The mind and the emotions will try to rule over the spirit, and this is a dangerous thing.

Our mind is a marvelous tool, created by God to store information. It is greater than any computer that will ever be invented, but the mind was not created to rule over our spiritual being. The mind can give forth true or false information. Our spirit person is seated in heavenly places with Christ.

*Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:5,6).

Paul wrote that we are to not to lean on our own understanding. Instead, we are to trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

➤ *Some Truth – Some Deception*

When we try to walk in the spirit, we may have a battle. For many, our minds may be used to being in control. We may have spent a life-time studying God's Word. We may have notebooks filled with our studies and our conclusions. We may have studied the Word from pre-conceived beliefs. We may have studied, much of the time, to prove what we already believed.

We may have been taught by very educated men and women that the gifts of the Holy Spirit had ceased – that they were for a different dispensation. We may have been taught divine healing was not for our time – that the gift of speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, and the working of miracles were not for today.

However, when we have a true encounter with God, and the things of the Spirit became real to us, our minds need to be renewed. We need to go back and read every passage, putting aside our personal opinions, and let God reveal His Word.

Many have come from the metaphysical, mind-science religions. Others from homes where the Word of God was ridiculed, and where higher learning was put on a pedestal even to the point of being worshipped.

We must all come to the place where we can say with Paul, For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar (Romans 3:3-4a).

We have to deliberately cast down things we had been taught that are contrary to God's Word.

➤ *Bringing Thoughts into Captivity*

Where do our thoughts come from? The answer is simple, "From everywhere." We are continuously bombarded with thoughts from our five senses – from our companions – from television – from books – from movies – from our pasts.

There are two kinds of thoughts. There are those that originate from God's Word, good teaching, or from God Himself, and there are thoughts from Satan's kingdom.



Paul wrote that we are to cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

This verse is much easier to read than it is to put into practice. Paul said we are to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. That means every time we feel the quenching of the Holy Spirit within, we should negate the false words, or thought we have just received.

The more we spend time with God, in His Word and in prayer, the more our thoughts will originate from Him, and the more we will be up-lifted in our faith. Our minds will be transformed moving from the natural to the supernatural.

In Proverbs we learn For as he thinks in his heart (spirit), so is he (Proverbs 23:7a).

➤ *Some Examples*

When challenged with a need to learn new ways, new information, new programs, we can say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

When we, or a friend needs to be healed, we can say, “Jesus said, ‘we can heal the sick.’ Jesus said, ‘Lay your hands on the sick and they will recover.’ Jesus said ...”

In ministry when we feel intimidated, we can say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”

When scenes of defeat come to our minds from the past, we can say, “Yes, I failed that day, but I’m not a failure. I’m a new creation in Jesus. I have the power of the Holy Spirit in me.”

On a daily basis, we can renew our minds to be the person God created us to be. By taking out the old patterns, by renewing our minds through the power of God’s Word and His Spirit, our minds can become a tremendous ally in helping us move into patterns of faith.

**In Conclusion**

As we read in Romans, we have each been given a measure of faith. As we use this faith, it will grow. We tend to look around us and think this person or that person really has

faith. But that level of faith was not just given to them supernaturally. It came through diligence and an ever-increasing faith, as they encountered the storms and testings of life.

When we watch the Olympics and see men and women race, pole vault, skate, or any of the other terrific things they do, we marvel at what they can accomplish. But if we take time to learn about their past, we find they have spent hours, days, months, and years of disciplined time practicing, and practicing, and practicing. As children, they started out doing exactly the same thing as hundreds of other children around them. But there was within them a desire to excel – a desire to be the best in one particular area. And that desire pushed them to go far beyond what others did.

When the words that Jesus said, “The works that I do shall you do also” become real to us, we will begin to read the Gospels in a new way. Every time we read a miracle that Jesus performed, we will say, “I can do that too. I can heal the sick. I can still the storm. I can raise the dead.” We will begin to picture ourselves doing these things. The words of Jesus will become a challenge to us and God will let us see the opportunities that are all around us to exercise our faith. We will begin to exercise our faith and our faith will grow, and grow, and grow.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Why did Jesus liken faith to a grain of mustard seed, and how is that encouraging to you today?

2. What does renewing our minds have to do with faith?

## **Lesson Six**

### **STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH**

#### **WHEN FAITH SEEMS WEAK**

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If our faith seems weak, there is a reason. As we go through the following checklist it's important to ask God to give us wisdom. Satan is the accuser of the brethren and we are never to heap condemnation on ourselves.

#### **Our Relationship with God**

What is our personal relationship with God? Have we gotten so busy doing good things, even doing ministry, that we have lost our close personal relationship with Him?

There is a saying, "Much busyness can bring barrenness to our soul."

Have we gotten our priorities turned around? Have we started thinking about what we can do for God and becoming important in our own eyes?

The apostle Paul was certainly a busy man, but he wrote, *Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him (Romans 12:3b The Message Bible).*

We are to measure ourselves by what God is and what He does for us, not by who we are, or what we can do for him.

#### **Relationship with Family**

We need to check our personal relationship with our spouse and family. Have we allowed dissension to come in?

*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you (Ephesians 4:31,32).*

#### **Relationships with Friends**

Are we surrounding ourselves with people who are strong in faith? People who are putting God first in all that they do? Or have we allowed others to put doubt and unbelief on us?

David wrote about who we associate with. Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper (Psalms 1:1-3).

## **A Sinful Life-Style**

We live in an age where sinful life-styles are being condoned. Men and women think they are followers of Jesus, but they are ignoring the warning of Scripture. It's easy to slip into areas of sin, especially if the people we are associating with are doing the same things. We can reason with our minds that God really doesn't care and make all sorts of excuses, but our spirits are not convinced. In Proverbs we read, Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts (Proverbs 21:2).

If we have sin in our life, even through we have convinced ourselves in the area of the mind that it is alright with God, we cannot have faith because our spirits are not convinced.

In checking for sin, we are not talking about past sins that are already forgiven. We are talking about sins in the present. Satan will try to get us to look at the past. He is the accuser of the brethren. If God says we're forgiven, we are forgiven. We don't need to go over everything that has ever happened and ask for forgiveness again.

You have not brought me fragrant incense or pleased me with the fat from sacrifices. (They had not brought the sacrifice of praise.) Instead, you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your faults. I - yes, I alone - am the one who blots out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again (Isaiah 43:24,25 NLB).

It is not God's plan that we go over and over the past burdening Him with our faults. If you know there is a problem in your life, don't ask your spouse if there is sin in your life. Don't ask a friend. Ask God to make it clear to you if there is something in your life you are justifying that He wants you to remove, and then listen expecting to hear Him.

What do we do if there is sin? If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

## Unforgiveness

Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

The very next thing he said was, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:24-26).

Forgiving is not pretending something didn't happen. To forgive, we must acknowledge it did happen and then make a conscious decision to forgive that person and all the surrounding situation.

Do you remember Peter asking Jesus about forgiveness?

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22).

This doesn't mean we are to write each incident down and count seventy times and forgive. He knew that if we forgave up to seventy times we would have developed a pattern of forgiving.

We need to learn to be quick forgivers. As believers, we will be rejected, betrayed and wounded time after time. Our response, to keep our relationship between us and God open, is to be quick to forgive.

## Questions to Consider

When we are believing God for a certain thing and realize our faith has grown weak, we need to be certain our faith is based on the word of God. There are four questions we need to ask ourselves.

### ➤ **What does God's Word say about my situation?**

This cannot be a general word. It must be specific. What scriptures am I basing my faith on?

It cannot be, "Isn't there a verse somewhere that says ...."

It must be, "The Word of God says ...."

### ➤ **Do I believe His Word is true beyond a shadow of a doubt?**

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-8).

➤ **Do I know His Word is true, regardless of what I see, or feel, or others say?**

Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar (Romans 3:4).

➤ **Can I trust God to perform His Word for me?**

Jesus promised us, "All things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22).

And this includes each of us.

## **BECOMING STRONG IN FAITH**

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In Joel we read, let the weak say, 'I am strong' (Joel 3:10b).

The apostle Paul wrote, Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong ( 2 Corinthians 12:10).

In Jesus, we can turn every area of weakness into an area of strength.

### **Spend Time in the Word**

We can build up our faith by spending time in His Word, especially in His promises. By reading and making those promises personal for us.

Faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of God, so if our faith is weak, we need to spend time hearing and hearing the Word.

In Philippians we read, Finally, brethren,

whatever things are true,

whatever things are noble,

whatever things are just,

whatever things are pure,

whatever things are lovely,

whatever things are of good report,

if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.

The things — which you learned — and received — and heard — and saw in me, — these do, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:8-9).

## **Become a Warrior**

When we are placed in a seemingly impossible situation, the world will tell you it's either "flight" or "fight." The very act of standing and fighting will increase our faith. It's time believers pull themselves together and begin to fight.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:13,14, **Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand ...**

We wouldn't need armor if there was no war.

In First Timothy we read, **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12).**

The apostle Paul referred to "a good fight." It can only be a good fight if we win, and we can only win this fight by faith. Our battle is not with flesh and blood but with the forces of darkness.

Paul reminds us, **We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).**

The apostle James wrote, **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).**

We can only win by using our spiritual weapons of faith. Faith can win over every stronghold of the enemy,

**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4).**

## **Know The Enemy**

Who is the real enemy of our faith? We are – when we allow ourselves to be intimidated – when we allow our minds to war against our spirits – when we allow our thoughts to be natural thoughts instead of setting them on the Word of God.

Just like Peter when he was walking on the water, when we look around at our situations in the natural and get our eyes off the spirit realm, we become the enemy of our own faith.

It's time we took 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 literally.

The apostle Paul wrote, **For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are**

not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

## **Praise God**

We are to praise God before we see our answer. That is real faith. We are to be in a time of joyful expectancy.

One of the most exciting Bible stories giving us the benefits of giving praise before we have our answer is found in 2 Chronicles. Three nations joined together and came against King Jehoshaphat and the Children of Israel. We read,

Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them ... You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you... Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.'

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever."

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated (2 Chronicles 20:15-22).

Notice that the Children of Israel began to rejoice, out loud, before they saw any answer to their problem. They did not rail again Satan. They did not continue to beg God to work on their behalf. They began to praise Him, and He sent the victory. If we continued on with the story, we would find that their enemies actually destroyed themselves and Israel did not even have to fight!



The battle was in the spirit realm. The battle was in their minds, and when they started praising God, He destroyed their enemies.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAITH-FILLED LIFE**

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### **A Total Life-Style**

Living the life of faith is a total life-style. There is no simple formula. There are no seven, eight, ten steps to success. It's a day-by-day determination to believe God and His word.

It's saying with the apostle Paul, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

The faith we are studying is a perpetual faith – a continuous steady faith – a day-after-day kind of faith.

In 1 Peter we read, Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:6-7).

In Exodus we find, And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13-14).

### **Cease From Our Own Works**

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives us one of the characteristics of the life of faith.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His (Hebrews 4:10).

When we are living the life of faith, we will no longer trust in our own works. We will lay aside man-designed programs, and other things which are part of a superficial hypocrisy. We will no longer be operating in the hyped-up energy of the flesh.

We will be listening to God and doing those things He wishes us to do.

Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner (John 5:19).

## **Be Diligent to Enter In**

The life of faith is one of diligence.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience (Hebrews 4:11).

This is not a life where we sit back and do nothing. We are to exert ourselves, make a conscientious, concerted effort toward an end, to have purpose.

The words of Peter come to mind. **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith ...** (1 Peter 5:8-9).

## **Understand the Word**

The life of faith has to be based solidly on the Word of God.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

We are to know the Word of God and allow it to show us our true motivations. We are told several things about God's word in this passage.

- It's living.
- It's powerful.
- It's sharp and can show us the difference between the soul and the spirit.
- It makes our motivations clear.

It is a knowledge of the total word of God that brings balance to our lives.

## **Know Jesus as Our High Priest**

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:13-15).

Jesus truly knows you and I. He knows our failures, and he knows our victories. And because Jesus walked on this earth as a man, he was tempted just as we are. Our God is not far away, completely separated from us and our temptations. In

Romans we read, It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:34b,35,38.39).

### **Come Boldly Into His Presence**

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

When we are living a life of faith, when we are walking in the supernatural peace He gives us, when we know His word and have a relationship with Him, we can come boldly into His presence in time of need.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. What are four steps to becoming stronger in faith?

2. What are the characteristics of the faith-filled life?

## Lesson Seven

### ENEMIES OF FAITH

#### Introduction

When it comes to the subject of faith, many have found themselves in a struggle that it seems will never end. They want to live a life of faith that pleases God, but at the same time they find themselves constantly battling with doubt and unbelief.

Like the father of the boy who was deaf and mute, they are crying out "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24b)

The road to faith seems so full of enemies that one feels there is a constant fight to really believe God. Remember, the writer of the book of Hebrews told us that we are to "Fight the good fight of faith." The battle with these enemies can be a "good fight" because, if we don't give up, if we keep meditating on the word, and keep our faith "muscles" developing, we will break through to the exciting victory of the life of faith.

There are many enemies of faith in the area of our emotions and our actions. Understanding these enemies and discovering how to defeat them is a major key to living in victory.

The enemies of our faith come through many entrances. When the Holy Spirit reveals some of these areas in our lives, we need to confess our sins and receive forgiveness.

Then we need to build strongholds in our mind against these problem areas through the revelation of the Word.

The first enemies of faith we'll discuss have to do with the emotional realm. We must bring our emotions into line with the word of God.

#### **BRINGING EMOTIONS INTO LINE WITH WORD OF GOD**

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##### **Fear**

Fear, if allowed to stay, will stop us from doing the will of God. It will stop us from having the faith it takes to do the will of God. The Greek word for fear means "to be intimidated by the enemy, to be in dread, terror and flight."

We cannot walk in faith and fear at the same time.

Faith and fear are both built on information. Faith is built on our knowledge of God's Word. Fear comes from

receiving information from our natural senses, from bad reports, and intimidations from the enemy.

➤ *Solution*

We find the phrase “fear not” used over a hundred times in God’s Word.

When fear tries to enter in, we should agree with the apostle Paul when he wrote, **God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind** (2 Timothy 1:7).

We need to resist the spirit of fear and command it to go in the name of Jesus.

We should make bold statements of faith.

So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6)

In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you (Isaiah 54:14).

In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalms 56:11)

And we must abide in His love.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18a).

**Feelings of Unworthiness**

Guilt, condemnation and feelings of unworthiness are a major enemy of our faith. Many are plagued with constant thoughts of accusations from the enemy.

... the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down (Revelations 12:10b).

➤ *Solution*

These accusations from the enemy are thoughts and imaginations that must be cast down or rejected.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5 KJV).

We have been made righteous with the imputed righteousness of Christ Himself.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1).

Now, we are to experience the full assurance of faith.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

Saturating ourselves in the Word of God, especially in verses like the ones above, will conquer the sense of unworthiness. As long as we allow feelings of unworthiness to stay, we will not have strong faith.

## **BRINGING ACTIONS INTO LINE WITH THE WORD OF GOD**

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### **Failure to Forgive**

Right after Mark recorded the story of the fig tree and Jesus' teaching on having faith to move mountains, he went on to record Jesus saying "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses (Mark 11:24-25).

If we hold bitterness, resentment, hurts and unforgiveness in our hearts, we will always have doubt and unbelief. Not forgiving others separates us from God and there is no faith separate from God.

#### *➤ Solution*

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew 6:14,15).

The answer to any area of unforgiveness is to forgive. Always remember, it is not that the person deserves to be forgiven, or even that they have asked to be forgiven. Forgiving is an act of our will. We choose to forgive, and that act of obedience will set us free.

Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (Colossians 3:13).

### **Taking Offense**

When Jesus was asleep on the boat and the storm came, the disciples woke him up and said, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:37,38)

They were offended and accused Jesus of not caring that they were about to perish.

Many have prayed and it seemed as if God didn't care. He could have changed the situation, but He didn't and they are offended. There are still many who are saying with the disciples, "God, do You not care about the desperate situation I am in?"

➤ *Solution*

The fiery trials of life are opportunities to grow in faith.

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:12,13).

The religious leaders took offense at the teachings of Jesus, and because of holding on to that offense, they could not believe in Jesus and missed out on all that He had come to bring them.

And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things? So they were offended at Him (Matthew 13:54-57).

Holding offense against anyone, will keep us from receiving the miracles of God.

Again, the answer is to forgive and to refuse to hold on to any offense.

**Hardness of Heart**

Closing ourselves off from others or from God, being cynical or skeptical are symptoms of a hard heart. Hardness of heart comes from unforgiveness.

In Mark, Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief and linked it to hardness of heart.

Afterward He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mark 16:14).

Every person has had cause to be hurt, rejected and offended. We have heard so many times, "I prayed and nothing happened." This person will build walls around their feelings to protect themselves from not being hurt again.

➤ *Solution*

But the walls we build for our protection are also walls that separate us from God and from others. The answer is to tear down the walls and allow God to soften our hearts.

Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 18:31a).

The Psalmist prayed, Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalms 51:10).

## **Disobedience**

There was a confrontation between the prophet Samuel and the King Saul. Instead of obeying God, Saul did what the people wanted.

➤ *Of Saul*

God, through Samuel, told Saul he was to go up and utterly destroy the Amalekites and everything they had. Instead Saul destroyed the Amalekites but took the spoil and the king as captives. When Samuel spoke to him about this, Saul replied, the men took the spoils so that we could offer them as sacrifices to your God.

Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal" (1 Samuel 15:20,21).

Samuel replied, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice (1 Samuel 15:22b,24).



When confronted with his disobedience, Saul blamed his acts on others, and then tried to make it look like he had done it with good motives – “We kept them to sacrifice.” Finally, he ended up even denying his God. Notice his words, “your God” in verse 21.

His continued disobedience eventually led to David being anointed King in his place and Saul’s death.

➤ *Of Children of Israel*

When the ten spies came back with an evil report, the Children of Israel refused to believe in the power of God. They had experienced His power in the plagues that came on Egypt, in the parting of the Red Sea, and in the supernatural provision of shade by day, light by night, water and food. Even their clothes didn’t wear out. But they began to rail against God and against Moses. They could not plead ignorance. They knew God said, “Take the land.” They knew His mighty workings of miracles on their behalf, but still they refused.

In Hebrews we learn that **Those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience** (Hebrews 4:6b).

Because of their deliberate decision not to follow the leading of God, they all died in the wilderness.

➤ *Solution*

We cannot be disobeying God in one area of our lives, and live in faith in others. We cannot reason away disobedience. We cannot blame it on others. The only answer to disobedience is that we confess our sins so that God can forgive them (1 John 1:9).

Let’s make a decision like the new generation of the Children of Israel and say, “**The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey**” (Joshua 24:24b).

**Doubt And Unbelief**

Doubt and unbelief are very similar and are two of the strongest enemies of our faith.

Doubt is defined as being undecided or skeptical about something; tending to disbelieve; regarding as unlikely: having a lack of certainty that often leads to irresolution. Doubt means to be fearful, apprehensive, or suspicious.

Unbelief is failure to believe, or having a lack of faith

➤ *Ignorance of God's Word*

The most common reason for unbelief is ignorance of what the Word of God has to say on a subject. This may have been caused by erroneous teaching from those we have respected.

Hosea wrote, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge* (Hosea 4:6a).

When the apostle John wrote of the "other disciple" coming to the open tomb, we are told he "saw and believed."

Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead (John 20:8,9).

He had to see before he could believe because he had not known the Scripture. If we are going to believe, it is important that we know the Scriptures.

➤ *Following our Natural Senses*

Later in that same chapter, Thomas arrived where the other disciples were gathered.

The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

When Jesus arrived He spoke to Thomas.

Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:27-29).

Jesus would say the same to us today. "Do not be unbelieving but believing. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Thomas said, "Unless I see ... I will not believe." Unbelief is the result of depending on our sense knowledge. What we can see instead of knowing the Scriptures. Faith can only come by knowing the Word of God.

➤ *Hardness of Heart*

Jesus rebuked the disciples' unbelief and hardness of the hearts.

So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:57,58).

When Peter was walking on the water to Jesus he took his eyes off Jesus. He became afraid and began to sink when he saw the circumstances around him. Jesus caught him when he began to sink.

Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)

Doubt comes in when we get our eyes off Jesus and on to the natural circumstances – what we can see with our natural eyes.

Jesus said, "Have faith and do not doubt."

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again."

And immediately the fig tree withered away. Now when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:18-22).

Again in Mark, Jesus emphasized the importance of not doubting in our hearts.

For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says (Mark 11:23).

**Accepting a Substitute**

A person who makes counterfeit money strives to make his money look as much like the real thing as possible. Satan has been quite successful at tricking us into accepting substitutes for true faith.

➤ *Hope*

The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote, **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (11:1).**

We have discussed hope in some detail before, but here it must be recognized as a possible enemy of faith. We must turn our hope to faith to receive our answers. We must turn our hope from believing for an answer sometime in the future, to believing for it to happen now.

Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24).

He said believe – not hope – that you receive them.

➤ *Mental Agreement*

The mind is a marvelous tool, but it can also be an obstacle to having faith. The natural mind cannot grasp things in the spiritual realm. The mind can strive to understand the Word of God, but the mind must be in submission to the spirit.

The natural mind cannot comprehend the mysteries of God.

**But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).**

There are two kinds of things we can believe in. The natural, human facts, or the truth that is revealed in God's Word. There is revelation truth, the spiritual truth, or the physical things that we perceive by our natural senses.

Mental agreement is trying to have faith with our mind. It doesn't work. Faith must come from our spirit. Un-renewed minds will war against things of the spirit. Our minds must be renewed by the revelation of God's Word.

**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).**

➤ *Faith or Presumption*

We have an absolute right to believe anything God's Word promises us. But when we go beyond that, we could be operating in presumption.

Webster defines "presumption" as meaning "to take or suppose to be true, or entitled to belief without examination or proof, or on the strength of probability, to take for granted, to infer, to suppose, to assume."

God may speak to you. He may give you a word, and you will be challenged to believe for the fulfillment of that word or vision. That is not presumption.

However, we are to judge carefully every word or vision we receive. Does it line up one-hundred percent with the Word of God? What is our motivation? Is it self fulfilling? Does it fulfill a personal desire of the flesh? These are warning flags

Let's look at Romans 12:3b once again, this time using the Message Bible. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

## **DEFEATING OUR PERSONAL ENEMIES**

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There are two keys that Jesus taught on how to deal with the enemies of our faith.

### **Fasting**

Fasting, when it is chosen by God, can be a time of denying the leading of our natural knowledge and desires in order to move more freely into the realm of our spiritual senses.

### **Prayer**

Prayer, together with reading and meditating on the Word, is the time when we can best hear the voice of God

When the disciples asked Jesus why they had been unsuccessful in casting the demon out of the boy who was an epileptic, Jesus said it was because of their unbelief.

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief ..." (Matthew 17:20a)

In the next verse, He emphasized the importance of prayer (communion with God) and fasting as keys to dealing with unbelief in our lives.

"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (verse 21).

We, like the Children of Israel, don't want to miss out on the "Promise Land" of all the destiny and blessings that God has for our lives.

Again, the writer of the book of Hebrews said by the Holy Spirit, Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of

unbelief in departing from the living God; So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12,19).

## **The Progression of Faith**

Almost every person can run, but before they can run in a marathon, they need to learn the proper way to run. They must learn to breathe correctly. They must build up their strength over a period of time. It takes running every day for hours, and more hours, and more hours, until their bodies are built up and they are ready for the marathon.

God knows where our faith level is. He will not tell us to leave our homes and go overseas until He has led us, and we have obeyed, in going to our own neighbors or family.

### ➤ *Jerusalem – Judea - Samaria*

It's interesting that Jesus said you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

There is a progression in this passage.

**Jerusalem** represents our home.

**Judea** is our area of influence – our school, our work, our neighborhood.

**Samaria** is especially interesting because there was enmity between the Jewish people and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were a mixed race and the Jews felt superior to them. It would be a humbling experience to go to Samaria. However, when they ministered there it would open the doors to the whole earth.

We must start at the level of faith where we are. And then hear from God and do what He says.

David tells us of the importance of being careful about those who are having an influence on our lives.

### ➤ *Psalms 1:1-3*

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper (Psalms 1:1-3).

Notice the progression in this passage. First a person walks with the ungodly, then he stops and stands with them, and finally he sits with them.

Walking in faith will bring a natural separation between us and the people operating in the natural realm. We will still have contact with them. We will still care about them and reach out to them. But we will no longer agree with their philosophies and partake of their lifestyles. Instead, our lives will be a walk of faith and obedience.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Write three “enemies” you have had to your faith and how you have found the solution.

## Lesson Eight

### COME, WALK ON THE WATER

#### Introduction

I love the song, *Come Walk on the Water with Me*. Peter walked on the water. He did let doubt come in. He did fail, but then he called out "Lord, Save me." And immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and saved him. Peter was back walking on the water, and although the scripture does not say this happened, I like to picture Peter and Jesus walking all around that boat. I'm sure that once Peter realized he could walk on the water, he didn't want to stop.

God is so faithful! When we step out in faith, He is there working with us. Mark wrote, So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen (Mark 16:19,20).

The apostle Paul wrote, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ... (Ephesians 1:17-19).

It's time for all of us to release our faith, to step out on the supernatural waters and show God's exceeding greatness to the world around us.

#### WALKING ON THE WATER

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. And when evening had come, He was alone there.

But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.



But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

## Jesus Said Come

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:22-33).

What a wonderful example of faith. Peter certainly put his faith into action. He heard Jesus say, "Come," and he climbed out of that boat, and started toward Jesus. He was walking on the water.

What happened then? He took his eyes off Jesus. He saw the waves, he felt the wind, and he moved out of the supernatural realm and into the realm of the natural. He began to sink, but he did the right thing. He called out, "Jesus, Save me."

Jesus caught him by the hand and said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" The Greek word used for "doubt" is *distazo* and means to stand in two ways. The spirit of Peter was saying, "I can walk on the water!" The mind was saying, "You're going to drown!"

Peter had a wavering spirit. He was of two minds. Jesus chided him. "Why did you doubt?" Peter didn't have to doubt. He had a choice.

What a wonderful example this story is for us. We can identify with Peter. He certainly wasn't perfect. Like Peter, we may be able "to step out of the boat" in a time of strong faith, but it's necessary to be unwavering in our faith, to do no matter what the circumstances seem to be, to continue doing whatever Jesus has told us to do.

It's also an example of not being paralyzed by a fear of failure.

## **HAVING A BOLD, GOD-KIND OF FAITH**

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Many Christians have settled for a lukewarm spiritual existence. With lack of faith, they have resigned themselves and are living as victims in the struggles of life saying, "Whatever will be will be."

They do not understand that we were created to rule and reign with Him – That they were given dominion over all the earth and everything that is in it. Jesus said that if we had the faith even as a grain of mustard seed the mountains would have to obey us.

Because of false teaching, and because of the mixture of what is good and evil being allowed to be in their lives and churches, the spirit of Laodicea has taken over much of the church in our time.

In Revelations we read, "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth (Revelation 3:14-16).

Many attend church faithfully, but never expect God to intervene in their lives. They never step out of their natural boats, and walk on the supernatural waters.

We must learn to become aggressive in our faith.

### **God-Kind of Faith Moves Mountains**

Jesus taught the disciples to have a God-kind of faith, and that is what He wants you and me to be operating in today.

In Mark, we read about an incident in the life of Jesus. He came to a fig tree looking for fruit and when He found none. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it (Mark 11:14).

Mark continues, Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray,

believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:20-24).

We can conclude several things about having a God-kind of faith from this example.

- Jesus spoke specifically – “Let no one eat from you ever again.”
- He spoke His faith out loud – The disciples heard him.
- That evening when they came by the tree, it looked the same. We know this because no one commented on it, but Jesus did not doubt what was going to happen.
- Twenty four hours after he spoke to the tree, it was dead. Death had started at the roots the moment He spoke. It just took time to be seen.

When the disciples marveled at what He had done, Jesus made no comment about the fig tree. Instead, He taught them about faith. He encouraged them to have faith in God, to embrace it, and do miracles too.

Notice that Jesus did not want them to stand back in awe of Him; He wanted them to join Him in doing the miraculous.

## **EXAMPLES OF THE GOD-KIND OF FAITH**

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### **David and Goliath**

The Old Testament is filled with examples of individuals acting in a God-kind of faith. What about David when he came from taking care of the sheep and the whole army of Israel was stopped by one man? Of course, that man was a giant, and in the natural very fearsome, but listen to David’s faith-filled words.

#### ➤ *David Spoke in Faith*

When he heard Goliath rant and saw how it intimidated the armies of Israel, what did he say? "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? (1 Samuel 17:26b)."

#### ➤ *His Brothers Were Against Him*

The enemy was threatening, but David refused to react in the natural. He refused to be afraid. Then David’s brothers turned against him. After all, they reasoned, they understood the situation better than David – and besides, since they were part of the group that was afraid, they resented him not being afraid. They resented his faith.

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle" (1 Samuel 17:28).

David was speaking in faith, but his brother misunderstood him and accused him of speaking in pride and insolence of heart. His family was against him, but David did not stop.

➤ *King Saul was Against Him*

He was brought before King Saul and he said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:32,33).

Saul told David he was too young and he wasn't trained in battle.

➤ *He Stood in Faith*

David's faith was so strong he convinced the king to let him go up against Goliath. If he failed, it meant the whole nation of Israel would have been defeated and gone into slavery. But David persisted in faith and spoke his declaration of faith before both the Israelites and the Philistines, and Goliath was killed just as David declared.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

"This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

"Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

What can we learn from this incident?

- The God-kind of faith is unstoppable.
- Family and friends may not understand.
- Leadership may not understand.

But David knew God. He had developed his faith even as he took care of the sheep and protected them from the lion

and the bear. David was a man prepared by God. He walked in the God-kind of faith, and the Philistines were defeated.

Goliath was defeated but that was not the last we hear of the Philistines. Over and over they regained their strength and came against God's people.

### **David at Baal Perazim**

Years later, when David was anointed for the third time and was now the King of all Israel the Philistines heard and came against David. Not against the nation of Israel – against David. They knew his anointing, his strength, and they were out to destroy him.

We read in 2 Samuel, Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

David knew what to do – he sought the Lord. It was his desire to go into battle, but he didn't go until he heard from the Lord.

And David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim (2 Samuel 5:17-20).

Baal Perazim means "He is Lord of the Breakthrough!" David was a warrior and he knew the God of the Breakthrough. He had a strong, aggressive faith, and he was not afraid to make war against his enemies.

The enemy may be coming against us from all directions. The spirits of poverty, depression and discouragement, those things that would war against our mind – doubt and unbelief, spirits of sickness and pain, they are the Philistines in our lives.

It's time for us to be aggressive. It's time for us to acknowledge the God of the Breakthrough in our own lives!

## **Caleb and Joshua**

Caleb and Joshua were two of the spies that were sent to spy out the promise land and they were aggressive in their faith.

When the other spies began to talk in fear about the size of the enemy, they stood against them, and even against the will of the people. What were their strong, faith-filled words?

"The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them" (Numbers 14:7b-9).

There were thousands of people who stood before the Lord that day and refused to obey Him. In the next forty years, every one of the adults died in the wilderness. But Joshua and Caleb lived to see their words fulfilled.

## **Shadrack, Meshack and Abed-Nego**

Let's look at Shadrack, Meshack and Abed-Nego. They were captives in a foreign land, and yet they had reached a place of preeminence. And still when the command came to worship Nebuchadnezzar, they refused.

They were brought before the king and commanded and threatened with being thrown in to the fiery furnace. What did they say?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

The furnace was so hot that the soldiers who threw them into it died instantly.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! (Daniel 3:16-18,24-26,28)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had such strong faith they were willing to die for it. However, they believed they would be delivered from the fiery furnace and they were.

### **Ask – Seek – Knock**

Believers need to develop a strong, aggressive, persistent faith. What were Jesus' instructions?

"I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened (Luke 11:9,10).

Notice that the first step is to ask. Once we know beyond any doubt the plan of God, and have His instructions on how to operate, we must move out in faith and knock, and knock, and knock, until our answer comes.

It's not "Whatever will be, will be." It's what we aggressively believe that will change our lives and the world around us.

### **RELEASING OUR FAITH**

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There are three steps to releasing our faith.

- The first step is to hear and believe the word of God.
- The second is to speak that faith out of our mouths.
- The third is to put that faith into action.

### **Faith Comes by a Hearing in Our Spirits**

➤ *Logos and Rhema*

Paul wrote in Romans, So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

It is the Word of God that produces faith in our spirits. Faith is developed in our spirits by hearing and hearing the Word of God.

There are two Greek words that are translated “word.”

W.E. Vine in the Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words said that *Logos* is the “The revealed will of God.” It is the combined utterance of God which reveals His will. Using this definition we can say that the Bible, which reveals God’s will, is the *Logos* of God. *Logos* is the general word.

In John 1:1 we read, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

We could read this verse using the Greek word, “In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God.”

Jesus is the Word. He is the revealed will of God.

W.E. Vine goes on to define the Greek word *rhema*. *Rhema* “denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing.”

Ephesians 6:17 is another example of the use of the word *rhema*. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*rhema*) of God.

When the Holy Spirit takes the written word of God and reveals it to us personally, it becomes *rhema* to us. The *rhema* in Ephesians 6:17, is any specific Word that God has revealed to us.

### ➤ *The Gift of Faith*

Note: We have not written about the Gift of Faith in detail in this study because we have covered it in detail in *Supernatural Living Through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.

The gift of faith is a supernatural faith for a specific time and purpose. It is a gift of power to accomplish a certain task.

When the word of wisdom is given telling us how a task should be done, it sparks the gift of faith into operation to boldly carry out the task according to what God has said.

The gift of faith is to be a normal part of our lives. First we receive instructions from God; the faith to accomplish these instructions is given; and then we obey.

It is the personal Word of God that is quickened to our spirits that brings true faith. We no longer struggle to



believe. We know that God has spoken a promise into our spirits with all of the integrity of God Himself standing behind it.

We, like Abraham, become ...fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform (Romans 4:21).

We will boldly say with Jeremiah: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for you" (Jeremiah 32:17).

We know without a doubt that God's Word will be accomplished in our lives.

Isaiah wrote, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:8-11).

Without a doubt we will agree with Jesus as He said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

## **QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Tell about two examples of the God-kind of faith from Scripture.

2. How is faith released in our spirits?