

12

FAITH

(This lesson is designed to teach us how to live by faith in God and His Word. We must walk by faith, if we are to be pleasing to God and if we are to see His works released through our lives).

The Concept of Faith

Romans 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Hebrews 11:6

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.

People live with their 5 senses, but we as children of God live with a '6th sense'—the 'sense of faith'!

God calls us to live by faith

Hebrews 11:1

(Amplified Bible)

Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

Faith comes from God

Acts 3:16

And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Hebrews 12:1,2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Faith is the door that invites God to my circumstances!

The Sovereignty of God and the Exercise of Faith

Matthew 13:58

Now he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Mark 6:5,6

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. Now He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then he went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

- *If God is sovereign (all powerful, above all others and independent of all others) and whom no one can stop, why does He still require His people to exercise personal faith if they are to experience His mighty workings in their lives?*

It may seem conflicting—our God is Almighty and Sovereign, and yet God may be limited by our unbelief and cannot work if there is no faith.

- *If everything is a free gift of grace, then how is it that we can receive them only through faith?*

For as we understand it, grace is an expression of God's character that is independent of anything we have done, while faith is an expression on **our part** of confidence and trust in God.

Points to consider:

- God in His wisdom has deemed it fit that these two apparently conflicting attributes co-exist. There is the realm of God's indisputable Sovereignty and there surely is the integral and necessary element of personal faith with its dynamic results.
- There are certain things that depend solely on the sovereignty of God such as God's eternal purpose and His plan for the ages. These will be accomplished *independent* of the exercise of human faith. And then there are individual purposes that God has, whose fulfillment depends on the individual's cooperation with God.
- In extending all of His gifts freely to us out of His grace and yet making it necessary for each one to receive them by faith, God is giving every person "equal opportunity" to receive from Him. Regardless of race, color, social or economic standing, and past experiences, every person has the same opportunity to receive what God has extended to us freely by His grace.
- The realm of faith has its perimeters set by the will and purpose of God. To operate outside of this is to "knock against" the sovereign will of God, and no one can be successful in doing so.

So it is absolutely necessary for every believer to learn how to live by faith.

Faith in the Old Testament and New Testament

Abraham

Read Abraham's story in (Genesis 11:26 to Genesis 25:11)

Abraham did not let his faith weaken by the reality of his circumstances ...

Romans 4:18-21

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.

Jesus' teaching on faith

Mark 11:22

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God."

Matthew 9:29

Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

There are many examples of faith:

Matthew 8:13

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Matthew 9:2

Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Matthew 9:22,29

But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

Matthew 15:28

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Matthew 17:20

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Matthew 21:17-21

Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. 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." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And 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.

Faith in the Life of the Believer

We are saved by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Romans 5:1

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every believer has been given a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

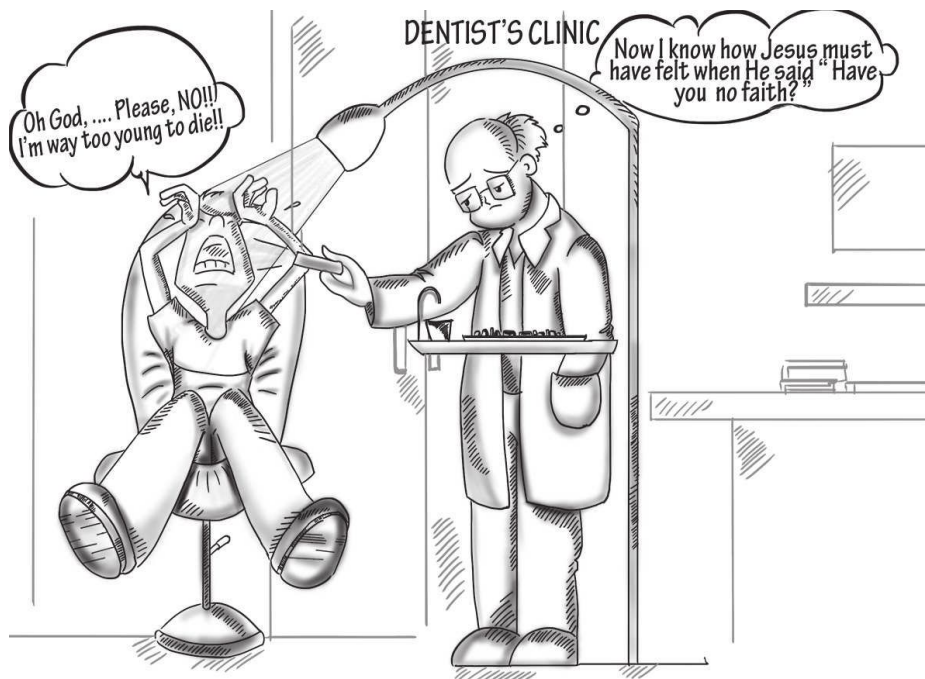
There are different levels of faith:

- no faith

No faith

Mark 4:40

But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"



- little faith

Little faith

Matthew 6:30

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

- great faith

Great faith

Matthew 8:10

When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

2 Thessalonians 1:3

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.

Faith can grow.

How to Exercise Your Faith

Receive the Word

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As we hear the Word of God and allow it to enter into our spirits, it generates faith. It produces a reason for inner assurance, a strong basis for faith's reason and a solid foundation for inner convictions. The Word of God is the basis for faith's reason.

Faith is based on what God has spoken to us—either from His written Word, or a word spoken into our hearts by His Spirit.

Speak your faith

Mark 11:23

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.

'To confess' (dictionary): 'to acknowledge or to own, to acknowledge faith in.'

Confession is stating something we believe in our hearts. It is giving evidence to something we know to be true. It is testifying to a truth we have accepted.

We confess:

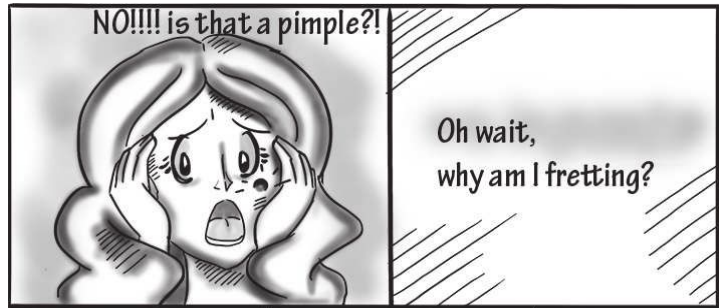
- What God has done for us in the plan of redemption
- What God has done in us, through His Word and His Spirit
- What we are to the Father in Christ Jesus
- What Jesus is accomplishing for us now at the Father's right hand, where He is making intercession for us
- What God can accomplish through us

Confession must be kept within the limits of God's written Word.

Step out in faith (Act on your faith)

James 2:14, 22, 26 (Weymouth's translation)

What good is it, my brethren, if a man professes to have faith, and yet his actions do not correspond? You notice that his faith was co-operating with his actions, and by his actions his faith was perfected for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.



Our actions must correspond with our belief, if we are to receive from God.

Walk your faith (Endure in faith)

Hebrews 10:35, 36

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.



We need to have patience and endurance to inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:12

That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Romans 4:16-21

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—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.

Judges 6:11

Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

When we act on our faith, we are taking a STEP. We are moving from where we are into a new place of confidence and trust in God.

**Faith is both
a STEP and
a WALK**

But faith is also a WALK. As we endure through time, continuing steadfast in our faith, we journey with God into the fulfillment of His promises.

Hindrances to Strong Faith

- Lack of knowledge of God's Word
- Your faith cannot go beyond the actual knowledge of God's Word
- Lack of a clear desired goal
- Worry / Fear / Doubt / Unbelief

- Mental Assent—mentally we say ‘yes’ (in our minds) but we do not have faith in our hearts
- Laziness / Slothfulness—failure to act upon the Word

James 2:14, 22

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

- Wrong motivation / Wrong attitude
- Living in sin, unrighteousness
- Guilt / Condemnation
- Failure to hold fast to the confession of faith

Hebrews 10:27

But a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.



KEY MEMORY VERSES

Hebrews 11:6

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.

Mark 11:23

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.

APPLICATION

1. What is 'Faith?' To what extent do you exercise faith in your life?

2. What are the hindrances to your faith and how can you overcome those hindrances?
