

BUILDING OUR FAITH

LESSON #4



- **What Faith is and How to Use it**
- If one wants to please God he must have faith: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" ([Heb. 11:6](#)). This is one sure way to please God. If God can be made happy and well pleased in such a simple way, why shouldn't everyone who loves Him put forth the utmost effort to have faith in Him? None of us would be pleased if our friends constantly made us a liar every time we opened our mouths. Not one of us would feel like doing anything for those who did this.

- The same is true with God. He is a person, and we should learn to treat Him as a person and not insult Him by questioning and doubting every promise that He makes. How can we expect to get answers to prayer as long as we continue in such an attitude? How can we have the nerve to come to God continually and ask Him for something, and then tell Him by our acts and innermost feelings that we do not believe Him and cannot trust Him to the extent that He demands? Is it any wonder that we get so few prayers answered by such a procedure?

- The greatest miracle of all is that He ever answers us once. God is under no obligation to answer if we do not have implicit faith in Him for what we ask.
- Faith is simple. It is believing God without a waver, without doubting, and without questioning what He says. It is taking God at His Word and believing that what He has promised He is able to perform it.
- It is believing not only that He is able, but that He will do it. It is the quality of counting those things that "be not as though they were" ([Rom.4:17](#)).
- It is shifting from God can to God will!

- Faith is also the absolute conviction that what God has promised and what we have asked according to His Word is done already. It is "the substance of things hoped for" and the first payment on things that we desire from God ([Heb. 11:1-3](#)).
- The way to get faith is by hearing the Word of God ([Rom. 10:17](#)). The way to use faith is to take God at His Word and count Him faithful in granting what is asked in the name of Jesus.
- Ask and then believe that it is done. Thank God for it as if it were already done. Expect the complete answer whether you see it at once or not. Forget symptoms, feelings, impossibilities, or anything to the contrary and it shall be done regardless of how impossible it may appear outwardly.

- Faith laughs at impossibilities and cries, "It is done." It leaves all results and all answers with God as being God's part, and it assumes that it is done.
- **Our part then is to cooperate with faith and not hinder its working by doubting and questioning the how and when of the answer.**
- If a Christian will truly exercise faith that he knows is necessary, there will be no question as to the answer. One can get healing, health, success in business or in any undertaking, prosperity, happiness, or anything that would cause one to be victorious in any phase of life ([Mt. 17:20](#); [21:22](#); [Mk. 11:22-24](#); [Jn. 15:7, 16](#); [Rom.8:32](#); [Heb. 11:6](#); [Jas. 1:5-8](#)).

- Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true ([Php 1:27](#); [2Th 2:13](#)).
- Its primary idea is trust. A thing is true, and therefore worthy of trust. It admits of many degrees up to full assurance of faith, in accordance with the evidence on which it rests.
- Faith is the result of teaching ([Rom 10:14-17](#)). Knowledge is an essential element in all faith, and is sometimes spoken of as an equivalent to faith ([John 10:38](#); [1Jn 2:3](#)).
- Yet the two are distinguished in this respect, that faith includes in it assent, which is an act of the will in addition to the act of the understanding. Assent to the truth is of the essence of faith, and the ultimate ground on which our assent to any revealed truth rests is the faithfulness of God.

- **Faith**

- The word "believeth" denotes the act and process of faith. It comes from the Greek verb pisteuo (NT:4100) which occurs 248 times in the New Testament. This use of the present tense indicates that faith must be continued in to receive its benefits ([Acts 14:22](#); [Ephes. 6:16](#); [Col. 1:23](#); [Col. 2:5-7](#); [1 Thes. 5:8](#); [1 Tim. 2:15](#); [1 Tim. 3:9](#); [1 Tim. 6:12](#); [2 Tim. 3:8](#); [2 Tim. 4:7](#); [Titus 1:13](#); [Hebrews 10:23-38](#); [2 Peter 1:5-10](#)).
- It can be lost ([Luke 8:13](#); [1 Tim. 1:19](#); [1 Tim. 4:1](#); [1 Tim. 5:8,12](#); [1 Tim. 6:10,21](#); [2 Tim. 2:18](#); [2 Tim. 3:8](#); [Jude 1:3](#); [Rev. 2:13](#)).

- Faith Means:
 - 1. To be persuaded of ([Romans 4:17-22](#); [Romans 8:38-39](#); [2 Tim. 1:12](#))
 - 2. Place confidence in ([Ephes. 3:12](#); [Phil. 1:6](#); [Hebrews 3:6,12-14](#); [Hebrews 10:35](#); [1 John 3:21](#); [1 John 5:14](#))
 - 3. The substance or conviction of things hoped for, the assurance of things not seen ([Hebrews 10:19-38](#); [Hebrews 11:1,6](#); [Romans 4:17](#); [Romans 8:24](#))

- 4. Absolute dependence upon and reliance in the Word of God and of Christ ([Matthew 8:8-10](#); [Matthew 15:28](#); [Romans 10:17](#); [Hebrews 11:1-12:3](#))
- 5. Full surrender, yieldedness, and obedience to all known truth ([Romans 1:5](#); [Romans 16:26](#); [Romans 6:11-23](#); [James 2:14-26](#); [2 Cor. 10:4-7](#); [Hebrews 11:6](#))
- 6. Trust wholly and unreservedly in the faithfulness of God ([Matthew 6:25-34](#); [Matthew 12:21](#); [Luke 12:28-31](#); [Ephes. 1:13](#); [1 Tim. 4:11](#); [1 Tim. 6:17](#); [1 Cor. 10:13](#))

- 7. Give one's self over to a new way of life ([Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 6:11-23](#); [Romans 8:1-16](#); [2 Cor. 10:4-7](#); [Galatians 5:16-26](#); [Col. 3:5-10](#); [Hebrews 12:1-15](#); [Titus 2:11-14](#); [1 John 1:7](#); [1 John 2:6](#); [1 John 3:8-10](#); [1 John 4:17](#); [1 John 5:1-5,18](#))
- 8. The attribute of God and restored faculty of man whereby both can bring into existence things that are unseen ([Romans 4:17](#); [Galatians 5:22](#); [Matthew 17:20](#); [Matthew 21:22](#); [Mark 9:23](#); [Mark 11:22-24](#); [Luke 17:6](#); [Hebrews 11](#))
- 9. The whole body of revealed truth ([Luke 18:8](#); [Jude 1:3](#); [Romans 10:17](#); [1 Tim. 4:1,6](#); [1 Tim. 6:10](#); [2 Tim. 3:16-17](#))

- 10. Joyful faith in, and acceptance of Christ as the substitute for sin and our Savior whereby one receives salvation ([Mark 16:16](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [Romans 1:16](#); [Romans 3:24-31](#); [Ephes. 2:8-9](#));
- access into grace ([Romans 5:2](#));
- fulfillment of the promises ([Hebrews 6:12](#));
- the Holy Spirit ([Galatians 3:14](#));
- righteousness ([Romans 4](#); [Romans 9:30,32](#); [Romans 10:6](#); [Phil. 3:9](#));

- sonship ([Galatians 3:26](#));
- healing ([James 5:14-16](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#));
- eternal life ([John 3:15-18,36](#); [John 5:24](#); [John 6:47](#));
- and answers to every prayer ([Matthew 7:7-11](#); [Matthew 21:21](#); [Mark 11:22-24](#); [Luke 18:1-8](#); [John 14:12-15](#); [John 15:7,16](#)).
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- Faith in Christ secures for the believer freedom from condemnation, or justification before God; a participation in the life that is in Christ, the divine life ([John 14:19](#); [Rom 6:4-10](#); [Eph 4:15, 16](#)); "peace with God" ([Rom 5:1](#)); and sanctification ([Acts 26:18](#); [Gal 5:6](#); [Acts 15:9](#)).
- All who thus believe in Christ will certainly be saved ([John 6:37, 40](#); [John 10:27, 28](#); [Rom 8:1](#)).
- The faith=the gospel ([Acts 6:7](#); [Rom 1:5](#); [Gal 1:23](#); [1Ti 3:9](#); [Jude 1:3](#)).

- Saving faith is so called because it has eternal life inseparably connected with it. It cannot be better defined than in the words of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."
- The object of saving faith is the whole revealed Word of God. Faith accepts and believes it as the very truth most sure. But the special act of faith which unites to Christ has as its object the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ ([John 7:38](#); [Acts 16:31](#)). This is the specific act of faith by which a sinner is justified before God ([Rom 3:22, 25](#); [Gal 2:16](#); [Php 3:9](#); [John 3:16-36](#); [Acts 10:43](#); [Acts 16:31](#)). In this act of faith the believer appropriates and rests on Christ alone as Mediator in all his offices.

- This assent to or belief in the truth received upon the divine testimony has always associated with it a deep sense of sin, a distinct view of Christ, a consenting will, and a loving heart, together with a reliance on, a trusting in, or resting in Christ.
- It is that state of mind in which a poor sinner, conscious of his sin, flees from his guilty self to Christ his Savior, and rolls over the burden of all his sins on him. It consists chiefly, not in the assent given to the testimony of God in his Word, but in embracing with fiducial reliance and trust the one and only Savior whom God reveals.
- This trust and reliance is of the essence of faith. By faith the believer directly and immediately appropriates Christ as his own. Faith in its direct act makes Christ ours. It is not a work which God graciously accepts instead of perfect obedience, but is only the hand by which we take hold of the person and work of our Redeemer as the only ground of our salvation.

- Saving faith is a moral act, as it proceeds from a renewed will, and a renewed will is necessary to believing assent to the truth of God ([1Co 2:14](#); [2Co 4:4](#)).
- Faith, therefore, has its seat in the moral part of our nature fully as much as in the intellectual. The mind must first be enlightened by divine teaching ([John 6:44](#); [Acts 13:48](#); [2Co 4:6](#); [Eph 1:17, 18](#)) before it can discern the things of the Spirit.
- Faith is necessary to our salvation ([Mark 16:16](#)), not because there is any merit in it, but simply because it is the sinner's taking the place assigned him by God, his falling in with what God is doing.

- **What Faith is Not**

- Faith is not feeling that prayer is answered. The average person who seeks to exercise faith depends upon what he can see, hear, or feel. Testimonies concerning faith are usually expressed in connection with feelings and emotions, or the various senses.
- Sense-faith is based upon physical evidence or upon the emotions and feelings of the soul. All who take this road as the basis of faith will sooner or later be deceived. Faith should be based upon the Word of God regardless of any sense-knowledge, or feeling-evidences.

- People are constantly looking to feelings as to whether prayer has been heard or not. If they happen to feel good, or if something happens that encourages them, they think that it is easy to believe, but if reverses come and feelings take wings, these same people are in the depths of despair.
- They are quick to accuse God of being unfaithful and untrue to His Word. If they do not go this far they are quick to imagine that it was not God's will to grant the answer. They become satisfied to go without what God has plainly promised.

- Faith has not the slightest relationship with feelings and sense-evidences. At the times when men think they have all the faith in the world because of feelings, they have the least in the world, and when they think they have the least, they have more than at any other time in their lives.
- Many people are surprised to get answers to prayer because when they prayed they thought their faith was nothing. People should not believe they are healed because the pain is gone, or that they are saved because they feel they are forgiven. They should not think that their prayers are answered because things are working out that way.

- Instead, they should always maintain faith because of what the Word of God says.
- The Word of God should have first place in their lives instead of the senses.
- All basing of faith upon what we have done, how well we live, or what experiences we have had will lead to failure in answered prayer.
- God does not answer upon these grounds.
- He answers solely upon the grounds of grace and faith in Him and in His Word.

- True faith is not trusting in the goodness and in the faith of another man. It must be personal faith in God and His Word. People continually go about seeking someone who has faith and who can get answers to prayer for them.
- This may work temporarily while one is learning about God and His Word, but if we do not properly learn and develop a personal faith that refuses to be denied, we shall eventually revert to failure and unbelief, and we shall have to be satisfied with the modern theory that answered prayer is not for everyone.

- The program that will pay is that of having personal faith in God, faith in Jesus Christ, faith in the Holy Spirit, faith in the Word of God, faith in the atonement, and total consecration personally to believe God regardless of anything that might happen to hinder prayer.
- The right program is not talking about faith, or the need of it, but the actual exercise of it.
- Simple faith in the Word regardless of feelings and circumstances is never possible to the man who lives only in the realm of his senses, for he believes only what he can see, feel, hear, or understand to be possible.

- This was the kind of faith Thomas had when he declared that he would not believe until he had seen. It was the kind that Martha had when she could see nothing but the natural fact that Lazarus had been dead four days and "by this time he stinketh."
- Neither mental faith nor mere assent to truth and dependence upon feelings is enough. The individual must come to life and action before he will realize the benefits of active, living faith that refuses to know defeat and failure. A man must learn to fight the fight of faith and lay hold of God and His Word.

- He must learn that he is surrounded by an unbelieving world and an atmosphere of doubts, that demons and fallen angels and men have lived for centuries in unbelief and wickedness creating currents of doubt and mistrust that are very subtle, and that effects of the fall have left in the lives of fallen men deep wounds of doubt and wavering that must be healed.
- He must learn that he has to wrestle with powers of darkness and currents of mistrust and unbelief which make it a struggle to exercise active living faith for things that are not seen. He must not only learn how to do this, but he must do it in order to get results.