

What Is Faith?

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Millions lack faith to receive answers to their prayers—to free their minds from fears and worries. To a large extent this is due to lack of understanding what faith is. Read this simple but thorough explanation of the subject.

The whole world is now shaking with convulsions, preparatory to a *tremendous* event.

This present world breakdown, following the two greatest, most destructive wars in history, with world economic collapse, social unrest, religious confusion, is merely the WARNING SIGNAL that the END of the present civilization is here. The second coming of Christ, to establish a new order of world peace on earth is *near*, much nearer than people think!

Any Faith Today?

And speaking of His own second appearing on earth, Jesus Himself asked, prophetically: "When the Son of man cometh, *shall He find faith on the earth*?" When Jesus uttered these words, He was looking into the future—into *our very present generation*—which He clearly foresaw. And foreseeing the almost total absence of FAITH in our time, He asked this question!

Certainly the world has almost lost sight of real FAITH. No wonder so few have any—no wonder so many say, "My faith isn't very strong"—or, "I just can't seem to work up the faith." People today do not know what faith is, or *why* they do not possess it. Yet without FAITH none can even be saved!

Jesus Had Faith!

When Jesus walked the earth in human flesh, He possessed faith!

Yet He said, plainly: "Of *myself*, I can do NOTHING!"

Few realize that what He did—the miracles He performed—He did not do by any supernatural power of His own. Everything He did, every miracle He performed, was done literally through FAITH, setting us a beautiful example.

But how, then, did He perform His miracles, accomplish His mighty works?

"The FATHER that dwelleth in me," explained Jesus, "He doeth the works."

Yes, even as you and I may be, Jesus was filled with God's Holy Spirit—God's dynamic supernatural power! This power of God Almighty, the Creator, was literally *in Jesus*; *and the same identical power of the same identical Living God may be within you today!*

All the apostles and evangelists of the first century true Church of God *did* perform miracles, and even *greater* miracles than Jesus had performed, until even Peter's *shadow* passing over the sick and afflicted caused them to be healed!

Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul—all common, humble, ordinary men of themselves—all *had that power*, the SAME identical power Jesus had, *because they lived and walked CLOSE TO GOD*, and were *filled with the Holy Spirit!*

And we seem to LACK that power today, NOT because God denies us that power, but *because we are so close to a modern, materialistic world*—our minds so filled with the *material* interests of *this* life; our minds and our hearts are *so far from God*; we are so out of touch with Him, through lack of enough *time* spent in the study of His Word and lack of enough of the right kind of surrendered, submissive, and earnest and heartrending PRAYER—and consequently, because we are *not filled* with the HOLY SPIRIT!

So now, let's ask *two questions*:

First, What *is* faith?

And second, *How* may we have it, and how may it *be increased*?

What Faith Is

Now notice, faith is the *substance*—the marginal rendering says "ASSURANCE"—of things *hoped for* (Hebrews 11:1). So FAITH comes *before* possession.

Once you have *received* the *possession*, you no longer *hope* for it. But even before you receive it, you have it in SUBSTANCE; and that substance—that ASSURANCE that you *shall* possess it—is FAITH.

Then again, faith is an EVIDENCE—the "evidence of things *not seen*." Faith *precedes* the actual receiving of what you ask for. And faith is the EVIDENCE you *shall* have it, *before* you even SEE it. It is the EVIDENCE of things *not yet seen*. You do not *have* it. You do not *see* it, or *feel* it—yet faith is your EVIDENCE that you have, or shall have it. Faith is the substance—the ASSURANCE—of receiving that which you still HOPE for.

How To KNOW You Are Healed

So I want you to notice, that when you *hope* for things or *ask* God for things, there is an EVIDENCE—a *proof* because, where God is involved, His evidence *is* proof—that you shall receive what you have asked. And what is that proof—that evidence? Is it the actual *receiving* of the answer, so you see, or feel, or hear that you have it? No!

Suppose, for instance you were ill—taken with a disease. Now Jesus healed the sick continually. And, He said, the works that He did—and this was one of them—we should do also. Now suppose you ask God to *heal* you. Naturally, you want some *evidence* that you going to be healed.

So what is that evidence, that proof? Is it the evidence of the pain ceasing—or the swelling going down—something you can *feel*, and *see*? I know a man who says, "When I can *see* anyone healed by direct prayer, then I'll believe in it." This man freely says he *wanted* to BELIEVE in it—he *wanted* to have FAITH in it! He was looking for an EVIDENCE that he can SEE—and he died without ever seeing it!

Because what we SEE—what we feel—is not the true EVIDENCE. Having the thing—seeing it—is not faith. Faith *precedes* possession because FAITH is *confidence*—ASSURANCE—you *shall* possess it.

The human mind, naturally, can receive KNOWLEDGE only through the five senses. These are the five sole channels capable of transmitting knowledge, by natural processes, to the human mind. The senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling.

But that is not FAITH. Faith is a *spiritual* matter, and it has *nothing to do* with the five senses, which are *physical*.

Prayer is a *spiritual* matter. God is a SPIRIT! And when we ask, for instance, for healing, we *do* have an evidence—proof *positive*—that the healing *will be done*; but that evidence is not something seen, or felt, or heard—it is not a *physical* evidence—it is rather the *spiritual* evidence of FAITH. FAITH is our evidence.

An Unusual Trial

Let's picture a trial in a courtroom. It's a very strange—a most unusual—trial, for the One being *tried* is none other than GOD ALMIGHTY! And *you*, yourself, are sitting as JUDGE and JURY. The prosecuting attorney is your human nature. Attorney for the defense is the Holy Spirit. God is accused of *lying*—of *unfaithfulness*—of obtaining things more valuable than money under false pretenses! God is accused of willful *non-payment* of PROMISSORY NOTES.

You, now sitting as judge and jury, have read God's command and written PROMISE, in James 5:14, for your physical *healing* when sick. You have prayed for healing, according to God's written promise. You have followed God's instructions and called the elders of the Church, who have prayed over you the prayer of faith and anointed you with oil.

The prosecuting attorney, your human nature, attempting to convict God of obtaining your allegiance under false pretenses—of breaking His contract—of *lying*—presents before *you*, as judge and jury, *his evidence*.

"My evidence," says your nature, "is literal, tangible, evidence that is *real*—evidence you can *see* and *feel*. You can see for yourself that you are not healed. The pain is still there! In fact, perhaps it has grown worse! God gave you a *written promise*, as certainly as anyone ever gave a promissory *note*. You conformed to all His conditions. You prayed. You called the elders of the Church, and they prayed. You *believed*! But you can now *see my* evidence—you can *feel* my evidence—you are still suffering—you *are not healed*! Therefore God *did not heal you*! God did not keep His Word. God's Word, the Bible, lied to you. God FAILED! My evidence is that which you plainly *see* and *feel*! You *are not healed*. Therefore I demand you bring in a verdict of GUILTY!—guilty in the first degree—I demand you find Almighty God GUILTY of lying, of obtaining your allegiance under *false pretenses*, of not performing *what He promised in His written promise*."

But now the attorney for the DEFENSE—God's Holy Spirit—speaks to you, quietly, calmly.

He says to you: "I now present MY evidence that God's Word is TRUE—that God is *faithful*—that God *cannot lie*. My evidence is *not* anything you can see or feel. My evidence is simple FAITH—patient TRUST in the veracity of God's Word. It is *impossible* for God to lie. My evidence is YOUR FAITH in that fact, and in His promise. And FAITH is the evidence of that which is *not seen, not felt*!

"Let's review the case to see clearly what happened. Let's understand plainly where your human nature has clouded the issue and *deceived* you. God has told you, in Exodus 15, that HE is your healer—your GOD-*healer*—that is one of His *names*, and God is named *what He is*. God sent His Son into the world to be beaten with stripes, to *suffer* the penalty of your transgressions of nature's laws, *in your stead*—His body was broken for you, and by His stripes, *you are healed*! God gave you His Word that it is *His will* to heal you. He commanded you to call the elders of the Church, which you did. He *promised to heal* you. But God has also made it a part of this contract, *in His Word*, that "*according to your faith, be it unto you*"—in the very words of Christ!

"Now FAITH is your *evidence* that God *will* do what He promised. You can't *see faith*—you can't *feel* it. What you see or feel has nothing to do with faith.

But the point your human nature wants you to overlook is that *God did not promise WHEN, or HOW, He would heal you!*

"God's purpose in your life is to transform you from what you've been into the very *image of His Son*—into the very *character* of God Himself. Part of this character is the learning of PATIENCE! And God instructs you, in James 1:3, that the *trying* of your faith works PATIENCE into your character. God has revealed to you in this and other Scriptures that He will sometimes *delay* healing you *in order to TRY your faith* and to teach you to be *patient!* Your healing, God has promised, shall be *according to your faith.*

"Faith is trusting God to do that which HE *has not yet done.* After the healing is completed, *you no longer need to exercise faith.* Faith is the ingredient *you must exercise until* God heals you—*until* you can see and feel that you are healed. *After* God has healed you, then you won't need FAITH in it any longer, but your *faith* must remain firm and steadfast, and patient, *regardless of what you see or feel, until* God actually heals you, as *He has promised to do.*

"Now the prosecuting attorney in this case, your human nature, wants you to believe that *faith* is something you exercise about 30 seconds, while you are still praying, and then if God has not done what He promised as soon as *you* expect, you are to find God guilty of *lying.* The instant you yield to the *devil's* influence over your human nature and render a verdict that God *will not* do what He promised just because He has not done it *yet*—that moment you make God out a liar—you lose all FAITH in God; and you thereupon break *your part* of the agreement, which is to *have faith and keep on having faith, and trusting God, and relying upon Him, UNTIL* He performs what He promised.

"Faith is simple *reliance* upon GOD's WORD. It is the evidence of what you *do not see or feel.* Therefore I call upon you to *have patience—to keep on TRUSTING GOD, until* He heals you, and then HE *will* heal you! I call upon you to find God *innocent* of this charge of lying—I call upon you to find Him FAITHful to His promises, and then you *shall* have them."

The evidence is now all in. *You* will now render the verdict!

You must render your verdict based upon the Evidence.

Which, now, is the evidence you believe? That which you see, and feel—the physical evidences that often are deceptive, or your *faith* that God's Word is true, His promises are *sure*, that it is impossible for God to lie?

If you BELIEVE this latter *spiritual* evidence, and reject the physical evidences of sight and of feeling, you pronounce sentence that *His Word has been VINDICATED by your verdict*—you be released from the disease, and what He promised *shall* be carried out.

But, if you decide that the physical evidences of sight or feeling are to be trusted in over and above the Word of ALMIGHTY GOD—and you *reject* His Word and His promise, and refuse to *believe* in it—refuse, in other words, to accept and trust in the evidence of FAITH until God completes it, then you yourself must render your verdict "NOT HEALED," and you will not be healed!

You see, God does not *promise* healing, or anything else, unless we BELIEVE. "According to your FAITH be it unto you," said Jesus. And remember the FAITH must *precede*, and therefore is a *condition* to, the possession.

One man expressed it very well: "FAITH is the *assurance* that the things which God said in His Word are *true*: and that God *will act* according to what He has said *in His Word*. This assurance, this *reliance* on GOD's WORD, *this confidence*, is FAITH!" And it is a true Bible definition. This Work of GOD has been built by putting it into actual practice!

Learning God's WILL

Remember, *whatever* your need, the first thing to do, to be sure of receiving an *answer* to your prayer, is to *search the Scriptures*, to *learn* whether it is GOD's WILL (Ephesians 5:17; II Timothy 3:14-17).

The BIBLE *reveals* God's will. We need *never* say, "Well, I know GOD *could* heal me IF IT IS HIS WILL." You can *know* His will. And so far as healing is concerned, I can tell you definitely that His Word says plainly and

emphatically that it *is* His will. The Bible is full of *promises*—literally FULL of them. If you *need* anything, study to see whether God has *promised* it, and if He has, HE CAN'T BREAK A PROMISE!

The Importance Of CLAIMING a PROMISE

I remember one time several years ago when my two sons came to me and asked me to do something for them—I don't remember now what. They were then around seven and nine years old. I do remember I didn't want to do it.

"But, Daddy, YOU PROMISED," they said, "and you've GOT TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE."

And then I remembered I *had* promised. Well, what do *you* think? Do you think I could break a *promise* when my two sons came to me and put it like *that*? No, and if you'll *just as boldly tell God HE has promised* and then CLAIM that promise as applied to *your* case, and TRUST God to keep it and quit *worrying* about it—quit trying to *work up* faith—just RELAX, and *let God* take over from there—leave it with Him—let Him do it—*He'll* do it, every time!

I know whereof I speak, because I've put what I'm now telling you to the test not once, but literally hundreds and thousands of times, and *God has never failed to keep His promise once*. I've seen the answers come so often and so frequently I expect the answer when I ask!

God promises to supply every need—that if we'll seek *first* the Kingdom of God and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS—which is right *doing*—He will provide every *material* need (Matthew 6:33).

This Work A Living Example Of Faith

Why, this very Work we conduct is a direct answer to prayer! This Work—*The World Tomorrow* broadcast, *The Plain Truth* magazine and Ambassador College—which now has grown to national and international scope and influence, started as small as any work could start—literally from NOTHING.

It has been from the start 100 percent a *work of FAITH*—and we had to really *learn* this lesson of faith before it had even started.

WHY People Lack Faith

And now, very briefly, WHY don't we *have* FAITH, and *how* may we get it, and how may it be *increased*? So many say, "Well, I have no impression—I have no *feeling*, no *conviction*—that I shall get the answer."

They want to wait until they get a certain CONVICTION, a certain feeling, a sort of *assurance* they can feel—before they really believe we shall have the answer.

But THAT *is not faith!*

That is feeling!

Your feeling, your convictions, your impressions, have absolutely not *one thing or the other* to do with FAITH. FAITH HAS ONLY TO DO WITH GOD'S WORD! The one question is, *has God promised it in the Bible?* If He has, then probabilities, possibilities, feelings, convictions, impression, *have nothing whatsoever to do with it*. God has a thousand ways we know nothing of, of answering and providing whatever He has promised. We don't need to see HOW *He is going to do it*.

And that's *another* thing, He almost *never* will do it the WAY we expect. So don't *try* to figure out *how* it is possible for God to do it. You are trusting in SUPERNATURAL POWER! Then BELIEVE in that power. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. What He has promised, He will perform; but He will do it HIS way, and in HIS time. Leave all that to Him and just trust Him. Rely upon His Word.

God's GIFT

And let us remember, FAITH is the GIFT OF GOD.

So many think that everything else that comes from God is HIS *gift*, but the FAITH required to *receive* these things is something we ourselves must

somehow work up, or strain and strive for. But we have to just relax and trust GOD, even for the FAITH by which we receive everything else! (Ephesians 2:8)

In Revelation 14:12 is a description of the *true* Church of THIS DAY. Those in this Church have the FAITH of Jesus. Notice, the FAITH of Jesus! It is not just *our* faith in Him, but *His* faith—the very faith with which He performed His miracles—placed *in us* and *acting* in us.

How can you get it? Draw closer to God. Get to *know* God. Surrender *all the way* to Him, and *do* His will. And then PRAY. You get to *know* Him in PRAYER. We are too close to the *material* things. Through PRAYER, *much* more prayer, you can come closer to GOD and the *spiritual* things. And what a *happy, joyous* experience it is, once you have really done it!