



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

7350 Granbury Rd.

Fort Worth, TX 76123

Faith, How to Strengthen It

(Just Do It)

Lesson #2

Overall Lesson #50

Here are 8 great ways to fire up or strengthen your faith straight from the Bible.

***Serving in the Hard Places**

If you think you need to have your faith strengthened then try serving someone. For one thing, it allows us to see just how much we have been blessed by God. Our church started a local nursing home ministry and it was not easy at first. We didn't know anyone, we had some strange looks like "Who are you?" but we just started visiting people. I began to search out those who never had visitors, who had

no family or friends that ever came to visit them. Just by asking the staff you can find that out. Some of these lonely souls had never had a visitor at all. They were so hungry for company...for someone to just sit and listen to them. When I left, I felt so full of joy for (hopefully) having made a difference in these people's lives. Isn't this what pure religion is...to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction (James 1:27)? That is what James calls "pure religion" and how many, might I ask, of these residents there who were orphaned and widowed? Almost every single one of them was. When you visit the lonely and broken hearted, your faith will be recharged because you are doing what Jesus would do if He were still here on earth.

***Soak Up the Scriptures**

It is true that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). Isn't reading the Word of God the same thing as hearing it? Of course you want to hear good biblical teaching and preaching and to sit in on a good Sunday school or Bible study class because that's another source for hearing the Word by which faith comes but simply staying in the Word on a daily basis will increase your faith. Why? Because you'll read how God moves in the lives of those Whom He has chosen and since He has not changed, He is still working our lives too. There is real power in the message of the Bible (Rom 1:16) and "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). You want what is alive and active working in your life...and the sword has two edges to it...it cuts both ways and cuts down to the bone where the soul and the spirit meet, even down to the "joints and [the] marrow" and it's able to "discern the thoughts and intentions of

the heart.” Examine the Word of God and it will examine you. Stay in the Word of God and it will stay in you. Go through the Word of God and the Word of God will stay in you. It cuts, yes, but it does so in order to heal. Faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God so consume it like you do your daily bread. Feast on a daily diet of the Word and you’ll not only jump start your faith, you’ll strengthen it.

***Witnessing for Christ**

This might seem like something that might discourage you because on my last time out during street evangelism, my friend and I were not well received. I suppose though that’s not the point. There is something wonderful that happens after you tell people about the only way that they might be saved (Acts 4:12). You feel such joy in your heart, not at the moment, but certainly afterwards. I guarantee that. It always fires me up after having a day doing door to door or street evangelism. It’s not up to us to save anyone (Acts 2:47) but it is up to us to tell them about Christ (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). I believe you will grow in your faith when you witness to others for Christ. For one thing, there is such joy in being obedient to Christ’s imperative command to “go” that is given in the Great Commission. There is also joy when some people respond in a way that gives you hope that maybe the message penetrated their heart. The power is in the message and never in the messenger (Rom 1:16) and Paul described as part of his joy those whom he led to the Lord. We read about this in Philippians 4:1 where he writes, “my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved” and he asks the rhetorical question to the Thessalonians “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you” (1 Thess 2:19)?

***Start Praising and Thanking the Lord**

We were made for God's glory and so why not give Him the thanks that He is worthy to receive? There is real joy in praising and giving thanks to God. If you want to know a great praise psalm, look at Psalm 150:

“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: Praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: Praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: Praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.” (Psalm 150, KJV)

It gives you plenty to praise Him for, even though we can find dozens of reasons in the Scriptures like John 3:16, John 10:28-29, Romans 8:3-39 and one of my personal favorites, 2 Corinthians 5:21 which says the gospel in one verse, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

***Become a Prayer Warrior**

This sounds easier than it actually is to do. Speaking for myself, prayer is one of the most difficult things for me to do because I find that I am fighting a spiritual battle every time I get on my knees before God but that could just be one of my personal weaknesses. When I begin to pray, I sense that the Enemy wants to start putting thoughts into my mind, he is trying to remind me what I still need to do, what problems that I have ahead of me, and that I don't really have the time

for prayer but I turn these reasons into the very reason I need to be praying; the more we are under spiritual attacks, the more we need to be staying in prayer. Start a prayer journal where you write down specific prayer requests and put other people's prayer requests ahead of you own. I like the acrostic for prayer, ACTS:

**Adoration of God for all He has done for me and others.*

**Confession my sins and shortcomings and thanking Him for His mercy and grace and the patience He shows me.*

**Thanksgiving is next. Just pour out all of your thanks for all He has done. Maybe you can write out a "blessings list" of things for which all that God has done and provided (e.g. salvation, home, job, family, church).*

**Supplication is the last one...start praying for yourself last of all. Start praying for God's will and that your prayers are aligned with His will. Pray for all your needs and not all your wants. Maybe this is what Jude meant when he wrote that it is "by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit" that we can build ourselves up in the faith and that is by praying and not just praying but "praying in the Holy Spirit."*

***Immersing myself spiritually – I listened to podcasts and read books that inspired and encouraged my faith.** There were days this is what got me through the day. On days where I was fighting depression or feeling less than hopeful, I would listen to a podcast while I drove or walked my dog. I started listening to Joel Osteen and read Mark Batterson's book. Those two were life changing to me. Joel gave me hope and encourage me in so many ways. Mark encouraged me to pray

harder, to circle what I felt God was saying to me. Both encouraged me to believe God had – has – a plan for my life.

***Obedience** – Be willing to pray for God’s guidance, but then be just willing to be obedient to what He is telling you to do.

***Fasting**- Fasting clears your head, it reprioritizes everything in your life because you're ignoring and not giving into the urges of your body, rather feeding your mind and soul instead. In times of hunger that is your clue to open the Bible and read, or to pray, or better yet read your Bible out loud and then pray out loud.

Application/Activity

Wednesday morning: Read

1. Isaiah 43:2

"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you."

2. Psalm 37:5

"Commit your way to the Lord. Trust in Him, and He will act."

3. Romans 8:18

"The pain that you've been feeling, can't compare to the joy that's coming."

4. Proverbs 31:25

"She is clothed in strength, and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future."

5. Joshua 1:9

"Be bold. Be brave. Be courageous."

6. Ecclesiastes 3:1

"There is a time for everything and a reason for every activity under the heavens."

7. Isaiah 41:10

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

8. Isaiah 66:9

"I will not cause pain without allowing something new to be born, says the Lord."

9. Psalm 91:4

"He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings, you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."

10. Psalm 62:1-2

"My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from Him, He alone is my rock and my salvation."

11. Philippians 4:13

"I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."

12. Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Thursday: 24 hour fast

Friday: Pray this: Heavenly Father, I want to thank You for my countless blessings. I thank You not only for the food I have to eat, lovingly prepared for me, but also for spiritual gifts, in particular the loved ones I cherish dearly, a comfortable place to live, the beauty that surrounds me, health, and spiritual wealth to name a few. I acknowledge you for the countless blessings You've provided. I thank You for giving us clear direction through Your Holy Word. Through good and bad times, help me to see that we are blessed beyond measure. Amen.

Saturday: serve others. Come and serve the wonderful women of our church at 10 a.m. at our Women's Brunch.

Sunday: Worship God's Mighty Name

Monday: Make a list of people you want to pray for. You will work through these prayers throughout the month, either daily or one at a time.

Tuesday: Read 1 Kings 17-19 in preparation for next week's series on Elijah.

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