

THE MYSTERY OF THE MEASURES OF FAITH



FAITH

- Faith has a substance; a spiritual weight.
- God has given each of us a measure of faith. Romans 12:3 tells us that we should think of ourselves with sober judgment, “each according to the measure of faith God has assigned.”
- 1 Corinthians tells us some have been given the spiritual gift of faith.
- When we get together, the faith of others, or lack thereof, can affect the effectiveness of our prayers.
- Instigator’s faith: This is the level of faith present in the person praying.
- Recipient’s faith: This is the faith of the person who is being prayed for—it’s the level of assurance and expectancy they have while being prayed for.
- Childlike faith: Like the name implies, is the kind of faith children have. It’s innocent; it’s unpolled by the cares of the world; it’s unjaded by emotions and negative experiences. Childlike faith just believes.
- Corporate faith: That’s what I call “all y’all” faith. That’s the collective faith of everyone present in the room.
- Anti-faith: This is what Jesus refers to as unbelief. You may have always thought unbelief was simply a lack of faith. Unbelief is more than just zero faith; it’s actually negative faith.
- In the economy of heaven faith works like an invisible, spiritual currency. Understanding the structure of that economy helps prayers become more effective. It also helps you to understand why sometimes someone is healed, and other times they aren’t. The clues are found in the ministry of Jesus.

MEASURES OF FAITH

- We’ve each been given a unique measure of faith.
 - In Romans 12:3, the Apostle Paul talks about how we should think of our-selves as we truly are: “each according to the measure of faith God has as-signed you.”
 - Everyone has been assigned enough faith to have our prayers answered. You’ve been given enough faith to do what God has called you to do.

- Everyone has been given enough faith to believe the Word of God and to share that belief with others. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20: And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- The Great Commission was given to all of us. Whatever faith God has assigned you, it's enough.
- Jesus said if you have the faith of a mustard seed—you could speak to a mountain and tell it to be cast in the sea and it would. Jesus was saying it's not about the size of your faith; It's how much of the faith you've been given that you're using.
- He's given us His Holy Spirit to help and comfort us along the way. Remember, Jesus finishes the Great Commission with "behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- Everything we do in the Kingdom is done according to the measure of faith we've been given.
 - ◇ When we ask for something, we're to believe by that measure of faith, and we'll receive it. When we prophesy, we do so according to the measure of faith we've been given. When God heals through us, it happens through the measure of faith we have when praying.
- What measure of faith were you given? More importantly, are you using the full measure of faith God gave you? You may have had events in your life that have brought you pain and caused you to lose faith. So now when you pray, you might not do it with the same conviction as before. I want to encourage you: you still have all of the faith God has assigned you. But there's something else at play—and you'll need to deal with it. It's this mysterious substance called anti-faith.

FAITH AND UNBELIEF (ANTI-FAITH)

- Your life as a Christian will often take place within the tension of these two forces—faith and anti-faith.
- The enemy knows the power of faith, and that's the first thing he attacks. The enemy will fill our minds with fear and doubt, all intended to build up this substance of unbelief in our heart.

- Unbelief has to be dealt with. The answer is the Word of God. The Word of God has the power to neutralize unbelief. The Word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, has the power to separate us immediately from unbelief. The Bible says the Word of God has the power to divide the soul and spirit, separate truth from lies, and faith from anti-faith.
- Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of that which is unseen. Sometimes we take Hebrews 11:1 to say that faith is hope, but that verse actually says that faith is the substance of things hoped for.
 - That word substance is the Greek word *hupostasis*, which literally means that which stands under. Faith is the foundation of the things we hope will happen. That foundation is God. Faith can't be separated from God. Your perception of God, and the relationship that's birthed out of that perception, is your faith.
 - If your perception of God is wrong, it's like having cracks in your foundation. Cracks start through patterns of negative thinking:
 - ◇ "What if God doesn't answer my prayer? What if I'm never healed? God didn't heal my friend, He's probably not going to heal me. Why doesn't God want to heal me? God must not love me."
 - ◇ Negative thoughts like these are the weapons of the enemy. They keep us from believing what we pray, and sometimes from praying at all.
 - ◇ You don't lose faith near so much as you gain unbelief.
 - ◇ Take every thought like this captive. Recognize these thoughts as the enemy sowing unbelief in your heart. Find scripture verses that contradict these negative thoughts and then make those verses a part of your life.
- This mysterious substance called unbelief in effect, neutralizes faith. If faith is that which allows us to accomplish supernatural feats, then unbelief is the kryptonite that makes us mere mortals.
- Unbelief even has the power to affect those around you who may be full of faith.
 - In Mark 5, Jesus had just returned from the other side of the Sea of Galilee where he had just cast out the legion of demonic spirits from the Gaderene man. Almost immediately a leader of the synagogue named Jairus fell at his feet, begging him to heal his daughter. Jairus had faith that if Jesus came to his house and prayed, his daughter would be healed (the recipient's faith). Jesus agrees, and He and His disciples begin making their way to the house of Jairus.

- On the way to heal Jairus' daughter, Jesus is touched by the woman with the issue of blood. The faith of this woman is so strong, she believes, that if she only touches the hem of his garment, it will be enough to heal her (the recipient's faith). She touches the end of Jesus' prayer shawl and He feels power leave Him. "Who touched me?" He said. It wasn't the physical touch of his garment; Jesus felt power leave Him through the sheer power of this woman's faith. Jesus then tells her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well." (the recipient's faith).
- While He was still talking to this woman, a group of men approached Jesus and Jairus with news from his home. "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" Unbelief creeps into the heart of Jairus and his wife. But what does Jesus do?
 - ◇ Immediately, Jesus does two things. He turns to Jairus and tells him, "Do not be afraid; only believe." Next, he permits no one except the parents and the three disciples to come with Him to Jairus' house. He accomplished two things: He stopped the power of unbelief in Jairus, and He separated the believers from the unbelievers.
 - ◇ When He came to the house, Jesus did the same thing. The Bible says He physically put the unbelievers outside the house before entering the girl's room to begin praying. Jesus only allowed His disciples and the girl's parents in the room with Him.
 - ◇ Unbelief is anti-faith. Jesus recognized unbelief could prevent the miraculous from taking place and He took steps to make sure that didn't happen.
- In the very next chapter of Mark, Jesus is confronted with unbelief again:
- "Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' 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." Mark 6:1-5.
 - ◇ This account reveals several interesting details about unbelief:

- First and foremost, unbelief can prevent even Jesus from performing miracles. The Bible clearly says: Jesus could do no mighty works. Faith as powerful as that of Jesus can be hindered by the unbelief of others.
- A miracle must require more faith than just healing a sick person.
- Finally, Mark 6:6 says Jesus marveled because of their unbelief. What do you think Jesus was marveling at? Was He marveling at their reasoning—that because they knew Him and His family it was impossible to believe he could perform miracles—or was Jesus marveling at the power of their unbelief?

THE 100 FAITH-UNIT PRINCIPLE

- These two passages of Scripture teach us a valuable principle: There is a quotient of faith required for healing and miracles. Faith adds to that quotient. Unbelief sub-tracts. I see this principle play out throughout the New Testament and it's caused me to develop what I call the 100 Faith-Unit Principle.
- The 100 Faith Unit Principle isn't a scientific formula; It's a way of physically describing something that's taking place in the spiritual arena.
- When Jesus is healing and performing miracles, we see faith and unbelief at play. Faith manifests through three sources:
 - The instigator's faith;
 - The recipient's faith;
 - The corporate, or "all y'all faith."
 - ◇ Within all three sources lurks this strange substance called unbelief.
- Here's how it works: Let's say you have someone who is really sick and is asking for prayer. Let's say that prayer will take 100 units of faith to result in healing. This principle tells us that the 100 units of faith doesn't have to come from just the person that's being prayed for, or just the person doing the praying. The 100 units of faith can come from the sum total of the parts—instigator, receiver and corporate body if that applies. If the total units of faith equals 100 or greater, the person is healed. This is an extremely simplified explanation for something that's probably very complex.
 - For example: If I have 50 units of faith and the person who is sick has 50 units of faith, the person is healed. If I have 100 units of faith and the sick person has 0 units of faith, the person is healed. Here's where it gets tricky. If I have 100 units of faith and the sick person has 20 units of unbelief, they don't get healed. Unbelief subtracts from the overall sum of faith in the room.

- Let me stop here and say this: I don't think it's right for us to tell somebody God would have healed your son, your daughter, your husband or wife, if you just had more faith. That's not my point in explaining this principle. I've known situations where a loved one has died and the spiritual figure who had been praying blamed the family members for not having enough faith. That's not right. Christ didn't come into the world to condemn the world. I believe that point of view is in error.
- Jesus did say that when we ask anything of Him, to believe that we have received it—that means to have faith in God—and then we'll receive it. So faith is required when we pray. Sometimes we pray out of obligation, but we forget to believe. Believing means more than just hoping; it means visualizing in your soul and your spirit the prayer as already answered. It's done. That's flexing your faith muscles. That's how the Kingdom of Heaven works.

CHILDLIKE FAITH

- There's innocence in a child's heart that all of us adults can learn from. Children will believe until they're told something is not true. It's called childlike faith. Jesus told His disciples that to enter the Kingdom, they would have to become like children.
- Faith requires childlikeness—it's not sophisticated and scholarly—it's simple and beautiful. It's not about how much of the Bible you know, it's about how deeply you believe and trust the parts you do know. One day we will all enter into the gates of heaven with childlike faith.

FAITH GROWS BY TAKING RISKS

- A man I consider a spiritual father, John Wimber, used to say, "You spell faith R-I-S-K." In a spiritual sense, that's true. You can invite the presence of the Lord through prayer, you can strengthen your resolve through the Word, but at some point, faith needs legs.
- The power for Peter to walk on water was there all along. But it wasn't activated until Peter took a risk and stepped out of the boat. Risk activates faith.
- When you first came to faith in Jesus, you took a risk. Every day since, as you grow and mature in your spiritual walk, you've been presented with opportunities to take further risks. You have a choice: You can take that risk, or you can re-main in your comfort zone.
- Here's the danger of staying in your comfort zone: God will nudge you to take a risk—to pray for someone, to give financially during hard times, to walk through a door that's suddenly opened. You can make a choice not to take that risk. But spiritually, your faith is weakened. Remember earlier, I was talking about faith being a foundation and how unbelief causes cracks in your foundation. Not responding to the Word of God can also destabilize your faith.

- Jesus says this in Matthew 7:24-27:
 - “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
- “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”
- Faith is strengthened by doing what you believe. If you believe it, but don’t do it, how much do you really believe it?
- There’s also another principle at play when you don’t act on God’s nudges; your faith is actually weakened, and you stop hearing the nudges of the Holy Spirit. These are side effects to not taking God-inspired risks. We squander the measure of faith God has given us. We lose out on opportunities to experience the supernatural take place in our life.
- Faith becomes real when it’s exercised through risk. Risk isn’t always something you do. Sometimes risk is something you don’t do—like trusting God and waiting instead of trying to make something happen. Let me also say this: You don’t earn salvation by taking risks. Taking risks is merely exercising the rights you already have as a citizen of the Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

When you place your faith in Jesus you’re doing more than just having your basic needs met. You’re doing more than securing a place in Heaven. You’re empowering the Creator of heaven and earth to act on your behalf. That’s right—you have the power to em-power God to do something. It happens through this mysterious substance called Faith. Faith is the understanding of how the system of heaven works. It’s the invisible currency of an invisible economy. And God has made you a major stockholder.

Why would God entrust something as complex and unfathomable as His Kingdom in you and me? That’s a big risk. Why would He rely on us to advance His Kingdom when the only way to do that is to act on a belief in something we can’t prove? Faith is a risk—it’s a lifetime of trying to find an often disappearing set of footprints using a 2000 year-old map. But here’s the truth: In our relationship with God, He’s the only one taking a risk. He has risked it all on us—imperfect vessels. I know some of you are struggling with your measure of faith so I want to pray for you right now:

“Lord, the greatest prayer I’ve ever asked, you answered. You saved me from the pit. You pulled me out of the consequences of my sin and made me an heir to your Kingdom. But before You could do that, You had to do something else. You had to give up that which was most precious to You—Your Son. You not only gave Him up, You watched as He suffered at the hands of those who said they loved You. This is how much You love me. This is what I place my faith in.

Here's what else I know about you. You're not a God who can heal—you are Jehovah Rapha—the God Who is healing! You are not a God who can provide—You are Jehovah Jireh, the God Who is provision. You are not a God who can render justice—you are Jehovah Mishpat, the God Who is Justice. Your names and Your Person are inseparable. You are unchanging, all-powerful, all-knowing, you are the beginning and the end, and there is nothing impossible for those who put their faith in you.

Father, strengthen the faith of those who are listening right now. I ask you to remove unbelief from them. Pull it up by the root and cast it away. Return to them the full measure of faith you've assigned. Invite them again to step out of their comfort zone and take a risk on You. Thank you for entrusting us with your precious Kingdom. We delight in being partakers in your divine nature. It's through your Son and Your Holy Spirit I now pray. Amen."