

life groups' sermon guide

faith



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

The definition of the word faith is a belief without evidence. Faith is a confidence or trust in something that may not be seen. Faith is the result of teaching. (Romans 10:14-17)

In general, faith is an inclination to believe a certain statement to be true.

In Hebrews 11:6 we find, "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."

We read in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Ineffective faith is made obvious to others by our inadequate trust in God. When we concentrate on the faithfulness of God in the past, we can face hardships with confidence. As there were many in John's day who were believers in name only, we are of no value if we are only Christians in name alone. If others can't see our faith, what effect do we have for the cause of Christ? For us to be effectively working for God, His commandments and teachings must be followed.

Q: How effective are you for God?

Another way in which an ineffective faith is made obvious is by an unchanged life. Once we become a Christian, we will repent. Repentance is a change of attitude. Since our attitudes affect all aspects of our lives, our entire lifestyle would change for God.

John gives us an example in the comparison he made between people who assert their belief in God, yet live an ineffective life for Him. He compares them to fruitless trees that will be cut down. The grower predicts which fruit trees will bear fruit, and the Lord's people need to harvest exceptional deeds. If we are unwilling to live a productive life for the Lord, we are not glorifying Him in our service. When our service to the Lord God is limited to the use of the name Christian and not to following His commandments, we are not helping Him as we ought to.

We find in I Corinthians 4:19, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power."

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:1

There is some who talk a lot about faith, but that's all, it's just talk. An ineffective faith rarely goes beyond words. They may know the right words to say, but the lives they live don't reflect God's power. In Romans we are told that we need to live for God. The Christian life is not to be just discussed. A large imaginary line is made between knowing the right words and living them out. Don't be content to have the right answers about Christ. We should live our lives so that others will see the power of God working in our lives.

If we go through life with our thoughts continually on the challenging events surrounding us without looking for help from God and Jesus, we may sink in a state of despair. The Lord wants us to count on Him when we have trying times in life. It is comforting to know that we can rely at all times on God.

Q: In what way are we able to know our faith is ineffective?

In Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

Peter on one occasion exhibited a weak faith. The disciples were in a boat with Peter when a strong storm came and caused the disciples to be afraid. Only Peter reacted in faith. Peter walked on the water, but as his faith faltered, he began to sink. This sinking happened when he took his eyes off Jesus and gazed directly on the rough waves in the sea. Instead of having a fixation with the difficult situations, we should fix our gaze upon Jesus Christ.

Found in Matthew 14:28, "And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.'"

In Ephesians 2: 8 we are told, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

No matter how much faith we have, we NEVER come to the point of "making it on our own". Again, our reliance must be on God. It is not like saving for a "rainy day", it must be done on a daily basis for our faith to grow.

Q: In what manner are we able to know if our faith is weak?

We have talked about an ineffective faith; now let's talk about an effective faith. An effective faith is totally dependent upon God. We should not be concerned about the amount of faith we may possess, but about having a deep abiding faith in God. We need to understand that faith is not to help us look good in the eyes of others. Our aim should be to always be ready as Samuel was. Found in I Samuel 3:9. "Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and it

shall be, if he calls you, that you may say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.' So Samuel went and lay down in his place."

Something that fascinates me is how a small seed can grow into something larger. Our faith is like a seed. As we grow in our knowledge of God, our faith will grow. Its growth relies upon our keeping the Lord's commandments.

The root or foundation of faith is the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:1 we read, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are encouraged to endure hardships and persecutions throughout our Christian life. Rarely do we hear that any suffering is good for us, but it can shape our character. We find in Romans 5:3-5, Paul admonishing the church at Rome. Our faith is strengthened because it endured the pressures that we faced.

We are told in Ephesians 6:16 of the power of faith. Also in Romans 5:1 we read that with faith we have peace with God. Galatians 2:16 tells us that we are justified by faith. Hebrews 11 is the great chapter on faith. It lists so many wonderful examples of faith.

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:21-23(NKJV)

In II Corinthians 8:7 we read, "But as you abound in everything; in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us, see that you abound in this grace also. " The word abound means to be richly filled, well supplied, flourishing, overflowing.

We read in I John 5:4-5 that faith is the victory over the world. Many times old age and illnesses set in, and we are not able to continue in the work of our Lord as we are accustomed. Old age and health problems are not an accepted excuse for becoming lax in our efforts for God. Faithful unto death is not until we are older or have health issues.

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things says the first and last, who was dead, and who came to life: I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich): and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:8-10

Q: By what means are we able to know if our faith is effective?