

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:10-18

FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT FAITH:

1. God has given you a measure of faith.

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. Romans 12:3 NASB

Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]. Hebrews 11:1 Amplified

2. Your faith can grow.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

3. Your faith has to be released.

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. James 2:17

Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Mark 11:23

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of

Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." 1 Samuel 17:45-47

4. Sometimes your faith needs help.

So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. Exodus 17:10-12

TALK IT OVER:

1. What stood out to you about this message on the THE SHIELD OF FAITH?
2. Do you find it hard to have faith in God, and if so, why?
3. Why do you think James writes that faith without action is dead? James 2:17
4. Peter had to act on his faith when he got out of the boat and walked on the water to Jesus. Describe a time when God asked you to "get out of the boat" and act in faith?
5. How can you tell when your faith is weak?
6. What do you think you can do to strengthen your faith in the coming year?
7. Share an example of how the faith of others has helped you through a difficult time.