

Lesson 13

Teacher's Manual

FAITH AND GOD'S WORD

READ & MEDITATE ON: Hebrews 11:1-16 MEMORIZE: Mark 11:23-24

INTRODUCTION

The Bible tells us we can be saved by faith, shielded by faith, walk in faith, stand in faith, live by faith, inherit the promises of God by faith, be rich in faith, pray in faith, overcome the world by faith and praise God by faith. God desires the confidence of every human being in Him and His Word. In fact, "...without FAITH it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). All that we are or ever hope to be in God depends entirely on faith.

"And beside this, giving all diligence,
ADD to your faith...."

II Peter 1:5

In the first chapter of his second epistle, the Apostle Peter salutes Christians by reminding them of the things needful for continuing in the faith. Note should be taken...he begins in verse five, speaking about the graces and attributes of Christians who will be overcomers by beginning with FAITH. This shows that before anything else in our life is productive, we must have faith. It is most important...it is our link between the natural and supernatural. Since we derive all our spiritual resources from the Bible, it is necessary that we read with faith: alive, active, and full of desire. Thus, faith will become our mainstay because it directs us in every facet of Christian living.

I. FAITH

God is a Spirit (John 4:24). He is infinite and has unlimited power. Man is finite and limited in power. To lay hold on the eternal God,

First of all, we must believe that His Word is true. The word "hearing" used here means more than just to receive sound, it also encompasses understanding. In other words, Romans 10:17 could read, "...faith cometh by understanding...." What do we need to understand?

- There is power in His Word -- Hebrews 4:12
- Jesus has all power -- Matthew 28:18
- His Word was given and inspired for man -- II Timothy 3:16-17
- His Word is settled in Heaven -- Psalms 119:89
- There is no limit with God -- Luke 1:37; Jeremiah 32:17

C. How To Have It

We know that faith comes from the Word of God. A person can only go as far in faith as their knowledge of the Word of God permits. So if we want to have more faith, we only need to have more of the Word of God.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

John 15:7

The beginning of this scripture says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,...." This means that God's Word can live in our thought patterns and actions. We do not have to stop and think about them: they are a living part of us. When His Word abides (lives) in us, we think and act according to His Word. Otherwise it is our own thoughts: pure human logic. The remaining portion of this verse, "...ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you," depicts the results that faith brings. This is a very positive position. God's Word is always positive. Christians are positive, too, when the Word is abiding in their lives.

A desire for God's Word to become a part of our nature is the foundation upon which faith is built. Desire will drive you to meditate upon God's Word, as you seek Him in fervent prayer and fasting because you want all God has for you. Meditation on the Word of God plants His Word in our subconscious mind. This saturates our mind and emotions with truth. Scriptures also become a part of us when we read, study, hear and memorize them. (Please note that fasting and prayer, no matter how much you do of it, will not change God...nor will it build faith. Fasting and prayer changes you and helps you to cultivate the faith you

1. Ignorance:

The Bible says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). It is rather evident then, that those who have never heard God's Word cannot believe in it. A person can never believe in something they know nothing about. Without knowing what the scriptures teach, a person remains in spiritual ignorance. The cure for this kind of unbelief is exposure to the truth of the Bible.

2. Disobedience:

A person can discover what the Bible says but then refuse to act upon it. This is what the Israelites did when they did not go in to possess the promised land according to the command of God. They "...entered not in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:6). The word unbelief as used in this scripture is translated from the Greek by Strong's Concordance to mean: disobedience or unpersuasableness. They were unwilling to let the Word govern them. The cure for this kind of unbelief is obedience.

B. Hope

We have a blessed hope! The glorious hope that Jesus Christ is soon to return and receive us unto Himself--the hope of eternal life--the hope of a new heaven and earth where sin, sorrow and sickness will never be. We rejoice in this hope. However, hope is all future tense. Hope is extremely important to us as Christians (I Corinthians 13:13). However, it is different from and cannot be substituted for faith. Faith is present tense. "NOW...faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It counts the things that are not as though they were. Hope says, "I will get it sometime." Faith says, "It is mine, I have it now." Hope is believing that God could do a certain thing. Faith is knowing God already has done it or is doing it--right now. We can hope He hears our prayers and hope we will be healed--but we will not receive our answer or our healing until we know that it is ours...by faith.

C. Senses

Seeing and feeling by our senses can sometimes be a great stumbling block to faith. Doubting Thomas said that he would not believe in the resurrection unless he could see Jesus in person and feel His nail prints and His pierced side (John 20:24-29). His faith was not based upon God's Word, but his physical senses and the seemingly unreasonable circumstances. He said he would not believe until he could see. This is not scriptural faith.

heavenly father He will not let harm come to us. It was our Lord Jesus who said, "Fear not: believe only..." (Luke 8:50), and, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36).

III. WALKING BY FAITH

The Apostle Paul told the early Christians that faith was a way of life. In three of his letters he told the saints that, "...the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38).

"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"
II Corinthians 5:7

Our responsibility is to receive God's Word and not try to understand how He performs it, but to accept what He says. All through the scripture when men obeyed His Word by faith, they were able to see the supernatural in operation. It is no different with you, for the scripture says, "He is no respecter of persons," (Acts 10:34) Embrace what He says...let it become a part of you and you will see by believing His Word, that you can become a new person. To walk successfully by faith requires confession and action. These two important ingredients can make all the difference in the world in our walk with God.

A. Requires Confession

Confession is a powerful agent in experiencing living faith. Concerning the confession of faith, we do not mean the confessing of sins which is (in a sense) negative confession. In the faith realm we are concerned with a different kind of confession: A positive confession. What is a positive confession? It is affirming orally something we believe. It is verbally testifying to something we know. It is witnessing to a truth we have embraced. To bring our faith into a living realm, we should agree with God's Word...outloud! This is a powerful way to obtain the promises of God. Notice the references Jesus Christ gives to oral confession in the following scripture:

"...Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, (your problem or need), Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Mark 11:22-23

Here is a simple formula of faith patterned after Abraham's:
(1) Discover the promise of God, (2) Believe God's Word,
(3) Consider not the contradictory circumstances, (4) Be
confident of His ability to bring it to pass.

B. Requires Action

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of faith: active and passive. Passive faith is to expect the sun to come up in the morning. We have got this all figured out because the sun has come up so many times and we also understand the logic behind it. Active faith looks at things in a much different realm. If it is in God's Word, then it is accepted without the help of logic. It must be so because God's Word says it. Active faith will operate in a tight spot when you know it is a life or death situation, or it will work as an every day helper to accept the things that cross our paths. To live a life of faith, one must ACT on God's promises, REGARDLESS OF apparent FEELINGS, OR CIRCUMSTANCES.

"...faith, if it hath not works, is dead,
being alone."

James 2:17

Consider the Old Testament heroes of faith in the Book of Hebrews who ACTED upon their faith: Abel offered, Enoch went up, Noah prepared an ark, Abraham went out, Sarah delivered a miracle child. Why? Because they not only saw the promises of God, but, "...were persuaded of them, and embraced them...." It was a way of life. They walked by faith--not by sight. Isaac and his son, Jacob, pronounced blessings, Moses forsook Egypt, kept the pass-over and passed through the sea. Joshua marched, Rahab hung out the scarlet rope and was spared (Hebrews 11:4-31). Let these examples be an encouragement to every child of God to walk by faith, "...looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:2).

Faith resulted in action in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. The lepers went to the priests and were cleansed (Luke 17:12-14). The man with the withered hand stretched forth his hand and it was made whole (Matthew 12:10-13). The blind man had to go and wash before he could see (John 9:1-7). The paralytic took up his bed and walked (Mark 2:3-12).

Faith in action proclaims a powerful message to promote God's great cause on the earth. He did not die on the cross and rise again the third day in vain. Our faith tells this world:

- He has power to save, heal and keep us.
- He lives in us.
- His Word is true.

Salvation, healing and abundant life has already been promised and provided for by Jesus Christ. "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). We can believe and receive or we can doubt and do without. The promises of God today can be claimed by faith even as the children of Israel fought to claim the promised land. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..." (I Timothy 6:12). Dare to believe God! Step out in faith and trust Him completely in every area of your life.

You will soon find that when you say (confess) what God says, it will be just as though "He" was saying it. His Word is alive and powerful and the sooner you confess it, the more ability you will have to slay the fleshly reasoning of the logical man. In other words, by learning to agree with the Word and saying it over and over again, you will find that a oneness of your mind with God's mind will result.

Find a promise. Memorize the corresponding scriptures. When you are in need, say them out loud. Apply them to your need. Personalize the Word by substituting the words "I," "Me," or "My," etc. in a scriptural passage. For instance, II Corinthians 5:17 says, "...If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Now, apply this to you by saying, "I am in Christ, I am a new creature: old things are passed away and all things in my life are become new." Confess it in your heart first. Confess it in your room outloud. Say it over and over until your spirit and words agree. Say it until your whole being swings into harmony with the Word and will of God. You will experience a blessed feeling of confidence. You will be able to know the things that cannot be explained in words, but only experienced by a living faith. Confession can be used to obtain promises in physical, spiritual, material and emotional realms.

Your confession must be based on the written Word--not your feelings or the evidence of your senses. The sky is the limit. You can go as far in God as you feed your faith. The more you feed it, the more it grows. Be sensitive to what He is saying to you. Remember, "It is written," is all faith needs to be effective. As you embark on your journey of faith, remember faithful Abraham, of whom it is said:

"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Romans 4:17-21

Bible faith is the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Thomas' faith was natural human faith. In God's economy, "believing is seeing," not, "seeing is believing." "...Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Thomas also said that he would not believe unless he could feel. Real faith in the Word acknowledges that whatever God says is true. Faith does not depend on feelings either. It depends on the facts--God's Word. Feelings usually follow faith. However, we should not rely on our feelings. Moods may change but God's Word never changes. It is eternal and forever settled in heaven.

D. Wavering

Another enemy to faith is wavering. "For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James 1:6-7). Once we claim a promise, we should never move from that position. Sometimes a person receives salvation or healing and then because a former symptom returns they think that perhaps they were not healed or saved after all. If you know you have received a promise, do not waver. Resist the devil (James 4:7). Do not be tricked by the father of lies. Stand on God's Word. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" (Hebrews 10:23).

E. Unworthiness

This is a very subtle form of lack of faith. We often feel that we are not good enough to deserve God's gifts. This is true. However, God does not save, answer prayer or heal on the basis of our worthiness. It is based, rather, on the worthiness of Jesus Christ and upon the fact that He has already provided for whatever it is we need. From the natural standpoint, we are unworthy because of our unrighteousness. But by faith we are worthy, for by it we are made the righteousness of God in Him (II Corinthians 5:21). When we know we are worthy in Christ we can ask and receive with confidence because, "our hearts condemn us not" (I John 3:21).

F. Fear

Very often the devil uses the weapon of fear to torment us. Fear causes us to worry, hesitate and be filled with anxiety. The scripture tells us fear has bondage (Romans 8:15). When we fear we become paralyzed and cannot trustingly receive the things of the supernatural. Faith works by love (Galatians 5:6) and "...perfect love casteth out fear..." (I John 4:18). If we believe that God loves us, we know that as our loving

have gleaned from God's Word.) When you desire God's Word to become a part of you enough that you read, study and memorize passages of scripture...then visualize, personalize, and believe them so much you would stake your life on what He says...you are on your way to an active faith-life.

The scriptures are designed by God to stimulate and give faith. The Lord Jesus said, "...these are written that ye might believe...and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). The Bible brings salvation through faith in its teachings (II Timothy 3:15).

"...the holy scriptures,...are able to make thee wise unto salvation...which is in Christ Jesus."

In Romans 10:14 Paul questions how a person can have faith in one of whom they have not heard, and how they can hear (which includes understanding) without a preacher. Yes, the Word of God brings faith. It stirs a person to act upon the Word of God. Jesus prayed for those who would have faith (believe) through the preached Word (John 17:20). People who had faith, "...believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..." (Acts 8:12). The WORD stimulates, awakens, and produces FAITH. And it is through faith that we are saved. If we want more faith, after our salvation experience, it is plain to see that we must feed on the Word of God so faith can grow.

We can only know God through His Word which reveals Him. Man must therefore, of necessity, trust His Word as being reliable, and worthy of placing the utmost confidence in. To disbelieve a human being's word is to discredit their honesty and dishonor their character. How much more so would this hold true in disbelieving God's Word? This is why Jesus Christ commands men to have faith in God (Mark 9:23).

II. HINDRANCES TO FAITH

What are some of the things that can cause us to miss out on receiving God's best for us?

A. Unbelief

There are two kinds of unbelief that can hinder the faith of people--saved or unsaved. They are ignorance and disobedience.

temporal man must believe. Without the assurance that God exists and that He responds to human searchings, it is impossible to be pleasing in His sight.

"...without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:6

A. What It Is

Many times we try to make something very complicated out of faith. Faith is simply to believe what God says. It is an assurance and conviction that God's Word is true. Consider the Bible's definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1:

KING JAMES VERSION

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

THE AMPLIFIED BIBLE

"Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things (we) hope for, being the proof of things (we) do not see and the conviction of reality--faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses."

In the New Testament, the word "faith" (noun) is found 245 times and the word "believe" (verb) with its various endings, is found 268. Their companion, "trust," is found 35 times. These words, simply defined, mean: "to put confidence in, to rely on, to put absolute trust in, without any question or doubt." In the scriptural sense, faith means, "the leaning of the entire human personality on God in Christ Jesus in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom and goodness" (from Hebrews 4:2 AMPLIFIED).

B. Where It Comes From

Because God has chosen to reveal Himself to man according to His Word, the Bible is the primary source of all true faith.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Romans 10:17