

THE PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

Lesson 1

What Is Faith?

As Christians we are called to live by faith, “**but the just shall live by faith**” (Habakkuk 2:4). We are to live by faith just as we live by air, water, and food. We cannot live without air, and we cannot live without faith. **Faith is the only thing that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6)**. So what is faith?

Faith-pistis: *Conviction of the truth of anything, trust and holy fervor.*

This is just a definition, but faith is defined by its actions. So how does faith act and how does it manifest? How does faith grow? How does faith increase? How does faith please God? Faith is an action. How does it act?

FAITH SPEAKS

We must first realize faith begins manifesting when we open our mouths. Faith is what we are saying.

- **We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;**
2 Corinthians 4:13

The spirit of faith speaks. You will speak what you believe. The more you believe something, the more you’ll talk about it.

- **These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.** **Hebrews 11:13-14**
- **And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. ²³For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, 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**

Notice in this passage Jesus teaches that faith in God means you speak to things. In this case, you speak to the mountain. Jesus had just spoken to a fig tree and it obeyed him. The tree withered and died.

- **And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. ⁶And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.** **Luke 17:5-6**

Here, the apostles, like all of us, wanted more faith. Instead of praying for them, Jesus told them even small faith can speak to a tree and it will obey.

FAITH: BIRTHED IN OUR HEART, RELEASED BY OUR MOUTH

Faith is of the heart, for with the heart we believe. We must take the Word of God that we have heard and meditate upon it in our hearts. It will become our faith.

- **But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; . . . ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
Romans 10:8, 10

Once we believe in our hearts, then words begin to proceed out of our mouths.

- **A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**
Luke 6:45

What comes out of your mouth originated in your heart. You must give diligence to make sure there are no evil treasures in your heart. If there are, they will eventually come out of your mouth.

- **Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)**
Hebrews 10:23

This verse challenges us as believers to cling to the confession of the Word of God. This is what we refer to as “faith confessions.” These are the promises of God’s Word that you confess because you believe them, not necessarily because you see them. To vacillate between the Word and the world would be called “wavering.” **James 1:6-7** tells us this makes us unstable in all our ways.

THE TONGUE: A POWERFUL WEAPON

Faith speaks, and your faith is what you are speaking: good, bad, or indifferent.

- **Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.**
Isaiah 41:15
- **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.**
Proverbs 18:21

Because faith is a powerful force, we must be ever mindful of the words that come out of our mouths.

- **And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell . . . ¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.**
James 3:6, 10

Our tongues can set things on fire and burn them to the ground. We can even set our own lives on fire and watch them burn. Our tongues have the power to both bless and curse. These are powerful actions and should not be taken lightly.

- **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified (*acquitted*), and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (*sentenced*).**
Matthew 12:36-37

An account will be given for every idle word spoken, and our words either acquit us or they sentence and condemn us. We are who we are based upon the words of our mouths. Other scriptures about the power of the faith-filled tongue:

- The mouth is a well of life (**Proverbs 10:11**).
- Your mouth can destroy your neighbor (**Proverbs 11:9**).
- Your mouth can overthrow or exalt an entire city (**Proverbs 11:11**).
- An upright mouth can deliver you from harm (**Proverbs 12:6**).
- The mouth produces fruit that can satisfy you (**Proverbs 12:14**).
- The wise tongue is healing and health (**Proverbs 12:18**).
- A man eats good by the fruit of his mouth (**Proverbs 13:2**).
- The tongue can bring healing, and it is a tree of life (**Proverbs 15:4**).
- You can declare a thing and it will be established (**Job 22:28**).

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Lesson 2

How To Get Faith

Everyone, whether lost or saved, has a measure of faith.

- **... but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**
Romans 12:3c

Everyone has the ability to believe, and God gives man the free will to believe whatever he wants. However, the Bible tells us what to do with this faith: *believe God*.

Some believe there is no God, others believe there are many gods, and still others believe in the one true God. Regardless of what is being believed, faith is in operation. You can believe anything you want, but believing it doesn't mean it is true or accurate.

Not all men have faith in Christ Jesus.

- **And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.**
2 Thessalonians 3:2
- **For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**
1 Peter 4:17

Faith is like human muscle. Every human has the same general muscular build with the same amount of muscles. Some develop their muscles and they become body builders. Others cover their muscles with a thick layer of fat. In the end we each have the same number of muscles, but we are responsible for developing the muscle of faith. So how do we develop the muscle of faith?

FAITH COMES BY HEARING

Every great believer desires to have greater faith in God. Jesus even commanded that we have faith in God (**Mark 11:22**). The disciples requested that the LORD Jesus would increase their faith (**Luke 17:5**), but there are no short cuts to great faith.

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

Faith comes by hearing. It does not come by having **heard**. You must hear and keep hearing. You will believe what you are hearing if you hear it enough. Jesus said you must take heed how you hear (**Luke 8:18**).

Faith in God's Word only comes by hearing His Word.

- God spoke to Abram and Abram believed Him. It caused Abram to become the father of faith (**Genesis 12:1-4**).
- An Ethiopian politician gained faith to be born again and water baptized after he heard Philip preach Jesus to him. He was able to believe with his whole heart (**Acts 8:29-40**). Hearing produces faith for *salvation*.
- Cornelius' household believed on the Lord Jesus as they heard Peter preach Christ unto them. The Holy Spirit confirmed their faith by falling upon them and filling them (**Acts 10:44**). This is another example of hearing producing faith for *salvation*.
- A crippled man heard Paul preach the gospel and gained faith to be healed of his handicap (**Acts 14:7-10**). An example of faith for *healing*.
- Disciples at Ephesus obtained faith for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit after they heard Paul talk about it (**Acts 19:1-7**). An example of hearing producing faith for the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost*.

To be strong in faith, you will need to develop a lifestyle of reading the Bible, speaking the Bible, listening to the Word being preached, and sharing the Word with other people. The foundation of strong faith is built upon the Word of God.

Faith can also be placed in man's word.

- Ten Israelite spies brought back an "evil report" about the Promised Land. All of the people believed them and murmured against God. They believed man's word though they had not actually seen the land for themselves (**Numbers 13:17-14:10**).
- Gossip and slander can affect your faith and change what you believe about someone, even God. Many Christians will even change their faith in God once they get to college or around philosophizing humanists (**Proverbs 18:8, 26:22**).
- The Bible tells us some Christians will even "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." They will listen to another voice and change their faith and doctrine (**1 Timothy 4:1**).

You must be careful what you are listening to. There are many opinions and perverse doctrines in the earth seeking to indoctrinate you. The world's system is run by satan himself (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), and he has his own propaganda machine he uses to pervert all of mankind. Stick with the Word of God and whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (**Philippians 4:8**).

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Lesson 3

What Faith Can Do

Faith is active. Faith causes change. Faith is never satisfied.

Hebrews 11 is often called the “Great Hall of Faith.” It lists great Bible heroes and what they accomplished by their faith. Let us see what others have accomplished with their faith. “Now faith is . . .”

FAITH:

- Obtains a good report (verse 2)
- Offers a more excellent sacrifice or offering (verse 4)
- Pleases God (verse 5)
- Moves you to action (verse 7)
- Saves your family (verse 7)
- Obeys God (verse 8)
- Steps out of its comfort zone (verse 9)
- Restores barren wombs (verse 11)
- Receives miracle power (verse 11)
- Passes tests (verse 17)
- Pronounces blessings (verses 20-21)
- Is not afraid of wicked rulers (verse 23)
- Refuses the world’s accolades (verse 24)
- Chooses to be a people of God (verse 25)
- Refuses the pleasures of sin (verse 25)
- Esteems reproach/persecution to be great riches (verse 26)
- Forsakes the world (verse 27)
- Keeps the commandments (verse 28)
- Walks with God through new paths (verse 29)
- Destroys strongholds (verse 30)
- Receives the Word and peace (verse 31)
- Subdues kingdoms (verse 33)
- Works righteousness (verse 33)
- Obtains promises (verse 33)
- Stops lions’ mouths (verse 33)
- Quenches the violence of fire (verse 34)
- Escapes murder (verse 34)
- Is made strong in weakness (verse 34)
- Fights valiantly (verse 34)
- Turns the enemy to flight (verse 34)
- Raises people from the dead (verse 35)

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Lesson 4

How To Activate Your Faith

James 2:17, 20, and 26 teach us that “faith without works is dead.” Faith must have some action to it. Faith is not something to be sat upon and collected. Faith must act. In this lesson, we will examine Bible ways to act on and activate our faith.

FAITH THROUGH SPEAKING

The easiest way to activate and release faith is through speaking. The spirit of faith believes, therefore it speaks (**2 Corinthians 4:13**). Speaking faith is the easiest way to act on faith.

- God spoke creation into existence (**Genesis 1 and 2**).
- Abraham trusted God and said so. “I and the lad will return again” (**Genesis 22:5**).
- The Israelites and the 10 spies did not have faith in God and their mouths said so, but Joshua and Caleb believed God and they declared so (**Numbers 13:26-33**).
- The three Hebrew boys declared their faith to Nebuchadnezzar, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king” (**Daniel 3:17**).
- The good fight of faith requires you to confess a good confession before many witnesses (**1 Timothy 6:12**).
- Hebrews exhorts us to hold fast our profession of faith (**Hebrews 4:14, 10:23**).
- The heroes of faith died in faith “confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (**Hebrews 11:13b**).

Faith is activated and released the moment you open your mouth.

FAITH THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Faith also obeys God. Faith honors God by obeying His will and Word. When God gives a direct order, whether through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, or the preaching of the Word, faith will obey it. Faith is a doer. You’ll obey what you trust.

- Noah built an ark at God’s command (**Genesis 6:14-22**).
- Abraham left his homeland at God’s command (**Genesis 12:1-4**).
- Moses challenged the greatest king of his day at God’s command (**Exodus 5:1**).
- Gideon destroyed his father’s pagan idols at God’s command (**Judges 6:25-27**).
- Numerous battles were won when they were fought as God commanded (**Judges 7:15-23; 2 Samuel 5:17-25**).
- Peter preached to the Gentiles at God’s command (**Acts 10:19-20**).
- John wrote the Revelation at God’s command (**Revelation 2:1**).
- The lame at the Gate Beautiful arose at Peter’s command (**Acts 3:6-8**).
- Peter let down his net at the LORD’s command (**Luke 5:4**).

- Peter and Andrew became fishers of men at the LORD's command (**Matthew 4:19-20**).

Faith is quick to obey God and His will for our lives.

FAITH THROUGH FAITH

Sometimes faith just steps out and does something, though there is no command or instruction. Because faith is of the heart (**Romans 10:10**), we often act on the things that are in our hearts, and this too is faith. We must be careful here, because not everything in our hearts is godly or God-pleasing.

- Many patriarchs were moved by their hearts to build altars to God. They wanted to honor God and consecrate themselves to Him. This was an act of faith (**Genesis 12:8; 26:25; 28:16-22**).
- Jonathan set his heart to defeat the Philistines and his armor bearer supported him. They acted on their hearts and were victorious (**1 Samuel 14:4-15**).
- David's heart moved him to build a temple for God and he began to act on it before Nathan the prophet forbade him (**2 Samuel 7:1-17**).
- David poured out water from the well at Bethlehem as a libation offering (**1 Chronicles 11:17-18**).
- Four lepers were motivated by their faith to go up against the Syrian camp. They risked their lives though they had nothing to lose (**2 Kings 7:3-11**).
- The woman with the issue of blood sought Jesus for healing after she had heard He was healing people. She acted on the faith in her heart (**Mark 5:25-34**).
- John Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas (**Acts 13:13, 15:38**).
- Demas forsook Paul at the end of Paul's ministry, having loved this present world more (**2 Timothy 4:10a**).
- Offerings are to be given based on the faith in our heart and how our hearts motivate us to give (**2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7**).

We will act on whatever is in our hearts because faith acts and faith is of the heart. We must examine the contents of our hearts and make sure our faith lines up with what God is saying and doing.