

The Life of Faith

Parts 1 and 2

Hebrews - Chapter 11

If human hearts are not changed, then all of the good that is coming will not last. There is a heart condition that needs to be healed. We've been given a window and an opportunity by the mercy of God towards us to rise up and make a difference. We need to prepare ourselves for an engagement, and pray for revival, spiritual awakening, and for the miraculous.

2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

The Bible says that we live by faith, we walk by faith, and that this journey we're on is called *"the Faith"*. The word "faith" is mentioned in the New Testament 244 times in its original Greek form. It's an important issue, and God has called us to *live* a life of faith. Faith means we're believing for what's bigger than what is - seeing what we can't see - but with the eyes of faith, we can see something beyond what we're experiencing right now.

1] Faith is total trust in God's character

That's what faith is, and we need to understand that before we can employ faith, embrace faith, walk in faith, apply it and deploy it into our lives. Trust is the linchpin that everything turns on, and that is, do we trust the character of God? Most of our faith-failures come from not trusting God's character or what he says - what his Word teaches us. Faith ultimately rests in the character of God because he is *trustworthy* - we can trust *him*.

2 Timothy 2:13 ESV

"If we are faithless, he remains faithful - for he cannot deny himself."

1 Samuel 15:29 NIV

“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.”

God is faithful, and what he promises, he will do, and we must apply our faith to that.

Romans 3:4 LSB - God will never deny himself. He will never lie.

“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.”

Our faith will never be able to reside completely in a world leader. It must reside in God and in God alone.

Hebrews 6:18 LSB

“So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.”

The Bible word for “hope” literally means “a joyful and confident expectation of a desired good.” God has good things planned for us, but along the path, there can be pain and resistance. James makes it clear there will be trials that will come, because we live in a fallen world. But, we have faith in the character, the nature, and the goodness of God, that, no matter how hard it gets, or what we go through, it’s going to be okay.

2] Faith is complete confidence in God’s Word

This is where we decide, *“Am I going to build my life on God’s Word, or on my circumstances and how I feel in the moment?”* We can’t just trust our feelings on any given day, but we want to be diligent to line up with the Word of God and to be faithful. Our confidence is in his Word, not in our own mood for the day. We persevere through pain and suffering, and do the right thing. Even when we don’t feel like it, we’re to be “good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ”.

When God says something contrary to what we feel in the moment, we’re still obligated because we trust him and believe that he has been faithful to *us* even through his pain and suffering on the cross. God’s Word has a plan and a promise to see us through our feelings so we can say with Jesus, *“Not my will but Yours be done,”* every day, for a long period of time - “long obedience in one direction.”

Hebrews 11:1 ESV

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

2 Timothy 3:16 ESV

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”

There is a *cost* to following Jesus. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called “The Cost of Discipleship”, which said, *“Jesus bids a man come and die.”* There’s a cost to this, and he paid with his own life.

John 17:17 ESV

“Sanctify [develop, set apart, train] them in the truth; your word is truth.”

If we believe God’s Word is Truth, then we have no other choice than to obey. But, if we don’t know what it *says*, it’s hard to *obey*. The Bible reminds us that we have something to do - something to correct - something to adjust in our life. Faith is complete confidence in God’s Word.

Psalms 119:105 ESV.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

God shows us the path with just enough light for a step or two in front of us, but we might get a prophetic glimpse of something further down the line in our journey.

3] Faith is agreeing with God’s Word even when it is contrary to circumstances

Sometimes, when we read the Bible, it’s not going to line up with what’s happening in our life. This is what it means to walk by faith - to re-align our thinking to God’s Word no matter what’s happening in our life in the moment - and God doesn’t show us everything we’ll face in the future, but we need to be faithful with what he gives us now. God’s Word is *true*, and we must stand on his Word and *believe* his Word, irregardless of our circumstances, what people say about us, or of a lack of our own self worth in the season. We remind God and ourselves that he is good and what his Word says is true.

Romans 4:19-21 ESV

“He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.”

Are we fully convinced that God’s Word is true, and that it’s true for us too? Do we believe that God is able to do what he promised? The enemy will say, *“Yes, but is He willing?”* That’s where we struggle, so we must trust in the character and nature of God. We have an opportunity right now to commit to God’s Word - to believe it even when it’s contrary to our circumstances. The nature of faith is that it starts to work with time and development.

We set things into motion when we *believe*, and we need to give God time to make the moves, instead of saying, *“Well, I prayed, but it didn’t work.”* We believe God’s Word, and then *trust* that he’s working. If what we’re asking is in alignment with God’s Word, then it’s in alignment with his will, and we can pray for it with confidence and believe that circumstances have to line up with the Word.

We start by believing and praying what God’s Word says, and then by faith begin to lean in to it and confess that God’s “system” is working. We trust the character and nature of God, and then pray and step back, standing on God’s Word and say, *“Lord, Your Word says it, and I believe it, and I choose to not be moved by what I see, think, or feel - but I choose to be moved only by Your Word, ...and I’m standing on Your Word!”*

When we came to Jesus, we came by faith. When we received the Holy Spirit and were immersed, filled, and clothed by Him, we did that by faith. We walk by faith, we talk by faith, and we live by faith. We pray by faith in Jesus’ name. Everything about our life is about faith.

Hebrews 11:6 ESV

“Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

“If you are willing to own your faith and do it with integrity, God will multiply your influence when you engage with faith. You don’t have to pray for a ministry. You have to start with the influence you have and tell the truth.” - Allen Jackson

“Look to see where God is working, and when you know where he’s working, that’s his invitation for you to align yourself with him and then join him in his work.” - Henry Blackaby

When our circumstances stand in opposition to what God has clearly said, proposed to us, and provided for us, faith declares that our situation must come in agreement and alignment with the will of God.

4] Faith is seeing the unseen

Hebrews 11:27 NASB

“By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as though seeing Him who is unseen.”

Hebrews 11:13 ESV

“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”

Faith allows God to paint a picture in our heart through the promises in his Word that becomes a tangible reality to our spirit and soul before seeing and experiencing it in the flesh. When we become that strong, we become stable, with our feet planted, and we’re no longer moved by winds of change, news, the world, or politics. People with big faith and bold faith, who aren’t afraid - whose feet are planted - will not be moved, no matter what comes their way because they’re anchored in God’s Word.

Walking by faith will lead us, in God’s timing, to the full experience of that which has been previously unseen (in the natural realm). God will give us a picture of what is to come because he loves us so much, so we have no reason to be afraid.

5] Faith is acting on the Word

It’s one thing to read, study, know, and to love the Word, but it’s a whole other thing to *do* the Word. It’s not really faith unless we *act* on it. Faith must be activated to be faith because faith is *substance*.

Hebrews 11:1 NKJV

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

If we say we believe something, we then have a responsibility to step out on it. At the end of the day, if we don't *act* on it, then we're not *in* faith. This isn't just about "doing works" - about getting busy so we can score brownie points with God. He loves us already, right where we are, but he's still our Father, and when we walk in faith - step out and act on his Word - it *pleases* him.

James 2:21-24 ESV

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

When faith is present, works will happen. We don't work to get faith, we work because of faith. When we have faith, works will naturally come out of that. We have real faith, not just a good idea. God wants us to activate our faith with good works, action, and activity.

Hebrews 11:17 ESV

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."

6] Faith is giving a good report

Numbers 13:30-33 ESV

"Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.' But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.' And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.'"

God had already told them they would occupy the Promised Land, so they should have known, if they trusted God by faith - why would they change their mind? Their circumstances didn't align with what God said, but they should have stood in faith against the winds of doubt, by confessing, *"But God said... and we will believe the Word of the Lord!"* Instead, they projected their own weakness, fear, doubt and unbelief."

A “good report” means choosing God’s assessment of the situation over others or our own. It will often leave us in the minority opinion. When God tells us what to do, we have a decision to make - to say, *“Yes, Lord, I believe Your Word, Your, nature, and Your character”* - or what we see with our own eyes or others. Will we follow God - stand for what he tells us to - and let everything else fall by the wayside? This is our moment to act - not to lean, but to stand and to *continue* to stand.

7] Faith is a decision that never wavers

James 1:6-8 ESV

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man [tossed between two opinions], unstable in all his ways.”

Once we make the decision and say we believe that God said it, our circumstances can’t move us, and we stand our ground. There comes a point where we have to put a stake in the ground and say, *“I believe - with what I know at this point in time - that God said this! I’m not going to lean, rock, or waver - I’m going to make a decision and I’m going to stand!”* We have to do that. Right now, there are people that we work with, live with, and play with who are looking for leaders in their life.

We become better leaders by reading God’s Word and by letting *it* read us. The Bible will make us great and give us influence in our sphere. People are looking for men and women who will stand boldly. We need to get rid of wanting to be liked, and be okay with wanting to be *respected*. There’s a big difference. We need to take a stand in faith and say, *“We will believe the report of the Lord!”*

Prayer

Father, in Jesus' name, we say Yes to You and we receive this Word. We stand on Your Word and trust that every time we pray and believe Your promises, that we're setting them into motion, and, because of Your character and Your nature, You are moving on our behalf. We're expecting breakthroughs we've never seen before because we're trusting that Your system is working, because Your Word is true. Thank You for the gift of faith that You give us - this measure of faith, with the opportunity to grow and expand it. Lord, we want to be known as people of faith - people who stand, even if we're in the minority, because we trust and believe Your Word. May we step into this new year boldly with faith, trusting that You're going to do something that will blow our minds this year. We trust You for it. We walk in faith for it, and we thank You for it. In Jesus' name. Amen