



Inner Growth - Faith 2

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7

Fight - 2 Timothy 4:7

Attitude - Philippians 2:14

Insight - Habbakuk 2:3

Time - Ecclesiastes 3:1

Heart - Acts 15:9

What is faith? In the short first version, faith is creating something into existence. However, that alone will not be sustainable unless the belief is there. The statement is true. However, this determination (as long as it is something good and right) will develop by the power of God through Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Still, there is a requirement on the part of believers or Christians that includes more than creating something into existence: to walk in faith, not by just what we see. What does this mean? To walk in the scriptures often means to live, act, and conduct in a certain way. To walk by faith is to live in the confident expectation of things to come, the belief of the existence of unseen realities, and allow them to influence us as if they exist.

An analyst would criticize that it is some imagined make-believe system. However, it is not that at all. When you trust in someone, similar to how a spouse will trust in their partner, they believe that anything is possible and follow their lead. No matter what others say or react, the believer will have their heart, mind, and approach to life set until it comes to fruition. Despite negative feedback from the public eye, the faithful will continue trusting God until the appointed time.

For example, if you are a student going to school and desire to be a dentist, you will take the necessary steps to become one. However, you do not have the license or the degree yet either. But still, you believe it and see yourself getting there at some point. A believer daily has that belief, the feeling, their mindset, that eventually it will develop as they pursue in that direction. Daily preparation and doing something towards that profession make it become a reality.

Believers rely on God to bring them to the place of receiving the desires of their hearts as long as they look for Him to direct their path. What is the first step of faith for people who desire to come to know and have a relationship with God? Salvation. The deliverance from iniquity. All human beings were bound and chained in the mire of sin from birth. The Act of faith is why believers serve God. How do people become Christians? Through Christ: that is the name for the people of God. Every day, the children of God get up, acknowledge, and trust Him for the day to guide them through it, which is a step of faith. The only difference between believers is the level of it: the result is by how they conduct themselves daily during encounters of all sorts of trials and tribulations, their fellowship with God throughout each day, their prayer life, praise, worship, making melody in their heart, all play a role daily as to where they stand.

There are also different areas of faith that Christians need to know and eventually will encounter as they continue firm in their journey with Christ. Besides walking by faith, other notables are Blind Faith, Having Faith, Justification by Faith, and Lack of Faith, where most new converts struggle as they develop their relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Faith is not relying on ourselves but on the power of God. How do believers do that? Our thoughts and focus must be upon Him as we live through it: Not in a worrying sense, but in a peaceful and depending way, which may not be simple at first.

Faith is a fight. There are two hundred and thirty-one instances of faith, with two in the Old Testament and the rest in the New.

The first one is an example of the children of God who did not put up a good fight.

They did not make an effort to do such.

The Israelites did not demonstrate it in their journey from Egypt to potentially reach the promised land with Moses as God's servant. Deuteronomy thirty-two, verse twenty, faith is first mentioned in the Bible. This scripture is part of a song in this chapter written by Moses designed to impress upon the Israelites that their whole existence resulted from God's faithfulness. However, their faithlessness had taken a toll on Moses, the other faithful helpers, and eventually God.

The Lord said, "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith." God expresses that He will make them and others see the fruit of such actions. There was no faithfulness in the relationship.

They were notoriously treacherous and had so often broken their covenant with God that they were not to be trusted when they made a profession of repentance. To the truth of this, their whole history bears witness.

But besides this, in another sense, the Israelites were destitute of faith. They did

not believe the words God had spoken to them and had no faith either in His promises or threats. The children of Israel put no trust or confidence in His glorious perfections, power, love, or faithfulness.

They have not a firm reliance on the truth and importance of what God did speak to them and on the divine attributes engaged to make it good. Whatever is not the object of their senses, they either believe faintly or not at all.

The other example is Habakkuk two, verse four, for the life of the right-doers who desire to follow righteousness and who will live by faith. The righteous differ from the proud and the ungodly, whose lives are not upright. The hearts of the honest turn to God, and they desire to be His children, to have a close fellowship with Him, and to obey His will. The righteous must live in this world by faith in God.

Faith is about attitude. The New Testament has many examples in the four Gospels, starting with Matthew eight, verse ten, in the healing of the centurion's servant. The entire narrative begins with verses five through thirteen, where this centurion was a heathen, a Roman soldier. Though he was a soldier, he was a godly man. Herein, the centurion owns him to have Divine power over all the creatures and control of nature as a master over his servants.

The centurion's faith surpassed anything that Jesus found among the Jews, for it combined a loving concern for another person with great trust in Christ. This example, along with Christ's application to the unbelieving Jews in verses eleven to twelve, warns us that we will not be in what God is doing by adhering to human traditions or failing to believe in the power of his kingdom. The centurion appealing to God regarding his servant got the attention of Jesus. He replies that he will come to heal the man in verse seven.

However, the man went further to say to

the Son of God to speak the word, and my servant shall be well.

In the same chapter is another example of faith with the storm stilled that starts from verses twenty-three through twenty-seven. The key verse is twenty-six. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Though it had all drifted away under the pressure of their fears of the disciples. They had not altogether lost their trust in Him, but they had not learned the lesson of the faith from the centurion and were only at ease when they heard the voice of Jesus and saw that He was watching over them. Jesus was sleeping on the ship with the disciples there when the storm became dangerous. The disciples had the Son of God with them but still was fearful. His human nature, like ours in everything but sin, was wearied, and he slept at this time to try the faith of his disciples. They, in their fear, came to their Master. The centurion's faith, who met Jesus, said to speak the word while the disciples who were steadily around Him went to Jesus looking for one.

The example between the centurion and the disciples shows it does not matter what status we have. We need the measure of faith in God and not ourselves. The right attitude will require the proper mindset for faith to operate. The centurion's situation is many would have waited for Jesus to come and heal their servant after He said He would come. However, the response in the bottom part of verse eight of Matthew eight after the statement made by Jesus, "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed," is unique.

Faith is about insight. The Shunammite woman in Second Kings four, verses eight through thirty-seven, is about that, although not mentioned in this chapter. The woman is a wealthy married woman in the village of Shunem. She had no child. This woman got permission from her husband to set up a guest room for Elisha,

acknowledging Elisha as a true prophet and holy man of God. Elisha often passed that way in his travels and stayed in the guest room.

Elisha asked his servant, Gehazi, how he could help the woman in return for her hospitality. Gehazi mentioned that she had no son and her husband was old. Elisha then called the woman and told her she would have a son this time next year. The fulfillment of the prophecy came to pass, and the Shunammite woman had a child, but the story was not over. Several years later, the child came down with some sickness and died that day in her lap. The woman immediately left to find Elisha and asked him to come to heal her son. Elisha came back with the woman to Shunem. The Shunammite woman was a faithful woman and received a reward from God. She was rich, yet her heart was not on her wealth but on helping the prophet Elisha by building a guest room. She had no motive but only of service to the man of God. Still, the Lord blessed her with having a child. Several years later, facing the adversity that her child died, she did not question the situation or look to use her wealth as a remedy to resolve the matter but hastily looked for Elisha to aid in this situation.

The Shunammite woman recognized the presence of God in Elisha. She did not begin to murmur or complain about her situation but acted in faith, which describes the narrative from verses twenty-one through twenty-six. She put her faith in God to do something and moved in obedience. Since God gave her a son through His servant Elisha, why not restore her child to life? The following verse proves how powerful faith can be when you believe.

In verse twenty-five of chapter four of Second Kings, Elisha viewed the Shunammite woman afar and summoned Gehazi to question her before her coming to him. Why did the prophet do that and

not just let her come? And she answered, It is well: Her answer was purposely brief and vague to Gehazi, for she reserved a full disclosure of her loss for the ear of the prophet himself. She had met Gehazi at the foot of the hill, and she stopped not in her ascent till she had disburdened her heavy-laden spirit at Elisha's feet.

However, that could be the case, but Elisha may have wanted to know where her faith lies in her answer to Gehazi. Who is to say that he does not know what happened to her?

Faith sometimes takes time. Not every problem will have a quick resolution. Some will be gradual and require patience, which many of us do not have. Hebrew eleven in the New Testament is the 'by faith chapter' that summarizes many of these verses as instances in the Old Testament. In verse thirty, it reminds us of the walls of Jericho.

Joshua six, one through twenty-seven, demonstrates the power of God with the walls of Jericho falling. In ancient warfare, such cities were either taken by assault or surrounded, and the people starved into submission. Its invaders might try to weaken the stone walls with fire or tunneling or heap up a mountain of earth to serve as a ramp. Each of these methods of assault took weeks or months, and the attacking force usually suffered heavy losses. It would require a lot of faith if done this way.

However, the strategy to conquer the city of Jericho was unique in two ways. First, the plan of action was by God Himself through His servant Joshua, and second, the strategy was a seemingly foolish plan. God told Joshua to have the people march silently around Jericho for six days. Seven circuits later, on the seventh day, to shout. When the people did give a loud outcry, the massive walls collapsed instantly, and Israel won an easy victory. God had given the city of Jericho to them before they even began to march around

its walls, as in Joshua six, verses two and sixteen. It was when the people of God, by faith, followed the commands of God that the walls of Jericho fell, as in verse twenty. The follow-through is the work where it is in operation. God says it is ours. We now have to get our faith there, which requires the activity.

Faith is purifying the heart. We see from the words purifying the hearts by faith that justification by faith and sanctification by the Holy Ghost cannot be separated. Both are the gift of God. We have great cause to bless God that we have heard the gospel. May we have that faith which the great Searcher of hearts approves and attests by the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Purifying our hearts and consciences will free us from the guilt of sin and shall be from the burdens some try to lay upon the disciples of Christ.

The biggest challenge to faith is when the enemy will use the ungodly to stop our faith with negative talk to implant pessimistic thoughts about whatever God has given way for us to proceed and accomplish. Noah built a large boat as described in Genesis six, verse fourteen, to the end of chapter eight. The boat was huge, as the other ships made in our time: very long, wide and deep, with a roof over it. He made a long, wide house in three stories but so built that it would float on the water. Such a ship as this was called "an ark." God told Noah to build this ark and to have it ready for the time when he would need it.

Noah did what God told him to do, although it must have seemed very strange to all the people around, to build this great ark where there was no water for it to sail upon. And it was a long time because this ship was so big that Noah and his sons were at work building the ark, which God had told them to create, while the wicked people around wondered and no doubt laughed at Noah for constructing a great ship where there was no sea.

So, what is faith? It is more than a bucket list of things that we may ask of God? It is the requirements He will ask of us through His Word. Most of us see money as the way to do it before whatever it is we need to see it happens. God does not need money, but we think we do. God did not make heaven, earth, and us with money. Only His Word brings things together, so let us use His Word today and let faith take its course.