



Outer Growth - Faith 3

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Romans 1:17

Focus - Proverbs 4:25

Actions - 1 Samuel 2:3

Inside - 2 Corinthians 4:16

Think - Proverbs 16:3

Head - Ecclesiastes 1:18

Faith. What contends against it is the opposition, resistance, that fights you not to believe but forces you to stay and say against what you are trying to receive. Many people may say it, some folks may act it, but how do we live it? To live by faith is to live well. For believers, in Second Kings four, verse twenty-six, Elisha, the man of God, said to Gehazi, his servant, "Run now, I pray thee, to meet her (the Shunammite woman), and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

Live well. Love much. The latter part of Galatians five, verse six, "but faith which worketh by love." Faith in Christ, the devoted attachment to Christ, is the great motive power, the source or mainspring of action; and the law by which that action is regulated is the law of love. Faith makes a man seek to do the will of Christ; love tells him what that will is. Live well. Love much. Laugh often. Laughter is good for the soul and is first mentioned in Genesis eighteen, verses twelve through fifteen. "Therefore, Sarah laughed within

herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed, I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

However, Sarah's laughing was not a laughter of faith, like Abraham's, as in Genesis seventeen, verse seventeen, but a laughter of doubting and distrust. The great objection for Sarah is that she could not get over was her age. "And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken, as in chapter twenty-one, verse one. In verse six, "And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. God made Sarah receive her child despite her unbelief; the miracle of the son came to pass for Abraham's sake.

"The just shall live by faith" is the latter part of Romans one, verse seventeen. The righteous, the right-doers. It is easy to say we have faith and quote scriptures of faith from the Word of God, but living by it during the test that comes is the difference. There is a chorus from a famous hymnal, "Living by faith."

Living by faith in Jesus above
Trusting, confiding in His Great Love;
From All Harm Safe In His Sheltering Arm,
I'm Living By Faith And Feel No Alarm.

The summary of this chorus reminds believers not to worry and to trust God in challenging situations, knowing in their hearts that He will see them through.

"Living by faith" begins with focus. "Let thine eyes look right on" to the path of truth and holiness, without turning or looking to the right hand or left, as it is afterwards expressed; to the word of truth, as the rule to walk by. To Christ, the author and finisher of faith, from whom all grace, and the supplies of it, are to be had; and to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God. "Thine eyelids look straight before thee" to the precepts of the word, to observe them; to the promises of it for encouragement; to the examples of the saints gone before, as motives to excite diligence, and to exercise patience, faith, and hope; to

the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life, and to the blessed hope laid up in heaven. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God, as in Romans ten, verse seventeen. The Word of God stirs up faith because it is in our hearts already.

The center of our attention should not be on our past that led to the problem, but the focus on overcoming our past by envisioning the victory of changing the past now. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned, as in Matthew twelve, verse thirty-seven. In Exodus fifteen, verse twenty-two, "So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water." Where they were, the water was bitter in Marah. In verse twenty-four, "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" The following verses, twenty-six to twenty-seven, of Exodus fifteen, are an example to the Israelites to prove them. "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee." And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." Like God's chosen people, like believers, are we going to focus on His Word and believe what He said? Or are we going to focus on the problem and continue to be one?

Faith will depend upon actions. The old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." This is where living by faith begins. What are we going to do now? We heard the Word of God: Are we going to follow it? "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments, as in Leviticus twenty-six, verse fourteen.

In First Kings four, verse eight, the Shunammite woman's faith was tested. She was blessed with a son, as in verses eight through seventeen, she was severely tested with her son's sickness being taken by her in verses eighteen to twenty-one, and God

restored her son's life as she held firmly to God's Word of promise.

Her child in verse nineteen, "And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother." Then sat on her knees and then died. "And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out, as in verse twenty-one. "And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again," in verse twenty-two. The following verse, "And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him today? It is neither New Moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well."

The Shunammite woman remembered that God, through His servant, in verse seventeen, blessed her with a son. Immediately, she took action and did not express any negative reaction or words to the situation of her son. The Shunammite woman moves in faith toward God after quoting words when receiving a challenging question from her husband. She said, "It shall be well." Her faith in her response gives permission to God to fulfill what she believes. In Ephesians four, verse twenty-seven, "Neither give place to the devil." The Shunammite woman denies access to the enemy with her actions or with her words.

"Living by faith" will be determined by the "inner person." In Ephesians three, verse sixteen, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." To have the "inner man" strengthened by His Spirit is to have our spirits energized with His life and to bring our souls (feelings, thoughts, purposes) more and more under His influence and direction so that the Spirit can manifest His power through us in greater measure. The purpose of this strengthening is that Christ may establish His presence in our hearts, that we may be "rooted and grounded" in the revelation of Christ's love for us, "with all the saints" with full comprehension, and that we may be filled with "all the fullness of God." That the presence of God may so fill us that we reflect from our innermost being the character and stature that belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does all this have to do with faith? The inner person (our spirit) is what connects us to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man can only come through the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of God. Remember, God created all things by His Spirit. Look how He formed the earth. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," as in Genesis one, verse two.

Therefore, for believers, for faith to work with the works, it will need the enablement of the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah four, verse six, God spoke to Zerubbabel. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Although this message was spoken to Zerubbabel, it applies to all believers. Physical might, outward power, or human strength will not accomplish the work of God. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," as in Hebrews eleven, verse one. By the Spirit of God, for believers, the evidence will come from the realm of the spirit into the natural. However, if the spirit of the believer is not in unison with God, how can the believer sustain that belief? "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," as in Second Corinthians four, verse sixteen. If saints are in close devotion to God and connected to the Holy Spirit, the faith will manifest by the Spirit of God and work through the Holy Spirit. Yes, many people, with faith, or belief and works, working towards their goal, receive it. However, it depends on what that is; if it will draw them closer to God or away from Him later in life. The purpose of the believer is to know God and the Holy Spirit through His Son, the three in one. You know them, and everything you desire that is good and not ungodly is yours, as in First Corinthians three, verses twenty-one through twenty-three. "Therefore, let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are

yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

How we think can stop our faith from working. There are many godly people today, saints, believers, however you see yourself in God, claiming to have faith and believe. Yet, they think negatively. They worry over a circumstance, which they are in now, and that will not prompt their faith to move. Faith moves from "I want" to "I have" because it begins in the spiritual realm, and then later manifests in the natural.

However, if a Christian says or claims they believe in whatever they ask God for, but dwell in the past or remember failures that relate to what they are trying to achieve now, and see no actual result, what do you expect? Can a believer say they have faith in one sense, then think the opposite in another sense? That is like a person moving forward one step, but then the wrong thoughts make that same person step back. It is no different than a person in their thoughts thinking like this, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, no, I can't! It stops faith from moving.

A believer can quote all the faith scriptures they want, but if the thoughts differ, then our faith will suffer and produce nothing. Change the way you think. Change the way you look at things. Forget the past! Because if you don't move on from it, you will remain a prisoner of it! And if you have someone in your environment who speaks about your negative past and continuous negative experiences that truthfully did happen, they can influence you to remain a negative thinker. Have to keep a distance from those people if we desire things to change.

The Israelites who escaped Egypt through the Red Sea by God through His servant Moses and his brother Aaron, were led into the wilderness, where they lacked food and water. After all the miracles they witnessed and experienced, this is where their faith was in Numbers eleven, verse five, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." The Israelites started to complain.

Human achievement does not always work how we expect. Particularly, for believers, the solution calls for something higher than human wisdom, philosophy, or ideas. "That wisdom comes from above," as in James three, verse seventeen, "hidden wisdom God ordained before the world," as in First Corinthians two, verse seven.

Faith. What contends against it that fights you not to believe but forces you to stay and say against what you are trying to receive? The devil will attempt to distort your focus.

Suppress your activity towards what you are trying to achieve. Corrupt your inside with sin and try to use your flesh against the inner person, fill your mind with things to distract, put stuff in your head to stop you from believing and receiving.