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The Gift of Faith

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(Ephesians 2:8)*



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The Gift of Faith

We cannot please God without faith, we cannot be saved without faith, and we cannot have peace without faith. Without faith we have no Christian life.

This paper reveals the blessing of faith, the faith that pleases God, how we grow in faith, and how faith gives life to the fullest. God will give us as much faith as we desire, we have to know how to attain it.

The Blessings of Faith

Two of the greatest blessings from faith are (1) we are saved by faith, (2) and it pleases God.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians: 2:8)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

We cannot please God without faith, but we can please God with faith. We are blessed when we please God and we are saved by faith.

The more we trust the Lord the more peace, joy, confidence, and security we have. Our faith gives us strength to endure hard times in life and faith leads to our eternal life.

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. (Isaiah 26:3)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

We show our faith to the Lord when we obey his Word. We show our faith by trusting the Lord to lead our life, knowing his way is better than our way. He knows what we need better than we do, understands the circumstances of our life better than we do, and guides us through life better than we can. Our faith tells us all things are possible for God and that his love for us is perfect.

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

David, second king of Israel, trusted God to lead him through life. The Lord was pleased with David, because he believed and obeyed. Nothing pleases God more than when we show our faith by obeying his commands.

***After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'* (Acts 13:22)**

God could depend on David to obey his will. We live the divine plan God has for us by trusting the Lord and obeying His will. This will give us security because nothing or no one can keep God from fulfilling his plan for our life.

Believe

How can we have faith if we do not believe God's Word? If there is anything in the Word that we do not believe or doubt, it will destroy our faith.

We can believe God's Word because we know all things are possible for God. Faith is believing God's Word.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Faith comes from reading the Word, revealing God's Word is true and he always keeps his promises.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:17)

And being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. (Romans 4:21)

Read the Bible and learn the promises from God, and pray using God's promises. Believing God's promises brings glory to God, and Christ said our prayers will be answered when it brings glory to God, (John 14:13). Trust in the Lord, because we endure by his perfect love and his promises.

....it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6:18-19)

God cannot lie is an anchor to our soul, increasing our faith in the Lord. God will keep his promises according to his timing and his will, which may be different than our timing and our will. We believing God's promises and we know his timing and his will are perfect.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)

Praise the Lord that his thoughts and ways are above ours. He understands us and our situations in life better than we do, and he has the perfect answer to our prayers. When we accept this truth our belief increases tremendously.

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. (James 2:23)

We are God's friend when we believe his promises and have the faith to walk according to his will. God's love is more than we can imagine and to obey his will is to walk in his love.

The Faith that Please God

What does God expect in terms of faith? How much faith do we need to please God? We will look briefly at the story of Job because God taught Job the meaning of faith.

***In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.
(Job 1:1)***

Job was a man who worshipped and trusted God. Then one day tragedy struck Job.

One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the

house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. (Job 1: 13-22)

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. (Job 2:7)

In a matter of hours tragedy struck Job's family, his sheep, oxen, and camels. Job was covered with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Throughout the book of Job, his three friends and his wife tried to advise him. Job remained faithful to God, but wanted to know why all this tragedy was happening to him. This is God's reply.

Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. (Job 38:1-3)

God continues by describing things that can only be done and understood by God in his infinite power and wisdom. God was telling Job that he could not possibly understand all the ways of God.

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? (Job 38:4-5)

After God finishes speaking to Job, Job gives God his final answer.

Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that

obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand things too wonderful for me to know. “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:1-6)

The book of Job is a powerful lesson in understanding the faith that pleases God. Walk in obedience to God’s perfect loving will, no matter what happens in life. We trust the Lord for one reason, he is God, he is in control, and his love for us is perfect. Don’t expect to understand everything about God, his answer to prayer or his timing in answering prayer, but continue to praise God and walk in his divine will. It’s not important that we understand everything, but it is important that we know God understands everything. We continue in prayer and leave everything in God’s hands, trusting him to guide us through life making Godly wise decisions and being light in the world. Faith gives us great peace when we fully trust God in all situations, knowing he is in control.

Paul’s words to the Galatians summarizes how we live pleasing God, a life lived in faith. Paul had faith to surrender his life to Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Give God Control

If we give God control, it relieves us from the worries of trying to be in control. What does it mean to give God control? Does this mean we lose control? We do not lose control but we gain control, control of ourselves.

The longer we obey the Lord, making Godly wise decisions, our heart changes as our mind renews.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

"Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)

God renews our mind to be more like the mind of Christ. Our will begins aligning with the Lord's will, because we experience his will as good, pleasing, and perfect. We are now in control through the power of God as our will becomes his will. We are no longer directly controlled by the world, and we are no longer directly controlled by our emotions. Whatever happens in life we take to God and he guides us in his wisdom. This is faith, knowing God's ways are perfect. Faith is a blessing knowing God is in control, it takes the weight of the world off our shoulders. We trust God to guide us through life moment by moment, helping us to make Godly decisions, and overcoming whatever mountain this world puts in front of us.

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4)

If we trust the Lord, he will enable us to overcome the world. There is nothing in this world that we cannot overcome through the love and power of God, if we faithfully obey his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Depend on the Lord today; take the attitude that you cannot make it through the day without his divine guidance. Commune with God and invite him into everything you do today. Trust the Lord because he wants to help you through every situation of your life today. No detail of your life is too small for God and no detail is too large, he is interested in every aspect of your life and is willing to guide you with his infinite love, knowledge, and power.

Grow in Faith

The Lord has given everyone a measure of faith.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (Romans 12:3)

We are created by God to have faith. Our faith grows as we learn more about God and his promises. The better we know someone the more we can trust them, and the same is true with God.

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. (1 John 2:3)

This scripture states that if we are to know the Lord, we must obey his commands. We obey his commands by following Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit's guidance.

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)

We cannot bring Christ to others without the Word of God, because the power to minister to others is in the Words of God. We also cannot minister to others effectively without being in prayer. Christ knows exactly what the person we are ministering too needs to hear. If we are communing with the Lord we are inviting him into the moment, and he gives us his thoughts through the Holy Spirit.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5)

We will bear fruit in our ministry if we remain in Christ and he will remain in us. We do this by reading and meditating on God's Word and

walking in obedience to his will. Fellowship is essential to our faith because God speaks to us through other Christians.

Our faith increases the closer we are to the Lord; and we get closer to the Lord through obeying his commands. Necessary to obey the Lord and minister to this lost world; we must know his Word, be in prayer, and fellowship with other Christians. This equips us to follow Christ as he leads us in ministering to others, and ministering to others leads us back into the Word, prayer, and fellowship. This becomes the circle of love which fills our heart with God's love bringing us closer to God thereby increasing our faith. The more we realize God's love the more faith we have.

When we are serving the Lord through Christ, our heart opens to understand his perfect love and we become confident that we are following God's will. This confidence comes from God and is necessary if we are to believe his promises, because his promises are based on those who "love the Lord," and "called according to his purpose."

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
(Romans 8:28)

When God takes priority in our life we live for Christ, reflecting his love and compassion to others, we are confident and secure in Christ and we walk in peace. We now have the faith that pleases God.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3: 3-4)

Hindrances to Our Faith

Satan's goal is to convince us that we cannot trust God, and he does this by placing fear in our hearts. When trouble comes into our life, we may become anxious for God to help us. If we become impatient, fear

can move into our soul. Fear drives us inward and away from God. Instead of trusting God we start making our own decisions, taking matters into our own hands. This tells God that we do not trust Him.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Three hundred and sixty five times the Bible tells us not to fear. Fear drives us away from God, leads us toward self-centeredness, and fear is toxic to our mind, body, and soul.

Every Christian encounters fear because it is one of Satan's most powerful weapons. Although fear from Satan will attack us, we can overcome fear through the power of Christ.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

When fear comes into our heart we can be confident because we have the power to overcome. Through faith we give our fear to the Lord, asking him to guide us through the fearful situation with his wisdom and power. When we put our anxious moments in God's hands, we can feel the fear go away as God's love fills our heart; we have overcome Satan's attack.

We show our faith in the Lord through persistence in prayer. While we are waiting for an answer to our prayer, we commit our way to the Lord, letting Christ lead us to reflect his love to the world. Our prayers are answered as we trust the Lord and walk in obedience to his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
(Colossians 4:2)

Summary

The following six steps summarize the blessings of faith. Each step will help your faith and all six steps will give you the faith that God desires, and help you to grow in faith.

- 1. Read the Word and focus on God's love and his promises. Note that God cannot lie and always keeps his promises. The more we believe God's promises the more faith we will have.**
- 2. Pray with your request under God's promises, knowing he will keep his promises. Doing this will help us to overcome doubt when we pray and replace it with faith.**
- 3. Be obedient to the Lord because the answer to our prayer occurs during our obedient walk. Walking in faithful obedience to the Lord pleases him and blesses us.**
- 4. Know that God loves you more than you can imagine and his thoughts and his ways are above your thoughts and your ways, as the heavens are above the earth. He will answer your prayers perfectly and in his time. Trust God will give you the perfect answer at the perfect time, this is faith.**
- 5. Walk with an attitude of confidence, always praising and thanking God. If we don't thank God for what he has done, why would he want to do more for us? Develop a thankful heart.**
- 6. Know that your faith pleases God and that you are saved by faith. God often tests our faith by answering our prayers at the eleventh hour. Trust and praise God always, even when things seem hopeless.**

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; (Psalm 37:3-7)