



CONNECT

FIRST STEPS - LESSON 12: FAITH IN GOD



Objectives

- New believers to understand the meaning of faith.
- New believers to understand the need for having faith in their Christian walk.
- New believers to demonstrate practical actions of faith.

Introduction

There was once a tightrope walker, Charles Blondin, who awed his crowd by crossing over Niagara Falls. When he walked back to the edge of the falls, he asked them if they believed that he could walk across and back again while pushing a wheelbarrow. The crowd cheered and said “YES”. He proceeded to do just that. He then asked for a volunteer to step into that wheelbarrow. Trusting God is like getting into the wheelbarrow! To believe God can do something miraculous is one thing, to trust your entire life to Him is another.

Other illustrations:

1. When you enter a restaurant, you would never give a second thought whether the food is poisoned.
2. When you board the bus, you are certain that you will reach your destination and would never once thought of checking the driver’s license or checking at the driver to see if he is falling asleep behind the wheel.
3. When you enter a dark room, you are certain that there is a floor that you are stepping into, you would never give a second thought whether you will step into a deep hole.

In our daily lives, we constantly exhibit faith in the things we engage in.

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for
and assurance about what we do not see.*

Hebrews 11:1

What Is Faith?

1. Faith is being sure in what we hope for

“Being sure” refers to being confident in and trusting God. “What we hope for” refers to the promises of God.

2. Faith means trusting God and His character

Some would say it is difficult to trust God as they have yet to see or touch Him. You can trust His character as described in the Bible. God would never go against His character and His promises.

Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

Hebrews 6:17-18

3. Faith means trusting God even though you do not see the answers

Have confidence in the promises even though you have yet to experience the results. Do not doubt God but know that God has His timing and His ways.

Assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1b

Why Do I Need Faith?

1. Faith pleases God

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

God is pleased when two things are reflected in our relationship with Him. (1) When we trust that He is real; and (2) He is rewarding.

2. Faith helps us to grow in our relationship with God

If we decided to trust someone, we will open up a channel of open communication, and deeper level of relationship. We will allow the person to speak into our lives.

Like any deep and abiding relationships, the more we journey in this relationship with God, the more we learn to trust Him (i.e.: faith) with our weaknesses or situations that we could not possibly deal with our own strength. Hence, we also open up our hearts to God in a greater measure to allow Him to speak into our lives. This will grow our relationship with God as we continue to learn that He is always faithful and trustworthy.

Mentor Chat

1. Read *Matthew 8:5-13*, what is Jesus most impressed with?

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralysed, suffering terribly."

Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

*When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "**Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.** I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

Matthew 8:5-13

Jesus was truly amazed by the centurion's faith. He demonstrated such faith in recognising the greatness of God's authority and power.

Reflection Station

1. What are God's promises for me?

Examples Of God's Promises

This is by no means an exhaustive list but it gives an indication of God's promises.

1. In Christ, everything you really need will be supplied

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

2. In Christ, the peace of God will guard your heart and mind

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7

3. In Christ, you have eternal life

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23

4. In Christ, you are sanctified and made holy

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours.
1 Corinthians 1:2

5. God's always blesses you in order that you can always be ready to do good works

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

6. You do not have to fear because God is always with you

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

7. Goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalms 23:6

8. God's grace is always sufficient for you in your weakness

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

6. God will always provide a way out when we face temptations

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

1 Corinthians 12:9

7. God will never leave us or forsake us

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5-6

Mentor Chat

1. Does it take a spiritual giant to have faith? Is it true that only pastors and leaders have faith because they know so much of the Bible?

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.

Matthew 21:21

Use this new language in private times with God and also in times of corporate prayer. This helps us strengthen our spiritual lives, receive help in times of weaknesses and receive empowerment in doing God's work. We need to be faithful in applying this gift. Our sensitivity to the Spirit's prompting will also increase as we pray more often.

Jesus said that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. All of us can have this faith. It is all about our attitude and trust in Jesus. It has nothing to do with our roles and functions in church.

Here the Bible shows us a God who can be trusted and relied upon! If Jesus died for us on the cross, it is true that we can trust Him for other things in life. Be like a little child and believe God at His word. Do not intellectualise or box God up with our own understanding.

You cannot pump up faith out of your own heart. Whenever faith is starved in your soul it is because you are not in contact with Jesus; get in contact with Him and lack of faith will go in two seconds.

Oswald Chambers

In the 20th century, the antithesis (the opposite) of Christianity is an attitude of relying on ourselves, believing that we can make it on our own, or a deep cynicism about life. For example:

- a. New Age Movement: To believe in self, or a cosmic power which is unknown.
- b. Free Thinkers/ Atheist: To believe in self, and anyway God helps those who help themselves!
- c. Buddhism: All is nothing and useless but I can try my best and hope for the best. However, Buddha is not sure whether he can attain Nirvana, the state of nothingness; so what about a mere mortal being?

2. What does putting faith in God mean?

It does not mean *"I am useless and I need a crutch"*. Rather, it means that I have a living God who will stick His neck out for me. I am going to listen to Him and trust Him, instead of going my own way. I am going to take God at His word and act upon it.

Faith is not sitting there waiting for something to evolve, or merely praying that things would happen. Throughout this lesson, it is emphasised that faith depends on choosing to trust God and His Word; and not on emotions or feelings at a certain point of time.

A faith that hasn't been tested can't be trusted.

Adrian Rogers

Examples And Application Of Faith

1. Faith and action

Faith means being active. For example, as we pray and wait for God to provide financially, we do our part to be thrifty and to look for a job.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes

and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:14-17

2. Faith in trials

Many times, God moulds our character and attitude during times of crisis and trials.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.

James 1:2

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

3. Faith in healing

Jesus healed a woman who has a bleeding problem for twelve years.

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

Mark 5:25-26

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Mark 5:34

4. Faith in approaching God

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

James 1:6

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Reflection Station

1. **If God loves me, why does He allow me to go through difficult and tough times? How do I know that God will not disappoint me if I trust in Him?**

When God allows us to walk through difficult and tough times, it does not imply that He loves us less. Similarly, when our earthly parents allow us to learn things through the hard way, it is because they desire us to have a deeper understanding and experiences about life. Likewise, God has His very purpose and reasons for allowing whatever situations to take place in our lives.

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

Sometimes, it is through difficult and tough times we come to appreciate life and the blessings of God in a greater measure than before.

In other times, difficult situations may be consequences as a result of our deeds and actions. It is never inflicted by God.

Mentor Chat

1. **Does faith accompanied by deeds in James 2:14-26 contradict the teaching that we are saved by faith and not by our deeds in Ephesians 2:8-9?**

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith

by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James 2:14-26

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

James 2:14-26 points to a believer’s genuine faith leading to corresponding actions. These deeds are the result of your faith in God. They are not the means to receive salvation in Christ. **Ephesians 2:8-9** reveals that salvation is by the grace of God alone, through faith. Salvation cannot be earned by our deeds. Grace is something we do not deserve and is given to us freely. We can only receive this salvation when we believe in Christ’s redemptive work for us on the cross. Hence, both verses do not contradict each other. Instead, they fully complement one another to give complete meaning to the process of salvation. Our deeds cannot save us, only faith in God can. But deeds will reveal whether we have genuine faith in God.

Conclusion

Faith is trusting 100% in God's Word, character and promises. At the same time, from this faith, we do with 100% of our best effort.

Real true faith is man's weakness leaning on God's strength.

D.L Moody

Memory Verse

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



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