

82. HOW TO INCREASE OUR FAITH

Bible Reading: Hebrews 11.

Aim: To apply these principles to increase our faith, and to step out to attempt great things for God.

Introduction: We are saved by faith in Christ as Saviour when, believing that He paid in full for all our sins and wants to save us, we then call on Christ to be our Saviour. Romans 10:13; John 1:12.

As believers, we must continue to walk in faith day by day. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2Cor5:7

QUESTION 1: What do we have faith in?

ANSWER: We have faith in God's promises in the Bible that they are true, and reliable. God can be counted on to do what is best and right for me, according to the goodness of His character and His loving purposes for me. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25.

QUESTION 2: How important is it to walk by faith?

ANSWER: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report." Hebrews 11:2.

QUESTION 3: How will having faith or trust in God affect my life?"

A:

1. I will not worry, but live in victory.
2. I will attempt more service for God.
3. I will pray more, expecting answers from God.
4. I will sin less, knowing that sin is due to mistrusting God's power to solve my problems.
5. I will wait patiently for God to work out His plans in my life, as I major on serving Him.
6. I will tell more people about Christ, believing that God's Word will not return void, but will accomplish that which he purposes (Isaiah 55:11). "A little faith will bring your soul to heaven.
A great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

I. DEFINITION OF FAITH

"Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped (expected) for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

It is a confident assurance that God will do what is right and best for us in what we hope and pray for.

II. BIBLE EXAMPLES OF GREAT FAITH

1. **Noah** prepared an ark to the saving of his house, even though he had never seen rain. Hebrews 11:7
2. **Abraham** left Ur at God's command, not knowing where he went. Hebrews 11:8. Abraham by faith, when he was tried, offered up Isaac....accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Hebrews 11:17-19.
3. **Joseph** kept himself from adultery with Potiphar's wife. Joseph stayed faithful to God in the dungeon jail with no knowledge as to whether he would ever be released.
4. i) **Moses** refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

- ii) Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season.
 - iii) Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. 11:26.
 - iv) Moses by faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King.
 - v) Moses endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.
 - vi) Moses by faith kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them." Hebrews 11:28.
5. **Joshua:** By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. 11:30
 6. **Rahab** received the spies with peace, risking her life. 11:31.
 7. **Gideon** with God and 300 men defeated 135,000 Midianites. Judges 6:1 - 8:10.
 8. **David** by faith faced Goliath, killing him with one stone. 1 Samuel 17.
 9. **Elijah** prayed for God to withhold rain for 3½ years, then prayed for rain. James 5:17,18.
 10. **Job** endured suffering, yet he sinned not with his mouth, nor charged God foolishly. Job 1:22; 2:10
 11. **Hezekiah** by faith promoted a revival. II Kings 18.
 12. **Nehemiah** by faith returned to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls. He faced great danger and opposition.
 13. **Isaiah, Jeremiah** and **Ezekiel** preached God's message to the Jews who persecuted them.
 14. **Daniel** prayed to God daily knowing that he would be thrown to the lions. "He was faithful." Dan 6:3
 15. **Four friends** of a palsied man let him down through the roof to Jesus to be healed. Mark 2:5.
 16. **Paul** and early Christians who started churches all over the world in the face of much opposition.

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH

1. When **Hudson Taylor**, the famous missionary, first went to China, it was in a sailing vessel. Very close to the shore of some cannibal's islands the ship was becalmed and it was slowly drifting shoreward unable to move. The savages were eagerly anticipating a feast.

The captain came to Mr. Taylor and besought him to pray for the help of God. "I will," said Taylor. "provided you set your sails to catch the breeze." The captain declined to make himself a laughing stock by unfurling in a dead calm. Taylor said. "I will not undertake to pray for the vessel unless you will prepare the sails." The captain agreed to Taylor's request.

While engaged in prayer, there was a knock at the door of his stateroom. "Who is there?" The captain's voice responded. "Are you still praying for wind?" "Yes." "Well," said the Captain. "you'd better stop praying, for we have more wind than we can manage."

2. This story is told by the captain of a ship on which **George Muller** of Bristol was travelling. During his life he received more than 1,000,000 pounds from the Lord, without advertising. Every penny came as an answer to prayer.
"We had George Muller of Bristol on board" said the captain. "I had been on the bridge for twenty-four hours and never left it and George Muller came to me and said, 'Captain, I have come to tell you I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.' 'It is impossible,' I said. 'Then very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years; let us go down into the chart room and pray.'

“I looked at that man of God and thought to myself, ‘What lunatic asylum can that man have come from, for I never heard of such a thing as this?’ “Mr. Muller, do you know how dense this fog is?”

No, he replied, my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God who controls every circumstance of my life. He knelt down and he prayed one of the most simple prayers. When he had finished I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray. As you do not believe He will answer, and as I believe that He has, there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.

I looked at him and George Muller said, “Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years and there has never been a single day when I have failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door and you will find the fog has gone. I got up and the fog indeed was gone and on that Saturday afternoon George Muller kept his promised engagement. Sunday School Times.

IV. BARRIERS TO FAITH

1. Sacrifice: When you think you’ll lose out in some way.
2. Reason: When God’s commands seem unreasonable.
3. Peer Pressure: When obedience means going against the crowd.
4. Suffering: When obedience is likely to bring you suffering.

V. HOW TO INCREASE OUR FAITH

1. **Hearing the Word of God.**

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17.

As we hear God’s Word at church, study it privately, and believe God’s promises to be true, our faith will increase. We must hear, read, study, memorise and meditate on God’s Word.

2. **Remember God’s Past Answers to Prayer.**

David strengthened his faith before he fought Goliath by remembering how God delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear. I Samuel 17:31-37.

Notice Saul’s lack of faith, compared with David’s great faith. God’s past victories encourage us to attempt great things for God today, and to trust God in the future.

3. **Obey God in What you Know Already.**

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.” Luke 16:10.

If you don’t do faithfully the little jobs that God has given you to do today, you won’t do faithfully the bigger jobs that God may ask of you later in life.

4. **Ask God for Great Things Daily.**

You will receive what you ask for if you ask in Jesus Name, according to His will. John 16:24 says:

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Ask in faith for wisdom, nothing doubting. James 1:5-7.

Ask God to give you a mighty impact on the world for Christ.

5. **Listen to the Holy Spirit’s Leading.**

Philip did this in Acts 8:26-31, resulting in the Ethiopian eunuch being saved.

As we listen to the Holy Spirit’s leading, we become more used of God, others are blessed, God is glorified, and we are encouraged to attempt more things for God.

6. **By Meditating on God’s Goodness of Character in the Bible.**

Notice how God loves us. He wants to bless us and lead us in the right way. Psalm 34:4-10,17-22. Psalm 37:8 says: “O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28.

7. **By Trusting in the Lord rather than Fearing.**

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” Psalm 56:3.

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.” Job 1:21.

Job continued to trust God even though he lost his wealth, health and children.

8. **Read how God answered missionaries prayers in the past.**

9. **Develop a Thankful Attitude**, thanking God for all things, knowing that God is working out His perfect will in our lives. “In everything give thanks.” I Thessalonians 5:18.

10. Study facts proving **Creation**, the Bible’s **Fulfilled Prophecies**, & proofs of the Bible from **Science** and **Archaeology**. These will convince us of God’s Word being true and of God’s care for us.

11. **Tackle Giants Courageously** in the Lord’s strength. Joshua 1:5-9.

12. Have a **Humble Spirit** seeing **my natural poverty** and **need of God**. God will look to such a man.

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, & trembleth at my word.” Isaiah 66:2

13. **Attempt New Things for God** to reach more people for Christ and to teach God’s Word.

14. **Be content if you are unmarried**, using your time to serve God. God will provide a spouse if He wills in His own time. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” I Timothy 6:6.

15. **Learn to Wait upon the Lord** for Him to provide our needs.

“I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry.” Psalm 40:1.

16. **Tithe**, developing our faith in God’s ability to provide. Malachi 3:7-12.

As we give money to God’s work above what we think we can afford, God continues to abundantly provide our needs. We then have faith to give more.

17. Be a **Clean Vessel**, and God will use you more. II Timothy 2:20,21.

“Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11.

18. Be **Filled with the Holy Spirit** daily. Be aware of God’s presence doing great things in our life.

19. Study to **Learn Soul Winning** and **Follow Up** by doing it. As people get saved and come to church through our outreach, our faith will increase.

CONCLUSION: Will you increase in faith? Will you apply these principles today?

“A coloured church congregation had met to pray for rain to release a long dry spell. The preacher looked severely at his flock and said: “Brothers and Sisters, you’ll know why we is here. Now what I wants to know is-where is you’ umbrellas?””

Will you attempt something in faith for God today, believing that God will bless your efforts? or will you have no faith, and attempt nothing for God?