

The Walk of Faith



*A simple explanation of faith
anyone can understand*

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*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the
commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

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Faith...

is an intangible attribute not understood by many; even some Christians do not understand it.

Before we consider what faith is, let us look at what it is not.

Faith is not -- to believe the sun will rise in the morning.

Faith is not -- to believe you will be paid at the end of a working week.

Faith is not -- to believe the fuel pump is accurate when you fill your car.

All three relate to experience. While it is dark, our expectation awaits the dawn. At the close of a working week, we anticipate the pay cheque. As we fill the tank of our car and watch the meter tick over, we assume it is correct.

Faith is not -- to believe your spouse will be faithful.

Faith is not even -- to believe there is a God.

Of course there are similarities, but faith is far more than just believing.

When we say goodbye to our loved ones, we trust they will be faithful. And if we simply believe there is a God, we hope He will watch over us.

Yes, these are like faith, but they are not the real thing.

According to the Bible, we do well to believe in God, but "the devils also believe and tremble." James 2:19.

Faith relates to Christianity and not to everyday life.

It will affect our daily lives, but it is not simply believing the things we hope are true.

Faith is not something we can place on the table and say, 'That is my faith'.

Even if a person says, 'I have a very strong faith in God', it does not necessarily mean they have any faith at all.

The Bible writer James illustrated this when he said, "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" James 2:15.16.

James likens this to a person who believes he has faith. He continues, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." James 2:18.

It is obvious that a man is deceiving himself who merely says to a beggar, 'Depart in peace and be warmed'. In reality this man does not have faith, for "faith without works is dead?" James 2:20.

Linking this to our examples of the sun, the pay cheque, the fuel pump, the spouse, and believing in a God, it is like wishing a beggar well, but not providing his needs.

Faith does something. It is active, but more about this later.

What then is faith? "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." Hebrews 11:1.

This text is a paradox with:

- (a) Two intangibles -- faith and things unseen.
- (b) Two tangibles – substance and the evidence.

We ask the question – How can an intangible faith be a tangible substance?

Intangibles are not visible. We cannot see them, feel them, hear them or smell them. The senses are at a loss to do anything. On the other hand, a substance is visible, touchable, feelable, and smellable. We can show our friends as we display it before them.

God says, FAITH = SUBSTANCE.

FAITH = EVIDENCE OF THE UNSEEN.

An illustration will help.

You see a block of land on the internet. It looks good. It is the size you want, the location is perfect, and the price is right. But the land is in another state and it is impossible for you to get there. So you ask a friend to look at it on your behalf. He reports back that it is an excellent property. Trusting your friend, you go to a solicitor and have the papers drawn up. You pay the money and sign the deed. The land now belongs to you, although you have never seen it.

The title you hold in your hand is the evidence that you own the block of land. The printed deed is the substance that proves the land is yours. It is a valuable document.

In other words, true faith becomes the substance for the things we cannot see. It is our evidence for them, as real as an actual deed of ownership.

How is this possible? It will become clearer as we progress.

We will now note something else faith is not.

Faith is not feeling.

Pamela was in a difficult situation and as it worsened, she became distraught. All she could do was crawl into bed, and there she stayed. Days later she was still in bed, but now sitting up. As I came into the room she said, '*I have my faith back.*'

I smiled, '*That's good*', but said no more.

Pamela may or may not have had faith, but it was not faith that returned, it was feeling. Time had healed her pain and she was beginning to live again.

Then there was Jack. He had just had a heart attack, and we were visiting him in the hospital. After pleasantries, my companion asked, '*How is your faith Jack?*'

Immediately the answer came back, '*What has faith got to do with it?*'

Again I smiled. Jack understood the difference between faith and feeling.

There was a time when I did not understand the difference. It was back in 1962. I had just become a Christian and decided to graph my walk with the Lord.

Each evening I marked the graph up or down according to my day. If I had a really good day, the line went up high; if it was not a good day, it would go down. Sometimes it was below the line of normal.

This story has helped me many times to remember that I am walking on the narrow path that leads to life, and if I want to stay on it, I must look at the facts of the gospel. The devil often tells me to listen to my feelings, and I have learned many a painful lesson by turning my head and saying, *'Hey Feeling, how are you going?'*

Whoohah... one negative word from feeling and I am down.

A quotation from an old testimony says it well. "Confound not faith and feeling together. They are distinct... Let your faith take hold of the blessing, and it is yours. Your feelings have nothing to do with faith. When faith brings the blessing to your heart, and you rejoice in the blessing, it is no more faith, but feeling." Testimonies Vol.1. p167.

The blessing in this quotation is not when the object of faith is realised, or when the prayer is answered, it is when our hearts rejoice in believing without a doubt that God will do everything He has promised.

This is God's gift to us.

Many years ago the only income I had was donations from friends -- \$20 here and \$10 there. I lived this way for four years, and it taught me much about faith.

After a year of regularly receiving sufficient money to pay off my car, food, rates, electricity, water, and every other household need, I was absolutely certain God would continue to provide, that I hardly gave it a thought. God had given me His blessing, and it was now sight. Of course I continually praised Jesus for His blessings, but it was no longer faith.

My ministry was to write books and tracts and send parcels to Africa. It was fulltime, and another job was impossible. But was this God's will? My friends Margo and Sylvia prayed with me for guidance.

The next day God revealed His will, *'Do My work. I will tell you what to write, what to call it, and I will provide the money.'*

After two years, the money slowed down. In fact, it almost stopped and the bills mounted. My son asked, *'Mum can you lend me \$20?'* *'Warren, I don't have any money in the bank and I have only \$20 in my purse.'* He replied, *'But if you walk down the street someone will give you money.'* My response was, *'That is true, but I don't take it for granted.'* He got his \$20, and sure enough a friend stopped me in the street and gave me \$20.

After a month of pleading with God I totalled my bills -- \$1500.

What was I to do?

I decided to tell no one and trust my heavenly Father.

On this particular day I remember kneeling at my little table for worship. *'Lord, You promised to provide for me if I did Your work. If I can't trust You to do as You promised, I can't trust You at all. I need \$1500 today?'*

Never before had I asked for something 'today', but it was prompted by God's Spirit.

As I walked home from the post office that afternoon, I noticed a long white envelope with no return address. I opened it.

In my hand was an anonymous cheque for \$1500!

The reward of faith, 'knowing' that God would provide, continued until the end of the four years. In Christian circles this is called a '*rhema*', a Greek word meaning an utterance, a personal message from God.

But there is a danger.

There are Christians who like to pray for the sick, believing God will heal. This is certainly recommended, as James says, "the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up..." James 5:15.

So in obedience to Bible counsel, these Christian men and women gather around the bed and pray. They 'know' the patient will recover, so they pray enthusiastically.

But he dies. The believers are devastated. '*We didn't have enough faith.*'

Unfortunately, their '*rhema*' was nothing but strong feelings.

Instead of focusing on God the great Healer, they thought their faith would save the sick, but faith does not have the power to heal.

Faith is simply the pair of glasses to see beyond ourselves.

There are Christians who say, 'Faith works', or 'Prayer works', but this is making it a formula, something magical. No, faith and prayer must be directed to the great God of the universe.

It is not, '*Is my faith big enough or strong enough to receive an answer?*'

After all, how much faith did Jesus say would move a mountain? "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:20.

This is another paradox. The smallest seed of faith can move a mountain! But it is not faith that moves the mountain, it is God.

We are not to have faith in our faith, and then think it is too small to move a difficult problem. No, our faith may well be small, but the God of the universe is great and powerful.

If the problem is demonic, we are told to add fasting to our prayers that we might have entire dependence on God.

Do not look at your faith.

We don't keep analysing our glasses and wondering if they will work; we use them to see around us.

It is the same with faith. It allows us to see the God who has promised to answer our prayers.



Faith is a gift to Christians.

It is true all men have been given the ability to believe in the unseen. If this were not so, new inventions would never be made, however, this is not faith.

Some men make statements like, '*I only believe what I can see*'. It is not so. When I replied to my unbelieving brother, 'You can't see your brain', he was impressed, but it did not make him a believer.

We all believe in things we cannot see -- love, peace, joy, and all the intangibles.

We see their effects, but not the gift itself.

All humanity has received natural endowments which give the ability to love and enjoy happiness in this life, however, there are higher qualities of character given only to those who surrender to Jesus and accept the salvation He offers. One of these is faith.

Faith is God's gift to all who surrender their lives to Christ.

Faith is the fruit of the Spirit.

When we surrender with grateful hearts, the Saviour gives us His omnipotent Spirit to empower us to obey Him -- "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27.

With the Spirit dwelling in us, we receive its fruit -- love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control. Galatians 5:22.23.

Faith is not for the purpose of believing we have received a full tank when we fill the car, or that we will receive our pay cheque. Instead it is to trust God's Word in our walk of faith.

Faith is not blind. It is based on solid facts.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Hebrews 11:3.

It is by faith we believe that God, as the Creator, organized energy into the things we see around us. Every human being is without excuse if they do not see evidence of a divine Mind in nature. Romans 1:20.

The beauty before our eyes – in the trees, mountains, oceans, flowers, leaves, birds, animals, stars – everything reveals a Master Designer.

Nature speaks to our senses every moment of the day. Hearts that are open to God will be impressed with His love and glory as revealed through the works of His



God has given them the gift of faith. Sadly, even after their wonderful deliverance from slavery, almost all of the two-three million Hebrews refused to believe God could take them to the promised land.

When they arrived at the entrance to Canaan, they could not enter “because of unbelief.” Hebrews 3:19. They doubted and complained. No matter how much God blessed them with His miracles of food, water, and protection, they still did not trust Him.

God was not pleased with His people because “whatsoever is not of faith is sin”; and “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Romans 14:23. Hebrews 11:6. The Greek word to describe their lack of faith is ‘*apistia*’, which means faithlessness, disbelief, disobedience.

God told Moses to tell the people, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Exodus 14:13.14.

As Moses raised his rod, the Gulf of Aqabah opened before their eyes. Amazed, but obedient to his command, the Hebrews stepped onto the sandy pathway and began walking from the beach at Nuweiba to Midian (now Arabia) on the other side. If they had refused, the Egyptians would have returned them to slavery.



As they walked across the 13 kilometre (8 mile) expanse, the water towered over their heads. Would it come crashing down upon them? No, the parting of the Red Sea had been prepared for their escape from the Egyptians.

After many miracles the Hebrews arrived at the border of Canaan, but they refused to believe God could defeat the inhabitants of the land. They moaned over the report of giants and cities surrounded by high walls, and crying out in disbelief, ‘*Would God we had died in this wilderness.*’ Numbers 14:2.

God heard their moans and replied, “As surely as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness... from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me... shall fall in this wilderness.” Numbers 14:28.29.

It is a sad history, but it is written as a warning for us.

Paul says, “Moreover brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea...”

“Now these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:1.11.

Do you want to have faith?

You must surrender and believe God will do as He says.

Presumption believes, but does nothing.

Faith is obedient.

In fact, faith and obedience are so closely linked, they cannot be separated.

The Hebrew people continued to complain about water, food, and the authority of Moses; God was not pleased. He had been protecting them from the serpents that inhabited the desert, but when they refused to stop speaking against Him and Moses, protection was withdrawn. Fiery serpents entered the camp, and many died from snake bite.

A delegation came to Moses. “Moses, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us.” Numbers 21:7.

Moses was told to make a brass serpent, put it on a pole, and lift it high above the camp for all to see. Numbers 21:9.

Those who looked were healed.

My question – what healed the people -- faith or obedience?

Think before you answer.

Was it faith?

Was it obedience?

The answer is that it was neither faith nor obedience. God healed them.

A man could have said, ‘*What good will looking at it do?*’ If he refused to look, he would have died of snake venom. However, even if his faith was weak, looking would have brought healing.

When your faith seems weak, remember this experience.

Obedience doesn’t save, but it makes faith perfect. James 2:22.

When the Antichrist legislates for earth’s inhabitants to obey his laws, God’s people will stand firm. They will not obey human laws that contradict God’s Ten Commandments, no matter what the cost.

God says of these faithful ones, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

Those who die for their faith will rest in the grave until the return of Jesus. When He descends in glory and the trumpet sounds, they will rise to everlasting life. Then the living faithful will “be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...” and will ascend to the heavenly kingdom, rejoicing that their faith is now a reality. 2 Thessalonians 4:16.17.

Faith in the sacrifice of Christ gives us our title for heaven, and the obedience of faith changes us to become spiritual citizens of the heavenly kingdom. We receive

righteousness by faith, and we are sanctified by faith. Romans 4:4. Acts 26:18. Galatians 5:6.

Obedience does not give us righteousness. Everything we do is tainted with sin. In fact, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6. Only Christ’s righteousness is perfect, and it is the gift of faith.

Sadly, many Christians do not understand the relationship of the Law to the gospel. They turn against it and become antinomian, a belief in the gratuitous reckoning of righteousness, but without obedience to the Law of God.

The death of Christ did not do away with the Law. If there was a way to save sinners without the cross, God could have spared His Son’s suffering.

But there was no other way. Punishment must be carried out and the Law must be maintained.

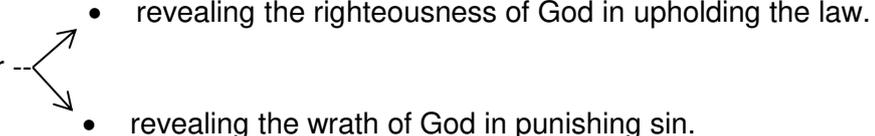
Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.... For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...” Romans 1:16-18.

The death of Jesus Christ gave two revelations of the love of God – His righteousness and His wrath.

Jesus died because **we** have broken the Law.

In His life the Saviour kept the Law perfectly, but to be our Substitute and pay the penalty for our sins, the “Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6.

The Saviour went to the cross bearing your sins and mine, voluntarily becoming “a curse for us”. Galatians 3:13.

Jesus died a sinner --


- revealing the righteousness of God in upholding the law.
- revealing the wrath of God in punishing sin.

Do you think God would do away with His Law after allowing His Son to suffer and die on the cross? It doesn’t make any sense.

If you are fined for speeding and receive a notice to say you owe \$199, would you expect the court to repeal the law that gave you a ticket? Of course not. To cancel the law is to cancel the charge.

In the spiritual realm it is the same, for “sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:6. “...by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20.

If the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross there would be no sin, no need of forgiveness, and no need of a Saviour.

God cannot abrogate His Law, any more than He can sin Himself. The Ten Commandments are a transcript of God’s holy and righteous character, albeit written on stone they are the letter of the Law and not the spirituality of His nature. Psalm 119:137-142.

Paul clearly tells us that we are “justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28. This means we do not obey to be justified; it is a free gift of God’s love.

However, once we have been justified by the grace and mercy of God, we will keep the Law out of love, both its letter and its spirit.

The purpose of the Law is to reveal sin, which in turn reveals the need of a Saviour. This is why Paul could say, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Romans 10:4.

Many use this text to prove the Law ended when Christ came to earth. The Greek word '*telos*' can certainly mean the end or conclusion, but it also means goal or purpose. Our text can be translated, "Christ is the *purpose* or *goal* of the Law for righteousness..." because it leads us to realise our need of Jesus who is our righteousness.

Comparing the subject throughout the Bible, one should never come to the conclusion that Christians do not need to keep the Law of God. However, we are no longer under the ministration of law. We are under grace, a ministration far more glorious than the Old Covenant ministration of law. (See further 2 Corinthians 3:1-11, Romans 6:1.2.6-18. 1 John 3:4-15)

Obedience is our love response to Jesus, for He said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' John 14:5. It is not to gain salvation, otherwise we could boast of our achievements. Ephesians 2:8-10.

Salvation is a priceless free gift.

In summary, what is faith?

1. Faith is intangible.
2. Faith is the substance for what we believe and the evidence for it.
3. Faith is like a title deed to a block of land we have not seen.
4. Faith is not simply believing in everyday secular events.
5. Faith is not feeling.
6. Faith is active.
7. Faith is not blind.
8. Faith bases what is believed upon evidence from God's Word and nature.
9. Faith is obedient.
10. Faith is God's gift.
11. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit.
12. Faith works by love to purify the soul.
13. Faith is walking from faith to faith, and not by sight.
14. Faith is the means by which God can answer our prayers.

Faith opens the door for God to answer prayer, whether for spiritual blessings or physical healing.

To the woman with the issue of blood, Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Matthew 9:22.

To the two blind men following Him, Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Matthew 9:29.

To the woman who poured perfume on Jesus' feet, He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Luke 7:50.

To the grateful leper, Jesus said, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Luke 17:19.

To the blind man of Jericho, Jesus said, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." Luke 18:42.

Faith allowed Jesus to grant their request.

In every case it was Jesus who healed, but it was their faith that made it possible. In Nazareth where the people refused to believe, Jesus was unable to heal the sick. Not that He was inadequate, but their attitude prevented Him.

So it is with us.

- We need faith every day to receive God's cleansing from sin.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Do you believe it?

If you obey the text, you can believe it.

- We need faith to receive the power to be obedient overcomers.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.5.

- We need faith to receive God's justifying grace.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 4:1.2.

Do you have peace?

If you have surrendered, it is a God's gift to you.

- We need faith to walk by faith. Romans 1:17.
- We need faith to accept the power of God to obey His Law. Philippians 4:13.
- We need faith to trust Him to supply all our needs. Philippians 4:19.
- We need faith to believe God will strengthen us. Isaiah 40:29. 41:10.
- We need faith to believe He will deliver us. Psalm 50:15.
- We need faith to believe Jesus is coming back again for His children. John 14:1-3.

And we need faith for so much more.

We must always:

1. Choose to trust God.
2. Choose to ignore feelings.
3. Claim a Bible promise.
4. Believe it.

Let us come back to faith being the *evidence* for things unseen with a story.

My friend Tita in Cameroon Africa wanted some cayenne. He had already received a very small bottle of tincture, but had used it all. I told Ruth and she said she would make him some. Sometime later my friend phoned and said she had mailed two bottles of cayenne tincture to Tita.

'What size bottles?' I asked.

'Two big bottles', she replied.

'Ruth, how big?'

'One is about 15 centimetres, the other bigger.' (6 inches)

I was horrified. Glass bottles sent all the way to Africa!

'Did you seal them?'

'No', she replied.

'Ruth what if the bottles break?'

'Oh I packed them well.'

'Yes, but thin glass bottles? They will take a month to get there and the handling is rough. What if they break along the way? The black liquid will ooze out, and other mail will be damaged. And what if someone gets a little on their fingers and they touch their eyes?'

'Well, it will sting, but won't hurt.'

'I know it won't hurt their eyes, but they will have no idea what it is and will panic.'

We talked for a while and then both of us went to the Lord. In my prayer I asked God to protect the bottles from breaking, with no custom's check. It would take two months before Tita's reply. How could I possibly wait in suspense for two months?

'Lord, I need something solid to base my faith on.'

I took my Bible and scanned through a few verses. Suddenly my eyes fell on a text in Matthew. I picked up the phone.

Listen to this verse Ruth. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you (*there are two of us*) shall agree (*we agree*) on earth (*that's where we are*) as touching anything (*anything Ruth*) that they shall ask (*we can ask*), it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven (*it's God's promise*)." Matthew 18:19.

We were excited and prayed together according to the verse.

I felt good, and was confident God would fulfil His promise to send an angel to accompany the bottles and not allow a custom's official to open the parcel.

But half an hour later the thought came, *'What if the bottles break?'*

In a strong voice I said, *'No, the problem is not mine any more, it belongs to Jesus.'*

The thought left, but in a few minutes it returned. Again I rebuked it, loud enough for the devil to hear, saying the parcel no longer belonged to me.

This continued throughout the next few days, but gradually became less and less, and for the greater part of the next two months I was not bothered with evil suggestions.

The Lord did not give me a *'rhema'* of blessing, but faith held on to God's promise until I received notification from Tita that the bottles had arrived safely without a custom's check.

In this experience with Tita and the cayenne, faith became the *substance* I held on to. It was my *evidence* that the Lord would fulfil His promise to me.

So long as I held on to that 'title deed', I was safe.

During the waiting period God showed me that I had obeyed His Word. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Both parts of this verse must be obeyed.

1. Submit to God.

In claiming the Bible promise and giving the bottles of cayenne to the Lord I had fulfilled this command.

2. Resist the devil.

In refusing to listen to the devil's negative suggestions, his subtle doubts were resisted, and in a short time he did flee. It was a powerful lesson never to be forgotten.

This lesson can be put into practice on a daily basis, as there rarely is a time when we do not need to claim a Bible promise for an answer to a need.

Even if you feel you have no faith at all, remember that faith has nothing to do with feeling. No matter how you feel, submit to God. Claim a Bible promise, and resist the devil's negative suggestions.

The biggest temptation when we feel discouraged is to want to talk our problems over with friends. We like to go into detail as to why life is hard, and we want them to listen. If they do not listen, we are hurt.

But this is the time for faith.

It is the time to put into practice the words of James 4:7.

Christian counsel is clear. "The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let

living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds. True faith rests on the promises contained in the Word of God, and those only who obey that Word can claim its glorious promises." Early Writings p72. E. White.

Do you have the fruit of the Spirit?

Or do you find yourself disgruntled, angry, selfish, complaining, and critical? If this is your experience, no matter how much you speak of faith or your works of faith, it is not faith, but presumption.

'But', you say, 'I go to church and read my Bible.' That may be, but you need to realise that the selfish, angry spirit is not that of Christ. You must ask yourself – Who has my heart?

Does my attitude contradict my profession? If so, the day will come when Christ will say, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:23.

It is serious enough to cause the loss of salvation.

We are to test ourselves.

Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." 2 Corinthians 13:5.

"Faith works by love and purifies the soul." Galatians 5:6.

John Wesley made this clear when he said, "Prove your own self by the infallible Word of God. If you do not have the fruits, effects, or inseparable properties of faith, you do not have faith." The John Wesley Reader, by Al Bryant, Word Books, 1983.

David wrote, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23,24.

If we have the Spirit of Jesus, we will have the fruits of the Spirit.

Do you want to know if you have true faith?

Look at your life.

Look at your motives and the relationship you have with your family.

Is your home filled with joy and patience? Is the Word of God uplifted? Do you pray together? Is daily Bible reading a pleasure? Do you attend church regularly, not as a chore or a social gathering, but to worship God?

You will know – if you are honest with yourself and compare it with God's divine standard – whether you are in the faith. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20.

The three most important fruits of the Spirit are – faith, hope and love. 1 Corinthians 13:13. And the greatest of these is love, self-sacrificing love.

Paul wrote in his chapter on love, "If I have prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I have all faith [so that I could remove mountains], but do not love, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2.

The word for love in the Greek is '*agape*', God's gift to those who surrender to Jesus. It is supernatural, and not a natural endowment from birth.

The Greek language has five words for love. The capacity for four is received at birth, but must be cultivated to be fostered and maintained, or they will be lost. The fifth is the gift of God at conversion.

If we have true faith, we will also have *agape* love, which is a love that sees the value of a soul. It does not matter who the person is, or how obnoxious they may be, our faith will see them as having great value, someone for whom Christ suffered and died. *Agape* will treat every human being as precious, and will tactfully do everything possible to bring them to Jesus.

If we have the fruit of the Spirit, even our natural love -- for our spouse, our children, our parents, and our friends -- will be changed. It will make us more like Jesus towards everyone.

The remainder of Paul's letter shows how the love of God behaves itself.

"Love has patience, is kind – love is not jealous, love is not vain, is not puffed up. Love does not behave indecently, does not pursue its own things, is not easily provoked. Love thinks no evil, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. Love

keeps confidential all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:2-8. King James II Version.

This is the character of Jesus.

It is by faith we believe that God has given these character traits to us by His Spirit. If you cannot see them in yourself and you know you have surrendered, it may be you are getting closer to the Lord. (If not, claim 1 John 3:20)

The closer you come to Jesus, the more you will see your faults, for your vision will be clearer. Your life will be seen in contrast to Christ’s perfect nature.

As you walk humbly along the path of faith, the fruit will grow and mature until it is fully ripe.

Martin Luther wrote, “...faith is God's work in us that changes us and gives new birth from God... It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing...”

“Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all His creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith.

“Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire!” Luther’s Definition of Faith. An Introduction to Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

How do we receive more faith?

The Bible tells us, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17.

We must read God’s Word. He will place the promises in our minds, but they must be put to use. When you find a promise, link it to a particular need in your life, and repeat it until its message becomes an experience. Then share it with others.

Faith grows with exercise.

“You have to talk faith, you have to live faith, you have to act faith, that you may have an increase of faith. Exercising that living faith, you will grow to strong men and women in Christ Jesus.” Faith and Works p78.

Then we can speak as if our faith is invincible. Often we are afraid to display our confidence in God in case our prayers are not answered, and we become embarrassed.

The problem is not in God, but in us. If we will just trust Him, He will reveal His glory.

When the devil tells you:

- You are too evil to be forgiven
- God doesn’t love you

- You'll never stop sinning
- You will never overcome

Hold up your shield to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Ephesians 6:16. At the same time, pull out your sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, for it “is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” Hebrews 4:12.

God will give victory to all who “fight the good fight of faith”, not using worldly tactics, but with His love and the Word. 1 Timothy 6:12. And “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4.

However, it must be repeated that we are not to concentrate on our faith. We must look at Jesus.

We do not need to ask the question -- Will I be faithful to Him? Instead we are to look at the unquestionable fact that Jesus was faithful *for me*.

In His walk of faith, Jesus never failed once. He fought battles every moment of every day, and the devil flung temptations in His path far beyond those you and I have to face. He understands overwhelming sorrow and pain; His suffering was intense.

Never forget that Jesus gained the victory for you and me.

If you can grasp this wonderful truth, your walk to heaven will be full of joy and peace. Jesus has won the battle, and because He has won, so will you.

Do you believe it?

Jesus has promised to guide us all along the sea of life if we trust Him, if we put our faith in Him.

Will you do that with me?

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2.

The path may be steep and rugged, but Jesus has travelled that way. His feet have pressed down the cruel thorns, making the pathway easier for us. Walking in His footsteps, our “path is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18.

As we walk along the sands of life, our faith will grow brighter and brighter, and the reward of the faithful will be ours at last.

Hallelujah!

Let Jesus wash away the trials of life
Look for the gems



Treasure life's precious gems

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