



**Module** : Foundation or Elementary Doctrines of Christ

**Session** : Essential Elements of Faith

**Focus** : Distinctives Characteristics of Faith

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Together with love and hope, FAITH is one of the three abiding, unending virtues listed in Scripture.

**1 Cor. 13:13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

As will be demonstrated in this series, all these three, faith, hope and love must be simultaneously present for each of them to have their fullest impact. None of these are designed to work independently of the other. Faith is the substance 'hoped' for according to Hebrews 11:1. So if you have faith you have hope. Hope cannot exist without faith. Then **Galatians 5:6** indicates that **faith works by love**. Love is the greatest of the three, but being the greatest, does not relegate the other two to an inferior position or non-importance. Anything 'greater' in God subsumes and incorporates those 'lesser' into it.

### **Faith's Object of God Himself**

Faith is more than an evangelistic concept that gets us saved or makes us believers. We are indeed 'saved by faith' (Eph. 2:8,9), but there is much more to it than this. We need faith for salvation – this is entry level faith. When we get saved and start to grow from infancy to maturity, at our infancy stage of spiritual development, we are for the most part focused on using faith to get things from God – to get our needs met, for example.

### **FAITH - THE CORE ESSENTIAL FOR ALL DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN LIFE**

Faith toward God begins with what God can do for you, but it cannot stagnate at that level. Scripturally, **faith is not primarily a need-centered concept as in us trusting God for things**. In some circles, 'faith' has been presented as a virtue which feeds the self-indulgence of some. Faith must be a **WAY OF LIFE**. Faith does not only relate our spiritual life, but also to the secular, domestic, vocational, etc.

Four Scriptures inform us that the **'righteous live by faith'**.

**Habbakuk 2:4** "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith."

**Galatians 3:11** Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “**THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**”

**Hebrews 10:38** BUT **MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;** AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

**Romans 1:17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT **THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**”

The word ‘**LIVE**’ encompasses **every aspect of our living and functioning**. The righteous ones live by the principle of faith. The Biblical teaching on faith goes far beyond the mere trusting of God for things. This is part of faith, but for the saints in the Bible, faith characterised their **entire existence**.

Life was inconceivable apart from faith. It was a basic condition of life. As breathing is to the life of the body, faith was **the core component of life** for saints in the Scriptures. For them faith was the core imperative – the essential ingredient to fulfilling the will of God upon the earth. To move out of faith is to cease to exist.

### **FAITH FOR SALVATION**

Apart from faith, it is absolutely impossible to please God.

**Hebrews 11:6** And **without faith it is impossible to please Him,** for he who comes to God **must believe that He is** and that **He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**

The beginning of living a life of faith starts with the acceptance of the existence of God: ‘***must believe that He is***’. Excelling in the life of faith is the portion of those who believe in God’s nature as a rewarder of those who seek Him. God will reward those who pursue Him – yearn after Him and unswervingly believe his Word.

To not have faith, is to be incapable of pleasing God and also be vulnerable to sin, which directly displeases God.

**Romans 14:21-23** ... and ***whatever is not from faith is sin.***

### **SAVING FAITH**

### **‘THE’ FAITH and ‘FAITH’**

The church, the Body of Christ, is described in many ways using many metaphors. One description of the church is the **'household of faith'**.

**Gal. 6:10** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. **(Nkjv)**

This implies the church ought to be a place of great FAITH and unswerving TRUST and BELIEF in God. The church ought to be characterized by faith in God. Faith expressed through works of obedience, not unbelief, doubt, fear, presumption or impatience should dictate the environment of saints of God in the **'household of faith'**.

In the NASB version of the Bible this verse references 'the household of THE faith'.

**Gal. 6:10** So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. **(Nasb)**

Generally whenever the definite article, 'THE' is used before the word 'FAITH', its primary reference is to the **body or principles of biblical truth or doctrine that one holds to and believes**. This then would obviously result in a disposition of FAITH (belief and trust) in God.

**Acts 6:7** The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

**Acts 17:8** But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

**Acts 14:21,22** After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

**Jude 1:3** Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

**Jude 1:20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on **your most holy faith**, praying in the Holy Spirit

**2 Tim. 4:7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

A study of **Hebrews 11** will reveal how specific individuals functioned by the principle of faith, and accomplished specific aspects of the will of the God for their own lives, their families, generation and nation. For the Old Testament saints, the word 'faith' was not even in their vocabulary. It was not even a theological concept. They simply functioned in various roles by the principle of faith. Relationship with God was so intense and the execution His will in the earth was so urgent and so highly prioritized, that nothing short of firm, unswerving confidence and assurance in God and His Word or promise would have sufficed. Some, like David, called it 'trust', others 'hope' and some, like Abraham, simply 'believed'.

## 2. **PRELUDE TO UNDERSTANDING FAITH**

Hebrews 11 is called the 'faith' chapter by some. In it, faith is defined and demonstrated in the lives of many Old Testament saints. Before we get to this, we need to briefly examine Hebrews 10, the preceding chapter as a prelude to understanding true faith.

### **Hebrews 10:32-39**

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you **endured a great conflict of sufferings**, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and **accepted joyfully the seizure of your property**, knowing that **you have** for yourselves **a better possession and a lasting one**. Therefore, **do not throw away your confidence**, which has a great reward. For you have need of **endurance**, so that when you have **done the will of God**, you may **receive what was promised**. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT **MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH**; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. But **we are not of those who shrink back** to destruction, but of **THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH** to the **preserving of the soul**.

In this record, people joyfully accepted the seizure of their property because they functioned at a higher level than the earthly dimension. They looked for a better and lasting possession. Faith caused them to do this – to transcend earthly concerns. The driving passion within them was **doing the will of God** (verse 36). Note that in the fulfillment of the will of God, there comes a reception of things promised.

When you have faith to pursue the execution of God's will, there will come persecution and opposition, which is designed to dampen faith and cause some to shrink back to a position of unbelief or doubt and ultimately not effect the will of the Lord for their lives. Thus the writer of Hebrews highlights the following two issues as a preface before he defines and demonstrates faith in chapter eleven:

- The issue of **confidence** (verse 35)
- The issue of **endurance** (verse 36)

✚ **Do not throw away your confidence (Heb.10:35)**

**Confidence = parrhesia** = freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech  
 = speaking openly, frankly, i.e. without concealment  
 = speaking without ambiguity or circumlocution  
 = speaking without the use of figures and comparisons  
 = free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance

Confidence or boldness is a key ingredient of faith. It implies being assertive, acting with conviction, being outspoken or having uncompromising courage. Casting away this confident position is the opposite of faith. A high degree of confident conviction in God and His Word is required.

✚ **You have need of endurance (Heb. 10:36)**

**Endurance = hupomone** = to stay up under  
 = to patiently persevere and not to swerve from the path

Endurance or patience is also a key component of biblical faith that causes us not to shrink back to a position of unbelief and to swerve off the path of confidence. Patient endurance is motivated by a sense that the task will be completed and the promise of God fulfilled. It causes you to push through your present difficulties and to focus on the 'end' or goal of your faith – the fulfillment of His promise.

With these two thoughts in mind (Confidence & Endurance), Hebrews proceeds to define faith ....  
 "NOW, Faith is ....."

**2. HOW DOES THE BIBLE DEFINE FAITH?**

**Heb. 11:1,2** Now **faith** is the **assurance** [of things] **hoped for**, the **conviction** of things **not seen**.

<p><b>Faith = pistis</b></p> <p>"firm persuasion," a conviction <u>based</u> <u>upon hearing</u></p>	<p><b>Assurance = hupostasis</b></p> <p>confidence or confident expectation</p>	<p><b>Hoped for = Elpizo</b></p> <p>To act with desire</p>	<p><b>Conviction = Elegchos</b></p> <p>a conviction, that by which a person is tested or proved</p>
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Considering the meaning of the words of the definition above, we may define faith as follows:

**Faith is an extremely strong conviction or persuasion rooted in something God said. It comes by hearing the rhema Word of God, which communicates 'grace', the very substance of which God, who is Spirit, is composed.**

**This conviction is not so much a mental position of belief and agreement as much as it is a divine reality, the nature of God within one, that undergirds and produces a confident expectation or hope. This hope causes one to act with intense desire outwardly in obedience, even without physical or tangible external proof or evidence, because faith provides a perspective into the unseen invisible reality.**

It starts with simple BELIEF. As you grow in practical righteousness, your faith will require WORKS. Both faith and works justified Abraham.

Together with love and hope, FAITH is one of the three abiding, unending virtues listed in Scripture.

**1 Cor. 13:13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

As will be demonstrated in this series, all these three, faith, hope and love must be simultaneously present for each of them to have their fullest impact. None of these are designed to work independently of the other. Faith is the substance 'hoped' for according to Hebrews 11:1. So if you have faith you have hope. Hope cannot exist without faith. Then **Galatians 5:6** indicates that **faith works by love**. Love is the greatest of the three, but being the greatest, does not relegate the other two to an inferior position or non-importance. Anything 'greater' in God subsumes and incorporates those 'lesser' into it.

### **3. HOW DOES FAITH COME ?**

The object of faith is God. We have IN GOD. God and His word or promise are one. When He speaks, He expresses Himself. You cannot extract His Word from who He is. When He speaks and issues a specific commandment or promise to us, the very act of obedient hearing internally in our spirits births faith within us to believe that what He commands or has promised is possible to be done. Our belief in the Word of what He has said is a strong conviction that produces earnest expectation and action even in the face of contrary external conditions. This is so because His Word is representative of Himself – absolutely 100% trustworthy, faithful and reliable.

**Romans 10:17**      *So faith **comes from hearing**, and **hearing by the word of Christ**.*

Abraham believed and had faith in God, according to that which he heard God speak'. God's speaking produced faith within Him.

**Romans 4:18**      *In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations **according to that which had been spoken**, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."*

If faith comes by hearing His Word, one may access faith whenever one 'HEARS' His Word. God speaks in various ways and forms, e.g. through your personal reading and study of His Word, through your listening to someone else preach or teach His Word, especially your spiritual father or leader, through dreams and visions, through circumstances, through wise and godly counsel and advice, etc. But the primary means of God's speaking that one may HEAR, is through the medium of HIS WORD. All of God's other speaking must be consistent and not contradict what He has revealed through His Word, which is consistent with and reflective of His nature.

**Mark 11:22, says Have faith IN God.** Some versions of the Bible, LIKE THE Modern King James Version render this as 'Have faith of God' – literally have the God-kind of faith. If faith is produced by being open to and fully assimilating and believing that which God says, and if God and his Word are one, then we could say that the moment you agree internally that what God said will take place, then through this you receive an endowment of faith – of an ability to trust Him implicitly. The Message Bible frames Mark 11:22 this way : '*Jesus was matter-of-fact: "Embrace this **God-life**. Really embrace it..."*

#### 4.      **WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF FAITH ?**

##### 🔍 **Sight into the Unseen Realm**

Note that the Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith says that it is a conviction of things NOT SEEN. This simply means that there is no external visible evidence for adopting the specific firm belief or persuasion regarding God's promise or commandment. The conviction is based upon an unseen reality that is not yet manifest in the natural visible world and human experience. Yet the conviction is so strong, that in spite of the non-existence of the natural reality of the promise, the person who has faith in the God who promised, regards the promise as already accomplished – so strong is the conviction. Faith is not based upon what we see externally – it is based in God's Word. After this, when the promise becomes practical reality, it is actually the outcome of our belief in it's fulfillment even before it came to pass.

**2 Corinthians 5:7**      *For **we walk by faith**, not by sight*

The saying 'seeing is believing', from a biblical faith perspective, is not true and is an anti-faith position.

Thomas wanted to first see Jesus in the flesh before he believed that He was risen from the dead.

**John 20:25-29** *So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "**Unless I see** in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, **I will not believe.**" After eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and **do not be unbelieving, but believing.**" Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus \*said to him, "**Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**"*

Faith does not rely upon, or need evidence to be strongly active. It needs is a Word from God. Faith is rooted and located in the unseen realm – the dimension of the spirit – the supernatural – faith takes its cue and convinced by realities not seen by natural human eyes. Faith in this sense is very much a dynamic of the Kingdom of God, which operates from the invisible realm and is fleshed out in our practical lives. In this sense faith is not wishful thinking or vain imagination – rather it is SUBSTANCE – it is a substantive reality.

## 📌 **Hope**

**1 Thessalonians 5:8** *But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the **breastplate of faith** and love, and **as a helmet, the hope** of salvation.*

In this verse, faith is described as a breastplate which protects the area around the heart and vital organs. Hope is described as a helmet which protects the head – the mind. Thus faith exists in the heart, and hope relates to the mind. Faith includes hope. Hope is a mental attitude of expectancy concerning the future. Faith is a firm condition of the heart – a strong internal conviction that you possess NOW in the present (Now faith is .....). When you have faith, you have hope also. You may have hope without faith. Hope based on faith will stand.

## 📌 **Accurate Confession**

The mouth will always reveal the state and condition of the heart.

**Matthew 12:34** *You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? **For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.***



Thus, if the heart is filled with faith towards God, then what proceeds out of the mouth will naturally be influenced by the faith within.

**Romans 10:8-10**

*But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, **in your mouth and in your heart**”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if **you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the **heart a person believes**, resulting in righteousness, and with the **mouth he confesses**, resulting in salvation.*

**2 Cor. 4:13**

*But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE,” we also believe, therefore we also speak,*

Speaking out in faith what you are internally convicted of, even though there is not physical external evidence, is one of the biggest tests and challenges of faith. Your outward reality might even contradict what you are convinced of within your heart, yet you must with your mouth speak as though the promise is already accomplished. Do not let negative words of doubt and unbelief nullify the faith in your heart.

✚ **Appropriate Works or Actions – OBEDIENCE!**

When you have faith in God for something, not only will the confession of your mouth testify to this, but also what you do, i.e. your actions or ‘works’, will be in synchrony and alignment with your faith. Faith is not based on works – i.e. what you believe is based on what you do (but in what you heard God say); BUT works are the evidence of the presence of faith – i.e. my outward actions will give indication to the presence and the quality of faith in my heart.

**James 2: 26**

*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so too faith **without works is dead***

If none of your external actions correspond with the faith you claim to have – then this proves there is no real living effective faith within.

**James 2:14-16**

***What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works?***

In Matthew 9, the friends of the paralytic carried him on a stretcher, broke the tiles of the roof of the house in which Jesus was, and lowered him down in front of Jesus, desiring Him to heal their friend. On seeing this whole determined, daring and costly action, Jesus comments on their corporate faith which was evidenced by what they did – works. The faith in their hearts was seen by their works. Faith is only SEEN in works in what you actually do.

**Matthew 9:2**

And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. **Seeing their faith**, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.”

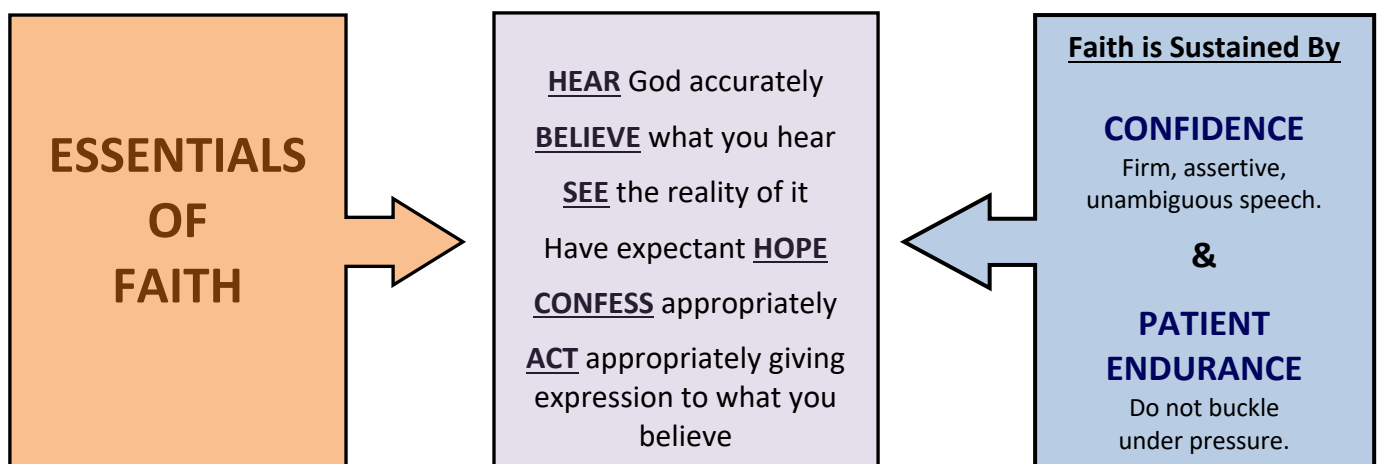
The goal of Faith is OBEDIENCE, even when that obedience leads you to a 'place', 'situation' or 'condition' where, by all rational and human estimation, your welfare may be compromised, BUT by Faith, Hope and Trust in God, you JUST OBEY!

**Heb. 11:8** By FAITH Abraham, when he was called, OBEYED by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, NOT KNOWING where he was going.

You do not have HOPE, TRUST and FAITH in God .... IF .... you cannot point to and demonstrate AN ACTION OF OBEDIENCE.

Your obedience indicates your faith.

In summarizing this section, ...



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## 5. WALKING IN THE STEPS ABRAHAM'S FAITH [Romans 4:12]

The principle of faith is most powerfully demonstrated through the life of Abraham. Scripture calls him the 'father of faith', and exhorts us to imitate him and walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

**Romans 4:12** '... follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham ...'

Let us consider Abraham's example of living by the principle of faith towards God.

**Essential Background Reading : Genesis 17:1-19 ; 21:1-8 ; 22:1-18**

When he and his wife Sarah were way passed the age of child bearing, and not having any sons, God promised Abraham that he would make him a father of many nations or the father of a multitude. Against all odds, he believed God, and although doubted and acted in impatience at one time thus producing Ishmael, ultimately his faith ensured that the promise was fulfilled – when Isaac was born.

#### **Romans 4:17-21**

(as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.” Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

**Rom. 4:17** (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of **Him whom he believed, even God**, who gives life to the dead and **calls into being that which does not exist**.

Note here that it states that Abraham believed God. He believed in something very specific about God’s nature, viz. that He “calls into being that which does not exist”. The King James Version renders this phrase as follows: **“God call those things which are not as though they were”**. The moment God declares something as reality, that thing exists, even though it may not be physically evident. The fact of its existence is not dependent upon tangible or visible evidence. It exists simply because God has said so. This is the posture of faith. It reckons something to be, even it is not. When God told Abraham he would be a father of many nations, he regarded himself as a father immediately. He did not wait to see physical evidence of it to regard God’s statement as true. He accepted God’s statement as true first and **because of this**, his actual experience was brought in line with what God declared.

**Rom. 4:18** **In hope** against hope **he believed**, so that he might become a father of many nations **according to that which had been spoken**, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.”

Recall that faith has an element of hope – a mental attitude of expectancy regarding something in the future. The phrase, ‘In hope against hope’ simply means that Abraham’s hope concerning him having a son was a hope against seriously huge odds. It says ‘he believed’ = his faith position. He had faith and hope vested in something he HEARD God declare over his life. Faith came into his heart by hearing God’s Word, and **“according to that which was spoken”**, he believed.

**Rom. 4:19** **Without becoming weak in faith** he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;

When He contemplated his own body and its inability to produce a son, as well as that the impossibility of Sarah's body to bear a child, he refused these realities to weaken his faith. He functioned by a greater reality – God's declaration over him. His actual visible and physical circumstances contradicted and stood as a significant obstacle in way of God's promise being fulfilled. YET, he did not allow these things to weaken in his faith position.

**Rom.4 20,21** yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being **fully assured** that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

**He did not waver in unbelief** : 'waver' = **diakrino** = to distinguish, decide or judge; in this verse it means to doubt or to be **divided in one's mind**. Abraham resolved in his mind that what God said will definitely come to pass. He did not consider any other option. He not did vacillate between faith and unbelief. He was not 'double-minded' about the promise made. There was no division in his mind.

**James 1:6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double minded man, unstable in all his ways

**He grew strong in faith** : Note that faith can grow to a place of strength (see note further on increasing faith)

**He gave glory to God** : He constantly maintained a thankful and worshipful dependence on and recognition of God's integrity and honour. His faith was a testimony of the absolute greatness, esteem and grandeur he attributes to the One who made the promise.

**He was fully assured** : Means to be fully persuaded – completely convinced.

#### ➤ **THE ELEMENT OF ENDURANCE OR PATIENCE**

Abraham gave in to a suggestion by Sarah that he sleep with her servant, Hagar that the promise might be fulfilled. Ishmael was born, but he was not the son of promise. The lesson here is that we must not act in the flesh to prematurely bring to pass a promise of God in our own strength and according to our own schemes and devices. Patiently endure until God effects His promise within you, His way. Abraham learned from this experience and trusted God for the 'son of promise', Isaac who was eventually given.

#### ➤ **ABRAHAM'S APPROPRIATE FAITH CONFESSION and WORKS**

Through Isaac, Abraham was going to become a father of many nations. When God called upon him to sacrifice Isaac, he did not interpret this command as a termination of his destiny, but was so fully convinced of God's original and first promise, that he believed God would have raised Isaac from the dead. Note here below, what he says to his men at the bottom of the mount on which he is to sacrifice Isaac:

**Genesis 22:5** And Abraham said to his young men, Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go up yonder; and **we will** worship and **return to you**.

**Hebrews 11:17-19** **By faith** Abraham, when **he was tested**, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, **"IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."** He **considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead**, from which he also received him back as a type.

## 6. **THE GIFT OF FAITH**

We all have a **measure of faith** (Rom.12:3); some have '**little faith**' (Matt. 17:20); others, like Stephen are '**full of faith**' (Acts 6); some have '**great**' faith (Matt. 8:10); some like Abraham are '**strong in faith**'. Some individuals might have the '**gift of faith**', which is one of the nine gifts of Holy Spirit. This gift must be distinguished from the general disposition of faith which most people have. The gift of faith allows the individual to believe God for extraordinary things.

## 7. **CAN FAITH BE INCREASED?**

Yes, faith can grow. Abraham '**GREW strong in faith**'. Every act of obedience and submission to God's will prepared his heart for a greater measure of faith. Note the following Scriptures:

**Luke 17:5** The apostles said to the Lord, **"Increase our faith!"**

**2 Thess 1:3** We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because **your faith is greatly enlarged**, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;

**2 Cor 10:15** not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, **but with the hope that as your faith grows**, we will be, within our sphere, **enlarged even more by you**,

**Romans 1:17** '**.... from faith to faith**'

This growth in faith need not only necessarily be interpreted as 'more faith' as opposed to the previous level of faith, but also can be a reference to growth in faith as one matures in the Lord. As previously stated many immature believers only express faith in God for 'THINGS' – to have their basic needs (and some cases, their 'greed') met. An analysis of Hebrews 11, reveals that the so called 'heroes of faith' expressed faith in God for a variety of pursuits, none of which were for material things. Faith must GROW from trusting God for things to faith and trust for becoming proficient in the assignment of God over one's life. This will affect all spheres of your life. Faith will become the operative framework of your existence.

## 8. THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION IS ALSO BY FAITH

**Ephesians 2:8,9** For by **grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**Romans 12:3** For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God **has allotted to each a measure of faith**.

**Galatians 2:16** Nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we **may be justified by faith in Christ** and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

**Romans 5:1** THEREFORE, having been **justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**,

## 9. FAITH IS NOT PRESUMPTION

Faith is always based in a Word or promise of God. Presumption has an element of arrogance and self-glory. Presumption is not based in a word from God. It is rooted in selfish carnal ambition. It is an assertion of man's own will. Faith glorifies God in that it is humbly dependent on Him as the source of the promise, and for the outworking of the promise. It never takes the initiative away from God. Faith receives; presumption grabs. Presumption is a false faith – an insincere faith – a hypocritical faith.

**1 Timothy 1:5** But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and **a SINCERE faith**.

**Sincere = anupokritos** = genuine, without pretense or simulation

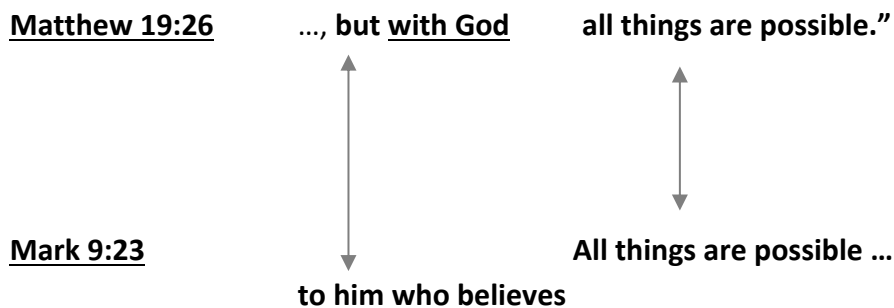
## 10. APPROPRIATING ALL OF THE PROMISES OF GOD

Appropriate all of His promises through faith. Faith rests on one fact - God's speaking. God has already revealed His will for many areas in our lives in His Word. Thus, where His general intent for humanity and specifically for his own children has been made known, then we can express faith in Him for the accomplishment of these things in our lives. For example, the Bible clearly teaches that it is His will that we live in health. Thus when I become sick or ill, I can in faith believe God for my healing.

**2 Corinthians 1:20** For as many as are the **promises of God, in Him they are yes**; therefore also through Him is **our Amen** (implies agreement : 'so be it') to the glory of God through us.

**2 Peter 1:3-5** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us **His precious and magnificent promises**, so that by them **you may become partakers of the divine nature**,

## 11. FAITH OVERCOMES THE WORLD AND ACHIEVES THE IMPOSSIBLE



The one who believes can attain the possibilities determined by God. God's possibilities are within the grasp of him who can believe.

**Matthew 17:20** And He \*said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have **faith the size of a mustard seed**, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; **and nothing will be impossible to you**."

**Matthew 21:21** And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, **if you have faith and do not doubt**, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will

happen. **And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.** [See Also Mark 11:22]

All things promised by God can be accessed through the principle of faith. All things are possible to him who believes. The 'faith hall of fame' in Hebrews 11 describes many different things done, performed, attained, etc, through faith. As already stated, it is not simply for needs that we express faith, but we, the righteous live our entire lives – every aspect of it by faith. Faith is necessary to accomplish all of God's will for our lives and for the earth. In summarising the parable of the faith-filled, importune widow in Luke 18, he asks the question, 'But when the Son of man returns, will he find FAITH on the earth?'

It is the principle of faith toward God that will cause us to overcome and surmount everything that threatens or opposes the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in the earth.

**1 John 5:4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; **and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our FAITH**

## **11. ENEMIES OF FAITH**

From our study so far, we list the following as enemies of faith. These things inhibit the reception or formation of faith :

- Neglecting the Word – the rhema word
- Not Hearing and Obeying the Word released through your spiritual oversight
- UNBELIEF is the lack of faith
- DOUBT is indication of 'wavering' – moving between faith and unbelief
- PRESUMPTION is false faith, not based on a sure Word of or from God
- IMPATIENCE produces an 'Ishmael' – something of human construction that is portrayed as the provision of God as a result of faith
- FEAR is faith moving in the opposite direction.

**Brief Amplification on Fear as an enemy of Faith** : A Brief Case Study of the Widow at Zarephath

Consider the widow of Zarephath, who gave her last bread to Elijah:

### **1 Kings 17:8-15**

- 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,
- 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; **behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.**"
- 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink."



- 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."
- 12 But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, **I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.**"
- 13 Then Elijah said to her, "**DO NOT FEAR**; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it **FIRST** and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.
- 14 "For thus says the Lord God of Israel, '**The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.**' "
- 15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, **and she and he and her household ate for many days.**
- 16 **The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah**

Note in verse 9, that God informs Elijah that He had already commanded the widow to feed Elijah. So when she encountered Elijah, it was no surprise to her that he actually asked her to first make bread for him. But this woman does not reveal to Elijah that God had instructed her to feed him. Instead she, gripped by FEAR, immediately discounts her ability to adequately feed Elijah as well as herself and her son (verse 12). In getting her to obey what God originally instructed her to do, Elijah challenges her NOT TO FEAR, BECAUSE 'FEAR' WAS HER PROBLEM THAT PREVENTED HER FROM RESPONDING IN FAITH to the Word of the Lord to feed Elijah. Whenever God speaks to us to give financially and otherwise to his servants or his work, we must not consult with our resources and its ability to supply all our needs. We must in simple faith obey what the Lord directs to give, and this becomes the catalyst that ignites perpetual supply for us, especially in times of famine or economic recession. Because of her ultimate obedience in feeding Elijah first, she is sustained throughout the duration of the famine, her flour and oil never running dry.

**The example of Moses** : Note that it was BY FAITH Moses left Egypt, because the element of fear had been removed.

**Hebrews 11:27**

**By faith** he left Egypt, **not fearing** ....

## **12. JESUS IS THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF FAITH**

Hebrews 10:32-39 highlights the need for confidence and patient endurance in doing the will of God. Hebrews 11 defines faith and demonstrates the working of faith in the lives of many Old Testament persons. The writer of the book of Hebrews, in chapter 12 stresses the need to consciously lay aside any weight (hindrance) and the specific sin that easily trips us up, and then to constantly keep your gaze and focus upon Jesus, the Son of God. The specific aspect of the nature of Jesus that is stressed here in chapter 12:2 is that He is the .....

### author and the perfecter of faith

**Perfecter = teleiotes** = completer; one who brings something through to the goal so as to win and receive the prize.

May the Lord both ignite and bring to completion a new degree of faith within you as you push toward the attainment of the goal of your personal and corporate destiny in God. Have faith in God. Have faith of God. Live by faith. Grow in faith. Prophetically see the attainment and fulfillment of His will and promise in your life. Patiently endure with unshakeable confidence in His ability to bring all things concerning you to fulfillment. Overcome the world by faith. Do the impossible by faith. Keep your eye on Jesus, always giving glory to Him, for He is the finisher or the perfecter of faith.

**1 John 5:4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;  
**and this is the victory that overcomes the**  
**world, even our FAITH**

FOR YOUR FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION :

### **THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM: HE WAS JUSTIFIED BY BOTH FAITH AND WORKS (OBEDIENCE)**

One cannot formulate a doctrinal position based on one scripture or one scriptural passage alone. Scripture must interpret scripture. In considering the issue of how we are made righteous, Abraham is the classic case study, and to fully and more accurately understand he attained a righteous position before God, we have to consider three separate passages of scripture together. These are **Romans 4**, **Galatians 3** and **James 2**.

#### **Rom. 4:1-25**

- 1\_ What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
- 2\_ For if Abraham was **justified by works**, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
- 3\_ For what does the Scripture say? "**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"
- 4\_ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.
- 5\_ But to the one who does not work, **but believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is credited as righteousness**,
- 6\_ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God **credits righteousness** apart from works:

- 7\_ "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.
- 8\_ "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."
- 9\_ Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."
- 10\_ How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;
- 11\_ and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,
- 12\_ and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.
- 13\_ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.
- 14\_ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;
- 15\_ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.
- 16\_ For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,
- 17\_ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.
- 18\_ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."
- 19\_ Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;
- 20\_ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,
- 21\_ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
- 22\_ Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- 23\_ Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,
- 24\_ but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,
- 25\_ *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

According to this passage, we may note the following without going into too much detail:

- Abraham was **not justified by works**, but by his **simple belief in what God said to him**.
- Because of this belief in God, without performing any works, **he is credited as righteous**.

- Abraham's belief in God was way **before the Law** was given through Moses and while he was not a Jew. So, righteousness had nothing to do with human attempts to keep the law of Moses or Jewish related ceremonies. Simple belief in Jesus Christ is required by both Jews and Gentiles in order to receive the gift of righteousness.

This passage in Galatians 3 below captures the thoughts expressed above succinctly:

**Gal. 3:6-9**

- 6 Even so **Abraham believed God**, and it was **reckoned to him as righteousness**.  
 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who **are of faith who are sons of Abraham**.  
 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that **God would justify the Gentiles by faith**, preached **the gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."  
 9 So then **those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer**.

In James account, he adds WORKS to Abraham's BELIEF as what rendered him righteous in respect to the ongoing work of sanctification in him, and not in respect to the initial belief by faith, through which he is justified at the start of his relationship with God:

**JAMES 2:14-26**

- 14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has **faith** but he has no **works**? Can that faith save him?  
 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,  
 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?  
 17 Even so **faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself**.  
 18 But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will **show you my faith by my works**."  
 19 You **believe** that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.  
 20 But are you willing to recognize, you **foolish fellow**, that **faith without works is useless?**  
 21 Was not Abraham our **father justified by works when he offered up Isaac** his son on the altar?  
 22 You see that **faith was working with his works**, and as a **result of the works, faith was perfected**;  
 23 and the **Scripture was fulfilled** which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.  
 24 You see that a man is **justified by works and not by faith alone**.  
 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?  
 26 For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

We may note the following points from the passage above:

- Outward works provide evidence of the presence, reality and authenticity of internal faith/belief.
- Not not only is Abraham justified by faith or belief alone without works, but then also by works, which are tacit indication that his faith or belief was genuine.
- Works gave evidence of faith but also works perfected faith (v.22). [So, if faith produces righteousness, then perfected faith will perfect righteousness in a practical sense].
- James argues that when Abraham obeyed God to sacrifice Isaac, that text which says “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” was fulfilled. So positionally, Abraham was righteous by believing through faith, and then his active obedience to God perfected or fulfilled this righteousness in him. You cannot have without the other.
- James then makes his punch line statement in verse 24: “You see that a man is **justified by works and not by faith alone**”.

It is important to consider that when the Scripture indicate that **Abram's** belief, without works, rendered him righteous, it was in reference to his response to believing God's Word that he would be a **father of many nations**. This was the beginning of Abram's journey with God.

But, when the Scripture indicates that **Abraham's** works also justified him, it was in respect to God's word commanding to sacrifice his only Isaac, something that occurred possibly anywhere from seventeen to thirty years later.

The point to note us this that, in entering relationship with God, there was nothing Abram could do but simply believe and so be reckoned as righteous. But now, having believed and being righteous, his name was changed to ABRAHAM (denoting a growth in grace), when was to now express that inward righteousness by outwardly obeying God's every directive. By this he gave outward evidence that indeed he was righteous. A claimed righteousness that is not outwardly demonstrated by active obedience is no claim to righteousness at all. Important to note is that GRACE empowered this act of obedience. So all the while grace was at work, but that does not set aside our personal responsibility to incline our hearts towards obeying God in every respect, so practice righteousness.

**Rom. 11:33** who **BY FAITH** conquered kingdoms, **performed ACTS of RIGHTEOUSNESS**, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions.

**Note also:**

- Abraham's faith was activated through belief in God, without works, but works 'PERFECTED HIS FAITH according to James 2:22.
- James and Paul do not contradict each other. Abraham was being TESTED by God when He offered Isaac (**Gen. 22: 1** “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”)

**James 2:22** You see that [his] faith was cooperating with his works, and [his] faith was completed and reached its supreme expression [when he implemented it] by [good] works. (AMP)

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