



# Using Your Faith

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Our topic is one of the most important themes in the New Testament: faith. In this study, you will learn what Bible faith is, the law of faith, and how to use it in your daily life.

God has carefully laid out in His Word, His conditions and what He expects from His people. The Bible says, “Without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6); “In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16).

We can look at two men in the Bible: King Saul and King David. Which one of these men was a man of faith? Which one do you think pleased God? King Saul believed in God, but King David had faith in God. It was King David who was pleasing to God: he defeated Goliath simply by using his faith in God (1 Samuel 17:32; 43-46).

## Scriptures

- 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” (Romans 1:17).
- Taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16).
- Wake up and strengthen the things that remain... for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of God. Remember therefore what you have received and heard; keep it, and repent. (Revelations 3:2-3).

## Prayer

I open my mind and heart to receive revelation from heaven, revelation about this life of faith, faith of our Savior, Our Lord Jesus, His way of thinking, His way of doing things. I believe and receive it today. In Jesus name, Amen.

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- You can share these notes with friends, use them as a basis for a Bible study group, or use them as a set of notes from which to speak and minister.

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## Part One

# FAITH TOWARD GOD: A FOUNDATIONAL STONE

### A. Key Scripture – Hebrews 6:1-2

*Therefore leaving the elemental teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity\*, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment – Hebrews 6:1-2 (NASB)*

(\*The Greek word for maturity or perfection is *teleos*. It means to come to the fullness of what God has in mind for us, like an acorn becomes an oak tree when it has matured.)

### B. Bible Study

#### ***We need a strong spiritual foundation***

In our spiritual walk, our foundation is referring to what we believe, what it is that we have faith in.

#### **Six foundational stones**

Notice that these foundation stones are all based upon the work of Jesus Christ.

1. Repentance from dead works – Jesus brings a change of direction in our life.
2. Faith toward God – Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith.
3. Instructions about washings: baptism of water – we join Jesus in His death; baptism of the Holy Spirit – Jesus is the baptizer.
4. Laying on of hands – the life of Jesus flows through us for blessing, healing, gifts and ministry.
5. Resurrection of the dead – Jesus is the resurrection and the life; we join Him in His resurrection.
6. Eternal judgment – Jesus is the Lamb of God who died for our sins.

#### **Problems reveal poor spiritual foundation**

If any of the following problems always seem to be bothering you, look to your foundation, for this is where the problem lies. Check which ones trouble you the most?

- Does your faith waver every time it is put to the test?



- Do you sink into depression with every storm that comes?
- Do you fall with every temptation?
- Do you walk in the flesh more than in the spirit?
- Do you always need others praying for you and encouraging you?
- Can you stand firm against the spiritual attacks of the enemy?

## Repentance from dead works

Notice in our key scripture it says, *repentance from dead works and faith toward God*. Repentance from dead works is the first foundational stone. And faith towards God is the second foundational stone you will need if you want to build a strong spiritual foundation.

- Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21)

To learn more about the spiritual foundation and the first foundational stone, redemption from dead works, download my Radio Horeb program notes and study them:

<https://judithdoctor.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Repentance-from-Dead-Works.pdf>

## Faith toward God

### Faith is a dynamic spiritual energy that enables us to connect to God.

According to the Bible, we need faith in order to come to God. Remember God is a Spirit, so we must approach Him differently than we do the things of the world – using faith, not our natural mind, reasoning or emotions.

Must believe that He is ...

- 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 (Hebrews 11:6).
- But let him 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 [*hesitating, doubting*] man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-8).

### Faith is guaranteed by the nature of God Himself: He cannot lie

God is absolute truth. He cannot change and He cannot lie – this is what immutable means. In order to make His promises and His gospel secure, God backed them up by covenant oath. He swore this oath by none other than Himself, the greatest of all. He has put His own character on the line.

- For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:16-18).



## **Faith creates experiences which are credentials to believers**

The strongest credential for believers is their own changed life. It is written in their heart that God is faithful. They have experienced the reality of the gospel in three distinct ways: the blood of Jesus cleansing and forgiving their sins; the waters of baptism in which they die to the old Adamic nature; and the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

## **C. Reflection—Faith Anchor Points**

There are certain times, events, and places in our Christian walk that are very important to us. We all have times of distress when we wonder, *God, where are you?* The nation of Israel went through this over and over, including the great heroes in the Bible. The Lord told them: “Look back, remember the things I have done for you!” We call these memories our “faith anchor points.”

Faith anchor points can be when God worked some wonderful miracle, a healing in your life or answered your prayer. Or it can be a word from God that has sustained you over the years.

For me, one word from God that has sustained me was this promise: “When you open your mouth, I will fill it.” I remind myself of this every time I am about to speak or go on Radio Horeb. Instantly faith will rise up in me, and the fear will depart.

What are your faith anchor points? Do you know what they are? Remember to return to them often and let them renew and restore you.

- List your faith anchor points.**

## **D. Make It Personal**

- Do you think God can lie to you or try to mess with your mind?**
  
- Reflect on your pictures or images of God. What kind of God do you know?**
  
- Write out your understanding of what faith toward God means to you:**





## Part Two

# GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS LAWS: THE LAW OF FAITH

### A. Key Scripture – Romans 3:27

*Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith – Romans 3:27 (NASB).*

### B. Bible Study

#### ***God has made a world that runs by laws***

God has made a world that runs by law – a set of established Truths, a set of governing principles. And He does nothing except by His own laws. This is one of the things that God will not do.

God simply will not violate his legal principles, because they are “part of his creation and a direct expression of his divine nature.” This is what makes God so trustworthy. He cannot be manipulated or coerced, like parents do. His hand moves in direct relationship to his divine laws; He works in accordance with his established laws.

In His sovereignty He has chosen to restrict or limit Himself, so that we might have a choice. However, God has provided enough power through His laws. Miracles are not a result of God breaking His laws of nature, but are His own using of His higher laws.

#### **Everything governed by the same principle**

An underlying principle of God’s created order says that “all things must come into balance or equilibrium.” The legality of the universe requires that *all things come to resolution, balance, i.e., justified*. This holds true for natural laws, moral laws, and spiritual laws. God has not made one law for the natural and another for the spiritual.

We see this principle operating in physics and chemistry. The law of physics says for every action there must be an equal and opposite reaction. Every chemistry equation or formula must balance. All these laws are intended to restore balance in the universe. This is true in moral and spiritual laws.

#### **God’s moral laws**

God’s moral laws are alive and active in the universe – *even* if we are ignorant of them. We cannot escape them. However, if honored, consciously or unconsciously, they will work to



maintain harmony in our lives, restore health and wholeness in us, and release God's blessings to us. (Adapted from John & Paula Sandford)

### **The law of justice**

The law of justice says that *all wrongs must be resolved*. When someone is wronged by somebody else, an account is opened, a debt created. The law of justice requires the person who committed the wrong be held accountable and made to pay down the debt.

### **The law of judgment**

The law of judgment says that *the measure we mete out, we will receive back*. What we receive in life is *directly* related to what we have given out. The law of judgment is inescapable – we are dooming ourselves in the same way we are judging others. (See Luke 6:37.)

### **The law of sowing and reaping**

The law of sowing and reaping says *we will surely reap what we have sown*. When we judge others, we are sowing a seed which by law someday has to be reaped. Whatever we plant always comes up, even though it can stay underground for many years. (See Galatians 6:7.)

John & Paul Sandford suggest the law of sowing and reaping was meant by God to be a blessing to humanity – not a curse.

### **God's spiritual laws**

God is a Spirit, and His spiritual kingdom is highly regulated: the laws of the Spirit govern all that happens in the earth and in the kingdom of God.

We need to understand God's spiritual laws and learn how to adapt ourselves to them, so we can provide the necessary atmosphere for answered prayers. When prayers are not being answered, we need to reexamine God's ways and discover what we are missing. We must learn how to use the laws and methods He has given us.

- For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

### **God is consistent in dealing with us**

God does not show any partiality or respect any one person. He does not set aside His law capriciously. His law is the expression of His own personal character – the revelation of His perfect holiness. He is not somehow above and outside the law, for the law is simply the judicial or legal manifestation of what He is. God can never change or deny Himself.

### **The integrity of God's laws**

God is never inconsistent or unpredictable like dysfunctional parents. His laws are:

1. Extremely consistent. God is not a respecter of people; His laws apply to everyone equally.
2. Extremely predictable. God is so predictable that we can tell exactly what He is going to do.
3. Extremely accurate and exact. God is extremely accurate and exact; He does not make mistakes.



4. Unchangeable. God never changes; His purposes do not change.

### **God cannot lie**

The Bible makes it clear: It says: “so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:18).

### **God does nothing except by law**

“We must learn that God is not an unreasonable and impulsive sovereign who breaks His own laws at will. ‘But God is omnipotent!’ you say, ‘He can do anything He likes!’ Yes, but He has made a world that runs by law, and He does not like to break those laws.

“Few of us in the north would ask God to produce a full-blown rose out of doors in January. Yet He can do this very thing, if we *adapt our greenhouses* to His laws of heat and light, so as to provide the necessities of the rose.

“And He can produce a full-blown answer to prayer if we adapt our earthly tabernacles to His laws of love and faith so as to provide the necessary atmosphere for answered prayer. God does nothing except by law. But He has provided enough power within His laws to do anything that is in accordance with His will” (Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*, p. 3-5).

### **Spiritual laws in the New Testament**

Here are some spiritual laws referenced in the New Testament. Check them out:

1. The law of faith – Romans 3:27
2. The law of love (the royal law) – Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8
3. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus – Galatians 3:2; Romans 8:2
4. The law of sin and death – Romans 7:23, 25; 8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:56
5. The law of works – Romans 3:27
6. The law of my mind – Romans 7:23
7. The law of liberty – James 1:22-25; 2:12, 14-17
8. The law of Christ – John 12:34; Galatians 6:2

## **C. Reflection—When Prayers Are Not Answered**

“We assume God will do something, even though we have not met the conditions of God’s Word. If God does not answer our prayer, we assume it is His fault, not our ignorance.

“So when God has not done this or that, we conclude that there is no use in prayer, because God will do as He likes regardless of our wishes. We do not consider that perhaps it is we who have not met the conditions of God’s Word and therefore had no right to expect an answer. Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*).







## Part Three

# WHAT IS FAITH TOWARD GOD?

### A. Key Scripture – Hebrews 11:1-2

*Now faith is the assurance [substance] of things hoped for, the conviction [evidence] of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval [a testimony] – Hebrews 11:1-2 (NASB).*

### B. Bible Study

The spiritual realm of God does *not* work through “magic,” but through faith. There are no magical words that will make God answer your prayers, but only an honest heart that recognizes its need and a tiny bit of faith that *God cannot lie*, that what He said is true. The truths of God must be united with faith in the heart if we want to receive something from the Lord.

Why did God’s people wander around in the desert for forty years and then die there? Was it because they lacked faith? I am sure that they believed in God, but did they believe what He said in their hearts? Maybe this is why we can’t get out of our own private deserts: we lack faith.

### ***Faith is necessary to receive God’s promises***

The Scriptures make it clear that genuine faith is necessary in obtaining and receiving all of God’s provisions and promises. The extent to which we receive God’s blessings depends precisely upon the degree to which we can believe God.

Our faith will determine what we will allow God to do for us:

- Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23).
- Then He touched their eyes, saying, “Be it done to according to your faith” (Matthew 9:29).
- But if any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting ... For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded [*hesitating, doubting*] man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-7).
- And the prayer of faith shall raise the sick [Gr. *Kamno*—to be weary, weariness of mind] (James 5:15).



## What is faith?

Faith is hard to describe because we often get it confused with what our church believes, our theology and doctrine. However faith is far more than ideas or mental beliefs about God. It is also more than any emotion we may feel. The Bible tells us that faith is the confidence and assurance in our heart that what God says is true.

### **Faith (Gr. Pistis): persuasion—to be fully persuaded, convinced, assured**

- Now faith is the assurance [substance\*] of things hoped for, the conviction [evidence] of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1, NASB).
- And [Abraham] being fully assured that what He [God] had promised, He [God] was able also to perform (Romans 4:21).

### **Faith resides in the heart**

Bible faith goes beyond mental agreement; it must reside in our heart, in the inner core of our being. The heart is a much deeper place than our mind.

- ... the righteousness based on faith ... [says], “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 shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Romans 10:8-10).

The natural mind is unable to accept the things of the Spirit of God because it is simply locked out of the spiritual realm (1 Corinthians 2:14). We can only come to know God through our heart or spirit. Our Western world has not known very much about our heart. We have been trapped in our heads and tried to make our relationship with God work through it.

If you look to your mind, you will find what you believe. But if you look to your heart and spirit, you will know what you have faith for.

### **Faith is a building block of spiritual reality**

Faith is the result of a real encounter between God and us. English translators used the word *substance* in an effort to describe the result of a spiritual encounter with God; i.e., ultimate reality, the ultimate inner essence of anything.

- Faith gives us spiritual understanding of all that is real.

### **Faith takes the answer now**

Hope refers to anticipating or expecting that it will happen in the future. Whereas faith says, it is mine, I have it now, and not I'll get it sometime in the future. Faith is the proof of the confidence we exhibit.

1. Faith is the state of knowing that we have something before it materializes in the natural world; it does not rely upon feeling, how it looks, or natural. If we listen to our spirit, there is something that sets up a thrill on the inside of us, because our heart knows it (Unknown).
2. Faith is not imagination or the wishing of things into being. It is the conviction of truth by the inner working of the Holy Spirit, who only persuades us to believe what actually exists.



## **Faith must be placed in the power of God**

For us to become more whole it is vital that we are grounded in the reality of a powerful and loving God who wants to do good things for us. We must discover a God of power and learn to place our faith in Him.

Some people place their faith in a religion, a theology, or a doctrine. But if we want results, we must do what the Bible says: place our faith in God and His power.

Faith is guaranteed by the nature of God.

- My word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

## **Faith involves a relationship with God**

It is our faith that connects us to the Spirit of God, to Jesus Christ. .

## **Faith is the most powerful, strongest force in the world**

Faith is not system of religious truths, but the most powerful force in the world. According to Jesus it can move mountains and hurl obstacles aside. Faith overrides the so-called impossible. It crushes fear and transforms the weakest personalities.

- He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move, and nothing shall be impossible to you” (Matthew 17:20).

## ***Faith comes by hearing***

The Bible says that faith comes from hearing the word of God. God can make His words known to us in many different ways.

The Holy Spirit can illuminate a word in Scripture, making it come alive to us. Faith is also quickened as we listen to another person’s testimony—their experience with the healing presence and power of God in some area of their life.

Sometimes faith comes when we hear the Lord speaking a personal word directly to us, when someone speaks a word from the Holy Spirit, when we have a dream or vision, or when we receive a revelation or insight into some truth.

- So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17)
- How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Romans 10:14-16).

## **The Bible says that every believer has some faith**

When we were born from above, the Bible indicates that the faith came from God.

- For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)
- God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith (Romans 12:3).



In Mark 11:21 (NASB), it says we are to have faith *in* God. However some translations infer that the faith is God's faith: Have faith *from* God; Have the faith *of* God; May the faith *of* God be in you.

## **Faith grows—if we use what we have we get more**

I have learned that great faith does not happen overnight. It begins when we use it in some small things, and it will grow as we continue to use it.

## **We learn how to use faith by doing**

If you don't have faith enough to trust God for your little things, are you going to have faith enough to trust God for big things? You have to start with small things and see God work in some very small things, like providing a parking space in the middle of a busy town. "Lord, provide me a parking space in a convenient place." Then just as you approach, a car pulls out. Is God interested in these small things?

He is interested in some very small things. He is interested when a feather falls out of a sparrow. This is where we have to start. Yet many people, because of their pride, or maybe because of their ignorance, somehow feel that God cannot be bothered with small things.

## **Faith obtains a testimony**

Faith creates experiences which are credentials for believers. The strongest credential for us is our changed life. It is written in our heart that God is faithful – we say, *we know, because we know, because we know.*

Using our faith and seeing what God does brings joy to our heart. Not only this, but we also obtain a testimony: we have a story to tell to others.

- For by it the men of old gained approval [obtained a testimony] (Hebrews 11:2).

Listen to my four-part testimony and ask God to increase your faith as you listen:

<https://judithdoctor.com/audio-files/>

## **C. Reflection—Cart Before the Horse**

"We often build a beautiful cart of doctrine, theology, rituals, etc., but we have no horse to pull the cart – no faith. We must instill faith in a wonder-working God, revealing a God who can meet our needs and answer our prayers" (Ralph Nault, The New Life, Inc.).

Remember it there is no power in doctrine, theology, or any laws. Only genuine faith in God enables us to experience His life-changing power in our lives.

- Do you want something more than doctrine and theology, rituals, and traditions?**



## **D. Make It Personal**

- How has your understanding of faith changed as you studied this section?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Who or what do you put your faith in?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In what ways has faith come to you?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Can you explain the difference between hope and faith?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Have you obtained a testimony?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Have you experience an inflow of joy because God answered your prayer?**



## Part Four

# USING THE LAW OF FAITH

### A. Key Scripture – Mark 11:22-25

*Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'be taken up and cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. And whenever you stand praying forgive, if you have anything against anyone –*  
Mark 11:21-25.

### B. Bible Study

Remember that there are spiritual laws that will work just as well as physical laws; we can trust faith!

- Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith (Romans 3:27)

#### **Golden text on faith**

Our key Scripture is often referred to as the golden text on faith. Here Jesus clearly explains in His own words how we can make the law of faith work for us.

1. He starts by telling us to put our faith in God: "Have faith in God."
2. Then He says that the law of faith will work for *anyone*: "Truly I say to you, *whoever says to this mountain, 'be taken up and cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.*"
3. Next He makes it clear that there are no limits on what we can ask for: "Therefore I say to you, *all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.*
4. And lastly He makes us aware that there is one obstacle to having our prayers answered: unforgiveness. "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone" (Mark 11:21-25).

In looking closely at the law of faith we see it consists of four dynamic elements: 1) believe it in our heart, 2) say it with our mouth, 3) act on it, and 4) forgive others.



## **Four elements of the law of faith**

### **1. We must believe it in our heart**

Our faith must be grounded in a word from God: a promise in the Bible that covers your situation; a personal word God has spoken to you; an intuitive knowing; a word given to you by someone else; a dream, a vision.

It is important to recognize that we may have persuasions which do not originate with the Holy Spirit and God's living Word. We may even quote Scripture, but not as God's living Word to us now. If we expose our mind, emotions, and will to these persuasions, we can become convinced in our mind of something that is not true. But these persuasions are not grounded in a living word from God that penetrates to our hearts.

We need to ask our self, am I standing on a word from God or am I standing on an idea?

#### **Meditate on the word of God**

We must feed on the word of God, until our heart takes hold of it

#### **Hope-so faith**

We need to become aware of whether or not we have faith in our heart, what our faith is standing on, or if we have only hope-so faith.

Very little has been written about hope, but hope is a basic building block of emotional and mental well-being. Hope is what pulls us into life and the future; without it our lives stall.

Hope means to anticipate, usually with pleasure, to expect something good to happen. In the Bible there is just as much importance attached to hope as there is to faith. Hope sustains us by holding out the promise of something new and positive on the road ahead, but it not faith.

#### **Faith takes the answer now**

Genuine heart faith says, it is mine, I have it now; not, I'll get it sometime.

- But let him 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 [hesitating, doubting] man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:6-8).

### **2. We must speak the word of faith from our mouth**

We must use our mouth to express the faith in our heart, using faith-filled words, not empty words. The words you speak aloud will connect to and strengthen the faith in your heart.

- But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I also spoke," we also believe, therefore also we speak (2 Corinthians 4:13).
- The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart—that is the word of faith which we are preaching...for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Romans 10:6-10).

There are many Scriptures that talk about the importance of our mouth:

- Death and life are in the power (lit. *hand*) of the tongue, and those who love it, will eat its fruit (Proverbs 18:21). Hebrew word used here is hand, suggesting that the words we speak give direction or fixes a landmark for our lives.





- For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned (Matthew 12:37).

To discover more about the power of your mouth see: <https://judithdoctor.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Scriptures-on-Mouth-Thought-Life.pdf>

### **3. We must act on our faith—take corresponding action**

Once I have the word of God that covers my situation, that word becomes the bedrock to what I believe, what I am saying, and the action that corresponds to it.

You must do something that supports what you are believing in your heart and are saying with your mouth.

- Jesus said, "the man who hears His words and does not act upon them is like the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand" (Matthew 7:24-27).

We must act; God does not make us do it. The Holy Spirit urges, prompts, gives a gentle push, but we must respond.

### **4. We must forgive others—because the law of faith works through love**

Faith will not work in an unforgiving heart. This is the only hindrance to faith that Jesus said anything about. This is why Jesus tells us to forgive when we stand praying.

- And whenever you stand praying forgive, if you have anything against anyone ... (Mark 11:21-25)

#### **No love, no faith**

- So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you being rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17).
- And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts, through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:5-6).
- ... but faith working through love (Galatians 5:6).

**Killer words: bitterness, anger, wrath**

**Faith words: kind, tenderhearted, forgiving others**

To learn more about forgiveness, get my book: *I Forgive You: How Heart-Based Forgiveness Sets You Free*, or read my blog posts on forgiveness.

### **Study Abraham & identify the four elements of faith—Romans 4:1-25**

Abraham is the greatest example of a man in the Bible who believed God. He appropriated the thing promised, the thing desired, by continuing to have hope when all hope was gone.

- Who follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham ... in who against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken ... and 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 wound.



- 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 He had promised, He was able also to perform.

### **Faith patterned after the faith of Abraham**

In order to get Abraham's results we must have Abraham's kind of faith.

- He had God's word for it.
- He believed it.
- He did not waver in unbelief.
- He considered not the contradictory circumstances.
- He was fully assured that what God had promised He would do.
- He used hope to keep his faith strong.
- He gave glory and praise to God.

### ***Abraham had absolutely nothing on which to base his hope ... BUT FAITH***

In the natural, hope was gone. Sarah his wife was probably 89 years old; Abraham was about a 100 years old. Yet, he refused to consider the deadness of his own body, or that of Sarah's.

### ***Is your hope based on faith in a promise from God or in the circumstances around you?***

Bible hope is based on God's PROMISES, even as Abraham's. If our hope is based on what is happening around us, it is not Bible hope. Spiritual hope is fed by our faith in God's promises, not on the prospects around us.

### **Abraham, the father of our faith**

- Those who are of faith are sons of Abraham; those who are of faith are blessed with the believing Abraham (Galatians 3:7, 9).
- In order that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14, 16).
- If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring (Galatians 3:29).

## **C. Reflection—Abraham & His Friend**

**What did Abraham ground his faith in?**

**Imagine a conversation between Abraham and his friend:**

Friend: "Wow, have you looked closely at Sarah lately. She really looks old. She isn't even able to get around very well." Now write out what you think Abraham might have said back to his friend.



## **D. Make It Personal**

- Can you identify the four elements of faith used by David? I Samuel 17:32; 43-46**
  
- Identify a need you have and write it here.**
  
- Find a promise in the Bible that relates to your need. Then meditate on this scripture, until faith is quickened in your heart.**
  
- Write out the four elements of faith and practice using them with.**
  
- Describe what hope is and how to use it. Use your hope to keep your faith active.**
  
- Have you seen God answer one of your prayers during this study group?**



# Appendix A

## GIVE YOUR HEART TO GOD

### Make It Personal

*Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I acknowledge that I have sinned and that I cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus came to give me life, and by faith I now choose to receive You into my life as my Lord and Savior.*

*By the power of Your indwelling presence enable me to be the person You created me to be. I pray that You would grant me repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth so that I can experience my freedom in Christ and be transformed by the renewing of my mind. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.*

### Here is the prayer I prayed years ago:

*God, I ask for your help. I want to know You. I need Your son Jesus. I place my faith in His work on the cross, His burial and His resurrection. I accept the blood He shed as enough for my sins and the sins of others against me. Jesus, I ask You to come live inside of me. I invite You to come into my life. And I thank you. Amen.*

### Examples of the “Sinner’s Prayer”

*God I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. I know according to your Word that I cannot make myself righteous, but I thank You because You love me and sent the Lord Jesus to die for me. And through His righteousness, redemption is made available to me. I believe that He died for my sins according to the Scripture. I believe that He was raised from the dead and is my justification. I confess Him now and take Him as my Savior.*

Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

(taken from <http://www.gotquestions.org/sinners-prayer.html>)



## Reflection

### 1. *Now, where is Jesus?*

If I ask you where is Jesus, can you say with confidence: “He is in my heart. I asked Him to come in, and I know He did, because God cannot lie.”

### 2. *Did you make Jesus Christ Lord?*

Did you make a decision to make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, to follow Him in faith and obedience? Did you decide to lay down your rebellion, surrender, and make Jesus Christ Lord of your life?

- And Jesus answered saying to them, Have faith in God (Mark 11:22)
- Let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard (Hebrews 4:1-2).

If I ask the question, *what or who do you have faith in?* most people will answer, “In God, of course!” But we need to give the question more thought, if we want our faith to work for us.

Faith sees the unseen things that the natural eye cannot see. Faith shows us there is life after death, there are miracles, and there is another dimension beyond the physical.