

Faith

The best definition of faith is found in the first chapter of Hebrews 11, which is often referred to as the faith chapter. “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) The NLT translation renders this same passage, “Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.”

One of the best examples of faith is in the life of Abraham, who is called the “father of all who believe.” God had promised this man that he would be the father of nations and that his children would be as plentiful as the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky. But Sarah and Abraham did not have one child, and now they were too old. Nevertheless Abraham kept his eyes on God and continued to believe what God had revealed to him. To understand the full import, read Genesis 12–22 and all of Romans 4. I have chosen a few verses from this faith-filled passage.

Faith in Action

“The promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham’s. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, ‘I have made you the father of many nations.’ This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, ‘That’s how many descendants you will have!’ And Abraham’s faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah’s womb.

Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous.” (Romans 4:18–22 NLT)

Faith for Us

In a real life situation Abraham demonstrated faith. His example was not only for himself and Sarah, but for us as well. We have not seen Jesus die on the cross and rise from the dead. We were not with the early disciples who witnessed these wonderful events, yet we believe in the living God and His Spirit has worked in our heart to give us faith.

“When God counted him as righteous, it wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand,

and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory." (Romans 4:23-5:2 NLT)

T. N. T.

Our salvation is a fruit of our faith. These verses are so powerful, they are often called TNT which stands for Ten-Nine-Ten. Romans chapter Ten, verses Nine and Ten. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

Growing Faith

Faith is an essential component of the life of a believer. One of the reasons I read scripture is to strengthen my faith. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17) I have experienced an increase in my faith when I am consistently reading the truth from God's perspective. But my faith wavers when I spend too much time listening to the evening news or reading the newspaper and seeing the world's problems from man's perspective. Romans 1:17 declares "The righteous shall live by faith."

Walk by Faith

One of my daily disciplines is going for a quiet walk by myself, usually in the evening. God and I jokingly refer to these special times as when I walk by faith :-) or as Paul expresses it "we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7). Even though God and I smile at this play on words, there is much truth to it.

When I leave my driveway and head north, I consciously think of James 4:8, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." I don't see God, but I believe His word, and confidently expect to meet with Him.

I know that sin separates me from God, so I express faith in the blood of Jesus to take away my sin and make me close to my Dad. This verse is the basis for my confidence, "Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (Ephesians 2:13)

Then I walk through the facts as revealed in the word, that God likes me, He enjoys my company, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, which is what I do when I set aside time to walk and commune with my Dad. "It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Over and over again, God meets me as I seek Him. I still wrestle with fear and wonder if God really likes me and wants to spend time with me, and He patiently reassures me that I am His son and He knows and cares for me. My battle today is the same as Abraham's was many years ago, believing that God is true and His words can be trusted.

Abraham believed God's promises and believed in God's person, for they are intertwined. God does not lie, for God is true and faithful. God follows through on his promises for God is faithful. God's word and His nature are totally consistent.

Abraham knew this, and his faith never wavered. He knew God. He communed with Him. He knew God's person and He remembered God's promises.

When you read through Hebrews 11, I hope you will identify as I do with all these men and women of faith who discovered in real life situations, that God was with them, that He never left them, that He is good and faithful. They knew, as we are learning, that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Remember

Since 2012 I have kept a journal and have hundreds of pages recounting and recording scriptures which God has illuminated, and notes of special times I have had with God. It is a wonderful exercise for me to reread my journals, to remember How God has set me. I am quick to forget and focus on what is coming next, and this new habit of writing and studying and recoding and reflecting is bearing good fruit in my heart and mind. I now enjoy being still and knowing that God is. I like being in His presence.

Declaration of Faith

In place of a prayer, I would like to share three passages of scripture which I call to mind when I am tempted to be saddened and depressed by events that happen in our world. "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10-11) A similar passage is found in Habakkuk 2:14, "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

There will come a time when we will not need to pray for our neighbors to know the Lord. "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:34) Amen.