

## Lesson # 10 -- The Goal of Faith

### Introduction

- A. In these lessons on faith a number of important principles have continually appeared in our study of the Bible.
1. Faith can be understood only when seen as a facet of our walk with God. We trust Him through His Word by the Holy Spirit.
  2. Faith is a decision to accept the Biblical promise or command and practice it while continually trusting God.
  3. Faith is intimately related to love (which is its structure and motivation), and hope (its expectation of certainty regarding the future).
- B. In this last lesson I wish to point out the goal of faith.
1. We understand that faith is a gift of God -- as an ability -- and given to every believer so we may know and do His will.
  2. Therefore faith becomes the one important way that God works in and through the believer. It is interesting that Paul referred to "The door of faith" (Acts 14:27). By faith we can and should enter into all the fullness of God's blessing.
  3. The goal God has designed to be achieved by the gift of faith is therefore twofold:
    - a. To lead the believer into the full experience of His will and blessing for us.
    - b. To bring honor and glory to Himself.

### I. The Biblical Instruction

- A. Faith is the key to success in a believer's walk with God.
1. The healing of the Samaritan leper.

And as he (the Lord Jesus) entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers . . . Go shew yourselves to the priest. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them . . . turned back . . . glorified God . . . giving him thanks . . . and he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. Luke 17:11-19

Comment: While we do not know about the other men who were healed the Lord Jesus did point out that the one was to be commended for his faith. That which made the Samaritan to differ from the others -- in returning to give the Lord Jesus thanks -- was his faith. When we realize that faith is a correct response to God, then we can understand why the Lord Jesus spoke as He did. The presence of faith in your life is what makes you to be different. We must learn to develop our faith by obedience.

2. Abraham's faith in the divine promise.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Rom. 4:20

Comment: We have often spoken of this incident in this series on faith. It has to do with the way Abraham and Sarah believed God when He promised them a child. They made a decision of faith to believe Him. The results of their faith went far beyond the birth of Isaac. He was in the lineage of the Lord Jesus -- the Redeemer of mankind. God could work in the life of Abraham -- because of his faith. There could not be a greater example given to point out the importance of faith.

B. Our faith is often tested so we can become stronger.

1. The purpose of these tests is spiritual maturity.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into different temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:2-4

Comment: This passage reminds us that our faith needs the characteristic of patience if we are to be strong in our walk with God. This means the determination to trust God -- even though things are going poorly and we have no emotional or circumstantial support. It is also helpful to see that such a faith will make us to be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." This description is the theme of this last lesson. The goal of faith -- as God designed it -- has to do with the leading the believer into spiritual maturity.

2. The trials of the believer all point to faith.

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:7

Comment: The value of faith, and therefore the trials of our faith, goes far beyond any monetary price that we could place upon it. Nothing can bring such benefit into your life and mine -- than our faith. Nothing can bring such honor and glory to God -- than our faith. We have failed if we do not look upon our ability to trust God as an area of profound importance. We must learn to develop our faith by being steadfast in times of trial.

## II. The Biblical Illustration

And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Matthew 15:22-28

Comment: Who could doubt the value of faith and what it has been designed by God to achieve -- after reading such a passage as this? The Lord Jesus was not only concerned about the little girl at home -- possessed by the devil -- but about her mother. Both had a need. The mother's need was to be willing to fit into God's plan and be submissive to His will while at the same time being aggressive in claiming the promises of divine help -- and her daughter needed deliverance. The faith of this mother, a Gentile, made it possible for God to enter into her family with help. Are we the free channel of divine grace in our family -- and to others? Or have we wasted our life with grudges, bitterness, gossip, self-centeredness, doubt, criticism, unbelief, laziness, and manipulating others? This mother did not blame God for her daughter's condition -- would we?

## III. The Biblical Explanation

(The Bible presents faith to us in a number of settings. The following examples will serve to indicate the goal that God has designed in faith.)

### A. The hearing of faith -- the believer's responsibility.

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal. 3:2,3

Comment: The church at Galatia had been influenced by false teachers who said it was necessary to keep the Jewish rules and forms in order to be saved and grow in the Christian life. Paul reminded them how they had become believers and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the "hearing of faith," i.e., by responding to God on the basis of the Bible. We cannot earn the grace of God. Our responsibility is to respond to God on the basis of what is said in the Scripture.

B. The work of faith -- the believer's life.

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. I Thess. 1:3

Comment: Faith, as we have seen, is much more than an intellectual assent to a group of ideas -- it is an action. For faith to be genuine it must be put into practice in some way. Paul commended these church members for their Biblical way of living -- the work of faith. We must make sure that all facets of our daily life grow out of faith.

C. The words of faith -- the believer's strength.

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou has attained. I Timothy 4:6

Comment: By the term "words of faith" Paul is referring to the basis of our faith in the Scripture. This is the very foundation for what we are to believe as well as the blueprint that indicates how we are to express our trust. As we live this way the Word of God becomes a source of nourishment and strength to us.

D. The fight of faith -- the believer's warfare.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I Timothy 6:12

Comment: Because we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ we are in a warfare. The devil hates the Savior and can only strike out at Him in His people. We are also involved in a conflict with the world as well as our fleshly nature. In all of these areas, that which wins, is our faith. As we choose to practice the Word of God (the content of our faith) we receive divine protection.

E. The assurance of faith -- the believer's certainty.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22

Comment: Our faith brings assurance to us because of its content. We cannot separate the true act of believing from that which is believed -- the Bible. That is the first basis of assurance. The second is found in the truth that we do believe! In spite of our doubts and fears we recognize the presence of the gift of faith in our daily life.

F. The Author/Finisher of our faith -- the believer's relationship.

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Comment: This verse instructs us in the great truth that behind our acceptance of the gospel is the work of God. He has given us the gift of faith. In this passage He also comforts us by giving Himself the title "Finisher of our faith." This means that he sustains us as believers and will make it possible for us to enter into His presence in Heaven.

G. The precious faith -- the believer's possession.

Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. II Peter 1:1

Comment: In calling faith "precious" Peter is teaching us the value of faith -- one of our greatest possessions. When we understand that the highest value in life is the spiritual and our most priceless benefits are to be found in the relationships of grace -- only then can we give faith a place of honor. This will motivate us to work a little harder.

IV. The Biblical Application

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Comment: It is quite overwhelming to recognize the design that God had in mind in giving us the gift of faith. As we have seen this makes it possible for Him to work in our life (it serves as an open channel) as well as making it possible for us to respond to Him. When you put these two together you have a basis to understand the value and power of Biblical faith.

The above verse is a testimony of what God wants to do in the life of every believer. He wants to fill us with joy, peace, and hope. As the passage states -- this comes about as we "believe," i.e., as we learn to respond to Him on the basis of His Word.

As we live our daily life, with all its trials, confusion, frustration, and disappointment -- let's make a serious attempt to read and obey His Word -- with the choices that grow out of genuine faith. If we do, then He will lead us into a life that will be characterized, not only with faith, love, and hope -- but obedience, fruitfulness, as well as joy and peace. He will be faithful to His promises.