

Session # 7

The Methodology of Spirituality -- Decisions of Faith, Love, Hope

Introduction

A. God is concerned about you. He made you as a person -- a spiritual person -- and recreated you in the New Birth to walk and talk with Him and to serve Him. He has made a provision so you may enter fully into this life of fellowship and service with fulfillment -- it is faith, love, and hope.

B. For many believers, faith, love, and hope are difficult to implement. One reason may be the confusion which comes when we do not understand how these responses to God are related to other truths of the Christian life.

I. Tentative Definitions of Faith, Love, and Hope.

A. Faith is taking God at His Word and practicing it trusting Him. Rom 4:17-21

B. Love recognizes another person as a person, gives that person rightful place in their life, and does the right thing by that person by becoming involved in that person's life, sacrificially, for their good. I Cor 13

C. Hope is faith and love practiced with regard to the future. It is living with a certainty of expectation knowing God will do what He promised. Acts 27:25; Rom 4:18; 8:24,25

II. Clarifying Observations Regarding Faith, Love, and Hope.

A. Faith, love, and hope are decisions of the will -- not emotions. Heb 11:24-29

B. FLH are abilities given fully in the new birth. Eph 2,8,9; I Thess 1:3

C. FLH are like functions and must be practiced for benefit. Heb 4:1,2

D. FLH are severely limited when based on emotions or circumstances. Num 14:1-11

E. FLH can be practiced without emotional support. Rom. 4:18; Matt 8:26

F. FLH is a practice of truth. Rom 4:17-21; 10:17; 15:13; Heb 11:24-29;

G. FLH has God as the object -- it is FLH in God. Acts 16:31; Matt 22:37-40

H. FLH reflects the attributes of God -- it is complimenting to God.

1. Faith "says" "I believe You are wise enough, faithful, loving, holy, kind, and powerful enough to do what You promise."

2. Unbelief "says" "I do not believe You are wise enough, or faithful, loving, holy, kind, or powerful enough to do what You have promised."

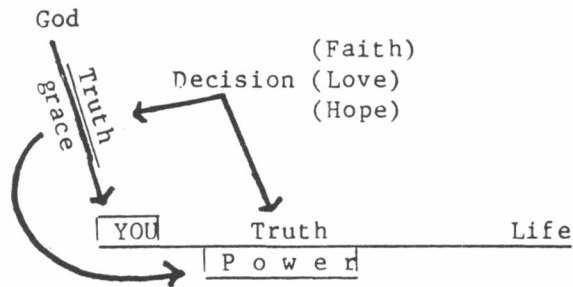
III. The Relationship of the Word and Will of God to Faith, Love, and Hope.

A. The principle: The power of God accompanies the Word of God. God "speaks" His power into our lives through His Word. To the degree we know and practice the Word of God -- to that degree we have the experience of the grace of God and therefore of the power of God. Note the following illustrations.

1. The Word of God and salvation. Acts 16:13-15
2. The Word of God and healing. Matt 12:10-13
3. The Word of God and enablement. I Thess 2:13
4. The Word of God and sanctification. Rom. 6:16-18

B. The principle illustrated.

1. When we make a decision (faith, love, hope) to obey God through His Word and then practice that truth -- God works in our life.



2. Steps in a decision of faith, love, and hope. (What to do with a sin that has you in bondage.)

a. The basis for these steps: The Word of God. I John 1:9

b. The individual steps.

- 1). Specifically and fully confess the sin to be what it is.
- 2). Forsake it completely.
- 3). Choose to believe God that He will forgive, restore, and cleanse you.
- 4). Receive the grace of God for your specific cleansing.
- 5). Believe God has kept His Word and live as the cleansed person you are.

IV. Major Hindrances to the Practice of Faith, Love, and Hope.

A. Indecision and passivity. Luke 24:25; Heb. 4:1,2

B. Pride. Matt 21:32; John 5:44

C. Unbelief. Heb. 3:7-12,15-19; 4:11

D. Unconfessed sin. I Cor 11:27-32; I Tim 1:19

E. Fear. Mark 4:37-41

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