

## CHAPTER XI

### AND NOW FAITH DEMANDS ...

#### **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Beginning.**

In the first chapter we stated that the Christian must learn the truths of Christianity and how to put them into practice. This last chapter is a statement on "practice." It will explain the most important element of "practice" which is a decision of faith. So there will be no misunderstanding, the necessary decisions of faith are explained and several suggested prayers compiled with some amplification for the sake of clarity. The Bible references are presented so the various concepts may be found in the Scripture and utilized for further study.

How does one approach the true and living God? The attitude that just any approach will do could hardly be more incorrect. God is Infinite, Eternal, and absolute Holiness. We can only come to God in the way He has specified and ordained. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

The non-Christian may come to God only through Jesus Christ. A correct beginning means a sincere and thorough repentance for sin, a wholehearted surrender to the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, and a deliberate, specific decision to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The following prayer may help:

"Eternal God, I bow before You in a sincere and honest confession that I am a sinner and that I have sinned against You. I repent of my sin and apologize to You for all I have done. I completely surrender to

Your authority and control as You have stated it in the Bible. On the basis of Your Word, Lord Jesus, I do now receive You into my life as my Lord and Savior. I believe in You and accept You as my forgiveness, cleansing, righteousness, and eternal life. I want to thank You for making all of this possible. In Jesus Name, Amen". (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; John 1:12; 3:16-18, 36; 5:14; 8:24; Romans 5:1; 8:1; 10:9, 10; II Corinthians 5:24; I John 1:9; Revelation 3:20).

The Christian is in an entirely different relationship to God than the non-Christian. However, we may likewise come to God only through Jesus Christ. As believers, the issue in our lives is no longer that of initial salvation; we have been accepted and forgiven. The issue is now daily obedience.

How are we as Christians to approach God through Jesus Christ? We may come only in the way which is in harmony with the Person of Jesus Christ, His work, and His Word. Who He is, what He had done in history, and what He has said in His Word are the determining factors in our approach to God. A correct beginning, therefore, must be with complete sincerity and honesty. One may not pretend with God! All hypocrisy, sham, platitudes, pride, playing-the-game, and mask-wearing must be deliberately and honestly abandoned. In the place of these, we must decisively surrender ourselves to God. We must begin with ourselves, as we bow before God, and acknowledge that all failure in practice is our failure as a person. No elusive side-stepping of this basic truth may be tolerated.

However, we must do more than acknowledge our failures of faith and love. To meet the demand of faith, we must put the Word of God into practice. We must, therefore,

personally assume the responsibility for being the right kind of person and for living in harmony with the Person, work, and Word of God. No decision is greater nor more important than this. All other correct decisions find their roots here.

"Heavenly Father, I bow before You in a sincere and honest choice to surrender myself wholly to You as You have made Yourself known to me in the Holy Scripture. I accept Your Word as my only authoritative standard for all of my life and activity. Therefore, I make the decision not to judge You, Your work, myself, nor others on the basis of my feelings or circumstances."  
(Romans 12:1, 2; John 15:7, 10; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 4:3-5; II Corinthians 10:12).

### **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Attitude Toward God.**

To approach the true and living God correctly, we must come to Him in the attitude of worship and praise. God is worthy of all glory which could be given to Him. The highest deed which can be performed by man and the most essential is that of true worship. To come to God in selfishness, with our minds filled only with our own needs, is not the correct attitude. The reality of the true and living God, Who is pure spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, truth, and love, should compel us to worship Him with our total being. Any failure to do so indicates our ignorance of the greatness and goodness of the triune God.

The slightest reflection on the greatness of God, as manifested in His work as the Creator and Sustainer of all things, as the Governor of all nations, the Author of history,

the Head of the Church, the Lord of the Harvest, and the Savior of mankind, should likewise cause us to bow before Him in adoration and praise.

Faith, therefore, demands that we recognize the greatness and goodness of God and worship Him for Who He is and what He has done. It may be helpful to use the following affirmation:

"I bow to acknowledge that You, the triune God, are worthy of all honor, praise, and worship as the Creator, Sustainer, and End of all things. As my Creator, I recognize that You made me for Yourself. I, therefore, choose to live for You. I am grateful that You loved me and chose me in Jesus Christ in eternity past and proved Your love in sending Your Son to die in my place. I praise You for every provision which has already been made for my past, present, and future needs through the representative work of Jesus Christ in Whom I have been quickened, raised, seated in the heavenlies, and anointed with the Holy Spirit." (Revelation 4:11; Romans 12:1, 2; 5:6-11; 8:28-39; Philippians 1:6; 4:6, 7, 13, 19; Ephesians 1:3; 2:5, 6; Acts 2:1-4, 33).

### **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Understanding Of The Permanence Of Salvation.**

Worshipping and honoring God are not acts performed only on our knees. They involve every part of our life and day. One of the most serious ways in which we dishonor God is to doubt His Word, either through ignorance or, worse yet, through presumptuous choice.

A crucial area in this regard has to do with the possession of salvation. Our shallow understanding of the profound depths of divine redemption easily propels us into ingratitude and gnawing doubt. As a result we judge God and evaluate His work and love on the basis of feeling and circumstance. This we may not do.

It is important to understand the provision God has made for us and to accept decisively as the truth what He has said in His Word concerning our salvation. The following prayer is an illustration of how this may be done:

"Since I have received Your Son the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I believe Your Word that You have received me, forgiven me, adopted me into Your family, assumed every responsibility for me, given to me eternal life, and made me complete in Christ. I accept the truth of Your Word that the Lord Jesus offers Himself to me as my daily sufficiency through prayer and the decisions of faith, and that the Holy Spirit Himself has baptized me into the Body of Christ, sealed me, anointed me for life and service, seeks to lead me into a deeper walk with the Lord Jesus and to fill my life with Himself. I accept these truths as realities in my life today." (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:6, 7; John 17:11, 17, 21, 24; Ephesians 1:5; Philippians 1:6. John 3:36; I John 5:9-13; Colossians 2:10; I Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20; John 14:13, 14; Matthew 21:22; Romans 6:1-19; Hebrews 4:1-3, 11; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Acts 1:8; John 7:37-39; 14:16-18; 15:26, 27; 16:13-15; Romans 8:11-16; Ephesians 5:18).

## **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Evaluation of Sin and Holiness.**

To honor and glorify God in daily life, faith demands that we understand and evaluate sin and holiness correctly. The Christian has the awesome ability to obey God and thereby bring holiness into his life, or to disobey God and thereby bring sin into his life. The kind of person we will become in character and practice is determined by the choices we make today. In this regard our future is an undeveloped potentiality for good and evil. Our manner of life in the future is determined by the sort of person we will be and this in turn is determined by our evaluation of sin and holiness today. It is impossible to sin and escape the destructive force sin has upon our character. Likewise, obedience to God will bring strength and virtue of character. As Christians, therefore, we must take a stand against our own sinful nature and the temptations from without and within. We must choose to live according to the will of God and to be characterized by the holiness which is both the demand and the promise of God.

An important step in this direction is the acknowledgement of our inability to cope with sin and our inability to produce a holy character. The secret of sanctification is not found in our own resolutions or desires; it is found in Jesus Christ and His work within us, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 1: 30; Romans 8:1-17):

“I acknowledge in Your presence that only You can deal with my sin and only You can produce holiness in my life. In both of these areas I am dependent upon You and Your grace. I, therefore, choose to wholly surrender myself to You to obey Your Word. I recognize that You have made every necessary provision for my daily life so that I may fulfill Your will and call. Therefore, I will not make excuses for my

sin and failure. I renounce all self-effort to live the Christian life and to perform Christian service. I renounce all the sinful religious activity which only weeps over sin and failure. I renounce the sinful praying which would ask You to change circumstances and people so that I may be more spiritual. I renounce all drawing back from the work of the Holy Spirit within and the call of God without. And I renounce all those motives, goals, and activities which have served my sinful pride." (I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 9Z:8; Galatians 2:20; I John 5:4; Romans 6:16-20; I Thessalonians 5:24).

### **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Response To The Commands Of God.**

Faith is essentially a decision, made in dependence upon God, in response to the promises and commands of the Scripture. When such decisions are made and put into practice, the grace of God flows into our lives, and we are increasingly set free from sin and increasingly enabled to live a holy life (Romans 6:11-22; Philippians 2:12, 13; I Peter 1:22).

The secret of a successful Christian life is, therefore, rooted in the Word of God and in the believer's sincere response to God and His Word. There is no other place to begin. Everything in practical Christianity begins with God, His Word, and the individual's decision to respond correctly to God. When we know the Biblical commandments regarding personal sanctification, honestly desire to obey God and make the right decisions of faith, then, and only then, will we know the will, grace, and power of God in our daily lives.

**The demand of faith, therefore, is three-fold.** **First**, we must know the commands and promises of God. **Second**, we must possess a sincere and honest desire to obey and believe God. **Third**, we must acquire the knowledge of how to make a decision of faith and follow through by making such decisions.

In the New testament there are four basic commands regarding the believer's daily life. All of the other commands and exhortations may be subsumed under these four or may be said to be their fulfillment.

These four commands are the application, in the believer's daily life, of the four historical deeds of redemption upon which all of Christianity rests. What the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost imply and demand in our daily lives has been summarized into these four specific commands.

Because the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified as our Representative so that we may be cleansed from the power of our sinful fallen nature, we have been commanded to "*put off the old man*" (Ephesians 4:22):

"I now make the decision, Lord Jesus, to receive You as my sanctification, particularly now as my cleansing from the old nature, and ask You, blessed Holy Spirit, to apply to me the work of the Crucifixion. Cleanse me from my pride, hypocrisy, lust, selfishness, doubt, and jealousy which I confess as sin. In cooperation with and dependence upon You, I make the decision of faith to '*put off the old man*'. " (Romans 6:1-22; I Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 5:6-21; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:1-17).



Because the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected as our Representative so that we may be enabled to live free from sin in holiness of life, we have been commanded to "*put on the new man*" (Ephesians 4:24):

"I now make the decision, Lord Jesus, to receive You as my sanctification, particularly now as my enablement moment by moment to live above sin, and I do ask You, blessed Holy spirit, to apply to me the work of the Resurrection so that I may walk in newness of life. I sincerely desire to have humility, honesty, purity, love, faith, and long-suffering in my daily life. In cooperation with and dependence upon You I make the decision of faith to "put on the new man." " (Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:24)

Because the Lord Jesus Christ ascended as our Representative to provide deliverance from Satan, we have been commanded to "*resist the Devil*" (Ephesians 4:27):

"I now make the decision, Lord Jesus, to receive You as my deliverance from Satan and by faith take my position with You in the heavenlies. I do ask You, blessed Holy Spirit, to apply to me the work of the Ascension. I would wholly surrender to you and, in the Name of Jesus Christ, take my stand against all Satanic influence and subtlety. In cooperation with and dependence upon You, I make the decision of faith to '*resist the Devil*'." (Ephesians 1:17-23; 2:1-6; 4:27; 6:10-18; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 2:14, 15; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8, 9).

Because the Lord Jesus Christ received the Holy Spirit as our Representative and bestowed Him upon His Church, we have been commanded to "*be filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18):

"I now make the decision to receive You, blessed Holy Spirit, as my anointing for every area of my life. I ask you, in all sincerity, to bring my character and life into full conformity to the Person of Jesus Christ and the will of God. Please work with me so that Jesus Christ may be glorified and the fruit of Your presence may be seen in my life. In cooperation with and dependence upon You, I make the decision of faith to be '*filled with the Holy Spirit*'. " (John 7:37-39; 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 2:33; Romans 8:1-17; Ephesians 5:18).

### **FAITH DEMANDS: A Correct Dependence Upon The Faithfulness Of God.**

And now that we have responded to God and have obeyed His commands by making the necessary decisions of faith, what is the next step? It is simply to believe God and to live accordingly. When we are faced with a temptation or choice which would be contradictory to the Person and deeds of God, and our decisions of faith, that form of thinking and acting must be rejected in dependence upon God and as a re-affirmation of our faith. If we have sincerely made the decisions of faith and honestly desire to live accordingly, we can expect the wisdom, grace, and power to live a successful Christian life.

"Having made this confession and these decisions of faith, I now take as my own,

Your promised rest for this day. I relax in the trust of faith knowing that in the moment of temptation, trial, or need, You will be there to be my strength and sufficiency." (Hebrews 4:1-13; I Corinthians 10:13).

The Demands Of Faith discussed in this chapter are undergirded by a full understanding and practice of three important truths illustrated in diagram 16.

**THE KEY TO SUCCESS: One Must Understand And Practice Three Important Truths.**

1. **God has revealed Himself.** The content of God's revelation is primarily a Person (Jesus Christ the Living Word): the Work of Jesus Christ in history (the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost is how He has revealed Himself); and the Word of Jesus Christ (the inspired and infallible Scripture).

2. **The correct response to God's revelation is that of faith and love.** Faith and love are inseparable. Both must be present for either to "work." The activity of faith and love (putting the Bible into practice by decisions of faith) is described in the Scripture as "obedience."

3. **The resultant experience is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in grace and power.** While not denying that faith is an experience of grace and power it is encouraging to realize that, when we correctly respond to God in obedience, the automatic result will be an experience of grace and power through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If the believer does not "enjoy the Lord" it is evident that he is in some way out of the will of God.

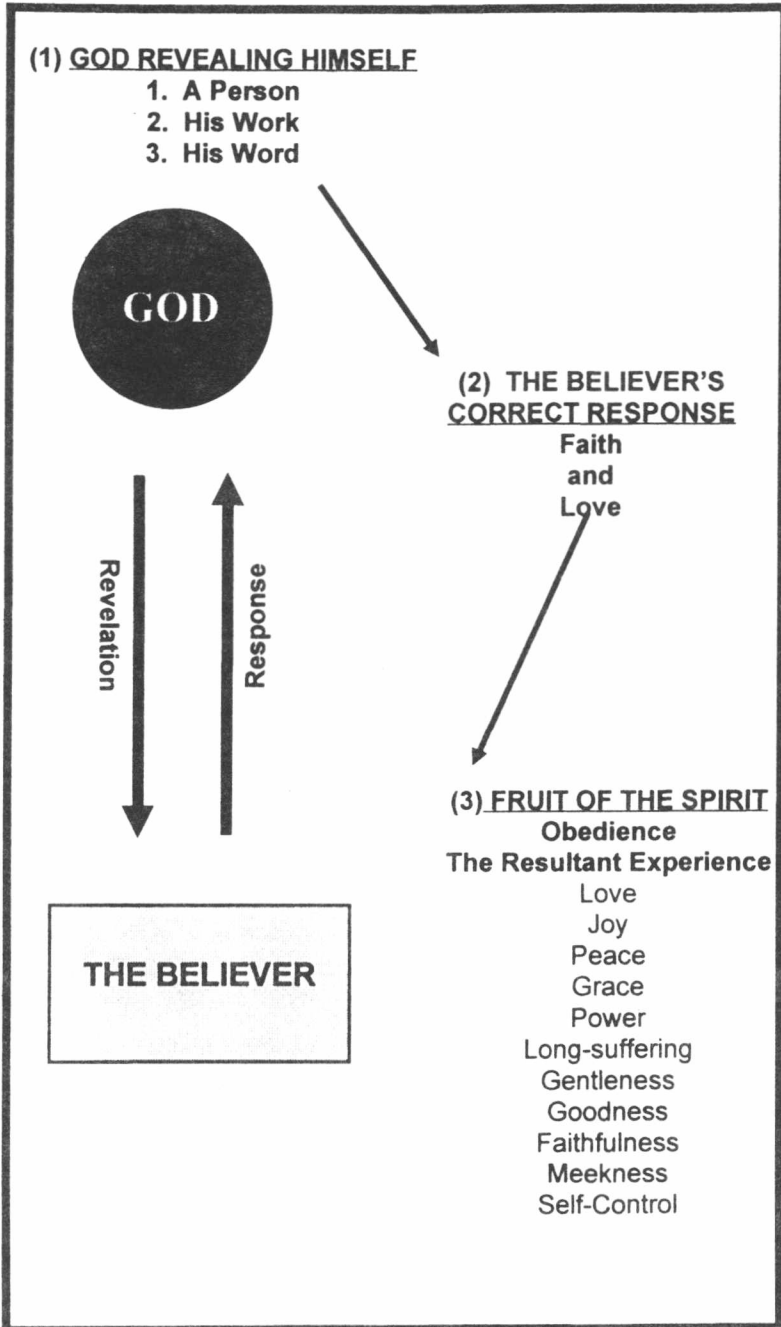


Diagram 16: Three Important Truths