

Father I choose to believe

Introduction: The Power of Believing Prayer

Weekly Studies:

1. The Gift of Faith
2. The Shield of Faith
3. Faith and the Word of God
4. According to your Faith
5. Faith overcomes Fear and Doubt
6. Thinking in Faith
7. Faith and Repentance
8. Interceding in Faith
9. Prophecy that fires Faith
10. Faith overcomes failure

Appendix:

- A. The Promises of God
- B. The Sin & Occult list

Copyright September 2000 by Mark Hemans. Parts of this book may be photocopied for study purposes, but not changed or sold.

The Power of Believing Prayer

When I began writing this booklet on faith I became quite ill. I suffered from dizziness, such that in order to sleep I had to sit up. At times I had great difficulty in getting my words out. The thoughts were there but I struggled to say them. I found standing for long periods, walking or doing menial tasks to be exhausting. The doctor was uncertain as to the cause of my sickness. Virtually the only task I could easily perform was to sit at the computer and write these studies!

Writing this booklet was no mere academic exercise. I had to put into practice the principles of faith that I was writing about. For weeks I struggled in prayer, fighting against fear and doubt, and choosing to believe in Jesus for complete healing. I would say the prayer of faith, "Thankyou Father I believe that you are healing me now." One day I had a vision of Jesus entering the room and healing me. About two weeks later I was completely well.

I have found again and again that God's power and blessing are released when one sincerely says the prayer of faith. It is a decision – the choice to believe in God's Promises. It is in the middle of the problem that the choice to believe must be made. These studies will help you to make that choice even while you are in the midst of the struggle, whatever it may be: sickness, depression, debt, loneliness, or spiritual attack.

Here are some other brief personal testimonies which I want to share to encourage you in the walk of faith.

- SALVATION. At 10 years of age I experienced the heavenly Father's love after saying the sinner's prayer. Suddenly I knew that I was a child of God. God had become my Father.
- HEALING.
 - ❖ As a teenager my ear became infected, rupturing the ear drum, leaving me deaf in one ear. After saying the prayer of faith for healing, I was completely healed.
 - ❖ For 12 years I suffered from optical migraines for which I said the prayer of faith.. Although I was told the problem was medically incurable, yet the Lord completely healed me.
- DELIVERANCE. I used to suffer from depression which was like a dark cloud. One day I realized that this came from Satan, and rebuked it in the Name of Jesus. Immediately it lifted off me and I've been free since.
- REVIVAL. After saying the prayer of faith for Wheaton College in Illinois, more than 10 years later the Lord mightily moved by His Spirit in 1995. Likewise after saying the prayer of faith for revival for the congregation of Christ Church in Dingley, Victoria some 35000 people visited the church over an 18 month period.

Nothing is impossible for God!

May God bless you mightily as you read this booklet.

HOW TO USE THE STUDIES

Whatever your knowledge of the Bible you will find these studies a great blessing. They may be used for preaching, seminars, home groups, or for discipleship.

Each study consists of a memory verse, Bible reading, a simple teaching, followed by some discussion questions relating to what has been taught. Although the studies are simple, they are arranged as to gradually build a deeper understanding on certain themes.

If using the course for a small group or to disciple someone, the following is recommended:

- ◆ The group (student) reads through the teaching and answers the questions BEFORE the meeting.
- ◆ The leader thoroughly acquaints himself with the material before meeting with his home group.
- ◆ The leader at the meeting then highlights the main points in the teaching. (Reading through the teaching will not leave sufficient time for the discussion questions.)
- ◆ The leader then opens the group up to discussion based on the questions given. As there are numerous questions, the leader should ask only one or two people to respond for each question. Focus should be given to the application questions (e.g. "How does this apply to your life?").

The studies include examples from the life of the author or from someone else to illustrate the teaching. It would be preferable for the leader to substitute his own life experience or perhaps one from the group itself. This will facilitate sharing in the group.

THE GIFT OF FAITH

Memory verse:

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:1

Bible Passage: Romans 10:8-17

Goals:

- That we learn how to pray the prayer of faith.
 - That we understand the three steps of faith: asking, believing, and receiving.

What is the gift of faith?

The gift of faith is a supernatural certainty that what God has purposed shall occur. In the gift of faith God enables us to believe things that we cannot see. Our walk of faith is not by our natural senses. It is an inner assurance, peace, or joy of God which doesn't seem "rational" in difficult situations. It is an inner conviction of the Holy Spirit which is independent of earthly realities.

The gift of faith comes as we believe the promises of God. It may also be evoked by a specific leading of the Holy Spirit revealing God's purposes in a situation. This may occur as we are reading the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit impresses upon us a verse for our situation. Or we may receive a prophecy or vision which reveals how we are to pray. With confidence we can therefore move forward in praying the prayer of faith. So we can say the prayer of faith simply on the basis of God's promises, or because of specific divine guidance.

“On earth as it is in heaven”

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus teaches us to pray that God's will in heaven become a fact on earth. He teaches us how to pray that heavenly realities become earthly realities. The prayer of faith is like a woman giving birth to a baby. Before the birth we do not see the baby. Yet we know it is coming as the mother travails in birth pains. Likewise we travail in faith until that which is unseen, God's will and His Kingdom, is given birth to in the natural. Like a woman in birth pains it can be hard work requiring much patience and perseverance.

"Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." **Matthew 6:9-10**

THREE STEPS OF THE PRAYER OF FAITH

We find the prayer of faith mentioned in James' instruction of how to pray for the sick. We discover that the prayer of faith is tremendously powerful, resulting in the salvation of the sick man, his healing, and the forgiveness of his sins.

"Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."

Jesus gives us three simple steps to follow as we seek to pray in faith...

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:24

We understand that the prayer of faith has three basic steps:

1. **Asking** for what is needed or desired.
2. **Believing** that we have already received it.
3. **Receiving** the blessing.

Let's now consider what it means to ask, believe, and to receive.

Step 1: Knowing how to ask

A good parent will not give a child what he wants, simply for the asking. If the child is demanding, greedy, selfish, or asking for the wrong things the parent will say no. So it is with our heavenly Father, we need to ask with right attitudes. The prayer of faith is not like a drink machine – put the coin in and out pops the drink can. The way we ask God is important.

The following are some principles to how to ask...

- Repent of specific sins in your life, and particularly that of unforgiveness. Sin can block the granting of requests. Examine your heart, is there a critical attitude, jealousy, revenge, anger, pride, or greed?

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." **Mark 11:25**

"Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am. "If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness..." **Isaiah 58:9-10**

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."

James 4:3

- Spend time with God. Develop intimacy with Him. Read and know His Word. In this way we can have increasing assurance of how to ask, because we are in relationship with Him.

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you." **John 15:7**

- Make your prayer specific. What is it we are asking for? What exactly are we expecting God to do? After praying, do you know what you have asked for? If God was to answer your prayer would you know it?

"And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." **Matthew 6:7-8**

Do you pray “if it be thy will”? This was the prayer of surrender by Jesus to do the will of the Father. When people pray this prayer (in the context of petition) what they are really saying is that they don’t know God’s will in the situation, and therefore don’t expect anything to happen. It is often a prayer of uncertainty. God’s general will is revealed in scripture, and is specifically applied to our situation by the Holy Spirit.

"And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." **Matthew 21:22**

- Press in to God when you ask. Persevere in your asking. Don’t give up too soon! When Mark was a missionary he was waiting for a package of books to arrive from

another country. Each time he went to the post office he gave thanks that his package arrived. At times he would take an empty bag with him in faith for the package. He continued in this way for 7 months. After all hope had gone, the package arrived. More important than the package, was the lesson in perseverance!

"And I tell you, ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

Luke 11:5-9

Step 2: Believe that you have already received it

- Faith is giving thanks to God before we see it happen. What we often do is to thank God after it has happened. But faith is praising God before it has occurred. Scripture says that "Now is the day of salvation." We believe that now it has happened, even if it takes years to transpire in the natural. We must live in the Kingdom NOW, making heavenly realities manifest on earth by faith in Jesus.
- Whether we experience anything or not we are to continue to give thanks by faith, until it is "manifested" (we have received it in the natural), or until the Lord gives us the peace that our prayers have been heard.
- This faith is to be a constant attitude that we develop. It is a daily reliance and trust in our heavenly Father that is commanded of us by Jesus. Only by walking by faith can we receive God's approval and please Him.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek Him."

Hebrews 11:6

"For by it (faith) the men of old received divine approval."

Hebrews 11:2

- Faith must become our automatic response. If someone wakes us up during the night and asks us our name, although half asleep, we could automatically give it without hardly a thought. So also with faith. Often when confronted with some difficulty, our natural reaction is to worry. Like the disciples in the storm when they cried out to Jesus: **"Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"** But Jesus, the Man of faith, calms the storm, and then rebukes his disciples saying:

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

Mark 4:40

Our automatic negative reactions of fear and doubt are ungodly. Through repentance God enables us to respond in faith.

- Choosing to believe. We can either put our faith in God, or react in fear, worry, self-reliance, or ungodly dependency (which is idolatry - the placing of our faith in something or someone other than God). We must repent of such sinful attitudes and absolutely trust in God. Giving thanks to Him for the answer before we see it.
- We have what we accept. If what we accept is poverty, sickness, marriage failure, or job dissatisfaction, that is what we will probably experience. However, if what we accept is the promises of God, then the blessings of God will be released upon us.
- The form and timing of the blessing. When we say the prayer of faith, God's blessing is always released. However the timing and the form of the blessing may be different from what we expected. For example we may be believing for revival, but the Lord may choose to intervene in judgment. We may be believing for physical

healing, but the Lord may choose to “take” the person, granting perfect healing through death. Or God may choose to heal the person gradually. This involves trusting God and submitting to His ways. We need to be mature to accept God’s response to our walk of faith.

Step 3: give God the glory for the blessing received

- For our own spiritual health we should give God the glory upon receiving answers to prayers. How often upon being blessed do we fail to really show our appreciation to God. The temptation is to take God for granted and simply go on with life. Like the ten lepers who were all healed by Jesus. Only one of them returned “praising God with a loud voice”, falling on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving Him thanks. Here was a man who without shame joyfully gave thanks to God for answered prayer.

"Then said Jesus, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

- Giving thanks to God for answered prayer builds our faith. When you are persevering in the prayer of faith, and feel discouraged, or it seems like nothing is happening, thank and praise God for what you have already seen Him do. As the song says: “Count your blessings one by one.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Hebrews 11:1

WHAT IS THE GIFT OF FAITH?

1. Using the teaching, explain what the gift of faith is.
2. *Complete the following sentences (answers are given below).
Faith has its eyes set on _____, and its feet firmly set on the _____ of God's _____.
3. *Faith is giving _____ to God before _____.
4. Can you give an example in your own life of how the Lord led you to pray in faith?

“ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

5. How is the prayer of faith like a woman in labour?
6. What does the Lord’s prayer teach us about the prayer of faith? (Matthew 6:9-10)

THREE STEPS OF THE PRAYER OF FAITH

7. What power is released when we pray the prayer of faith (James 5:14-15)?
 8. What are the three basic steps of the prayer of faith (Mark 11:24)?
- STEP 1: KNOWING HOW TO ASK**
9. When we are asking God for something in faith, why is it inappropriate to say: “If it be thy will?”
 10. Write down briefly four principles of how to ask in prayer (see teaching).

STEP 2: BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED IT

12. How do we receive God’s approval? How can we please God? (Hebrews 11:1,2,6)
13. Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples after He calmed the storm? (Mark 4:40-41)
14. *Complete: Faith must become our _____ response.
15. Why is maturity necessary in walking by faith?

STEP 3: GIVE GOD THE GLORY FOR THE BLESSING RECEIVED

15. In the story of the healing of the 10 lepers what is the way of receiving blessings?
16. How can we use answers to prayer to further build our faith level?

* **Answers:** Q.2 Jesus, promises of God’s Word. Q.3 thanks, before it happens. Q. 14 automatic

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Memory Verse:

"Besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one."

Ephesians 6:16

Bible Passage: Matthew 17:14-20

Goals:

- To use our shield of faith in doing spiritual warfare.

The fight of faith

There is a fight of faith that we all must do. In the midst of the battle with problems, fears, and crisis the Lord calls us to stand firm in our faith. We are to resist Satan and his demonic hosts by holding up our shield of faith.

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong." **1Corinthians 16:13**

Here are two examples of fighting in faith:

1. When Israel faced starvation in the desert, in the midst of the crisis, they failed to fight back in faith. They came under God's judgment because instead of trusting Him for food, they complained.

"They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness? 20 He smote the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread, or provide meat for his people?" 21 Therefore, when the LORD heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob, his anger mounted against Israel; 22 because they had no faith in God, and did not trust his saving power."

Psalm 78:19

2. When Jesus wanted to cross the lake He said to His disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." It was God's purpose that they should reach the other side of the lake and deliver a man possessed of evil spirits. Satan however strikes back by stirring up a tremendous storm. The waves were sinking the boat. Jesus and his disciples were about to drown. The disciples failed to fight back in faith. They were overcome with the fear of drowning.

Fear is the opposite of faith. Jesus rebukes the disciples saying, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" If we are to see the victory we must stand firm in our faith, and not dwell on the waves that Satan tosses up. Jesus stands up and with confidence says, "Peace! Be still!"

"On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" 41

And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Mark 4:35-41

Appropriating the victory of the cross

Satan was defeated by the Cross of Christ. Yet we must appropriate that victory by faith. Victory over Satan and his demons is a promise of scripture. The power of that promise is released by faith.

"And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him."

Colossians 2:13-15

So often when a Christian comes under some sort of attack, he responds thinking, "Why is this happening to me?" "Why doesn't God get me out of this?" God has made provision for each of our situations. But that provision is only released as someone chooses to believe.

When the fiery darts of the enemy are coming in, instead of putting up our shield of faith and stopping those darts, we often let our shield hang down useless and get hit all over. We groan and complain when those darts hit home. Yet the way to stop those darts from hitting us is to raise high our faith shield.

"Besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one."

Ephesians 6:16

In the middle of the attack we are to thank God for His protection, and the victory of the cross in our situation. We are to appropriate the promises of Scripture, affirming our faith in God as Protector.

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, 2 will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." 3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; 4 he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. 5 You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. 8 You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. 9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your habitation, 10 no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent."

Psalm 91:1-10

Satan's goal is to destroy our faith in Jesus

The goal of almost every satanic attack against us is to destroy our faith in the promises of God. Our faith is more precious than anything else we enjoy in this life. Our faith is more important than our health or our relationships. So when Satan attacks our peace, work, finances, marriage, health, or family, the primary attack is not against those things but against our faith in Jesus. It is helpful to distinguish between the point of contact (e.g. finances), and the goal of the attack (our faith). This is clearly seen in the satanic attacks against Job. The points of contact included his health, property,

finances, and personal bereavement. The goal of the attack was so that he would turn away from God and curse Him.

"And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause." 4 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." 6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power; only spare his life." 7 So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and afflicted Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

Job 2:3-7

We are in a war in which the genuineness of our faith is allowed to be tested.

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 1:6-7

Our faith is one of the great weapons that God has given us against the powers of darkness. By believing in the promises of God, souls are released from darkness to light, the sick are healed, demons flee, miracles happen, and angels come to our aid. If Satan can defeat our faith, we become weak and vulnerable, open to temptation.

We see this in the way that Satan planned his attack against Simon (Peter). Jesus discerned the attack against Peter's faith and warned him...

"(Jesus said:) "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren."

Luke 22:31-32

Jesus upholds Peter before the Father, interceding that his faith be strong. Then he instructs Peter that after the time of testing he was to strengthen his brethren. We are all in a spiritual battle in which we ought to pray for one another, encouraging the faith of each other through testimonies, words of encouragement, and Scriptures.

Overcoming sickness and demonic affliction by our faith

When Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, He cast out demons and healed the sick. In so doing He was destroying the works of darkness.

"That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together about the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him."

Mark 1:32-34

(Also Matthew 8:16-17)

Both healing and deliverance involve spiritual warfare. To heal the sick and cast out demons we must learn to use the prayer of faith as a spiritual weapon. Without faith our prayers and commands against sickness & demons are empty of power. Our faith is to be used as a weapon.

In the story of the healing of the epileptic boy, Jesus rebukes his disciples for not being able to cast the demon out because of their lack of faith. This is a clear example of

how sickness can be a work of darkness. It is absolutely critical for faith to be released in order for healing and deliverance to occur.

"And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." 17 And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." 18 And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Matthew 17:14-19

When Jesus was casting out the demons and healing the sick He was fulfilling the promise,

"He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Matthew 8:16-17

When we are confronted with sickness or oppression we can fight back with the promises of Scripture. “Thankyou Father that this sickness is upon the cross of Christ, and for your healing now in the Name of Jesus.”

Likewise the apostle James instructs us to confront sickness with the prayer of faith.

"...the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects."

James 5:15-16

Conclusion

Every believer needs to know how to use the shield of faith as a spiritual weapon. We are all in a spiritual battle. The shield of faith has been given us that we might overcome every attack of the enemy and be more than overcomers. Let us not allow ourselves to give in to fear and doubt, but lift high our shield of faith, and confidently put our trust in our heavenly Father.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Write out the memory verse from Ephesians 6:16

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

2. Share an experience in which you chose to resist Satan and walk by faith. (1 Corinthians 16:13)
3. Why did the Israelites come under God's judgment in the desert? (Psalm 78:19)
4. How did the disciples react to the storm (Mark 4:35-41)? What is the opposite to faith?

APPROPRIATING THE VICTORY OF THE CROSS

5. In what way can we experience the victory of Jesus over Satan?
(Colossians 2:13-15)
6. What is to be our response to difficulties and spiritual attack? (Ephesians 6:16)

SATAN'S GOAL IS TO DESTROY OUR FAITH IN JESUS

7. What is the primary goal of virtually every spiritual attack against us?
(1 Peter 1:6-7)
8. What was the goal of Satan's attack against Job? What were the "points of contact"?
(Job 2:3-7)?
9. What did Satan demand of Jesus? Why? (Luke 22:31-32)

OVERCOMING SICKNESS AND DEMONIC AFFLICTION BY OUR FAITH

10. Why were the disciples unable to cast out the spirit from the epileptic boy?
(Matthew 17:14-19)
11. How are we to come against sickness and demonic oppression? (James 5:15-16)

Ministry Time

If any one in the group is sick, feels oppressed or having difficulties, and they would like prayer, lay hands on the person, and say the prayer of faith.

If a person is not present at the group and in need, the group can say the prayer of faith on their behalf.

FAITH AND THE WORD OF GOD

Memory Verse:

“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.”

Romans 10:17

Scripture Passage: 2 Peter 1:1-4

Goals: To know how to appropriate the promises of Scripture by faith.

Our faith is in Jesus

Faith is Jesus centered. On the other hand, positive thinking focuses on having a positive mental attitude, upon realizing our “inner power” or abilities. Positive thinking is therefore man centered. Faith however has its focus clearly in Jesus Christ.

“Looking to Jesus the Pioneer and Perfector of our faith. who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”

Hebrews 12:2

All the promises of God are fulfilled in the Person of Jesus. That is why we appropriate these promises in the Name of Jesus.

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God.”

2 Corinthians 1:20

So when Peter healed the lame man, he did so by putting his faith in the Name of Jesus.

“And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

Acts 3:16

A miraculous walk of faith

The next door neighbor came over urgently requesting that Mark and Helen come and pray for her daughter, Jill. When they arrived they found Jill with a towel wrapped around her head and doubled up in agonizing pain. She had been diagnosed as having a tumor in her side and her medications had run out. Although Mark had worked in a hospital he had never seen anyone in so much pain.

Mark appropriated the promise of healing (James 5:15-16) in the Name of Jesus, and then began to give thanks that Jill was healed. He then asked Jill to sit up, as a sign that she believed God was healing her. As she sat up she groaned in pain, there was no evident relief. Mark felt the unsaid pressure from others in the group to leave her alone. But faith does not focus on the natural, whether it be the groans of pain, or the worried faces of relatives. Faith keeps its eyes upon Jesus the Author of our faith, and has its feet firmly planted in the promises of God’s Word.

Rejecting doubt and worry, and not focusing on the groans of pain. Mark asked Jill to stand and walk, as a sign that God was healing her. She very tenderly stood up, and began to painfully take a few steps. As she did so the pain abated and she was

miraculously healed by Jesus. The next day she was walking around town, the tumor had gone. All glory to Jesus!

Faith comes through the word of God

Faith rises up within us as we believe the Word of God. For example when we read of the miracles of Jesus, we are stirred to faith that the same Jesus is with us today to show us His power.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." **Hebrews 13:7-8**

In the Scriptures God has provided many promises to encourage us to put our trust in Him. As we believe the promises of Scripture our faith grows in the Lord.

"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." **Romans 10:17**

Many Christians are ignorant of the Scriptures. When asked if they know any promises of the Bible they are unable to cite one. How can we grow in our faith unless we take hold of these promises? As we lay up His Word in our heart, faith begins to well up within us. It is a great blessing to read, meditate and memorize the Scriptures. Why not carry around a small note book of memory verses? Then one can be memorizing scriptures while waiting in a line, traveling on the bus or train, or when going for a walk. Likewise many Christians carry around a pocket size Bible with them at all times, ready to read it, or share it with others.

"My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate upon thy promise." **Ps 119:148**

The great and precious promises

The promises of scripture nourish our faith. In the scriptures we find hundreds of promises from God about salvation, cleansing of sin, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, deliverance of demons, God's daily provision, His grace, love, peace, hope, joy, victory, healing, the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, and many more.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises." **2 Peter 1:3-4**

Turning on the tap

The promises of God are released in our lives by faith. If we want these great blessings of God in our lives we must make the decision to appropriate them by faith. Many read over these verses of promise, and never take hold of them by faith in their point of need. God's promises are like a tap. Unless we turn it on, the water doesn't flow. When we "turn on" God's promises by faith, the blessings of God flow.

For example, Paul clearly says that the promise of the Holy Spirit is to be appropriated by faith. Someone must believe for the Holy Spirit to flow.

"...that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." **Galatians 3:14**

If we rationalize these promises away in unbelief, they do not benefit us, and we turn off the tap.

"For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers." **Hebrews 4:2**

God's faithfulness to his promises

At times we do not understand the things that happen to us. In these situations we can choose to react to God in an attitude of anger or disappointment, or we can respond with a simple child like faith.

When Mark was 18 his father died. He didn't understand why God had taken him but he prayed: "**Father, I do not understand, but I trust you.**" We are finite humans who will never have a complete understanding of the way the Potter molds the clay.

"But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" **Romans 9:20-21**

God is faithful to all His promises. He is the unmoving Rock of our faith. Though we do not understand we can trust Him to be faithful and loving in all He does. He will never fail us or forsake us. All His ways are good and upright.

"For I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Ascribe greatness to our God! 4 "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he." **Deuteronomy 32:3-4**

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." **Hebrews 10:23**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." **Proverbs 3:5-6**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Romans 10:17

OUR FAITH IS IN JESUS

1. What is the difference between faith and positive thinking?
(Acts 3:16; 2 Cor 1:20; Hebrews 12:2)

A MIRACULOUS WALK OF FAITH

2. In the story of Jill's healing, what did you learn about walking by faith?
3. How can you apply these principles of faith to your own situation?

FAITH COMES THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

4. How can we help our faith to increase? (Romans 10:17; Ps 119:148)
5. What practical steps can you take to know your Bible better?

THE GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES

6. Can you name three promises of Scripture? (With Scripture references?)
 a.
 b.
 c.
7. What is a promise of Scripture that you need to appropriate in your life?
(2 Peter 1:3-4)

TURNING ON THE TAP

6. How do we make the promises of God flow in our lives? (Galatians 3:14)
7. How is it that we can read the promises of God without them benefiting us?
(Hebrews 4:2)

GOD'S FAITHFULLNESS TO HIS PROMISES

8. How are we to respond in situations that are difficult to understand?
(Romans 9:20-21)
9. In confusing situations what promises are offered to us through the following Scriptures:
 a) Deut.32:3-4
 b) Heb. 10:23
 c) Provs. 3:5-6

ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH

Memory Verse:

"According to your faith be it done to you."

Matthew 9:29

Bible Passage: Matthew 9:27-31

Goals:

- To increase the measure of our faith.
- To accept the faith challenges of the Holy Spirit.

According to the measure of our faith

When we think about our situation, what measure of faith do we use? Often Christians have no idea what to say when asked: "What is your prayer of faith?". Common responses to the question, "What are you believing God for?", include:

- ± "What do you mean?"
- ± "I can't believe, my situation too difficult."
- ± A repetition of saying what the problem is.
- ± "Will you believe for me?"
- ± "I don't see any way out of this".
- ± "It will always be like this."
- ± "I have had this problem for years, I can't see it ever changing."
- ± "Perhaps one day, if it's God's will".

God is looking for us to have a measure of faith. Here are some N.T. examples...

- When the disciples were in a terrible storm, Jesus rebukes them for their lack of faith:

"And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?"

Luke 8:24-25

- It was the faith of the blind men that released the power of Jesus for their miraculous healing.

"When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it."

Matthew 9:30

Often we are so overcome by our circumstances that our measure of faith is virtually non-existent. The Lord responds to our situation according to our faith. Faith is the key that opens the door of God's power. Faith is the confident declaration of God's promise in the face of what seems the impossible.

When we look at the bills, are we thinking: "How am I going to pay this?", or do we thank God for His provision. It is easy to talk of a great God, but it is our response to our situation that shows if we believe in Him.

Faith in the trials

It is the trials that show the true measure of our faith. They reveal if we are using a teaspoon or a cup measure for our faith. It is the hard ones like death, ongoing marital problems, or long term sickness that really tests our faith. Are we prepared to persevere trusting God for years? How often we miss out on the blessings of God because we give up, and say its too hard believing.

Having our faith tested is good for us, it produces godly character, making us to be more like Jesus. In fact we are supposed to rejoice when we face trials.

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." **James 1:2-4**

Growing in our faith

The following verse shows that God imparts a measure of faith to each of us to fulfill His calling on us. Even as we have different callings, gifts and ministries, accordingly we also have different giftings of faith. One will have faith to work miracles, another faith to plant churches, another faith to prophecy, another faith in the release of finances, another faith to evangelize, and another faith to teach.

"For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him." **Romans 12:3**

Paul says that we should seriously consider what faith God has assigned us. There is a faith imparted by God, and there are dreams and desires that come from the human imagination. The two are quite different, and are not to be confused. One comes from above, the other is of the emotions, and may even come out of pride. We are told to think with sober judgment so that we don't confuse faith with fleshly dreams. Has God told us to step out and do something, or is it a human initiative?

An ever growing faith

Our measure of faith is to be ever growing. The Lord will challenge and stretch our faith. As our faith grows the Kingdom of God is expanded through us. So we see that Jesus' parables of the Kingdom of God often involve growth. The Kingdom is extended as our faith grows within us.

"And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, 27 and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." **Mark 4:26-29**

"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." 33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it;" **Mark 4:31-33**

Faith is courage

Faith is stepping out of our comfort zone. Faith is “breaking out in a cold sweat”. Faith is like diving from the high diving board into an empty pool, and believing God to fill it on the way down! Stepping out in faith is not always a pleasant thing. Our natural mind will reason against it, telling us not to be stupid, to desist. In the same others may not understand our faith and even oppose it.

Dr. David Y. Cho tells of how two of his church board members strongly opposed him when he said that he was going to build a church for 100 000 members. They said it was financially crazy and not the right time. But knowing he was at the centre of God’s will, he courageously stepped out in faith. The building was completed, and the church grew from the then 30 000 membership to 100 000. The board members later acknowledged that God was with him.

Faith is expectation

When we pray what are we specifically expecting to happen? What are we expecting God to do? After we have prayed, do we know what we have asked God for? BE SPECIFIC! KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT TO HAPPEN! For example...

“Father I believe THAT:

- you are healing me now
- providing for this bill
- giving me opportunities to share the Gospel.

This is my prayer of faith and I believe that you are doing it now in the Name of Jesus.”

“And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.” **Matthew 6:7**

In moving in faith it is important that our prayer of faith:

- Be based on the Word of God.
- Be centred in God’s will for the situation.
- Not be lead simply by our emotions or the flesh.

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

James 4:3

Fast food and prayer

God is not a fast food service for answered prayer. God may answer our prayer of faith immediately or over a period of time. This often involves persevering in the prayer of faith whether for spiritual and numerical growth in our church, the salvation of a friend, healing, financial provision, or any of the other promises of God. To persist in faith we must keep our eyes on Jesus, and remain steadfast in what God has purposed for us. The ongoing walk of faith truly is one of God’s ways of forming us.

Some examples of persevering in faith, in Mark’s life include¹:

- Saying the prayer of faith for 12 years for healing of migraines, until the healing was manifested.
- The revival at Wheaton College occurred some 14 years after beginning the prayer of faith.

¹ These examples are given to illustrate the teaching, and encourage the reader. The group should share their own stories of answers to prayer over time.

- Friends of Mark were converted some 19 years after saying the prayer of faith for their salvation.
- Candido, a man in a constant state of coma was healed and converted three years after the prayer of faith for healing.

Who is our God?

When we have a problem do we immediately run to the professionals or do we first turn to the Lord and put our trust in Him? There is a place for doctors, medicine, counselors, & psychiatrists. But do we trust them more than the Lord? When in crisis do we call on the Lord, or is His help set aside? Do we intentionally trust Him, or have we made an idol of others?

Mark's daughter Rachel at about four years of age had lost much of her hearing. Mark was urged to seek specialist help. But the Lord clearly had indicated to him that he was to believe on her behalf and not seek medical attention. The Lord responded to the prayer of faith and completely healed Rachel.

Likewise we can believe what professionals tell us instead of choosing to believe the promises of God. We can idolize professional opinions. This is especially so when the doctor gives a very negative prognosis. If the doctor says of a patient, "He is going to get worse, and will die within two years." How easy it is for those words to be believed, and operate like a death sentence or curse. Not surprisingly the patient gets worse and die.

Break the words of curse. Turn to the Lord, and seek His will, depend upon the promises of God. We are to believe God's Word rather than simply accepting what people say. The Word of God is true and flawless, and to be trusted. Man's opinion will pass away, but the Word of God remains for ever. Put to use your measure of faith.

"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord abides for ever." That word is the good news which was preached to you.'

1 Peter 1:24-25

The Mustard Seed

Sometimes people will say, "I don't have faith like Jane. She could believe for that, but not me." "You have faith, you pray for me." Jesus makes it clear that God honors even the smallest grain of faith. Simply choose to believe. Make a start. Turn from doubt, and see what God will do!

"The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

Luke 17:5-6

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Matthew 9:29

ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF OUR FAITH

1. Think of a challenge or need in your situation and write down your prayer of faith (what you believe God is doing).
“Father I thank you...

FAITH IN THE TRIALS

2. Give two benefits of having our faith tested (James 1:2-4).
 - a)
 - b)

GROWING IN OUR FAITH

3. What faith has God imparted to you for your calling? (Romans 12:3)
4. Why are we told to “think with sober judgement” with respect to our faith? (Romans 12:3)

AN EVER GROWING FAITH

5. How does a growing faith effect the Kingdom of God? (Mark 4:26-29)

FAITH IS COURAGE

6. In what way is faith like “breaking out in a cold sweat”? Have you ever had such an experience?

FAITH IS EXPECTATION

7. Complete the following from the study notes....

In moving in faith it is important that our prayer of faith:

- Be based _____.
- Be centred in _____.
- Not be lead simply by _____.

WHO IS OUR GOD?

8. When in crisis whom do you turn to first?
9. How do “expert opinions” effect your walk of faith?

THE MUSTARD SEED

10. How much faith do you need to make a difference? (Luke 17:5-6)

GROUP ACTIVITY Have a time of prayer in which members of the group pray specifically for something. The leader should help people to correctly pray the prayer of faith.

FAITH OVERCOMES FEAR AND DOUBT

Memory Verse:

"Do not fear, only believe."

Mark 5:36

Bible Passage: Matthew 6:28-34

Goals: to learn to be single-minded in our walk of faith.

Worry is doubt, and doubt is sin

For 12 years Mark suffered from debilitating migraines. They began when he was working under a lot of stress in a factory. One day something seemed to just snap in his brain. From then on he began to have migraines. He would suffer loss of sight, inability to think or form sentences, loss of sensation in the face or hands. The medication at times was worse than the sickness causing nausea and other side effects. The migraines often occurred at most inconvenient times, such as while driving the car part of the road would suddenly disappear due to his sight problems. The worst was not knowing when a migraine would hit.

For those 12 years of migraines Mark gave thanks to God for His healing even though there was no change. Then one day while Mark was walking in the countryside the Lord showed him the flowers of the field and reminded him of Matthew 6 which says:

"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying 'What shall we eat or what shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all."

Matthew 6:30-32

The Lord made it clear to Mark that the root of his sickness was the sin of worry and anxiety, which had begun in the factory. Worry and anxiety are forms of doubt. Many times our thoughts and statements of worry and doubt negate our walk of faith. Mark repented of his anxieties and lack of trust in God. From that time on he knew that the root of his migraines had been dealt with. About 18 months later the migraines suddenly stopped.²

"But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin."

Romans 14:23

The mind: the arena of spiritual war

The main part of spiritual warfare occurs in the arena of the mind. Here the choices are made between faith or doubt, peace or fear, righteousness or sin, right doctrine or deception. One of the greatest spiritual battles occurring in the mind, is the struggle to overcome doubt, and believe. All the blessings and promises of Scripture are released to us as we choose to believe. Therefore, it is not surprising that Satan should attack our mind viciously with thoughts of worry, anxiety, fear, confusion,

² This is not to say that all migraines are caused by sin.

discouragement and doubt. Our mind is a battle field. If Satan can overcome your faith with fear and doubt, he may be able to rob you of some mighty blessings of God.

"For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ..."

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Jesus engaged people's minds, challenging them to make the choice of faith. As they chose to believe in Him, the power of God was released. Jesus often attributed miracles and healings to the faith of others. It was their faith in Him that released the blessings. This is not to say that if someone isn't healed it is because of the sick person's lack of faith. But what is important is that SOMEONE HAS FAITH in Jesus.

Let's look at two examples of this...

- Read Mark 9:21-25. The key issue in the deliverance of the boy with the dumb and deaf spirit, was the unbelief of his father. His words "*If you can*", is like praying, "If it be your will." The issue was not whether Jesus could do it, nor whether He wanted to. The deliverance of the boy depended on the decision of the father to truly put his faith in Jesus without vacillating. Thus the response of Jesus: "*All things are possible to him who believes.*" The power of God was released and the boy delivered when the father declared his faith, saying: "*I believe; help my unbelief.*" *"Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" 25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again."*

Mark 9:24-25

- Likewise we see Jesus drawing out the faith of a blind beggar. Although the beggar had been calling out to Him, Jesus requires the blind beggar to be absolutely certain of what he wants. Then Jesus attributes the miracle to the blind man's faith.

"And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." 42 And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."

Luke 18:40-42

Being single-minded in faith

When we begin praying in faith we are setting ourselves on a course. Like a ship navigating from one destination to another. We won't arrive at our destination if we are continually changing course. When God gives us a prayer goal and we begin to ask Him for it, we must continue on course in faith. If we are double minded in our prayer of faith, we shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. We are not to be "unstable" in our prayer, one day believing and the next doubting. The prayer of faith is a decision to believe, hanging on to the goal of our faith until it becomes a reality.

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord."

James 1:6-8

Read Luke 8:41-55. Satan attacks with fear and doubt, trying to get us off our faith course. This is seen in the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter. First Jairus must overcome feelings of fear in leaving the bedside of his dying daughter, and finding Jesus. He starts his faith course well.

"And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying...."

Then the ruler has to overcome another attack of Satan, news comes that the girl is dead. He is even told to stop bothering Jesus! Imagine how Jairus would have felt, the despair and fear that sought to overwhelm him. The temptation would have been to return home to mourn and bury his daughter. How often we start our faith course well, but then come under attack, and our emotions begin to go under. Like Jairus the temptation for all of us is to be double-minded. We are pulled between believing on the one hand, and giving in to fear and doubt on the other.

"While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." **Luke 8:49**

That's like saying: "Abandon ship. She's struck fast, we'll never arrive at our faith destination now. Give up." But Jesus wages war against the satanic attack on Jairus' mind saying: "**Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well.**" Jairus was called upon by Jesus to be single-minded in his faith, shunning all fear. Likewise we must wage war against all doubt and fear that seeks to dominate our mind. We are to walk in our prayer of faith, declaring the mighty promises of God.

Then we see the third attack on the faith of Jairus: the situation of weeping and grief in his house over the death of the girl. Would he also begin to weep and cry out like the rest, emotionally distraught by the death of his only daughter, or would he continue to trust in Jesus? In all this we see the example of Jesus, firm in his faith. He is truly the Rock of our faith. He is unmoved from His course of faith, whether by the news of the girls death, or by the mourners who laugh at Him. Into the confusion Jesus speaks words of hope: "*Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.*"

Likewise Jesus will speak assurance to us, encouraging us to keep walking in faith. This may happen through a Bible verse, a vision, a dream, a prophecy, or circumstantial affirmations. Jairus hung in there and followed Jesus into the dead girl's room. His single minded walk of faith was rewarded with the words of Jesus: "*Child, arise.*"

"And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat." **Luke 8:55**

Not doubting in our heart

When we take on prayer tasks, there must be no double-mindness. No wavering between doubt and faith. The key to the release of God's power and blessing is in the heart of the believer. It is essential to discipline our thinking, as well as our talking in accordance to our walk of faith. If we pray in faith, but then doubt in our heart and speak negatively to others about the matter, we are in danger of invalidating our prayer of faith.

"And Jesus answered them, "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 will come to pass, it will be done for him." **Mark 11:23**

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Write out the memory verse from Mark 5:36

WORRY IS DOUBT, AND DOUBT IS SIN

2. How are we to respond to our situation? (Matt.6:30-33)
3. Why are worry and anxiety sin? (Romans 14:23)

THE MIND: THE ARENA OF SPIRITUAL WAR

4. What important choices do we make in our mind?
5. In what way is our mind a spiritual battle field? (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
6. What are some of your personal faith struggles?
7. How does Satan try to rob us of the blessings of God?
8. What role did the faith or doubt of the father play in the healing of the deaf and dumb boy? (Mark 9:21-25).
9. What released the power of Jesus to heal the blind man? (Luke 18:40-42)
10. In what way is the prayer of faith like the course of a ship?
11. What is double-mindedness? (James 1:6-8)
12. Give 2 instances in which the faith course of Jairus was challenged. (Luke 8:41-55)
13. A) How was Jairus' faith encouraged in his critical moments?
B) In what ways does the Lord likewise encourage us in our walk of faith?
C) Give a personal example of the way God encouraged you to continue to believe.
14. In what way do our thoughts or speech invalidate our prayers of faith? (Mark 11:23)

THINKING IN FAITH

Memory Verse:

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach);"

Romans 10:8

Bible Passage: Mark 5:25-34

Goals:

- For our heart to be filled with hope and faith, which overflows into our speech.
- To identify destructive self-talk, and replace it with thoughts of faith & praise.

Faith in thought & word

The mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart. If we think in faith, it follows that we will speak in faith. This is a basic principle of moving in faith. It is essential that what we believe in our heart is declared or confessed in our day to day speaking.

"But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); 9 because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."

Romans 10:8-10

"Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak,"

2 Corinthians 4:13

If we are to move in faith our negative feelings and thoughts must come into submission to the Word of God. We must discipline ourselves to think and speak in accord with the Promises of God's Word.

This does not mean that we ignore damaged emotions, which need emotional healing. However, if we would live a life of faith we must come to grips with our negative feelings and thoughts in the time of battle. Negativity must be rebuked in the Name of Jesus, and replaced by declarations of faith. David in the following psalm commands his emotions to have hope in God.

"As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?" 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God."

Psalm 42:10-11

Faith and self-talk

Self talk is what we say to ourselves, it maybe out loud or just in our heads. Much of people's self talk would be better described as self-cursing. Telling themselves negative, doubtful statements, about their themselves or their situation.

As Jesus was walking through the streets of Capernaum there was a woman who was doing some faith self-talking (Matt.9:21). She was saying to herself, *"If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well."* Yet, she had every human reason to be thinking in

doubt. She had suffered a disease of blood loss for 12 years. By Jewish law she was ceremonially unclean, and therefore a social & religious outcast. She was prohibited from entering the temple (Lev.12:4). Everything and everyone that she touched became unclean (Lev.5:3). Anyone who used her bed or chair etc also became unclean, and had to wash himself and his clothes (Lev.15:26-27).

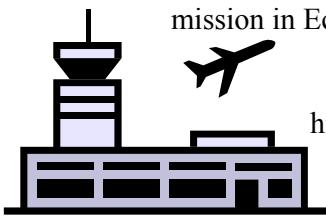
Moreover she had suffered from the antiquated methods of her doctors. She was in poverty having spent all she had on her doctors, and was only worse off (Mark 5:26). All in all she had a lot of reasons to complain. But instead she tells herself that if she could touch the garment of Jesus she would be healed. Her faith thinking, turned into faith actions, as she overcame her sense of shame, pushed through the crowd, and reached out and touched the robe of Jesus. Although many were jostling Jesus, He immediately felt that touch of faith which had released His power.

"And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Mark 5:34

A free flight

When Mark arrived at the airport in Paraguay to fly to Ecuador, he opened his passport at the checkout counter, and his stomach sunk as he saw the photo of his daughter in the passport (as pretty as she is!). He had brought the wrong passport. His passport was hundreds of kms away. It was impossible to fly without it. The stewardess said the next plane didn't leave for days, by which time the majority of the mission in Ecuador would have been over.



As Mark waited outside the airport to catch the bus back, he saw his plane taking off. The Lord clearly spoke to him in that moment saying that he was not to complain, but to praise Him. Mark began to praise the Lord as he watched the plane take off in the air.

When we praise God instead of giving into our misery or negative emotions, God's power is released. The result of praising God while watching the plane take off was that Mark acquired another flight leaving the next day. It turned out the flight was at discount price, unlike the first one! With the help of a donation and the discount, Mark flew to Ecuador and back again virtually free.

Renewing our minds in praise

We are to praise God not only when in church, or when we have received an answer to prayer, but also in the midst of the problem. Praise is a powerful declaration of our faith in God. The natural mind immediately wants to complain, be afraid, or doubt in difficulties. That's the way of our old nature, the flesh. But we are to renew our minds by the Holy Spirit, giving praise to God.

"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

Romans 8:6

"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:2

God's will is that we should discipline ourselves to praise Him in our soul (emotions & thoughts), in our meditation, and in our self-talk.

"I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD."

Psalm 104:33-34**Victory through praise**

We see this principle of releasing our faith in praise in the battle between King Jehoshaphat and a great multitude of Moabites and Ammonites. Jehoshaphat admonished the people to believe the prophetic word of victory against the enemy, given to them by the prophet Jahaziel.

"Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."

2 Chronicles 20:20

Jehoshaphat had a company of singers “in holy array” go out before the Israelite army, leading them in praise and thanksgiving. Instead of being afraid or complaining, God’s people faced their enemies with songs of praise!

(Jehoshaphat) “appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy array, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures for ever."

2 Chronicles 20:21

As God’s people praised Him, the Lord sent an ambush against the enemy armies. They were completely destroyed, without the Israelites even having to use their swords!

“And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

23 For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, destroying them utterly, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.”

2 Chronicles 20:22-23

Taking thoughts captive to Christ

The gift of faith frequently expresses itself in triumphant praise. Through praise we do warfare in the heavenly places, praising God for His goodness and greatness, declaring our faith in Him against the forces of doubt, fear, and discouragement. Praise does not depend on our feelings. It is an act of obedience coming from our will.

Negative thoughts, and doubtful reactions are demonic fortresses set up in the believer’s mind.

“For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

These thoughts of doubt come with their own justifications and arguments. For example:

“I am going to suffer heart disease because its hereditary.”

Such self-talk and statements must be identified as “proud obstacles” that obstruct God’s will in your life and church. These arguments are to be taken captive and brought into obedience to the Word of God. We do this by correcting ourselves and others who speak in such a way, and show them how to speak and pray in faith:

“Thankyou Father that the hereditary curse of heart disease has been broken through the Cross of Christ. By faith in Jesus I am whole.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Write out the memory verse from Romans 10:8

FAITH IN THOUGHT & WORD

2. What is the relationship between our heart belief and our speaking? (Rom.10:8-10)?
3. How are we to deal with negative (doubtful or anxious) thoughts or emotions? How does David deal with his emotional lows (Ps 42:10-11)?

FAITH AND SELF-TALK

4. How can our self-talk be a form of self-cursing?
5. What hurdles did the woman with the flow of blood have to overcome in touching the garment of Jesus? (E.g. Mark 5:26;Lev.5:3;12:4;15:26-27).
6. What was she thinking before God's power was released in her body (Matt.9:21)? According to Jesus, why was she healed? (Mark 5:34)

RENEWING OUR MINDS IN PRAISE

7. Do you have a situation in which God is calling you to turn from negativity and begin to praise Him?

VICTORY THROUGH PRAISE

8. How did the people of Israel confront the great multitude of enemy forces (2 Chron. 20:21)? What was the result? (2 Chron. 20:22-23)

TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE TO CHRIST

9. From where does the decision to praise God come from, the emotions or the will?
10. In what way does Satan seek to set up demonic fortresses in the believer's mind? What are we to do with these thoughts? (2 Cor.10:3-6)
11. Do you have any enemy fortresses in your mind? What arguments do they give to justify themselves? (See examples in teaching).

Group exercise:

Take time to confess and repent of specific negative thoughts and their arguments. In group prayer begin to praise God with statements of faith for your situation.

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

Memory Verse

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 5:1

Bible Passage: James 2:14-26

Goal: That our faith in Jesus leads us into deeper personal repentance.

Unbelief is the greatest sin

The greatest sin of humanity is unbelief. Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord are living a life of disobedience. The Israelites did not enter the promised land but died in the desert because they did not trust God to take them there. The grumbling, rebelliousness, and idolatry with the golden calf all stemmed from their unbelief. Unbelief is the root of all sin.

"And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief."

Hebrews 3:18-19

To truly believe in a holy God, means that we should live in the fear of God, and turn away from sin. On the other hand, unbelief refuses to recognize God's holiness. There is no fear of God nor sense of accountability to Him. As a consequence the person goes their own way in rebellion.

We are made righteous by faith

While Abraham was still uncircumcised, he believed God, and God credited his faith to him as righteousness. Paul makes it clear that it was not Abraham's fulfillment of the law of circumcision that made him righteousness, but his faith in God. Abraham's obedience in circumcising his son came as a result of believing. Repentance and obedience are therefore the fruits of true faith. We are not saved by being religious, nor by doing good deeds. We are saved by faith, and the fruit of that faith is good works.

"So also David pronounces a blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin." 9 Is this blessing pronounced only upon the circumcised, or also upon the uncircumcised? We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness."

Romans 4:6-9

Our faith is accompanied by repentance

The first step of faith that we make in our Christian life is to believe that Jesus Christ bore our sins upon the cross, giving us eternal life. When we believe in Jesus, we are trusting that He carried away our sins upon the cross, cleansing us by His blood. It would make no sense at all for me to say that I believe that my sins are on the cross and yet to continue in those very sins. If we believe in Jesus we cannot intentionally remain in sin. The fruit of faith is repentance. Those who say that they believe in God, but continue in sin, deceive themselves.

"If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have"

fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:6-7

This is why when we lead a person in the prayer of salvation we should always seek that they experience true repentance of their sins. We are to avoid making the prayer of salvation a religious rite of entrance into heaven. The salvation prayer is effective when there is true faith and repentance from sin.

Both Jesus and the apostles preached that we should repent and believe.

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." **Mark 1:14-15**

Paul speaks of bringing people from all nationalities to the "**obedience of faith**" (Rom.1:5).

"... testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." **Acts 20:21**

Demons believe and shudder!

There are many who say that they believe in God, yet their belief in His existence is not accompanied by a heart-felt repentance. They do not have a personal faith in the Savior, rather it is a theistic belief that ultimately will only lead to hell. The belief that God exists when divorced from personal repentance, is really no different from the belief of the demons.

"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-- and shudder." **James 2:19**

To believe in Jesus is to obey Him

From our new birth in Christ onwards we understand that to believe in Jesus means to obey Him. Jesus preached that faith in Him would mean a turning from darkness to light. Jesus is not only to be our Saviour, but also our Lord and King.

"And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And he who sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." **John 12:44-46**

The fruit of true faith is obedience to God and repentance from sin. The writer of Hebrews regards this doctrine as basic for the Christian.

"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God..." **Hebrews 6:1**

Faith leads to love

The apostle James taught how true faith would lead to a life of love to others. If we believe in Jesus we will not be tight fisted with our money, or hard hearted towards others at their point of need. Our faith in Jesus will well up in practical love towards others.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" **James 2:14-16**

"And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

1 Corinthians 13:2

James says that faith without works is dead. Evidently he was struggling with the problem of people who said they believed in Jesus, but without evidence of it in their daily lives. Unless we are walking in practical love for others, and living a life of repentance, our faith is barren. Such religion is shallow, without love for God or for others (James 2:20-24).

The prayer of faith leads us into repentance

We have learnt that true faith in Jesus will show itself in repentance, obedience, and love to others. Therefore when we pray in faith whether for ourselves or for others, we can expect our faith in Jesus to lead us to deeper levels of repentance. When we say the prayer of faith the Holy Spirit will often come and convict us of sin. If we resist His sanctifying work in our lives, hanging on to sin, our prayers of faith become ineffective, mechanical, and lacking in God's power. James makes it clear that the prayer of faith is to be said in the context of confession and repentance of sin.

"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." **James 5:16**

The prayer of faith declares the greatness of God in a given situation. As we believe that God's Presence and Glory be manifested in power it should not be surprising that we experience brokenness over our own sins, and that God purifies us. In the process we may well go through times of testing as the Lord reveals the conditions of our hearts. Therefore when we are interceding in the prayer of faith for others, God will often convict us of sin.

There is a direct relationship between the prayer of faith for ourselves or others, and God's peace, mercy, and forgiveness being released.

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." **Romans 5:1**

The prayer of faith for the sick

As we say the pray of faith for others, for conversion, healing, or deliverance we can expect not only those blessings to occur but also a stirring up of repentance, and imparting of forgiveness of sins. Repentance is the result of believing.

"Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." **James 5:14-15**

In the story of the healing of the paralytic man, Jesus looks up and sees the man's friends peering through the roof. He sees their courageous faith in carrying him through the streets, climbing up on the roof top and breaking it open. Their faith on behalf of their friend not only released the power of God that raised the man off his bedding, but also released God's mercy. Jesus upon seeing the faith of the men, says to the sick man: "My son, your sins are forgiven."

"And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" **Mark 2:4-7**

Whenever we draw near to God in faith, whether it be for salvation, healing, deliverance, or material provision, we can expect the Holy Spirit to respond to that faith by working sanctification in us. The greatest blessing that we can receive in response to our faith is the blessing of forgiveness and peace with God. James is clear that to draw near to God in faith, means to humble ourselves and repent of sin. It should not be surprising that when we come to God for blessing that the Lord should respond by revealing our sin.

"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you."

James 4:8-10

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Romans 5:1

UNBELIEF IS THE GREATEST SIN

1. Why did the Israelites fail to enter the promised land? (Hebrews 3:18-19)
2. Why is unbelief the greatest sin?

WE ARE MADE RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH

3. Faith was reckoned to Abraham as _____. (Romans 4:6-9) What are some of the fruits of faith?

OUR FAITH IS ACCOMPANIED BY REPENTANCE

4. What must occur in the heart of the sinner for the prayer of salvation to be effective?
5. When Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, what was his message? (Mark 1:14-15)

DEMONS BELIEVE AND SHUDDER

6. What is the difference between a saving faith in Christ, and the belief that demons have? How is it that people can say “I believe in God”, and yet still go to hell? (James 2:19)

TO BELIEVE IN JESUS IS TO OBEY HIM

7. What happens to us when we believe in Jesus? (John 12:46)

FAITH LEADS TO LOVE

8. When is a man’s faith dead? (James 2:14-16)
9. In what practical ways are you seeking to show God’s love to others?

10. How can our “religion” become shallow or barren? (James 2:20-24) What problem did James face in the church?

THE PRAYER OF FAITH LEADS US INTO REPENTANCE

11. When praying in faith for others, why is personal repentance so important? (James 5:14-16)

THE PRAYER OF FAITH FOR THE SICK

12. Whose faith released the forgiveness of sins for the paralytic? What does this teach us about interceding for others in faith? (Mark 2:4-7; James 4:8-10)

FAITH IN ACTION

Memory verse:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance;” **Hebrews 11:8**

Bible Passage: Hebrews 11:23-34

Goal: To step out in obedient faith to the Lord’s direction in our lives.

Faith working through love

Evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth, was an apostle of faith through whom God did awesome signs and wonders, including raising the dead. His faith flowed through a deep sense of compassion for those who suffered. At times he would publicly sob for minutes out of the deep compassion he felt for the many sick and afflicted who came to his meetings.

Faith is always to work through love. By believing in Jesus for eternal life we enter into a loving relationship with the Father. Our faith in Christ expresses itself in love to the Father. Eternal life is about having an intimate loving relationship with God.

“And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” **John 17:3**

The gift of faith is always to be motivated by love. Love is the conduit by which faith flows.

“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NIV version)**

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.” **Galatians 5:6**

Faith is divine courage

Faith is the supernatural courage to step out on the limb in obedience to God’s direction. No matter what our ministry is in the Body of Christ, God wants us to step out in faith in His divine projects. Every good resolve that we have is a work of faith brought to fruition by God’s power.

“To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power...” **2 Thessalonians 1:11**

To believe is to be challenged by God. If we do not sense that challenge of God that demands faith, calling us to step out of our comfort zone, then we are in danger of backsliding. All Christian ministry is an exercise of faith.

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;” **Romans 12:6**

Your measure of faith

God calls us to minister according to the measure of our faith. God has given each of us a portion of faith for the particular ministry to which He has called us.

A musician may use the measure of faith God has given him to sing a new song unto the Lord. Another having a mercy ministry exercises his faith to start a feeding program. An intercessor may exercise his faith by dedicating extended times in prayer as directed by the Holy Spirit. Another through his gift of faith is enabled to prophecy with boldness. Someone with the gift of healing goes out visiting the sick and sharing the Gospel.

God has assigned a measure of faith to each of us to do Kingdom works. As we step out in faith, God's power and grace are released.

"For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him."

Romans 12:3

Increasing in faith

We extend our ministry by increasing in our measure of faith. The increase of our faith may be compared to the growth of wheat.

"And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, 27 and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

Mark 4:26-28

The life of Abraham is an example of one who grew in his faith in God. First, he takes the step of faith in leaving his home town to an unknown destiny. Next God stretched his faith by asking him to believe for a child when his wife was old and barren. Then upon receiving the child, God challenges him to sacrifice the boy and believe that God would return the boy even from the dead. First "comes the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

Abraham grew in his faith through each challenge. So also with us. As we take steps of faith and see how God responds in wonderful ways, our faith grows, and we are emboldened to greater challenges. It is God who will speak these challenges into our hearts, and He will impart the faith to make it possible. Start with the measure you have. The important thing is not whether you have 1 or 5 talents, but how you use what you have. If the Lord has given you a little, be faithful with what you have, and He will add to it.

"And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'"

Matthew 25:22-23

At times we hear amazing stories of faith and supernatural courage and we think: "Oh, I could never do that!" Remember that it was someone else's divine challenge, for which God imparted supernatural faith for that purpose. In the same way as you put your faith in the Lord, He will do mighty things in your life.

“Faith is action”.

One of Wigglesworth's favorite sayings was "Faith is action". Our actions are where the "rubber hits the road". For example in the ministry of healing the temptation after praying for healing is to be too afraid to ask the sick person to do anything that would demonstrate that healing. For example asking a person suffering from chronic back pain to touch his toes. Many times it is the action of faith that releases God's power.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF FAITH IN ACTION

“And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him...”

"...looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:2

In faith we:

- ❖ Come together in prayer meetings believing that God is hearing our prayer.
- ❖ Go out, believing for converts and growing Christians.
- ❖ Confess our sins believing that God forgives and cleanses us.
- ❖ Come forward at "altar calls" believing that God meets us at our point of need.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Hebrews 11:8.

FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE

1. Explain the faith/love relationship with respect to our eternal life (John 17:3).
2. ³Complete the sentence: Love is the _____ by which _____ flows.
(Galatians 5:6)

FAITH IS DIVINE COURAGE

3. In your experience how is the walk of faith a divine challenge?
(2 Thessalonians 1:11)

YOUR MEASURE OF FAITH

4. How do you see yourself using the faith God has given you in your ministry.

INCREASING IN FAITH

5. What did Jesus mean by the words “first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear” (Mark 4:28)?
6. How did Abraham increase in his faith over the years? (See teaching).
7. In what areas has your faith grown? In what ways would you like it to grow?

“FAITH IS ACTION”.

8. ⁴Complete the sentence: “Many times it is the action of _____ that releases _____.”
9. Give an example of an act of faith from the Bible, and then one from your own experience.
❖
❖

Group exercise: Take a few minutes to wait on God to receive His faith challenges.

³ Answers: conduit, faith

⁴ Answers: faith, God’s power.

INTERCEDING IN FAITH

Memory verse:

"And the Lord said, 'If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.'

Luke 17:6

Bible passage: 1 Kings 18:41-46

Goal: To know how to intercede in faith.

Planting a church by faith

When Mark was a missionary in Paraguay he visited a suburb called, San Francisco, where there was no evangelical church or even a bible study group. While Mark could speak Spanish he couldn't speak the mother tongue of Guarani, making evangelism near impossible. So for a year Mark and an elderly couple would pray asking God that a church be planted in the area, and giving thanks for it by faith.

Without knowing of their prayers, a church bought the field directly opposite the house of the elderly couple. There they built a pastor's house, and a multi-purpose complex for a Christian school and conference centre. When it seems that we have no other resource but God, and we trust completely in Him it is amazing what He will do.

Yet the answer to prayer was sadly not without a cost. Satan struck back. The elderly couple had an unbelieving son, who while in a drunken rage murdered a woman. The simple prayer of faith is a powerful spiritual weapon, which can enrage Satan.

WHAT IS INTERCESSION:

Intercession is to mediate or intervene

To intercede is to intervene or mediate on someone's behalf. When a business goes bankrupt a mediator is appointed to intervene on behalf of shareholders and creditors. In like manner Jesus is our mediator or intercessor. While we were spiritually bankrupt in sin, He intervened on our behalf by dying on the cross. He took our sins upon Himself, imputing righteousness to us. We have peace with God because Jesus received the punishment of sin which we deserve.

"... He poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." **Isaiah 53:12**

In the old testament the High Priest was an intercessor. He offered sacrifices on behalf of the sins of the people. He carried the names of the 12 tribes of Israel into God's Presence as an act of intercession on their behalf. Jesus Christ is called the Great High Priest because He offered himself as the perfect lamb of God to atone for our sins. As the Great High Priest He continues to mediate on behalf of sinners, through His work of prayer.

"Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?" **Romans 8:34**

“Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” **Hebrews 7:25**

Jesus has called us to participate with Him in His great work of intercession. Through prayer we mediate (intercede) on behalf of others before the throne of God. Jesus has given us His Spirit to enable us in his work of intercession:

“And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” **Romans 8:27**

Intercession is standing in the breach

When we intercede in faith, we are believing that God is intervening in someone's life, to bring about blessing (e.g. conversion or healing). This involves a second concept, that of “standing in the breach”. When part of the city wall was broken through by enemy forces, then some soldiers would stand and fight in the breach. So in intercession we are standing in the breach defending others. This may mean taking spiritual responsibility for others when their own defenses are down. To stand in the breach during the battle requires a tough faith that will not let go of the promises of God, but hangs in there even when the going is rough.

Moses “stood in the breach” on behalf of God's sinful people. If he had not pleaded for mercy, the people would have been destroyed in God's holy anger.

“Therefore he said he would destroy them--had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.” **Psalm 106:23**

Intercession is the task of the church

The task of intercession is one of the high callings of the church. God has given us the responsibility of standing in the gap on behalf of family members, friends, cities, and nations.

“And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.” **Isaiah 58:12**

Our prayers may make the difference between God's judgment or mercy for others.

“And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.” **Ezekiel 22:30**

The truth is that it may be dangerous work standing in the gap and resisting the powers of darkness. We need to have the prayer support and cover of others.⁵ God has enlisted each of us to take up our place in His great army. When it comes to interceding it is important that we don't have a “lone ranger” mentality relying just on our own prayers. Let's join in prayer with others.

It only takes a little

In the 20th century man has discovered the tremendous power that lies dormant within one of the smallest units of the universe, the nucleus. The nucleus of an atom, invisible to the naked eye, potentially has the power to heal bodies, or destroy entire cities. “The A-bomb gained its power from the splitting, or fission, of all the atomic

⁵ See Peter Wagner, “Prayer Shield”, and John Maxwell, “Partners in Prayer”

nuclei in several kilograms of plutonium. A sphere about the size of a baseball produced an explosion equal to 20,000 tons of TNT.⁶

Faith can be compared to the nucleus of an atom - small but powerful. Jesus compared faith to one of the smallest known units of his time, the mustard seed. Placed in the palm of the hand the mustard seed is barely visible, yet potentially has the power of forming the largest tree in Israel.

"For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Matthew 17:20

"It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4:31-32

A ward of babies⁷

One day Mark was invited to pray for sick babies in a hospital ward in rural Paraguay. The windows were shut to keep in the warmth on a cold day. There was the smell of poverty and sickness with flies buzzing around. One baby gasped for air with the "death rattles" sounding in its throat. The doctor had told the mother that there was no more hope. Another baby lay with eyes half open, listless and yellow. One of the mothers had been trying to give her baby away, she was breast feeding her infant but had no more food for herself.

Mark's Christian friend, Julia, urged him to pray for each baby. Mark felt no mighty wave of faith, nor any specific divine direction or prophetic word. Almost under obligation he said a brief prayer of faith for each one, asking the Father to heal, and thanking Him for it. After providing some food to the mother in need, Mark and his friend withdrew.

A few days later Julia said that most of the babies had returned home well. Mark found it a bit incredible and so went back to the hospital to investigate. The baby with the death rattles was sucking healthily from its mother. The sick yellow infant had suddenly improved and had gone home. A toddler with complications of meningitis and fever was well, and been allowed to go home. The healings even extended to infants that weren't prayed for. A grain of faith barely identifiable had released the power of God in a desperate situation for the mothers involved.

So let's not despise the small amount of faith we have. May we put it to use even though we feel inadequate for the situation. The mustard seed will only grow into a large tree if it is planted. Put your grain of faith to use, and you will be surprised at what can happen.

⁶"Nuclear Weapons," Microsoft® Encarta® 97 Encyclopedia. © 1993-1996 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

⁷ Someone in the group may like to share their own testimony of how God responded to their prayer of faith, in substitute for Mark's testimony.

Power intercession

While Mark was in Paraguay the Holy Spirit began to intercede through Christians with “power birthing experiences”. God was giving birth to His purpose as Christians in prayer groaned and breathed like women in travail. This was accompanied by a prophecy concerning a move of God amongst the indigenous.

Some time later a group of indigenous were wonderfully touched by the Holy Spirit when visiting. They invited Mark to go out to them where the whole community was experiencing revival meetings every night. Many had been deeply touched by God. The meetings went on for hours. Through the prophetic word God had encouraged the Christians to believe in faith for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit amongst the indigenous. This prayer of faith was accompanied by intercessory power manifestations.

Paul teaches us about God birthing His will through us in prayer:

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.”

Romans 8:26

“My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!”

Galatians 4:19

Travailing prayer may or may not be accompanied by power manifestations. What is important is that we are praying in faith, believing that God is giving birth to his purposes. It is not us or the manifestations which give birth, but the Holy Spirit interceding through us.

We say the prayer of faith with our mind, while also allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through our spirit, whether in power manifestations or speaking in tongues.

“I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.”

1 Corinthians 14:15

Travailing prayer may occur for example through visions. In the example of the church plant in San Francisco, Mark would occasionally see a vision of tractors clearing the way, and building a road. Through intercession God was opening the way for his church to be established.

In the book of Lamentations, mothers are exhorted to intercede for their dying children. Birthing prayer may not only be something that happens to us in a passive way, but something we must actively involve ourselves in.

“Cry aloud to the Lord! O daughter of Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite! 19 Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street.”

Lamentations 2:18-19

Prophetic intercession

Prophetic intercession is interceding in faith based on divine guidance. Elijah during an extended drought heard the sound of rushing rain. It wasn’t actually raining but he heard it in the Spirit. He understood that God had revealed that it would rain. He began to birth God’s purposes in the position of a woman giving birth to a child. Elijah

was pregnant with the purposes of God, giving birth to them prayer. But he also combined his intercession with acts of faith by:

- Telling King Ahab to "*Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.*" (1 Kings 18:41)
- Sending his servant eight times to look for rain even though they had been in drought for 3 years. (1 Kings 18:43)
- Sending word to Ahab to go up in his chariot lest the rain overtake him, after hearing his servant report that "*a little cloud like a man's hand is rising out of the sea.*" (1 Kings 18:46).

Therefore we see three key aspects of Elijah's intercession:

- prophetic revelation,
- travailing prayer, and
- acts of faith.

(It should be noted that we do not always receive a prophetic word when interceding in faith. We may do so simply on the basis of the promises of God's Word).

Conclusion

One of the high callings of the church is to intercede, intervening in situations through prayer. In so doing we are participating in the ministry of Jesus. He is the Great High Priest who intervened in our lives through the cross, and continues to mediate on our behalf through intercession.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from Luke 17:6

INTERCESSION IS TO MEDIATE OR INTERVENE

1. What is the relationship between Jesus' role as High Priest and as Intercessor? (Isa 53:12)
2. In what ways was the O.T. high priest also an intercessor?
 - a.
 - b.
3. What is the function of the Holy Spirit in intercession (Rom.8:27)

INTERCESSION IS STANDING IN THE BREACH

4. What does it mean to stand in the breach in prayer?

INTERCESSION IS THE PROPHETIC TASK OF THE CHURCH

5. Has God called you to stand in the gap for another in prayer? Do you have others who will stand with you in faith?

IT ONLY TAKES A LITTLE

6. In what way is a little faith like the nucleus of an atom, or like a mustard seed? (Mark 4:31-32)
7. Write down an experience of how God responded to your grain of faith in surprising ways.

POWER INTERCESSION

8. What is intercessory birthing? (Romans 8:26)
9. How are we to combine praying in the Spirit, and praying with the mind? (1 Cor. 14:15)

PROPHETIC INTERCESSION

10. What is prophetic intercession?
11. Name 3 key aspects of Elijah's intercession (see teaching):
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Faith overcomes failure

Memory Verse

"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise..." **Hebrews 10:36**

Bible Passage: Judges 20:18-44

Goals:

- To respond to seeming failures with an ongoing faith.
- To accept that problems or suffering may be a part of stepping out in faith & obedience

Facing setbacks

We live today in a society that minimizes discomfort and pain, and that endeavors to maximize personal pleasure and comfort. These worldly concepts are pervasive even amongst Christians. For example many Christians initially step out in faith with enthusiasm to do something. But when they are confronted with difficulties or failure, it is assumed that:

- “God has closed the door”,
- They had heard from the Lord incorrectly, or that
- God has let them down.

Yet they may well be doing exactly what God had wanted of them.

The outcome of the walk of faith is not to be equated with immediate success. We can be living a holy life, obeying the Lord, and living by faith, yet still suffer, not seeing the immediate answers to our prayers, or face disappointments or failures. Difficulties may arise simply because we are walking by faith. God uses failures or problems to deepen our trust in Him, and to form godly character.

Most of us will experience crises that are difficult to understand. When Mark was a teenager his father passed away unexpectedly. Mark had to fend for himself, putting himself through college while living overseas. His prayer was, “Lord I don’t understand but I trust you.” If our faith depends on all things going well, it will be a shallow and immature faith. So we see that a strong faith must be combined with godly character.

Biblical examples of faith and suffering

As we walk by faith it is not uncommon to suffer difficulties of various kinds. If we think that the Christian life is problem free, we are living in a delusion. If we don’t have a biblical understanding that suffering is part of the Christian life, we will become discouraged. Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, and yet He greatly suffered. Likewise the wonderful men and women of God in the Old Testament suffered as they walked by faith.

“Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went

about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy--wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

Hebrews 11:36-40

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."

Hebrews 12:1-3

Hope deferred

It is said that often a new Christian will experience immediate answers to prayer. However in order for us to grow to a greater maturity, the Lord will allow us to wait for His answers, that our faith may deepen and reach a greater continuity. So often our faith can ride the waves of emotional ups and downs. One week we are enthusiastic believing great things, the next week all seems woeful.

The writer to the Hebrews says that Abraham and Sarah received promises which were not realized in their own life time. They left their own home land and lived as nomads, seeking a home which they did not find until heaven. Likewise they were promised that their descendants would be like the sand, but they died before seeing it.

"These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

Hebrews 11:13

"And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised..."

Hebrews 11:39

Abraham and Sarah lived a life of obedience and faith. Although they did not see the things they were believing for, yet their lives were still pleasing to God. What is required of us is obedience and the walk of faith. The outcome and success of our walk of faith depends on God.

"But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:16

So we see that doing God's will involves perseverance and endurance of various types of difficulties. And having pressed through we shall receive what is promised whether now or later.

"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise..."

Hebrews 10:35-36 (NKJV)

"For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls."

Hebrews 10:37-39

Dealing with failure

In the book of Judges we read of how a man and his concubine were passing through and stayed the night in the Benjaminite city of Gibeah. The men of the city wanted to have sex with the man, and instead the concubine was given to them. She was raped and found dead at the front door in the morning. The man went home and cut the dead body into 12 pieces sending the pieces to the tribes of Israel. As a result 400 000 Israelite soldiers gathered at Bethel to battle against the tribe of Benjamin and avenge the death of the concubine. Together they inquired of the Lord, and the Lord instructed them to go into battle.

The Israelites had a good motive for going into battle, according to the Mosaic law they were to avenge the death of the innocent. We see that they were going to battle in obedience to the Lord's personal command. They were also stepping out in faith believing that God would defeat the enemy and give them victory. So all in all we might expect that they be successful in battle. Instead 22 000 Israelites were killed!

Normally the cause of defeat is sin, as when Joshua's troops were defeated by the men of Ai, because of the sin of Achan (Joshua 7). Yet in Judges 20 there is no evidence of sin. The Israelites had gone to battle in obedience to the Lord, believing for victory.

"And the men of Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand men that drew sword; all these were men of war. 18 ¶ The people of Israel arose and went up to Bethel, and inquired of God, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?" And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up first." 19 Then the people of Israel rose in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel drew up the battle line against them at Gibeah. 21 The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah, and felled to the ground on that day twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites." **Judges 20:17-21**

After the defeat the Israelites again came before the Lord weeping, and seeking the Lord. The Lord gives no explanation for the defeat, but says to them to go up again. So in obedience to the Lord they again do battle against the tribe of Benjamin, only to be defeated with 18 000 soldiers dead.

"And the LORD said, "Go up against them." 24 So the people of Israel came near against the Benjaminites the second day. 25 And Benjamin went against them out of Gibeah the second day, and felled to the ground eighteen thousand men of the people of Israel; all these were men who drew the sword." **Judges 20:23-25**

Previously the Israelites had wept and inquired of God after defeat. This time they sat down before the ark of the covenant, weeping, fasting, and presenting burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. They began to get real with God. In offering burnt offerings they acknowledged His holiness and their sinfulness. In fasting they showed their dependence upon Him. God had allowed defeat and failure in order that they would truly humble themselves before Him.

"Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept; they sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD." **Judges 20:26**

It is so natural for us to want to give up in the face of discouragement and disappointments. When the people of Israel came before the Lord for the third time,

they ask the Lord, "Shall we cease?" If the Israelites had given up after two defeats they would have missed out on an overwhelming victory. It can be hard to accept that we may have to go through failure and disappointment before the battle is won. Failure, suffering, and difficulties are often what mature and purify our faith.

"And the LORD said, "Go up; for tomorrow I will give them into your hand." 29 So Israel set men in ambush round about Gibeah.... 35 And the LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel; and the men of Israel destroyed twenty-five thousand one hundred men of Benjamin that day; all these were men who drew the sword. 36 So the Benjaminites saw that they were defeated."

Judges 20:28-29, 35-36

Appendix A

The promises of God

"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God." **2 Corinthians 1:20**

"...He has granted to us his precious and very great promises..." **2 Peter 1:4**

There are thousands of wonderful promises in the Bible. It is good for the believer to know what they are and how to appropriate them by faith. Here are some of the promises of God.

Salvation in Christ

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." **Acts 4:12**

"The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." **1 Timothy 1:15**

Forgiveness

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." **Ephesians 1:7**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **1 John 1:9**

The salvation of the family

"For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." **Acts 2:39**

"And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **Acts 16:31**

Healing

"By his wounds you have been healed." **1 Peter 2:24**

"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." **James 5:16**

Deliverance from demons

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you." **Luke 10:19**

"And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;" **Mark 16:17**

"But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Luke 11:20

Protection from evil

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, 2 will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." 3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; 4 he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler."

Psalm 91:1-3

Victory

"As thy name, O God, so thy praise reaches to the ends of the earth. Thy right hand is filled with victory;"

Psalm 48:10

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:18

Sanctification of the believer

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life."

Romans 6:22

"He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption;"

1 Corinthians 1:30

Comfort

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Psalm 23:4

"For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song."

Isaiah 51:3

Joy

"Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Psalm 16:11

"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

Matthew 25:21

"The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel."

Isaiah 29:19

Peace

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

John 14:27

"I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." **John 16:33**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit

"And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, 5 for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:4-5

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God." **1 Corinthians 2:12**

Renewal in the Holy Spirit

"... He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit," **Titus 3:5**

"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..." **Acts 3:19**

Provision

"So Abraham called the name of that place The LORD will provide; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." **Genesis 22:14**

"But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith!"

Luke 12:28

Healing of relationships

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;" **2 Corinthians 5:18**

The Second Coming of Christ

"And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." **John 14:3**

"For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; 17 then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord." **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**

SIN AND OCCULT LISTING

Recognizing our Sin is Half the Battle

Often people don't recognize their sins because no one ever told them it was sin. This list of sins and occult is meant to be a blessing and help to people. As we identify our sins we can then confess them to God and receive forgiveness and peace.

A real barrier in recognizing sin is the way that we justify what we do. For example, some justify their anger by blaming the other person – “It’s their fault that I’m angry because they.....”. Others justify pornography as “a personal diversion which doesn’t harm anyone”. Others justify violence in marriage “because it helps” in some way. White lies are said to be “necessary and useful”.

There is no end to the reasons we give to justify our sins. Such arguments become demonic fortresses of the mind that must be identified as unbiblical deceptions. True repentance begins when we stop justifying our sin, and call it what it is: sin. Then the cleansing work of the Blood of Jesus can begin in us.

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Sin is sin, and we are guilty before God for our rebellion. Sin brings condemnation, curses, demons, eternal death, guilt and sickness. God requires humility in repentance so that there might be forgiveness and peace with Him. While we defend our sins, we have not truly repented, and therefore are not forgiven by God.

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” **1 John 1:6-8**

Through repentance you can receive peace and forgiveness from God.

Using our faith against sin addictions

Sin in our lives can affect us with mental torment, guilt, shame, sickness, broken relationships, marital and family problems, and curses. After confessing our sins we are to appropriate the promise of Scripture to be cleansed of sin and its consequences. Often people wonder why after confessing their sin they don’t experience freedom from it. It is because we have yet to appropriate the promise of cleansing.

Forgiveness and cleansing are two different things. We must believe that we are both forgiven and cleansed of sin. This is why a person can be saved, forgiven of their past sins, and yet continue to walk in those sins and be under demonic oppression. After confessing our sins we then are to believe for the cleansing of the Blood of Christ and deliverance of the demons related to those sins. This is how we are to approach any sin

such as addictions to TV, pornography, smoking, alcohol, masturbation, lustful thinking, gambling, anger, violence, or swearing.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:6-9

PLEASE MARK OFF YOUR SINS IN THIS LIST

The greatest sin

**Not believing in Jesus as the only
Saviour**

Sins of the tongue:

- Lies
- Anger, shouting
- Making fun of others in their need
- Coarse language, swearing
- Slander
- Criticism
- Judging others

- Gossip
- Self curses (e.g. "I am worthless, I will never succeed.")
- Cursing others (e.g. "He will always be sick.")
- Grumbling/criticism against the leadership of the church.
- Unfulfilled promises and good intentions.

Sins in the family:

- Neglect of children
- Lack of discipline and order in the family.
- Not teaching the Bible to one's children.
- Lack of respect for your partner
- Putting down your spouse in front of others.
- Mistreatment of one's wife
- Lack of love, obedience and honour of the husband .
- Violence and anger in the marriage.
- Violent discipline of children.
- Disobeying parents
- Lack of respect of parents

Sins of the heart:

- Unforgiveness
- Resentment
- Bitterness
- Holding grudges
- Hate
- Lust
- Greed
- Envy and covetousness
- Pride
- Selfishness
- Jealousy
- Double mindedness
- Lack of faith, doubt
- Anxiety, worry, not trusting God.
- Racism and bigotry

Various sins:

- Lack of love towards God and others.
- Neglecting to fellowship with other Christians (Heb. 10:25)
- Religiosity and legalism
- Persecution of Christians
- Religious pride
- Lack of daily prayer and Bible reading
- Blasphemy
- Causing division in the body of Christ.
- Rebellion and disrespect towards authority.
- Stealing
- Taking advantage of others unjustly
- Violence
- Impatience
- Manipulation
- Deceit
- Not visiting the sick and prisoners
- Mistreating the poor and needy
- Murder
- Vengeance
- Abortion
- Drunkenness
- Bribes
- Attending worldly parties with drinking & dancing.

Videos or films of violence, horror,
swearing, pornography.
Inappropriate TV watching

Sins of the use of resources:

Dressing luxuriously as an expression
of pride, vanity
Buying things out of vanity.
Gambling
Using our time wastefully
Not obeying God with our finances
(tithing and offerings)
Lack of compassion and generosity to
the poor
Using our resources selfishly
Not offering hospitality
Financial irresponsibility
Not paying taxes
Not declaring income in order to receive
government assistance.
Not paying child maintenance

Sins against the Holy Spirit:

Resisting or grieving the Holy Spirit
Criticizing and belittling the work and
manifestations of the Holy Spirit
Mistreating and persecuting those who
are used by God in the Anointing
Speaking against the gifts of the Holy
Spirit

Sins in the work place

Laziness or sloppiness at work
Taking advantage of and mistreating
employees.
Not paying or withholding appropriate
wages.
Borrowing and not returning is stealing.
Unjust or illegal contracts
Corruption
Not paying taxes

Sexual sins:

Perverse sexual acts – oral, anal, or sex
with an animal.
Violent or forced sex (including in the
marriage).
Rape
Prostitution

Fornication
Adultery
Masturbation
Homosexuality
Lesbianism
Sex between family members – incest
Pornography
Lustful thinking

Obsessions & addictions

Addiction to smoking, alcohol, novels,
TV, the internet, computer games, video
games, or play stations.

*NB. Watching TV, reading novels,
using the internet and games are not
necessarily sins, but lack of self-control
in these areas is.*

Occult and witchcraft sins:

Acupuncture
Amulets (good luck objects, etc)
Ancestral worship
Ankh (a cross with a ring top used in
satanic rites).
Apparitions – occultic
Astral traveling
Astrology
Automatic writing
Birth signs
Black arts
Black magic
Black mass
Blood pacts
Casting of spells and curses
Chain letters
Colour therapy
Conjuration (summoning up a spirit)
Consulting medium, espiritists,
witchdoctors or psychic healers
Contact with spirits
Control of objects by mental power (Tk
or Pk).
Coven of witches
Crystal ball gazing
Crystals & stones
Demon worship
Divining rod, twig or pendulum
Dungeons and dragons
Eastern meditation

ESP	Tarot cards
Espiritism	Tea-leaf reading
Fire walking	The Lodge (Free Masonry)
Fortune telling	TM – transcendental meditation
Halloween	Videos and movies of violence, horror, pornography, occult.
Hallucinogenic drugs (e.g. heroin)	White magic
Hard rock & heavy metal secular music	Witchcraft
Harry Potter novels, movies & toys	Yoga
Horoscopes	Zodiac signs
Hypnosis	
Idols and images used in worship	
Incantations	
Iridology (eye diagnosis)	
Jonathan Livingstone Seagull (reincarnation).	
Judo	
Karate	
Kung-fu	
Levitation	
Listening to demonic voices (including voices of deceased).	
Magic (not sleight of hand but supernatural power)	
Manipulation and cursing of others	
Mantras	
Martial arts	
Mental suggestion, telepathy, therapy	
Mesmerism	
Mind control, dynamics, mediumship, reading.	
Necromancy (conjuring up spirits of the dead)	
New Age (in all its diverse forms)	
Numerology	
Occultic games	
Ouiji boards	
Occult novels, magazines, music, or movies	
Pagan rites, religious objects, artifacts and relics	
Palmistry	
Pokemon Cards	
Satanism	
Secret society oaths	
Sorcery	
Soul traveling	
Spells	
Spirit guides or friends	
Star signs	
Superstitions	

Sects, World Religions & Philosophies:

It is important to renounce all oaths, pacts and baptisms made with any sect or secret society, destroy their religious objects, and destroy any books that are not in accord with Scripture.

A sect is a religious group that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Denies the full divinity of Jesus Christ.
- Doesn't recognize the full authority of the Bible as the basis of faith and conduct.
- Accepts prophecies, traditions, and other books as fundamental to belief and practice.
- Denies the Trinity, that of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Emphasizes traditions and rules to gain salvation.

All religions that deny that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and way to God are to be renounced.

To pray to, to use as a mediator, to show religious respect, or to worship idols and images.

To burn candles to them, to prostrate or bow before an idol or image.

Seventh Day Adventists
Amanda Marga Yoga Society
Bahai
Buddhism
Children of God
Christadelphians
Christian Science

Communism
Confucianism
Divine Light Mission
EST
Hare Krishna
Hinduism
Islam
Jehovah's witnesses
Marxism
Materialism
Mormons
The International Way
The New Age (in all its diverse forms)
Unification Church (Moonies)
Universal Church of God

**This sin & occult list is adapted from
Bill Subritzky's literature (see
website, Dove Ministries).**

