

The Walk of Faith

Lesson 7: Examining and Exercising our Faith

- I. Being sure of a true faith in God
 - A. A true faith may be known by:
 1. Its cause—saving faith in Christ is a fruit of the Spirit of God, who makes us alive with Christ, 1Cor 12.3; Phil 1.29; 2Th 2.13; Acts 13.48; Eph 2.4-5, cp. v.8
 - a) The Spirit produces faith concomitant with the work of regeneration whereby He gives us a new heart and love for God. It's a gift bestowed by His operation, continued by His power, increased by His blessing, and carried on to the end by His "never leaving nor forsaking" His own work, Phil 1.6
 - b) And the Spirit makes it known to us, not only that we believe, but that He's the Author of that faith, 1Cor 2.12; Gal 4.6; 1Cor 15.10 (cp. Heb 11.6)
 2. Its effects—living faith of the living God is fruitful.
 - a) It produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God has spoken and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God has promised.
 - b) True faith credits God with the finished work of salvation and approaches God as a reconciled Father through the work of a redeeming Son by the direction of a guiding Spirit.
 - c) Thus true faith enjoys peace with God in the conscience and joy in God in the heart.
 - B. A false faith may be known by:
 1. Its lifelessness—the hypocrite's faith is dead.
 - a) It's a fancy of the mind formed in the head on some other ground than the regenerating work of the Spirit.
 - b) It's the form of faith without the substance; the profession without the possession; the knowledge without the experience. They have no vital union with Christ and therefore have no real communion with Christ.
 - c) And in the hour of trial, they fall away.
 2. Its barrenness—the hypocrite's produces no real trust in God, no real dependence upon His Word, no real rest in His care, no real comfort in His governance. Having no life, it can have no fruit.
- II. Therefore, let us examine our faith!
 - A. Bring your faith to the touchstone and standard of Scripture:
 1. Is the Spirit the Author of it?
 2. Is Christ more precious to you than all else?
 3. Is it fruitful of love for God, work for God, and sacrifice for God?
 4. Do you take God's Word for truth?
 5. Are you walking with God in your life?
 6. Are you depending on God for all things temporal and eternal?
 7. Would you be willing to lose everything for Jesus' sake?
 - B. If that's your faith, then see that you read and study His Word to see what He's promised you for your safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of His holy Word and expect at every step that He'll make good to you all that He's promised you.
- III. Let us *beware* of those things that resist a life of faith.
 - A. The body of sin—the old man resists the walk of faith with all its might and cunning, with all its affections and desires. It will always be its nature to lust after sin in order to draw you to walk after the flesh and not after the Spirit, Rom 7.14f. Sin thrives on sense, temporals, and self and therefore opposes a life of faith, with an eye on eternity, lived for God.
 - B. The Tempter—Satan knows how to take advantage of our fallen nature and sinful desires. He knows how to bait it and entice it. He knows how to use our own heart's desires to deceive us into the very sin we were resisting. Satan does all he can to hinder the life of faith because he knows that once we learn to live outside ourselves on Christ's fullness, there's no limit to what we can do for God, no limit to the joys of heaven we can know on earth, and no limit to the damage we can do to his kingdom.
 - C. The world—the world is the Devil's bait. He uses it to trap us, to lure us away from our chief good by the promise of good (and even better). He convinces us to seek our treasure and happiness in the world, and to promise ourselves contentment and satisfaction in the world, and when he's done that, it gains a sway over us so that we

yield ourselves and all our energies to the service of it. Because once the world effectively becomes our portion (or at least the portion we lust and chase after), we effectively say to God, “Step aside, I have no need of you.”

IV. And let us *defend* ourselves by putting our faith to work on the promises of God, e.g. Jer 32.38-41

- A. What a strong consolation this passage is! Every sentence is strong enough to establish our peace with God and to maintain that peace in the midst of our war with sin and Satan.
1. “I will make, an everlasting covenant with them.” It was made for us and will be made good to us. “As I live, I will never turn away from doing them good. I will never change my purpose. I mean nothing but good to them. My heart is fixed upon it; and I will not leave the thing in their hands. My will to do them good shall not depend upon their will, or their faithfulness, or on anything in them. I have taken all their concerns into my hands and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of my grace.”
 2. “I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.” “I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, until they receive the end of their faith, the eternal salvation of their souls.
 3. “I will rejoice in doing them good.” “It always was and always will be the joy of my heart to do them good; and I will not, I cannot, be deprived of my joy.”
- B. Can you see how safe your salvation is!? God has seen to it in the sending of His Son to accomplish it and in the sending of His Spirit to apply it. It’s not only a matter of glory for Him, but a matter of rejoicing. His heart is set on it!
1. What more could He say to you to put an end to all your doubts and fears, than this? He’s engaged Himself in an everlasting covenant to see that your salvation is a matter of the highest priority and surest event. And He’s undertaken the whole of the work—what was to be done in you and for you. It’s His unchangeable purpose never to depart from you and never to suffer you to depart from Him. Your salvation is not a byproduct or side effect of what He’s really doing. It is what He set out to do, from before time began. He’s determined to exalt Himself as Love, His Son as Saviour, and His Spirit as Sanctifier—all in your salvation.
 2. Can you mix your faith with this promise? When you can, you’ll find it to be a powerful means of resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation and of returning to God after a fall. May you learn to put your trust in His Word and not in your strength.