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### A DEEPER LEVEL OF FAITH

Dear Friends,

July 2013

My parents were solid Christians, very faithful in both attending and volunteering at their church. As such, my sister, brother and I were in church every time the doors opened. Though the church was not what some would call Spirit-filled, the message of salvation through faith in Jesus alone was strongly delivered. It was as a result of those sermons that I accepted Jesus as my Savior when just a young teenager.

When I was 20 years old, I drifted away from church and away from my relationship with Jesus. For five years I lived a life of absolute rebellion against God and epitomized the definition of a sinner totally lost and without hope in the world. But at age 25 I returned to Jesus and have never looked back. It was also at age 25 that I got married.

My wife, Kathy, and I attended a church many would describe as Charismatic. It was there we were introduced to the reality of a Spirit-filled life, the demonstrated power of God and a level of praise and worship that I had never known. It was also at this church that we heard teaching about faith that was very new to us.

You see, back in the 70's and 80's faith was one of the primary topics being taught in Spirit-filled, Charismatic churches. Almost any preacher who was strong in his teaching on faith became popular. Faith teachers were on almost every Christian television station. Books on faith filled the shelves of Christian bookstores. Audio teachings about faith were sold in great abundance. We were all told we are supposed to live by faith, so we wanted to know how. We were also told that living by faith would cause us to have great financial and material increase, so we definitely wanted as much teaching on the subject as possible.

Looking back on those years, everyone on the "faith trail" claimed to be living by faith; but the truth is, I don't recall seeing anyone having their life transformed the way much of the faith teaching implied would happen, my life included. We had the zeal and we loved God, but we missed some valuable aspects of faith that would have produced great change. Not long ago the Holy Spirit shared with me some key components of faith that, if applied, will permanently change a Christian's life. I am going to pass them along to you, as well as the passages of scripture He used (His words will be in *italics*).

**But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

**(Matthew 4:4)**

**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

**(Romans 10:17)**

*Faith that has as its sole foundation the Word of God cannot ever fail. But faith that is one part the Word, one part religious tradition, one part worldly hope*

*and one part uncertainty will never produce 100% of God's will, promises or plan for your life.*

Herein is a huge mistake many Christians make when it comes to living by faith. They have allowed sermons, more than God's word, to define what faith is all about. They hear sermons about faith, but rarely study the Word of God to find out if the scriptures used in the sermons were used in context.

Living by every word of God is much more challenging than many realize. It requires completely altering your manner of living. It demands that you compare your own way of living, believing and speaking to what is described in the Bible and change what needs to be changed. It isn't simply a matter of "believing" the Word of God; it's also about "living" the Word of God.

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:16-17)**

*Faith is not just a system of belief, it is a lifestyle that transcends all nationalities and cultures.*

I never cease to be amazed when Christians exalt the customs and traditions of their culture above the standards of God's Word, then defend such practice by explaining, "That's the way we do it where we live." What they don't seem to realize is that they are bowing their knee to cultural traditions and compromising both their walk with God and their testimony for Christ. This is **EXACTLY** what the Apostle Peter was doing when the Apostle Paul confronted him in Galatians 2:11-20.

The moment we are born again we become a citizen of the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:12-13). Our citizenship is first and foremost in that Kingdom, above any citizenship we may hold in any earthly nation. Far too many Believers try to force Christianity and living by faith into the mold of their culture; this will **NEVER** work and will only produce conflict. Believers are supposed to influence their culture toward the unchanging standards of scripture. Don't forget, Jesus was a Jew, but one of the things He was frequently accused of was violating the "traditions of the elders;" traditions which had been exalted above God's Word.

**That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:18)**

*Faith is not just believing God will do what He has promised, it is also believing God will not do what He has not established with His Word.*

Over the years I have known of Christians who declare they are living by faith, but what they are believing for contradicts the principles of scripture. One extreme example: I remember a lady in her twenties who was using her "faith" to "confess" a man into being her husband. Faith confessions will **ONLY** work when they line up with every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Get it settled: God will never, ever stand in agreement with or cause to manifest any "faith confession" that is not first established in His Word.

**And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Matthew 17:20**

*The greatest victory is not when the mountain moved when you spoke to it. The greatest victory is when you finally conquered the flesh and stayed in prayer, fasting, worship & the Word long enough to develop the faith necessary to move the mountain.*

Believing the message of faith is not the same thing as developing your faith. I now realize now that in years past, so many Christians who followed the message of living by faith were convinced they had mountain-moving faith just because they believed what was taught. But unless we actually put forth the diligent effort to develop faith, we will not have mountain-moving faith. Just because we can quote faith verses and repeat almost verbatim the sermons we've heard about faith does not mean we have faith.

There is nothing about our flesh and emotions that wants to yield over the hours it takes to develop faith. But there is no shortcut or alternative. There is no "grace for special faith" reserved for those who stand behind the pulpit to preach God's Word. When it comes to developing a walk of faith, only those things described in God's Word will produce faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We build ourselves up on our most holy faith by praying in tongues (Jude 1:20). Additionally, fasting and worship help to keep our flesh and emotions in subjection to our born again spirit.

**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**  
(1 Peter 5:6-7)

**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4: 6-7)**

*Living by faith includes truly casting the cares of life over on to the Father and leaving them there. Worrying about a problem is failure to believe that God has the answer. God has never had to rely on anyone to come up with a solution, but He is always prepared to share the solution with those who trust Him.*

It is really quite easy to determine who is making progress in their life of faith. Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak (Luke 6:45). The more a person's heart is being filled with genuine faith, the more that person will speak in line with scripture. No matter how much a person says they are living by faith or standing in faith and trusting God, if the essence of their conversation is fear, lack, doubt, complaining, discouragement, etc, then they are not trusting God as they would have you believe.

Faith will focus more on God than on the problem. Faith will exalt the promises of God over the complications of a situation. Faith will never deny the circumstances, but will recognize that circumstances can be impacted by the power of God's Word. Faith will **NEVER** worry because true faith is established by diligently applying scripture and refusing to accept anything but the eternal, unchanging truth of God.

**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:10-13)**

**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh  
(2 Corinthians 10:3)**

*No matter how much you develop your faith, you will never be able to use faith to alter the will of another person. Faith for warfare is to do battle against Satan and his hierarchy, not to destroy or tear down others.*

Since being introduced to the "faith message" I have encountered innumerable Christians who are trying to use their faith to force change in other people. You cannot use your faith to force another person to get born again. You cannot use your faith to force a Christian to live the born again life. But you can use your faith and accompanying confessions to wage warfare against the demonic forces impacting those people.

If we look unto the example of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we do not see Him using faith to exercise authority over people to force change; but we do see Him exercising authority over devils that were influencing people. This is where so many of our faith battles will take place: against Satan and his legion of devils. Strong, developed faith enables us to overcome every cunning lie he tries to use to derail our walk with God.

I praise God for the way in which the Holy Spirit is teaching me more and more about living by faith, and how He is helping me more and more to live by faith. I want to encourage you to give all diligence to developing your faith, for then you will begin to live more in the will of God, receiving all of His promises manifested in your life!

In His Grace,

*Jim*

PS - A CD of the sermon that goes into greater detail about what I've shared about living by faith can be ordered on the next page.

## **KENYA PRAYER & POWER CONFERENCE**

In just a few weeks, Kathy and I will be leaving for Kenya to minister in a Prayer and Power Conference to be held in Migori. The dates are Sunday, August 11 through Sunday August 18. Services will be held at the Kakrao School. For more information, please send an email to the host pastor, Ken Oluock, at [childrenshope2007@yahoo.com](mailto:childrenshope2007@yahoo.com).

When the Prayer and Power Conference has concluded, we will be traveling north to Kisumu, Kenya for services to be held Monday, August 19 through Wednesday, August 21 at the Disciples of Mercy Family Church (located just past Mamboleo, next to the Kisumu Concrete Quarry). For service times and more information, please contact Pastor Jennie Ochieng at [dom@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:dom@africaonline.co.ke).

Please join us in praying over this tremendous opportunity to be used of God in accomplishing His Kingdom purposes. If the Lord leads you to send an offering to assist in this trip, that would be such a blessing. In no way do we want to be a financial burden to anyone over there. We know that God is able to make all grace abound toward us; that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8).

### **MINISTRY UPDATES ON FACEBOOK**

If you would like to receive our ministry updates via Facebook, please send me a friend request. Type in "Jim Martin" in the Facebook search box. My ministry page has a picture of Kathy and me sitting on a large rock in front of a lake.

### **2014 SPRING PRAYER AND POWER CONFERENCE DATES**

The dates for our Spring Prayer and Power Conference are now set for Sunday, April 27 through Friday, May 2. Our host hotel will again be the Country Inn and Suites 3971 Colonel Glenn Highway, Beavercreek, Ohio 45324). I have blocked off 30 rooms; two have already been reserved! To make your own reservation, call 937-429-2222.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Please send me a CD of the sermon, "A Deeper Level of Faith."

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