

## Certainty of Faith in the Face of Uncertainty

- *Faith answers the question, “Can I trust God?”*
- *Obedience answers the question, “Will I trust God?”*
- *Faith and obedience are built up much like our physical bodies are strengthened and developed from exercise.*
- *The muscles of our bodies are strengthened and enlarged by consistently lifting heavier and heavier weights.*
- *Also, like our muscles, if we do not continue to exercise our faith and obedience they will grow weaker.*
- *How do we build up our faith?*

### **Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

**<sup>17</sup>So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

- *One way to build up our faith is to consciously and consistently make decisions on what we read, listen to, and even think about.*
- *As we hear words of faith whether directly by reading and meditating upon the Bible, through Christian fellowship, hearing testimonies, or listening to sermons, our confidence in God grows.*
- *As we begin to fill our minds and hearts with God’s Word then our thought life begins to reflect more and more of the truths found in God’s Word.*

### **Jude 20 (NKJV)**

**<sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit**

- *Prayer brings into our faith walk the reality of our personal relationship with God.*
- *As we pray our focus is not to be on ritualistic prayers, but on God. As we share our hearts with God, the reality of His presence and our relationship with Him grows.*

- *When I pray, I consciously cultivate the reality that God at that very moment is attentive to my praise and thanksgiving to Him as well as whatever needs I am expressing to Him.*
- *When I pray I also cultivate an expectation that God is acting on my prayers at that very moment and I am going to see a fulfillment of God's will.*

#### **1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup>He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself**

- *When I pray I also incorporate the supernatural attributes of God in my prayer life.*
- *Praying in tongues and receiving revelations from God whether it is through a vision, a prophecy, or a thought that He places into my mind or a desire He places in my heart also builds up my faith.*
- *Another important element of building up our faith is not to do things that will tear it down.*

#### **Matthew 14:31 (NKJV)**

**<sup>31</sup>And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"**

- *Peter stepped forward at Jesus' word and began to walk on the water. But then Peter did something that caused him to doubt and to sink—he took his eyes off of Jesus and onto the circumstance, the storm and the waves.*
- *We need to keep our eyes focused always on Jesus.*
- *This does not mean that we ignore the realities of life, but we do not allow the circumstances of this life to dictate to us if we can trust God and His Word.*
- *When we are not discerning about what we put into our hearts and minds, then we are tearing down our faith and bringing confusion and doubts.*
- *This does not mean we are to look at the world through rose coloured lenses. Neither does it mean we are to look at the world through the distorted lenses of ungodliness and unbelief.*

- *We are to be discerning so we can distinguish between deception and truth.*
- *As followers of Christ we are to be able to face head on the realities of life, but without becoming disillusioned, disheartened, or fearful.*
- *How do we build up our obedience?*

**Romans 10:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup>But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?”

- “But they have not all obeyed the gospel” - *We are to act upon our faith.*
- “LORD, who has believed our report?” - *If we truly believe then we must act according to our faith.*

**John 8:34 (NKJV)**

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

- *Every time we give into sin it weakens our will.*
- *The more we give into sin the weaker our will becomes.*
- *We become weak willed Christians unable to resist temptation.*
- *How do we strengthen our will?*
- *Every time we choose to obey God we strengthen our will.*
- *Just like exercise bit by bit strengthens our body, exercising our will to obey God causes our will to grow stronger.*

**James 2:20–23 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup>But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

<sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

<sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

<sup>23</sup>And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.

- **“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”**  
– *Faith without obedience is of no benefit.*
- *When a person hears the gospel message, but does not obey it and receive Christ they will not be saved.*
- *After a person receives Christ, but fails to continue to obey the Word of God then their life will not improve and very likely will worsen.*
- *Faith without works is dead—faith without obedience results in a life that is powerless, devoid of truth, empty, and unfruitful.*
- *Faith is not just believing in Christ, but also knowing what He is expecting and then being willing to obey.*
- *Christ came not just to give us life, but to give us life more abundantly. (John 10:10)*
- *However, for us to experience that abundant life and true freedom from sin and torment requires faith in action—obedience to the truth.*
- **“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?”** – *Abraham’s faith was justified by his willingness not only to believe that he could trust God, but by actually trusting God by being obedient to God’s Word.*
- *Abraham’s act of obedience in sacrificing his son Isaac seems like a giant leap of faith, but in reality, Abraham spent many years taking small steps of obedience. Each step led to a greater degree of trust.*
- *Christians who are looking for those massive breakthroughs are missing out on the process of learning to trust God day by day for those little breakthroughs that are the key for the big breakthroughs.*

- **“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” - *Faith works together with obedience. Without obedience our faith will never come to completion, perfection, and maturity.***
- ***Faith in action is obedience and without obedience our faith will never blossom into what God has intended. We will continue to live frustrated and fruitless lives.***

<sup>23</sup>And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.

- ***Verse 23 actually speaks about two separate events in Abraham’s life that occurred perhaps fifty years apart.***
- ***The first event, “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness” is recorded in Genesis 15:4-6 when Abraham was about 75 years old and childless. God led him outside his tent and had Abraham gaze up at the night sky. God told him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of Heaven.***
- ***As Abraham looked up he chose to believe God even though the natural circumstances screamed the opposite and it was accounted to him as righteousness.***
- ***Between the first event and the second event, he learned to trust God and obey His voice. Then Abraham was able to offer up Isaac on the altar.***
- ***During that long journey of faith and obedience there were times that Abraham experienced fear and doubt and times that those fears and doubts caused Abraham to make decisions based on unbelief.***
- ***However, Abraham was willing to repent when he realized his failures and turn back to God and learned to trust and obey Him in a deeper way.***
- ***Ultimately Abraham trusted God so fully that he was willing to obey God completely and to offer Isaac, his only begotten son on the altar.***
- ***That is when God was able to call Abraham a friend of God.***
- ***What is one of the essential hallmarks of true friendship? – Complete trust.***

- *Abraham came to the place of fully trusting God.*
- *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works” – Abraham’s faith justified Abraham, but Abraham’s obedience justified his faith.*
- *James 2:18 puts it this way, “Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”*
- *Many people say they are trusting God, but their works are contrary to God’s Word.*
- *However, when our actions and our words both line up with a life of faith, then our faith is evident even to unbelievers. Then one could say our faith is justified—our faith is not in vain.*

**James 1:5–8 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

<sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

<sup>7</sup>For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

<sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- *One of the definitions of being double-minded is being uncertain.*
- *If a person asks in faith he is certain.*
- *A double-minded man is uncertain and therefore unstable.*
- *This condition of not being double-minded, but certain of God’s faithfulness is linked directly to the promise of God “to receive wisdom generously if we ask.”*
- *The Bible does not say that if we are double-minded God will not give wisdom, but that we will not be able to receive wisdom.*
- *The difference is that the emphasis is not on the Giver but the receiver.*
- *If we are double-minded and we ask God for wisdom it does not say He will not provide the answer, but that we will be unable to receive the answer.*

- *If we are double-minded we will never be sure that God has shown us something, because we will constantly be second-guessing everything. God cannot give an answer or direction, because we are not able to receive it.*
- *We must believe that when we ask God, He hears us and answers us and directs us.*

**Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**Hebrews 11:1 (NASB95)**

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- *The Greek Word for substance or assurance is “hupostasis” which means “substance, support, steadiness.” So it can mean “assurance, trust confidence.”*
- *Faith is the certainty of things hoped for.*
- *This life is filled with uncertainty.*
- *It is in the darkroom of uncertainty that faith is developed.*
- *Many times we pray, “God remove the uncertainty of life.”*
- *What we are really asking for is that God would remove the uncertainty of life, so that we would no longer have to trust Him.*
- *God wants us to pray, “God give us certainty in You in the midst of uncertainty.*

**Matthew 24:6–8 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

<sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of sorrows.

**Luke 21:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup>men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

- *This life is filled with uncertainty and as we get closer to the return of Christ the uncertainty will become more apparent. It is during those times our faith will shine forth like a bright light in the darkness.*

#### Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

- *The Greek word for covetousness used here is literally “the love of money.”*
- *If we are insecure in God we will look to other things to provide that security. This results in covetousness.*
- *We will either deal with the uncertainty in this life by trying to find security in the material world or find true security in Christ.*
- *The remedy for covetousness is security in Christ.*
- *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

#### Hebrews 13:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup>So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

- *“So we may boldly say” - This verse shows the attitude that we can have when our certainty is in Christ and not in the shifting sands of this world.*
- *“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear” – Our source of security is only in God, because He is our helper if we call upon Him.*
- *“What can man do to me?” – This does not promise that we will not have hardships in this life, but it does say that God is greater than our hardships and we be secure in Him no matter what we may walk through.*
- *One of the sources of lust is uncertainty.*
- *Lust is the reaction of the soul to uncertainty.*
- *“I can’t wait! I must have it now!”*



- *Worry is a direct result of uncertainty.*
- *The very definition of worry incorporates within it the idea of uncertainty.*
- *Fear and worry are different although they may be related.*
- *Worry can produce fear, but fear can exist without worry being present.*
- *If we try to avoid uncertainty not only are we unrealistic, but we will quickly grow frustrated with life and God.*
- *Every time we are confronted by uncertainty it is an opportunity to break out of our old thought patterns of thinking and choose to exercise our faith.*
- *If we do not choose to exercise our faith and trust God we will continue in the same cycle of worry, which will reinforce these wrong thought patterns.*
- *The true test of Christian maturity is not the miraculous, but the person's quiet and steadfast confidence in Christ even when confronted with the most difficult and uncertain situations.*
- *It is through the uncertainty of this life that our faith and obedience has an opportunity to be exercised and grow strong and vibrant.*
- *Uncertainty has at least two purposes.*
- *For those who do not know Christ it will help drive them to Christ.*
- *For those who know Christ the uncertainty will help them to learn to rely upon Him more and grow in faith.*
- *Two principles essential to strengthen our wills and our faith against the face of uncertainty are found in Philippians 4:4,6.*

**Philippians 4:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

- *Rejoice in the Lord always. Don't try to rely on your circumstances as your source of joy.*
- *Again I will say, rejoice! -The repetition of this verse reinforces its absolute importance for our lives.*

**Philippians 4:6 (NKJV)**

**⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

- *We are to be anxious for nothing, but take every one of our needs to God in prayer.*
- *A key principle is “with thanksgiving,” because this signifies a complete faith that the Lord hears our prayers and is answering us.*

**2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)**

**⁹For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.**

- *The Lord is looking throughout His Body for those of His people who are willing to stand on the certainty of faith in the face of uncertainty.*
- *The Lord wants to show Himself strong and He is looking for those willing to go through the spiritual discipline of building themselves up in their most holy faith.*