



# *On Faith*

By

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Teaching Notes are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

These teaching notes are from a study in the Book of Acts.

[These notes are from a study taught more than 40 years ago. The notes are in outline form.]

## Principles of Faith

Acts 6:1-7

Philip -

- Honest Report
- Full of the Holy Ghost
- Full of Wisdom
- Faithful Servant

Mark 10:44 - Being first in the Kingdom

Acts 8:8-5-8, 26-40

Principle #1 - Philip was a faithful servant and a powerful leader (5-6)

Principle #2 - Philip was a faithful servant and brought great joy to the people (7-8)

Principle #3 - Philip was a faithful servant and heard the voice of the Lord (26)

Principle #4 - Philip was a faithful servant and obeyed God (27)

Principle #5 - Philip was a faithful servant and "preached unto him Jesus" (35)

Principle #6 - God was faithful and gave Philip fruit (37) and an expanded ministry (39-40)

Are we like Philip? Do we want to be like Philip?

[Invite people to pray]

## The Problem of Faith

What do I mean by that?

Well, the problem of faith is that most of us have very little of it. That's right! Most of us as God's people have little faith.

- We have sat in churches and heard messages about faith and we've been challenged to live by faith, because the Scripture says that "the just shall live by faith"
- We've heard radio preachers tell us that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
- We've heard that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
- We've heard about faith that "if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
- We've heard that the victory that overcomes the world is our faith.
- We've been taught that faith is our great defensive weapon against all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- We've heard that "without faith it is impossible to please God."
- We've learned that faith is essential in prayer.
- We've heard all these messages time and time again.

My question is this: since we all know this to be true, why don't we "live by faith"?

We're so concerned that we be doctrinally correct about the issue of faith, and so am I, but why do we stop there? Why not go on and live by faith? Isn't it time that we walk what we talk?

## Reasons We Don't Live By Faith

I believe there are two basic reasons why most Christians do not live by faith.

1. We are ignorant of what God's Word says about living by faith, or
2. We are rejecting what His Word says about faith living.

On today's broadcast, I'm going to talk to those of you who just don't know what God expects of you in this area of faith.

On tomorrow's broadcast, I will speak to those of you who are rejecting God's Word about faith for one reason or another

## Faith Changes Lives

Turn in your Bibles to Romans 5:1. Here, the Apostle Paul is showing that our justification before God comes by faith and that this gives us peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ "by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Now that we've been saved by grace through faith and stand in positional sanctification and are justified before God, how should we live?

This is a good question. Is there any difference in the way we live after we're saved? Or are we just saved from hell and now we can go along our merry way doing whatever we please?

Listen, my friend. The great promise of Christianity is that we can and will be changed!

Before I was saved, I was a cursing atheist. I hated everything decent. I breathed out hatred for Christians and the Church. I lived a wicked and sin-filled life. I was destroying my body and mind through wickedness. If, when I got saved, all that happened to me was that I got a free ticket to Heaven but no change in my life, Christianity wouldn't be worth much during our time on earth.

When I got saved my life immediately began to change. I became a new creation and God began to change my life. Praise the Lord! That's something to shout about. God changes lives! He takes atheists and makes

them Bible teachers. He takes drunks and makes them into evangelists. He takes harlots and makes them into heroines of the faith. He takes drug pushers and makes them into servants of God and others. God is in the business of changing people's lives.

Now that we're saved, the Scripture teaches us that we are to live by faith. What does Paul mean by that?

Turn in your Bible to Hebrews 10:38. The Hebrew Christians were being called by some to return to Judaism and obedience to the Mosaic Law. The letter to the Hebrews was written to give direction to Jewish believers. The writer to Hebrews demonstrated powerfully that the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant, that Christ is a better sacrifice than the Levitical sacrifices, and that Christ is a higher Priest and Prophet than Aaron and Moses.

In Hebrews chapter 10, the writer appeals to a life of faith and warns against a lapse into Judaism. In verses 32-34, he calls upon the Hebrew believers to remember the days past when they proved their faith by enduring "a great flight of afflictions." They had also proven their faith by taking the abuses of non-believing Jews and their compassion for the writer (probably Paul) in jail. They also took joy in having their possessions and goods spoiled -- looking with the eye of faith at a better and abiding possession in Heaven.

In verses 35-39 the writer calls upon them to continue in patient faith. Faith is to be the theme of the believer's life, not legalistic forms and works. In verse 38, God was saying that the justified shall live by faith and that if any of the Hebrew Christians drew back into Judaism for fear of persecution, he would be very displeased with their decision.

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Hebrews 10:32-39

For a moment, let me share with you what other versions and translations of the Scripture have to say about living by faith.

"But the just shall live by faith [My righteous servant shall live by his conviction respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it]." AMP

"But My righteous one shall live by faith." NASB

"For my just man liveth of faith." WYC

"Now the just shall live by faith." GNV

This is an Old Testament quote from Habakkuk 2:4 repeated by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. Over and over again God has told us that we are to live by faith. This is talking about "serving faith." Saving faith is to present us justified before God. Serving faith is our walk and talk in this life.

Christianity is not some game we play on Sunday mornings. Christianity is a whole lifestyle that is played out every hour of every day of every year - forever! Christianity is not "getting from" God - it is "giving to" God.

The question is often asked, "Why do most Christians give out while trying to walk by faith?" One answer is they "give out" because they've never "given up." We want our cake and eat it, too. We want to be saved and know the joy of everlasting life, but we don't want to live for God now. If we're saved by faith and glorified by faith, then how do we think God wants us to live in-between?

We know that God saves us by grace through faith. We know that we will one day we will be glorified by faith. However, between salvation and glorification, we want to live our own selfish way - life by sight.

## Living By Faith

God is not pleased with that kind of lifestyle. That's what He saved us from living. He saved us from our selfish lifestyle to His selfless style of living - living by faith. We will never please God without faith and until we have pleased Him we have not succeeded in our Christian life. If we are to be successful in the Christian life, we must live by faith.

Just what does it mean to live by faith? It means we rely on Christ for everything - everything. It means we are not affected by what others say or do. We are affected by what Jesus tells us to say or do. God is our source of supply and we look to Him and to Him only for our lives. Most of us look to an employer for much of our supply, but God says to have faith in Him.

If we lose a job, we get nervous and exasperated. "Oh, what am I going to do? Where will our food come from? How will we pay our bills?" If we are living by faith, losing a job should not bother us because we will have our eyes on Jesus for our daily supply. If God uses another job to meet our needs, that's great. If He uses something or someone else to meet our needs, that's great as well. We have one obligation to God and that's to be faithful in doing whatever He's called us to do.

By this I do not mean we can just quit our job and sit around waiting for God to supply our needs. If God called us to work at a job, we should do what He says and be faithful. However, if God takes that job away, don't worry. Be faithful. Seek His will about the matter. Is God telling us to move?

go back to school to prepare for a different vocation/ministry? Listen to God and He will tell us what He wants us to do.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19) Jesus, after talking to His disciples about clothing and treasures and possessions necessary for life, said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) What things? These things: food and raiment. Verses 31 and 32 read -

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

We all need to listen to what God says to His children. God knows exactly what we have need of and has promised to supply all of our needs according to "His riches." Most of us live according to our own riches, If we have money in the bank, we're pretty happy and content. However, if we're out of money we get upset and frustrated. Look to God! He is our source of supply.



On yesterday's broadcast I shared with you the problem of faith. The problem being that most of us don't have any. I said that there were two basic reasons that we didn't live by faith.

1. We are ignorant of God's commandments to live this life or we just don't understand what He means.
2. We are knowledgeable about the faith life, but have decided to reject God's Word in that area.

Today I want to share with you some biblical and living examples of the faith life.

Turn to Hebrews 11:7 - "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Noah lived by faith and "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Even though Noah couldn't see any rain, He believed God and did as He said and built an ark. Noah was saved from destruction through faith in what God said.

Abraham is another biblical example of someone who lived by faith - "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Hebrews 11:8)

Sara, in verse 11, lived by faith - "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."

She received strength at a very old age to conceive, carry and bring that child into the world. Sara was saved by faith.

Again Abraham, verse 17, lived by faith - "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."

He took that child, Isaac, and offered him as a sacrifice in obedience to God. Having faith that God would raise Isaac up from the dead and having faith in the promise of God that a great and mighty national would come through Isaac, Abraham struck a knife toward his son, only to be stopped by God. Abraham and Isaac were saved by faith - "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

The 11th chapter of Hebrews goes on to show the great faith of many of God's men and women. They are great, not because of some talent or intellectual appeal, but because they believed God. They walked by faith!

Are there people today who live by faith? Yes, there are thousands of Christians who are truly living by faith. There are men and women who are not looking to an employer, but to the Lord for their supply. There are

pastors who are looking not to a congregation or convention or denomination or board of elders or deacons, but to the Lord for their supply.

Let me stop here for a moment and say a bit more about preachers and who they look to. I'm familiar with pastors who cannot or will not preach the truth of God's Word because of people in their church. They're afraid that if they preach too hard, too honestly, those people will leave the church and take their money with them. How would the church survive with their donations?

Have you ever really thought about who you serve, pastor? Have you ever wondered if maybe God can take care of His Church? You be faithful to what God tells you to preach and you know He will be faithful to provide for His church's needs.

There are too many spineless preachers in America who are afraid of deacons, elders, denominations, conventions or even other pastors. A lack of faith in the Almighty God has shut the mouths of God's preachers all across this land. But, you say, "I just don't want to offend anyone." Listen. If the truth offends, let it offend. Be sure that what's offensive is the truth and not your attitude.

I know preachers who have small fundamental churches who will say:

"We're small out here because we stand for the truth and the truth divides and there is only a remnant who still believe the truth."

In most instances that I've seen that is not the case.

What is true is that the preacher and his people are so dead in their legalism that no one wants to be around them. Some of us preachers get on our hobby horses and ride a 'pet' Scripture and a 'pet' stand while the people in our churches are starving to death. It's no wonder to me that hundreds of thousands of Christians are running off after one religious fad after another. If we as Christian preachers would do ministry God's way and preach the whole counsel of God in a spirit of love, the church would be alive, revived and thriving today. However, because of our own stubbornness and unwillingness to give up doing church 'our way,' the church is fast asleep even to the point of death!

Brothers, we need a revival in the pulpit. God's preachers need to wake up and blow the trumpet. Our people need to hear that "the just shall live by faith." Some of us preachers are so afraid that we allow a convention or denomination or board or committee tell us what and what not to preach.

I know many pastors who preach from a sermon series written by someone else. Some preach sermon series prepared by their denomination a year in advance. Listen, pastor, how do your denominational leaders know what your people need? Especially a year in advance?

I know some pastors who have allowed their people to scare them away from preaching from an open Bible. There are preachers who quote a short verse, then read from Reader's Digest or a newspaper or magazine. They give a nice little sermonette preached for Christianettes, as Del likes to say.

It's time to get down to business. God's didn't inspire the writings of Reader's Digest. He didn't inspire the morning newspaper. But He did inspire the Bible. We need to do what God has called us to do: stand up and preach the Word!

Praise the Lord that there are some who haven't bowed the knee to Baal. There are a few Elijahs left today. There are a few who believe God's Word means what it says and says what it means. There are a few who believe that we should be living by faith in God.

Pastors, I strongly suggest you look deep into your life and see if you are living by faith in God. God will richly bless you for it and it's really the only way we can teach our wives, our children, our friends, our congregation what it means to live by faith.

It's an easy thing to say, but a hard thing to do.

[Thank you for reading these broadcast teaching notes from more than 40 years ago. My prayer is they will be a blessing to you and your ministry.]