

**Walking
With
God
By
Faith!**

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WALKING WITH GOD BY FAITH

Developing a Faith-Lifestyle

Most of us are pretty clear on the truth known as “salvation by Grace through Faith.” But, in the confusion of preaching, teaching, television ministries, and books available today, we may find “lifestyle-faith”—that is, living by faith, facing life’s issues, handling life’s difficulties, celebrating life’s victories—a little harder to define, therefore, harder to apply to our life.

Every once in a while, it is good to go back and review the BASICS of our Christian life! (Certainly football, baseball and basketball players, golfers and bowlers often go back to some sort of summer “boot camp” where they do nothing but review the basics.)

So, let’s spend some time reviewing this VITAL subject—the subject of “walking with God BY FAITH!”

1. WHAT FAITH IS NOT—Faith is NOT simply “believing something.”

“Atheists” believe something! As a matter of fact they are betting the destiny of their eternal soul that there is NO GOD! Atheists and believers start out with the same information. Obviously, however, they go in different directions at some point! Biblical FAITH must come from a reliable source. Truth must be acknowledged and pursued. But, is that how the atheist proceeds? Let’s examine Romans 1:18-32... (and by the way, as we study, let’s see how far down the scale America has slipped...)

Romans, Chapter 1

- a) God’s wrath is *revealed* against a certain group of people... vs. 18 What is it about them that angers God?
- b) They know *about* God... vs. 19,21
- c) But they *suppress* (hold down, hold back) the truth... vs. 18
- d) They have *no excuse*; God has made Himself *known to them!*

- e) While claiming to have “superior wisdom,” they become “fools!” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1)
- f) They “drift off” into “paganism and idolatry!” vs. 23 Images of birds, animals, reptiles, (today it’s rock stars, movie and TV stars.) Inevitably, when people turn away from God, they look everywhere else for love, joy and peace. But these are only found in the Lord!
- g) They exchange the truth for a lie. When you “turn away” from the truth, it really doesn’t matter what you turn to... it’s still a lie. Notice vs. 24: sexual immorality—the degrading of their bodies. There is a dark side to the world, a world of pornography, sexual perversion to the limits of human banality. Those who pursue this lifestyle must do so directly in the face of a Holy and righteous God!
- h) Homosexuality and lesbianism are flaunted. This happens when people have turned their hearts far from God. vs. 26-27
- i) Every kind of wickedness! Evil, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful; they invent ways of doing evil, disobey their parents. Senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless!
- j) They not only defiantly DO evil, they approve of and encourage others to do the same.

This is the downward spiral that has KNOCKED America OFF OF ITS spiritual balance. Whereas our country once taught faithful commitment to marriage, divorce only as a last resort, providing for our children and our family, respectability, honesty, sobriety, faith, hope and charity... it has become a country addicted to garbage. Television programs, soap operas, and movies that have led us away from God’s values to “living together outside of the marriage covenant,” neglected and abandoned children, welfare fraud, do whatever you can get away with, indifference to God, cynicism, “every man for himself,” drunkenness and addictions!

The Bible has this to say:

Do not be deceived: God will not be mocked. Every person will reap what he or she has sown. Galatians 6:7

Then there is the strange variety of “personal philosophies” we have come up with. Rebelling against the values held dear by the previous generations, they have pulled away from ANY guidelines, and are adrift in a sea of confusion!

Some “believe”...

“Everything always works out for the best!” (Does it? Tell that one to the six million Jews killed in Hitler’s day!”)

Some “believe”...

“That God is out to get them and make their life miserable!” But that is not what the Bible says!

The fool “believes” that “there is no God.” (Psalm 14:1)

Many Eastern religions “believe” in reincarnation.

New Age religions “believe” that man is on the brink of a quantum leap to “godhood!”

Carl Sagan “believed,” and taught as fact, that man is simply the latest step in a billion years of random evolution.

Shirley McClain continues to tell people that she “believes” she has been on this earth MANY times.

Indians “believed” that a great hunter comes to get them when they die.

Early HAWAIIANS “believed” in the goddess of fire “PELE” and many other gods.

This person “believes” this; another person firmly “believes” something quite the opposite. Many people are absolutely convinced of this or that; they would stake their life on it!

Let's nail down two important thoughts before we move on, *since nearly everyone of the "beliefs" I have just quoted CONTRADICT SEVERAL OF THE OTHERS.*

First, JUST BECAUSE A PERSON "BELIEVES" SOMETHING DOES NOT MEAN THAT WHAT HE OR SHE BELIEVES IS TRUE!

and...

Second, TRUTH IS TRUTH WHETHER ANYONE HAPPENS TO BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

So, faith is NOT simply "believing something!"

2. Faith is NOT "believing something so hard that it COMES true!"

Today there is a lot of talk about "visualizing your goals," "imagining who or what you want to be," etc... This is called among skeptics "magical thinking!" It is the way that many people avoid facing the reality of their life NOW, by fantasizing a "glorious future." There is certainly nothing wrong with GOALS AND DREAMS, but, if overdone, *ongoing* fantasies leave us with the feeling that we are "nothing" today, where we are, what we are doing, and we miss the joy the Lord has for us today!

"The way some people define faith, it sounds as if all we have to do is 'imagine' what we want, 'believe hard' and it becomes reality. Thus WE define truth and reality. We are God."

Jennifer Kennedy Dean

Related words often used to describe this approach to faith: "Bullheadedness," determination, stubbornness, persistence, "storming the gates of heaven" and "bending the will of God to accomplish my purpose." But, have you thought about this:

If something is not already God's will, we have no business wanting it. And if it IS God's will, God does not have to be convinced, argued or nagged into activating that will on earth!

3. Faith is not “bargaining with God” for what best fits our plans and needs!

Bargaining says...

“If God will do as I ask, I will do something for Him.”

“I will do what God asks first and ‘trust Him’ to do what I want,” often referred to as “foxhole” religion.

4. Faith is NOT being forced by God to give in to His power.

People have these kinds of experiences, but they relate more to their rebellion more than their faith!

On the other hand,

Faith is not passive acceptance of life as it comes.

Often professing Christians will say: “Well, I believe that everything that happens WAS MEANT to be.” Que sera, sera... But this is not faith! It is resignation to fate; fatalism, stoicism, toxic thinking.

5. Faith is not something we must “stir-up” when we get in trouble or—for whatever reason—need God’s help!

Too often we live by need-driven faith, rather than *living by faith, walking by faith*, celebrating each day of life in a personal relationship with the Lord, living for the glory of God *everyday!* The sad result of this is, of course, that there is no sense of relationship and fellowship with the Lord. Hence, when we do come to God in our time of need, the evil one is right there to remind us that “we have not been concerned with God up to now, so why should He answer now?”

So, Biblical Faith is NOT...

1. Simply believing something...
2. Believing something “so hard it comes true.”
3. Bargaining with God to get what we want.
4. Arm wrestling God, being forced to give in.
5. Passive acceptance of life...
6. Trying to stir up our emotions...

Having “disqualified” all of the “pretenders,” we can now move into a full study of Biblical faith.

BIBLICAL FAITH IN DAILY LIFE...

1. Biblical faith is rooted in God’s WILL as revealed in God’s WORD!

Your Word is a *lamp* to my feet, a *light* unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Be ye *doers* of the Word and *not hearers only*, deceiving yourself!
(James 1:29)

Faith is “a life-changing, character-altering submission to God’s Word! It is a trust in, application of, appropriation of, and obedience to God’s Word—His warnings against sin and rebellion, His invitation to New Life, His promises to those who believe, and the directional modifications to our behavior that we discover as we go through life.”

Faith is not merely acknowledging that God’s Word is truth; nor is it simply expressing its truths with our mouth. Faith expresses itself in obedience!

What good does it do to say that you have faith if what you believe makes no difference in your life?

Biblical Faith is—in its purest form—COMPLETE TRUST IN, APPLICATION OF, AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WILL AS REVEALED IN HIS WORD, THE BIBLE. 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:9, 11, 24, 32, 67, 71, 105, 115, etc...

People today have an amazing number of things in which they express “faith”:

- ✓ Their parents, someone that they dearly love; their ancestors; ones who have died and who they now believe are in Heaven guiding them (!) “I just go to his or her grave and talk to them and he or she ‘guides’ me.” But the living

cannot communicate with the dead! But there is a LIVING GOD, WHOSE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES US EVERYDAY OF OUR LIFE, with a perfect, impartial and unbiased guidance GREATER than anything man can give or satan can impersonate! John 16:13

- ✓ Their teacher or college professor—who claims to be a “superior intellect”—who boldly teaches that “faith in a god” is an archaic and outdated remnant of a superstitious past age.
- ✓ Some just put their faith in themselves! “I’ve got the stuff! I’ve got a brain. This is how I have it figured out!”
- ✓ Political systems
- ✓ Religious systems, preachers, denominations... The pope, some religious hero...
- ✓ Good works. (Read Matt 7:21-23 for an eye-opener here!)
- ✓ Cults and leaders
- ✓ Money, the stock market
- ✓ Military strength
- ✓ Evolution, science: “If I can see it under a microscope...”
- ✓ Psychics, the latest astrological forecast, etc...
- ✓ Feelings, intuition, a “spirit-guide.”
- ✓ The guidance of angels...

And much more...

This is not what we are talking about when we speak of Biblical faith! **FAITH BELIEVES GOD’S WORD!** Remember, any promise is only as reliable as the one making the promise! Only God’s promises can be fully trusted; only God’s promises are PURE TRUTH with no mixture of error or “hidden agenda!”

Faith is the firm assurance and conviction that God WILL DO—indeed, IS DOING—exactly what He has promised to do! Faith is the conviction that God knows what is going on even when we do not!

F. B. Meyer states it this way: “Faith is being as sure of what God has promised as we would be if we **ALREADY SAW IT BEFORE OUR EYES.**”

“FAITH DOES NOT INVENT REALITY OR DESIGN REALITY. FAITH SIMPLY BELIEVES AND TRUSTS WHAT GOD’S WORD HAS SAID IS TRUE.”

FAITH is a lifestyle, a world-philosophy, a trajectory, a chosen mind-set THROUGH WHICH we filter all of the experiences of our life. FAITH is an implicit and growing trust in God’s WORD, God’s WAYS, God’s MOTIVES, God’s TIMING, and God’s REASONING.

That is not to say that faith does not question, wonder and search. Faith does all of this and more! “Faith” that does not do these things may only be, in reality, “fantasy-thinking.”

Faith may use logic, knowledge, circumstances, insights from others, counseling, truths from books read or sermons studied, but FAITH’S ULTIMATE GOAL is not simply to make good sense out of our surroundings, or to make so-called “good” decisions... FAITH HAS ONLY ONE GOAL: TO DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER, whatever that is, and wherever it leads.

Faith views all of life from the perspective of the Word of God. Where, and to the degree that our life does *not* measure up to its standards, “deeper life and victory over sin” become the goals of our life. We search out the promises and exhortations of the Bible. God’s promises have not grown weak in the last days! Our Lord Jesus—as the scripture says—“the same yesterday, today and forever!”

What good is it to “have” the promises of God if we do not claim them? Why bother to read the Word and learn His promises if they do not apply to me? What good does it do to say “I BELIEVE” if what I believe makes no difference in my life?

2. Biblical faith grows out of the following truths:

- a) THERE IS ONE—AND ONLY ONE—TRUE, LIVING, ETERNAL, PERSONAL, CREATOR GOD. Isaiah 43:10

- b) THERE IS ONE—AND ONLY ONE—TRUE AND LIVING WAY TO THE FATHER: THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR! John 14:6
- c) THERE IS ONE—AND ONLY ONE—SOURCE OF REVELATION FROM GOD TO MAN: THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD! HE COMMUNICATES THE WORD OF GOD AND THE WILL OF GOD TO MANKIND.
John 16:13-14; Romans 8:14
- d) THOUGH THERE IS ONLY ONE *SOURCE* OF GOD’S REVELATION, THE *METHODS OF COMMUNICATING* THAT REVELATION ARE NUMEROUS:
- ✓ The Bible 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
 - ✓ Preachers, Teachers, Evangelists, Christian Counselors, Christian Books, Pamphlets, Tracts, Magazines, Articles,
 - ✓ TV, radio, e-mail, the internet, films
 - ✓ EVERY PERSONAL WITNESS~

Where and to the degree that these accurately communicate God’s Word, they speak with the power and authority of God behind the words. (It must also be noted, however, that when spiritual power is present in religions or meetings that do not exalt our Lord Jesus Christ as mankind’s only hope, they must be considered to be *satanically energized*.)

***An “affirmative” response to the will of
God is called faith-motivated obedience.***

- e) PEOPLE WHO OPEN THEIR MIND AND HEART TO GOD THROUGH FAITH IN THE ONCE AND FOR ALL SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD, (AND SUBSEQUENT RESURRECTION) ENTER INTO A NEW AND UNIQUE FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AWESOME CREATOR-GOD; FURTHERMORE, THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKES UP RESIDENCE IN THE HEART (INNERMOST BEING) OF EVERY CHRISTIAN, AND THE HUMAN “SPIRIT,” ONCE DEAD IN SIN, IS MADE ALIVE AND

RECEPTIVE TO THE GUIDANCE OF GOD! (cf: not true of the unbeliever. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

- f) THE CHRISTIAN CAN NOW—FOR THE FIRST TIME —“UNDERSTAND” THE WILL OF GOD, AND—IN THE POWER OF GOD, HE OR SHE CAN PERFORM WHAT THE BIBLE CALLS “GOOD WORKS.”
- g) RESPONSE TO THE GUIDANCE OF GOD IS NOT ALWAYS POSITIVE AT FIRST. CHRISTIANS POSSESS, AT LEAST TO A DEGREE RENDERING THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHOICES, A “FREE WILL.”

A “negative” response is not called “un-faith, or unbelief;” it is called self-centered/motivated rebellion, and carries with it a growing array of resulting consequences.

3. Faith in our Daily Life:

In the early days of our spiritual growth, we have ONLY the Word of God on the issues of life (that’s enough); only God’s promises, warnings, exhortations, but no “history” of walking with God to draw from. Later, as we grow, we can look back in amazement and honestly say: “God has done wonderful and mighty deeds. Since He has always honored His Word, I can trust Him to meet this need I have now.” In our later stages of maturity, we can even go further: “He has always honored His Word in the past; He is meeting my needs today; I can trust Him for all my future needs. I can trust His promises, guidance, and provision also!

HOW FAITH OPERATES...

When guided by the Holy Spirit, faith functions in somewhat predictable ways.

- ✓ **REVELATION...** As we live openly and submissively before God, He begins to reveal a NEED in our life... a sin over which we need ongoing victory... a habit... a practice... a way of thinking, speaking, handling stress...
- ✓ **OBSERVATION...** Along with the revelation from God, we begin to observe the same truth in daily life...

- ✓ **CONVICTION...** I realize that God is convicting ME about this matter.
- ✓ **OBEDIENCE, APPLICATION...** Once we know His will, we seek to find His forgiveness, meet the conditions stated for change to take place, appropriate the promises and the power of God. We confess any future lapses into our old ways as sin, we resume living in God's truth and avoid living by feelings or our irresponsible emotions.

WE STAND FIRMLY ON THE WORD OF GOD! We do so even when it seems that "nothing is going as we think it should." WE TRUST AND WE OBEY!

FOR EXAMPLE: We become convicted about our use of language... cursing, slangy vulgarities, suggestive, off-color remarks, criticizing, fault-finding, insults, verbal abuse, gossip, slander, demeaning another, mockery, lying, bearing false witness...

SO... we begin to seek God's counsel on the matter... OR... AS WE ARE READING THE WORD, we become convicted of our wrong use of the tongue. It could happen either way!

For example: Ephesians 4:15, 25, 29, & 31

YOU *CONFESS* YOUR SIN BY NAME to the Lord (now and whenever you slip)

Confession: 1 John 1:9 Promise: 1 Cor 10:13; Phil 4:13

YOU PERSIST IN THIS PROCESS, always taking God's side against the sin, and never making excuses! Galatians 6:9

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I AM TEMPTED TO...

CURSE... God will give me better words...

USE VULGAR HUMOR... He will enable your humor to choose the "higher road."

CRITICIZE... SLANDER ANOTHER... He will help me to “speak only those things that build the other person up.”

LIE... God will empower me to “speak the truth in love.”

Here is even a “more basic” example: MY SALVATION:

1. RECOGNIZE THE NEED: “I am lost, separated from God.”

2. SEEK THE WORD OF THE LORD: “I need to find some way to get back to God!”

3. FIND GOD’S COUNSEL: “The plan of Salvation.”

4. MEET GOD’S CONDITIONS: Repent, believe, confess, receive Jesus as Savior and Lord!

5. CLAIM GOD’S PROMISES! John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13

6. REFER BACK OFTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD.

Trust His Word, not your feelings.

7. STAND FIRMLY ON THE PROMISES OF GOD!

Ephesians 6:10-18

PRAYER VERBALIZES OUR FAITH!

“God’s promises come from the SPIRITUAL END of the continuum—HEAVEN—to the MATERIAL END of the continuum—EARTH—as we exercise our faith.”

Jennifer Kennedy Dean

PRAYER, IN ITS PUREST FORM, *IS “SPOKEN FAITH,”* “CONFESSED FAITH.” JESUS said that “the mouth SPEAKS what first resides in our heart (innermost being. Matthew 12:34) Prayer verbalizes our faith. Prayer “speaks faith” into any/all situations. WHAT WE BELIEVE IN OUR HEART, WE CONFESS WITH OUR MOUTH!

When there is unity between the prayer of the believer and the WILL OF GOD as revealed in the WORD OF GOD, prayer becomes the act of, as Jennifer Kennedy Dean puts it, “bringing the already established will of God (in Heaven) to the earth!”

A GREAT (AND NOT ORIGINAL) ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH:

Supposing someone died and, in their will, they left you \$10,000,000.00! The check arrives in the mail. You open, hold it, feel it... but are you actually at that moment, a millionaire? Answer: NO you simply have an impressive, but un-cashed check for \$10 million. You only become a millionaire after the money is transferred from the other person's account INTO YOUR account!

Do you actually begin to live, at and think like a millionaire the moment that the money is in your account? Not really. The money is yours, but WITHDRAWALS must be made. You must appropriate it. We have all heard stories of people who lived in poverty, but when they died, hundreds of thousands of dollars was found "sowed up in their mattress." Believe it or not, many of God's people—RICH AND BLESSED IN CHRIST—live in SPIRITUAL POVERTY even today!

LOOK WHAT YOUR FATHER PLACED IN YOUR SPIRITUAL BANK ACCOUNT IN CHRIST:

**Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 1:3, 2:6; 2 Peter 1:3-4;
1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9; 2:2; Romans 8:28, 31, 35-39**

