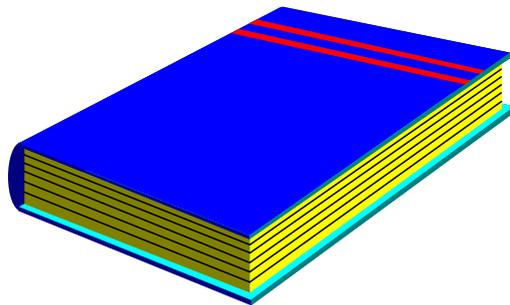


# THEWORD

## BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS



## FIRM FOUNDATIONS COURSE

### PARTSIX

### FAITH IN GOD

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”  
(Hebrews 11:1)

“The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17)

## The object of this study is

### **TO DISCOVER AND PROVE:-**

That God's purpose is that His disciples should walk and live in confidence and trust in His Word.

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On completion of this study you will have:-

- Studied the nature of Faith.
  - Learned about Faith and Sight
  - Learned to take hold of God's promises.
  - Confidence and security in your salvation.
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### **NOTES**

There are four practical aspects to these courses; exercises, Bible reading, learning and questions. The following notes are for your guidance:-

- 1. Exercises** are to be written in your own words and returned to the Course Administrator through whom this course was given to you or returned to the address below.
- 2. Bible reading** is to be done at the point of the course where you are asked to read. Do not just read the passage but meditate upon it before continuing.
- 3. Learning.** These are usually short passages of the Bible for you to learn so that you are able to speak them without reference to the Bible.
- 4. Questions** are listed at the end of each study and are to be answered when you are satisfied that you have completed the study. Your answers can be sent back to your Course Administrator or e-mailed or posted to the address below.

Once you have completed the work you can e-mail it to [stangain@btinternet.com](mailto:stangain@btinternet.com) for assessment. On successful completion of the whole course a certificate will be sent to you.

If you were given this course by your Course Administrator then return your work only to him. If this course came to you direct from London then please post your work to:-

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## **The Nature of Faith**

There are many different meanings and interpretations of the word Faith but in this study it is intended to discover what the Bible means when it talks about Faith. Biblical Faith always originates in the Bible, the Word of God and is always directly related to the Word of God.

**Learn** the following Biblical definition of Faith found in Hebrews 11:1 :-

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”**

Many people confuse hope and faith. They know what they “hope” will happen but have no firm acceptance that what they are hoping for will come to pass:-

**HOPE says:**

“I do not want rain tomorrow”  
“I am praying that he will recover”  
“If it is God’s will....”

**FAITH says:**

“It will not rain tomorrow”  
“He will recover”  
“God’s Word says.....”

The following three definitions bring out something of this difference:-

- a) Hope is directed towards the future - Faith is settled in the present.
- b) Hope is an attitude of expectancy about things that are still in the future - Faith is a confidence; something certain within us that we already possess here and now.
- c) Hope is mainly in the area of the **mind** - Faith is in the area of the **heart**.

**Learn** I Thessalonians 5:8 :-

“But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.”

Note the four words that are underlined above: faith and breast; hope and helmet. The biblical picture here is that faith is a breastplate, which covers the area of the heart and hope is a helmet which covers the area of the mind.

Romans 10:10 says that it is with your heart that you believe and are justified (saved). Many make a profession of faith in Christ with their minds only. It is a mere intellectual acceptance of facts and doctrines. This is not Biblical faith and does not bring any change in the life of him who professes it. (Just as a lack of repentance does not bring salvation. See Part 4 -Repentance).

Heart faith, or Biblical faith, brings about a change of circumstances. It is possible to believe with the mind, but it does not bear the fruit that believing in the heart brings. Heart belief is an active belief that brings about a change in the present time.

For example, in John 6:47 Jesus said “He who believes in me has everlasting life.” Jesus did not say he who believes will one day have eternal life - he has it now in the present time.

**Hope** in this promise brings an uncertainty to the believer about their salvation.

**Faith** in this promise gives an assurance that you cannot lose your salvation.

Because of faith today there is a quiet confidence about the future that will stand the test of death. Hope built on anything else will end in failure and disappointment.

**Exercise 1.** Hebrews chapter 11 gives many fine examples of Old Testament characters of Faith. Read this chapter and then select three of the characters mentioned and write about how each exercised the above principles of Faith to receive from God by Faith those things that were hoped for.

### **Walk by Faith and not by Sight**

This verse, often quoted as a way of Christian living, is not always fully understood. It is found in 1 Corinthians 5:7. We have seen that Biblical faith must be based on God’s Word. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is the evidence of things not seen. Therefore faith is not based on the evidence of our senses - what we see or hear etc. but on what God has said.

**Sight** says “There is no hope for your child; he will die”

**Faith** says “ “I am the resurrection and the life” He will live”

**Sight** says “I have no money - my business will fail”

**Faith** says “My God will supply all my needs - my business will succeed”

**Sight** says “There is no hope”

**Faith** says “God has promised; there is hope”

The Bible shows two conditions that we can find in our minds - carnal or spiritual. If we are carnally minded (worldly in our thinking) we can only accept what our senses reveal. If we are spiritually minded then we accept that God’s truth is more powerful than those things that our senses reveal.

**Learn** the following definition:-

**Sight** says “I’ll believe it when I see it” but **faith** says “I’ll see it when I believe it”

If Biblical Faith is faith based on the Bible then let us take time to see from the Bible examples of how this faith works:-

We will start by combining two verses which confirm the same truth:-

Matthew 8:17 “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses”

1 Peter 2:24 “By whose stripes you were healed”

Our senses and our bodies and the evidence of our eyes may tell us that we are sick but the Bible tells us that by the stripes of Jesus we have been healed. This gives us two choices.

(i) We can accept the testimony of our senses and the condition of physical sickness and become a slave of our carnal mind.

Or (ii) We can hold firmly to the testimony of God’s Word that we are healed.

If we accept the second choice with persistent active faith then the testimony of our senses will be brought into line with the testimony of God’s Word. This is the difference between the carnal and the spiritual mind.

**Exercise 2.** Read the story of the raising of Lazarus in John chapter 11. This is an occasion where Jesus was looking for faith. Jesus said “If you believe”, but there is evidence in the story that some believed and some doubted. From your study of the passage write out examples of those that believed and those that doubted. What words show this belief or doubt?

### **The Example of Abraham**

Abraham is known as the “father of our faith” and it is reasonable to believe that we can learn something about faith from him.

### **Study** Romans Chapters 3 and 4.

A close study of Romans 4:16-22 will assist us in this study.

“Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring - not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed - the God who gives life to the dead and who calls things that are not as though they were.

“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. This is why it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Let us take four lessons from Abraham:-

1) **Verse 17 tells us that Abraham's faith was directed towards God.** The fact that God calls things that are not as if they exist means this: as soon as God has declared a thing to be true, faith reckons it to be true, even though no evidence of the truth is experienced by our physical senses.

2) **Verse 18 tells us that against all hope, Abraham in hope believed.** This tells us that Abraham had hope AND faith. If he had only hoped, his faith would have been in vain. However, he combined faith - he believed the Word of God. He had hope concerning the future based on his present faith in God's Word and his faith saw things that are not come to exist.

3) **Verse 19 tells us that Abraham did not accept the testimony of his senses.** He faced the fact that his body and Sarah's womb were as good as dead WITHOUT WEAKENING. What he saw did not match up with what God had said but he accepted what God had said over and above what he saw with his eyes.

4) **Verses 20 and 21 tell us the object upon which his faith was based.** He knew his God and was confident that God is faithful and can do those things that He says He can do. "Nothing is impossible to Him" Therefore the focus of his faith was God and not what he saw. It was credited to him as righteousness and he therefore received that for which he believed.

God's Word is true and a firm basis for our faith. Pontius Pilate asked "What is truth?" Truth was standing before his eyes - Jesus, the Word; Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. The basis for our faith.

There is a difference between faith and the doctrine of positive thinking. There is a difference between faith and the doctrine that suggests that "What you say is what you get". Faith is based on God's Word - these other doctrines are based on man's will, mind, power or reason. These things will let you down and if confused with faith will confuse and weaken Biblical Faith.

Anything that is man centred and not based on God's Word is arrogance. There is no need to "name it and claim it." If God has promised - we receive. We do not "claim" any of God's promises. It is only necessary to believe and to receive. We do not need to take anything from God who gives freely.

**Faith receives!**

**Arrogance takes!**

**Exercise 3.** Many times when Jesus was talking to people who received from Him those things for which they believed, He made a statement that told them that it was their faith that had enabled them to receive. In Part 2 of this Course you read the Gospel of Matthew. Now read the whole Gospel of Luke. Write down the references in this Gospel where it is recorded that Jesus said that it was Faith or belief that had made it possible to receive a miracle or healing

## **Faith is Expressed by Speaking**

### **Learn:-**

“For with the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.” (Romans 10:10)

This is the next step in our understanding of faith. There is a strong connection between “faith in the heart” and “confession with the mouth”. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 that it is “out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.” If we are walking by the Spirit we will be speaking by the Spirit. If we are walking by the world or the flesh then our speech will be fleshly or carnal.

What is in our hearts comes out of our mouths. If our hearts are full of criticism then our speech will be full of criticism; if full of faith we will speak faith. This is why we should watch our words. If our speech is not reflecting the life of God we need to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith.

**(FOR YOUR OWN REFLECTION AND NOT FOR SUBMISSION TO YOUR COURSE ADMINISTRATOR) It is out of the overflow of our hearts that we speak. Our words have power to build or destroy. We all speak many words. What words have you spoken to others that have not built them up? Do you need to repent of these words? Do you need to ask forgiveness from God for these words? Do you need to ask forgiveness from those you have hurt?**

A faith that is held back in silence is incomplete and will not bring forth the full blessing for which we hope. Paul speaking in this context in 2 Corinthians 4:13 “We believe and therefore speak.” If we have faith then we must speak our faith that it may be effective and bring glory to God.

We have already seen that faith is a confidence in those things that we do not see. If I have confidence I live and act and speak with confidence in the area of my confidence. If God gives faith that a deaf and dumb man is to receive healing then confidence comes with that faith. This confidence is given that it may bring glory to God. If, then I do not declare that God is to restore the man, then when it happens there will be no glory given to God. How will a non-believer know that God has done it?

However, if the non-believer, walking by sight sees the deaf and dumb man and is told that “God will heal him”, then when that happens the non-believer will know that it was God that healed.

**Exercise 4.** We have already studied in Exercise 2, the story of the raising of Lazarus (John 11). The principle of speaking out in faith what is already an established fact in His heart is illustrated in this story. From your study of this passage, write out the passages that are spoken by Jesus “in faith” that Lazarus would not die but would live.

## **Without Faith it is Impossible to Please God**

Hebrews 11:6 gives a very important statement that it is well to **Learn:-**

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

It is not something that we have a choice about. We must have faith. However, this is something that we grow into. Everyone that is saved has already exercised faith to become Born Again, but we must continue in faith and grow in it. In fact the best way of putting it is as in Habakkuk 2:4:-

**“The righteous shall live by his faith.”**

So important is this scripture that it is repeated three times in the New Testament, Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. This short scripture provides a basic biblical authority for the gospel message that has changed the world.

The Roman Empire was brought to its knees by this revelation. This short sentence enabled Martin Luther to break the power of the Pope of Rome and change the course of history throughout Europe and eventually the whole world.

Today this statement when applied by heart faith contains the power to turn a life upside down and to change the direction of nations!

In the context of this statement the word “**live**” covers every area of human activity. It covers every experience and every aspect of personality - spiritual, emotional, mental and physical. It includes all of our life - waking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, eating, working.....!! The righteous live by faith in all areas of their life all of the time! The Bible is very clear in this too in the following verse which you should also

## **Learn:-**

“Whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23)

This is a hard teaching. It means that everything that we do that is not based on true Biblical Faith is reckoned by God as sin. (Not that this should condemn us since all of our sin has been covered by the grace of God in Jesus Christ as we learned in Part 5 - Law & Grace). This also applies to our so-called religious acts:- attendance at church; the saying of prayers; singing hymns and songs; deeds and gifts of charity..... If these acts are not preceded by true repentance and motivated by active faith they are “dead works”.

We have so far looked at the nature of faith and at many Biblical examples of men of faith and how we must talk and live by faith as we grow in our life in the strength of

the Holy Spirit but we must also understand how we take hold of faith to see it take effect in our lives and experience.

### **Taking Hold of God's Promises**

Faith is a confidence. But a confidence in what or who? There are two things upon which we can take a very firm stand without wavering if we are looking for a firm foundation for Biblical Faith.

- 1) We can stand firm on God's Word.
- 2) We can stand firm on the Character of God.

Faith is based on definite facts. In its widest sense faith is based on the whole Bible. However in a narrow sense we can take any single promise of God from the Bible and be sure that it is a firm basis for our faith.

**Learn:** Hebrews 10:17:-

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Although this scripture is often used as a basis for preaching the Gospel for new Christians it has a much wider purpose. For the Christian there is nothing in the Bible that is outside the possibility of faith.

In 2 Corinthians 1:20 we are told that "All the promises IN HIM are Yes, and IN HIM Amen to the glory of God **through us!**"

Notice the last two words in this verse "THROUGH US"! In other words, God's promises are not active unless they are channelled through a member of His Body - the Church: you and me. Without you and me none of the promises could become active. They require our co-operation. They require our involvement. Only through you and me standing firm on God's promises can God's promises become active in this world.

If healing is needed - God needs a person IN HIM to say "Yes" !

If a miracle is needed - God needs a person IN HIM through whom to say "Amen"!

If provision of needs is wanted - then God will supply the needs out of His glorious riches in Jesus Christ.

Faith does not operate in a vacuum - in an empty space. It needs a channel -you and me!

Whenever a need arises of any kind there are three steps that a Christian should take:-

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the promise or promises in the Bible that apply to the situation to meet the need.
2. Fulfil in his life any condition which may apply to that promise.

3. Firmly apply faith to the promise AND SPEAK the “Amen” to the promise or promises.

**Exercise 5.** There is a promise of God that can be applied to every situation in the life of a believer. God has promised that He will provide all our needs! Below is a list of various circumstances in which a promise from the Bible may be needed. If you were in the position of need, on which promises would you stand in these circumstances? (You can choose more than 1 promise in each circumstance).

- a) Sickness    b) Unemployment    c) Depression    d) Confusion    e) Doubt  
f) Childlessness    g) Blindness    h) Salvation for an unsaved relative    j) Forgiveness  
k) Poverty    l) Demonisation

The purpose of the above exercise is to help you to fulfil the first part of the three steps above towards seeing the Yes and Amen to His promises. The second step shows that there is a need to follow any conditions that may attach to the promise which will help to release the promise. The following Biblical examples will help in our understanding of this:-

**Example 1.** Psalm 37:4

Promise: He will give you the desire of your heart  
Condition: Delight yourself in the Lord

**Example 2.** James 5:14-15

Promise: The Lord will raise up the sick  
Condition: Call the elders of the church who will pray and anoint with oil in the Name of the Lord

**Example 3.** Proverbs 3; 5-6

Promise: He will direct your paths  
Condition: Trust in the Lord with all your heart - lean not on your own understanding

**Exercise 6.** From your own knowledge and search of the Bible select ten promises that have a condition attached to them as in the above three examples.

Finally the third step for faith in action is to apply faith and speak out what God will do. Live and act as if God has already done what he has promised to do. Abraham did not waver in his faith. Will you?

We have established in Part 2 - The Authority of the Bible, that we can accept the Word of God as a sure foundation. Anything that is unmoved and unshakeable gives us a reason for an unshakeable faith.

The Bible, and the promises contained therein, are one sure foundation but even more certain is the character of the God who has written the Bible and backs the promises.

It would be easy for me to say to you, "I promise that I will make you to be the next leader of your country and give you 500 million dollars and any other thing that your heart desires" It is an easy thing to say. However, anyone who knows me also knows that I am not able to fulfil the promise. I neither have the authority to make you a leader nor the money in the bank to give you!

You would be foolish to put your trust in a man that made such promises to you!!

However, the God of the Bible, our God - the Living God - has made many, many promises to you and to me. He has for example promised that all that believe in Jesus will not perish; He has promised that He is the Lord that heals; He has promised to supply all our needs. The good news is that He is able to fulfil His promises. He has the authority and power and resources and will and love and mercy and justice and holiness and knowledge and strength and ability and joy to do what He says. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is faithful and He will do it.

You would be wise to put your trust in a God that made such promises to you!!

**“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17)**

In conclusion, it says in Isaiah 7 verse 9 “If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.”

One translator puts it in this way:-

**If you do not stand firm in your faith , you will not stand at all.!!**

Therefore stand firm and unmoved in your most holy faith.

## Questions - Part 6

1. Hebrews 11:1:- “Now Faith is .....
2. What is the difference between “hope” and “Faith”?
3. What is it that changes circumstances - hope or Faith?
4. Who is the “father of our faith” and why was he given such a name?
5. Where in the Bible is the verse “Walk by Faith and not by sight”?
6. Why is it necessary to be spiritually minded? Why does a carnal or worldly mind become an obstacle to faith?
7. In the story of the raising of Lazarus, which is the statement of faith that you think is the most powerful and which statement of doubt is the most faithless?
8. Which four lessons about faith can we learn from the story of Abraham?
9. Which of the following statements is faith and which is from the will of man:-
  - a) Name it and claim it
  - b) Believe it and receive it
10. “Without faith it is.....”
11. In which three places in the New testament are the words “ The righteous shall live by his faith” found?
12. On which two unshakeable things are we able to anchor our faith?
13. Faith does not operate in an empty space. What is need to enable faith to be applied to a promise of God?
14. Which three steps should you take in faith when a need arises?
15. Often people do not receive what the Bible promises because they do not follow the conditions for that promise. What are the conditions that God asks to be fulfilled in James 5:14-15?

**Remember:** When you return the answers to these questions please return the answers to the 4 Exercises that are included in this study.

Write your name here.....