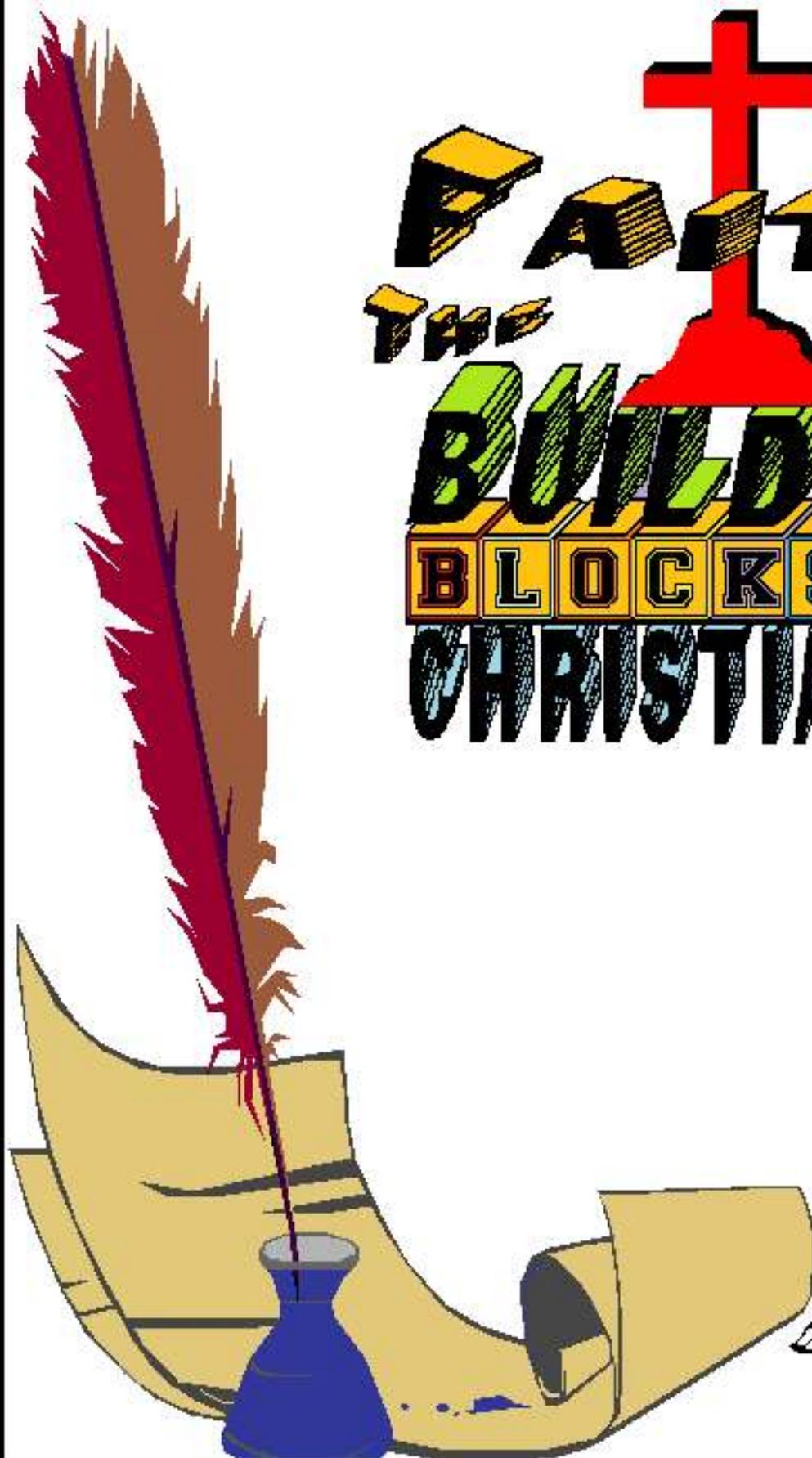
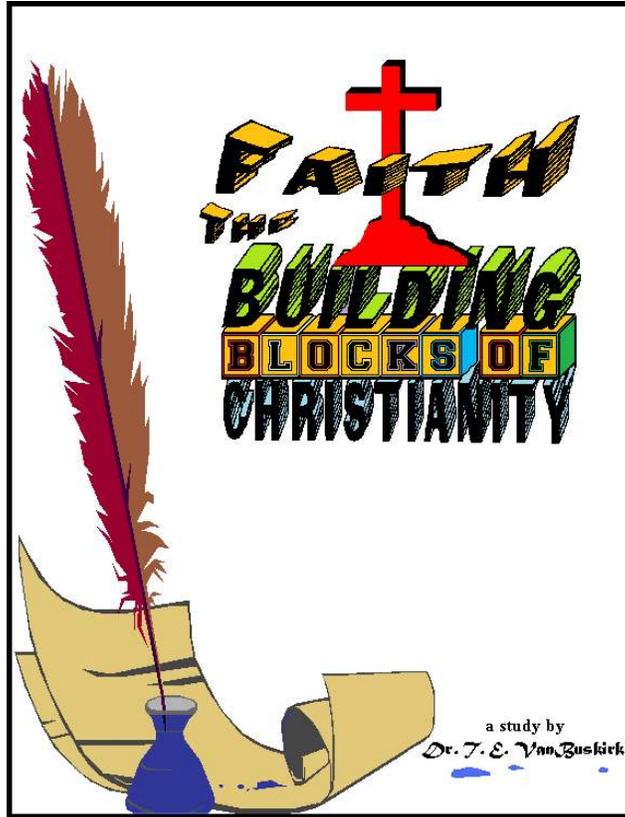




A PATH
THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS OF
CHRISTIANITY



a study by
Dr. J. E. VanBuskirk



a study by
Dr. T.E.VanBuskirk

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(A companion workbook for this study is available.)

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Please send a small love offering if possible. Dr. V&B

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Introduction

The purpose for which this book was written was as a textbook/workbook for a class on Faith at Salt Lake Baptist College and for a Wednesday night study on Faith at Bible Baptist Church, Ogden, UT, of which I was the pastor from 1997 on.

As I prepared for the class it immediately struck me that no one can teach faith, only God can do that. The best that any of us can do is to teach ON faith. From the Scriptures we can learn together what God has to say about faith. Through study of God's Word we can learn what faith is, where it comes from, how to use it, how to increase it, and what God expects us to do with it. We will rehash some of the old things that we have been taught about faith; and then we will build upon that and we will discover some new truths about faith. And when I say "new truths" I mean things that have been known to others before us, since there is "no new thing under the sun," (Ecc 1:9); but, many of those things have not been taught to you or I, yet, and so for us they will be "new truths."

We will, at times, simply allow God to "bring... things to [our] remembrance;" (Jn 14:26), but at other times we, in the process of following God's teachings, may foray into what is for us "new" territory and maybe even, at times, slaughter some "sacred cows" of men using the "sharp two-edged sword," the Word of God.

The Faith Chapter of Hebrews

A portion of our study will be in what many call the "Faith chapter" of the book of Hebrews, chapter 11. There are many others that call it "God's Hall of Faith." Either of these is a good description of that chapter. We also will examine all of the other verses and chapters in the Bible that talk about faith.

The Bible Text

The Bible that we will use will be the KJV, as I believe, with overwhelming scriptural, historical, and statistical proofs, that it is the only preserved Word of God for English speaking people. (See inside back cover for ordering info. on "*The Doctrinal Chaos of the Translations*," also by Dr. VanBuskirk.)

Study and Prayer

As we study I ask that you: 1. keep an open mind when we take a slice out of one of those "sacred cows;" 2. judge everything by the one true standard of the Scriptures (KJV); and 3. always accompany this, and any other studies of the Scriptures and or its doctrines, with prayer and supplication for the power and illumination of the Holy Spirit, without which we might easily fall into the kind of trouble that God had Peter warn us about.

II Pet 3:15-16 "And account [that] the

longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Etymology

Statistics

In the Bible, the words, “faith, believe,” and their derivatives are found some 666 times.

Chart 1. (Faith/believe) Word chart

faith	231	belief	1
faithful	78	believe	1
faithfully	8		3
faithfulness			1
	1	believed	111
	9	believers	2
faithless	4	believest	7
unfaithful	1	believeth	39
unfaithfully		believing	8
	1	unbelief	16
	342	unbelievers	4
Total 666			

Two English Words from One Greek Word

Believe

The reason for including “believe” and its derivatives in our study is because, in the New Testament, the same Greek word, “*pi-tho*,” and its derivatives, are nearly as often translated “*believe*” as they are “*faith*.” In fact, when we include all of the various derivatives of the word, “*believe*,” as well as its negatives, the total comes to 324 times. That is only 18 times less than it is translated as “*faith*.” In our study we will see what the difference is between the two words, faith and believe, and why it is necessary that we must retain the translation into both, instead of using only one or the other of the two.

In the New Testament, “believe” is almost exclusively translated from *pi-tho*, “*pis-tyoo-oh*” (from the root “*pi-tho*,”) or its derivatives, the only exceptions being:

Ro 15:31 “not believe,” where the root word is *ap-i-thoun-tone*, which means, *disbelieving/disobedient*.

Ro 3:3 “not believe,” root word “*a-pis-te-a*,” which means, *faithlessness* or a *violation of faith*.

I Cor 10:27; 14:22; II Cor 4:4 “believe not,” root word “*apistone*,” *a-pis-tone*, which means, *an unbeliever, infidel, pagan*.

II Tim 2:13 “believe not,” root word “*apistomen*,” *a-pis-toe-men*, which means, *to prove false, violate ones faith, be unfaithful*.

If, however, you track down the roots of all of these words except the first one, you will find that the root word, once again, is “*pi-tho*” (pi-tho) as it was in all of the other instances of “faith or believe.” In Strong’s Concordance the etymology of these words might not be apparent; but if one goes to a good Analytical Greek Lexicon this fact will become clear.

The first one of the exceptions listed above, *ap-i-thoun-tone*, is from a different Greek base and carries with it somewhat of a connotation of disobedience along with that of disbelief; however, “disobedient” would not be a proper English word to use in the place of the KJV “not believe,” because that would leave out the connotation of disbelief which must be attached to the word in order to carry the correct meaning into the English.

Faith

The word “faith” and its derivatives, in the New Testament, are almost exclusively from one Greek root word, “*pi-tho*” (pi-tho) and its derivatives; usually *pis-tis*, (pis-tis).

faith

{*pis'-tis*} and its derivatives

KJV - faith 239, assurance 1, believe 1, belief 1, them that believe 1, fidelity 1; 244 X’s

1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it

2) fidelity, faithfulness

{*ol-ig-op'-is-tos*} and its derivatives

KJV - of little faith 5;

1) of little faith, trusting too little, one who’s faith is small and weak (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Lk 12:28)

faithful & faithfully (the latter only in III Jn 1:5)

{*pis-tos'*} and its derivatives

KJV - faithful 53, believe 6, believing 2, true 2, faithfully 1, believer 1, sure 1; not translated 1; 67 X’s

1) trusty, faithful

2) easily persuaded

faithless

{*ap'-is-tos*}

KJV - that believe not 6, unbelieving 5, faithless 4, unbeliever 4, infidel 2, thing incredible 1, which believe not 1; 23

1) unfaithful, faithless, (not to be trusted, perfidious)

2) incredible

3) unbelieving, incredulous

faithfulness, unfaithful & unfaithfully (Not found in the New Testament.)

Root word

All of the New Testament words given above come from one root word in the Greek:

pi-tho, a primary verb;

KJV - persuade 22, trust 8, obey 7, have confidence 6, believe 3, be confident 2, misc 7; 55 X's

Primary meanings of the root verb *pi-tho*:

- 1) persuade
- 2) be persuaded
- 3) to trust, have confidence, be confident

Final instance

One final instance of the word, "faith," in the New Testament, is found in Heb 10:23. I put this word last and separate because it is not from the same root word as the others.

{el-pece'} [from a primary {el-po} to anticipate, usually with pleasure]

KJV - hope 53, faith 1; 54 X's

- 1) expectation of evil, fear
- 2) expectation of good, hope
- 3) on hope, in hope, having hope

Heb 10:23 "... Let us hold fast the profession of [our] faith..."

Two English Words from One Hebrew Word

As in the Greek New Testament, the Old Testament words for "believe" and "faith" are closely related.

faith This word and its derivatives can be categorized as follows:

faith, faithful '*emuwn* {ay-moon'} (Str 529, from 539)

KJV - faithful 3, truth 1, faith 1; 5

- 1) faithfulness, trusting
- 1a) faithful, trusty (as adj.)

faith, faithful, faithfully, faithfulness,

'emwnah {em-oo-naw'} or (shortened) *'emunah* {em-oo-naw'}

(Str 530, fr 529) from '*emuwn* {ay-moon'} (See previous entry.)

KJV - faithfulness 18, truth 13, faithfully 5, office 5, faithful 3, faith 1, stability 1, steady 1, truly 1, verily 1; 49

- 1) firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness

faithful '*aman* {aw-man'}, a primitive root (Str 539)

KJV - believe 44, assurance 1, faithful 20, sure 11, established 7, trust 5, verified 3, stedfast 2, continuance 2, father 2, bring up 4, nurse 2, be nursed 1, surely be 1, stand fast 1, fail 1, trusty 1; 108

- 1) to support, confirm, be faithful

faithfulness (1 time, Ps 5:9) *kuwn* {koon} a primitive root; (Str 3559)

KJV - prepare 85, establish 58, ready 17, stablish 5, provide 5, right 5, fixed 4, set 4, direct 3, order 3, fashion 3, variant 2, certain 2, confirmed 2, firm 2, preparation 2, misc 17; 219

1) to be firm, be stable, be established

faithfully, faithful *'emeth* {eh'-meth} (Str 571, contracted from 539)

KJV - truth 92, true 18, truly 7, right 3, faithfully 2, assured 1, assuredly 1, establishment 1, faithful 1, sure 1, verity 1; 127

1) firmness, faithfulness, truth

faithful (1 time, Dan 6:4)

***'aman* (Aramaic) {am-an'} (Str 540, corresponding to 539)**

KJV - believe 1, sure 1, faithful 1; 3

1) to confirm, support

believe

This word and its derivatives can be categorized as follow:

believe, believed, believeth

***'aman* {aw-man'}, a primitive root (Str 539)**

KJV - believe 44, assurance 1, faithful 20, sure 11, established 7, trust 5, verified 3, steadfast 2, continuance 2, father 2, bring up 4, nurse 2, be nursed 1, surely be 1, stand fast 1, fail 1, trusty 1; 108

1) to support, confirm, be faithful

believe (1 time, Dan 6:23)

***'aman* (Aramaic) {am-an'} (Str 540, corresponding to 539)**

KJV - believe 1, sure 1, faithful 1; 3

1) to confirm, support

Summary

From the majority of the instances mentioned of the use of the words, “faith” or “believe” (and their derivatives) and the definitions gleaned from their respective Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic roots, it is obvious that a deep connection exists between the two words.

In the next section we will first examine the different manifestations of “faith” mentioned in the Bible. Then we will examine the difference between “faith,” and “believe.” Lastly, we will see if there is a connection between the manifestations and usage of “faith,” as compared with those for “believe.”

The reason I use the phrase “manifestations of faith,” is because there is only one scriptural faith; but, it manifests itself in many ways.

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

chapter one

Faith, What Is It?

One of the first things we need to find out is, what is faith. Is it believing in things for which there is no ground of assurance or fact? Is it blinding oneself to reality and believing in things that don't exist? Is it denying the rules of nature and believing not in the concrete but in the incorporeal? Is it only possible to have faith by just simply saying, "God is right and scientific facts are wrong?" Does the proportion of our faith depend on how intelligent one is; or how educated or uneducated in the "hard sciences" we happen to be? Is faith not only supposed to be "blind faith," but also "deaf and dumb?" How about this one, "faith is contrary to logic." Or, "You can have faith or facts, but not both." All of these are questions that I have either asked myself before or ones that have been asked or stated in my presence by others. They are questions that have been asked by scientists and philosophers for centuries; or they are ones already answered, supposedly, by statements made by those same personages, some famous and some infamous, down through the years.

I'll make this statement right up front. There is no necessity for, nor does God demand that we have blind faith. Neither does He demand that our faith be deaf and dumb. Our faith is based upon various proofs, internal and external, scriptural as well as logical, and it is something given to us by God, that can grow or be stunted, exercised or suppressed, but it cannot be denied.

KINDS OF MANIFESTATIONS OF FAITH

In this section we will first of all find out how faith manifests itself in the actions and characters of the Scriptures. The word "faith," itself, may or may not be included in the references given; but, because of context or inference, we will see that it was involved. Because of space we will only examine a few representative scriptures.

Saving faith This is probably the first one that comes to mind for most people when faith is mentioned. The following representative references are to Abram (Abraham).

Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Ro 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which [he had] being [yet] uncircumcised.

:13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, [was] not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

4:21 "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

- :22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness .**
:23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

Dead faith This faith is mentioned in the book of James.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Jas 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.

From these verses we learn that the life of the flesh is the spirit; and, likewise, the life of faith is works.

Little faith / Great faith

Mt 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith ?

Mt 8:10 When Jesus heard [it], he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Mt 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great [is] thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Visible faith

Mt 9:2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Strong faith / weak faith

Mt 9:21-22 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Mt 9:28-29 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith

be it unto you.

Mt 14:29-31 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Personal faith

Mt 9:2 ... Jesus seeing their faith

Mt 9:22 ... thy faith hath made thee whole

Mustard seed faith

Mt 17:19-20 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 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.

Faith in God

Mk 11:22-24 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. There-fore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them].

Faith in Christ

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ).

Missing faith

Lk 8:24-25 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Lk 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Increasing faith

Lk 17:5-6 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Failing faith / Weak faith

Lk 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren

Ro 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, [but] not to doubtful disputations.

Full faith

Acts 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost...

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Acts 11:24 For he (Barnabas) was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Channel of faith Faith as the channel by which strength and wholeness are effected.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Healing faith

Acts 14:8-9 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Jas 5:15-16 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

(Also: Mt 9:22; 15:28; Mk 5:34; 10:52; Lk 8:48; 17:19)

Door of faith

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Purifying faith

Acts 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith

Mutual faith

Ro 1:12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Life-giving faith

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Gal 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith . (Also: Ro 1:17; Gal 2:20; Heb 10:38)

Sanctifying faith

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Faith of God

Ro 3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Faith of Jesus Christ

Ro 3:22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Propitiating faith

Ro 3:25 Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Law of faith

Ro 3:27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith

Justifying faith

Ro 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Ro 3:30 Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith (Also: Gal 3:11)

*Fulfilling and establishing faith**Fulfill God's promise*

Ro 4:8-16 Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which [he had] being [yet] uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, [was] not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. Therefore [it is] of faith, that [it might be] by grace;

to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

Establish the Law

Ro 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Substituting faith

Ro 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Cross-nationality faith

Ro 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Voided faith

Ro 4:14 For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

The channel of faith

Ro 10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Ro 10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Edifying faith

I Tim 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do].

Supporting faith

Ro 11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Ro 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

II Cor 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Proportional faith

Ro 12:5-18 So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. [Let] love

be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. [Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. [Be] of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Delineating faith

Ro 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin.

Faith of logic and power

I Cor 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching [was] not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God

Spirit given faith

I Cor 12:8-9 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

The value of faith

I Cor 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.

All faith is of less value than charity

I Cor 13:2 And though I have [the gift of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Vain faith

I Cor 15:14-17 And if Christ be not risen, then [is] our preaching vain, and your faith [is] also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Object oriented faith

Faith in God, various readings: Mk 11:22; I Pet 1:21

Faith in Christ, various wordings: Acts 3:16; 24:24; 26:18; Gal 3:26; Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; I Tim 3:13; II Tim 1:13; 3:15;

Faith in the blood of Christ: Ro 3:25; Heb 11:28 (In type.)

Faith in Christ's name

Acts 3:15-16 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Directional faith

Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ

The faith

Faith is so important that our whole system of worship and practice is not called “religion,” in the Bible, but is called “the faith.”

Steadfastness in the faith

I Cor 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Continuing in the faith

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Established in the faith

Acts 16:4-5 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Obedience to the faith

Ro 1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

The faith in Christ

Acts 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

The Gospel of Christ and cross-national faith

Ro 1:16-17 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.

Spreading the faith / renown faith

Ro 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world

KINDS OF FAITH

According to Ryrie, “The Scriptures seem to distinguish four kinds of faith.”^(6a)
The problem I have with this statement is that the Bible tells us that there is only, “one

faith.” (Eph 4:5) What Ryrie calls four different kinds of faith really needs to be viewed as four kinds of manifestations of faith. That way a reconciliation between our perception and the truth of the scriptures can be effected.

Those kinds, as presented by Ryrie, are as follows:

1. *Intellectual or historical faith.* This he presents as a mere intellectual apprehension of truth.
2. *Miracle faith.* This is faith to perform a miracle.
3. *Temporary faith.* This is similar to intellectual faith but with more of a personal interest.
4. *Saving faith.* This is reliance on the truth of the Gospel as written in the Scriptures.

I prefer to believe that there is only one faith, as the Bible states, but that the circumstances surrounding its manifestations may vary. In one instance it is manifested during a simple recognition of truth or fact, generally in the physical or philosophical realm. In another it manifests itself during a miracle. In other instances it may manifest itself during a serious, but temporary, personal investigation of truth; and in the fourth one mentioned it manifests itself as a channel for the saving of a soul.

In all of these there is but one faith; but the circumstances surrounding its manifestation and the results of its manifestation vary greatly. Even these manifestations of faith can be grouped into two categories:

1. **Natural faith-** which is the faith that is natural to us; and it is exercised toward the physical or spiritual created beings or objects: the creation and any of its constructs, including, but not limited to, physical objects, culture, philosophy, etc. In short, natural faith is faith in the creation.
2. **Spiritual faith-** which is faith in the things of God. Spiritual faith must be understood as faith in the true, eternal, self-existent spirit being, God; and not as faith in those other, created, spirit beings. Our faith can be exercised in the spirit realm toward God and His ability to control the actions of those of His creatures that are also in the spirit realm, but our faith is in Him not them. When we exercise faith in those created spirit beings, then we are exercising “natural” faith; or, to put it another way, faith in the creation rather than faith in the Creator.

Summary- We have to conclude that there is only one kind of faith but that the manifestations of it may vary; and that the objects toward which it is exercised may also vary. That is why we group these manifestations into two categorical types: Natural faith and Spiritual faith. Natural faith is faith toward the creation and Spiritual faith is faith toward the Creator.

NOTE: The apparentness of this observation may, perhaps, more clearly be seen in the extensive, even though non-comprehensive, presentation of the different kinds of manifestations of faith in the Scriptures presented in the previous section.

Dr. VBJ

THE DEFINITION OF FAITH ^(3b)

Theologically we are told that faith is used in the Scriptures in two senses: a general sense; and a particular sense. Although the following are descriptive of faith in relation to Salvation, they are still applicable to faith in general.

General meaning- According to Evans in *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, the general meanings of faith are three.

Knowledge:

Ps 9:10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee...

Ro 10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

That latter scripture tells us that faith is not believing something without evidence; but that it is based on the soundest evidence of all, God's Holy Word. In the beginning of this chapter I asked the rhetorical question, "Is [faith] believing in things for which there is no ground of assurance or fact?" The answer is: "Quite to the contrary." Faith, in this case "spiritual faith," rests upon the eternal Word of God. It is not ephemeral but concrete. Not merely physical, which is destined to perish; but spiritual as well. It is so stable that it will last and has lasted for time and eternity. Its pillars are rooted in the bedrock of the Eternal God and its bedrock is in Heaven and its soaring spires reach to the Earth. As Evans put it, "An act of faith denotes a manifestation of the intelligence." That manifestation of our intelligence is resting our faith upon the Word of God; and what it tells us is unfailingly true. To hear about God enables us to exercise our faith in Him.

Ro 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?
and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

Some think that those who exercise that spiritual faith that rests upon the Word of God are somehow trying to escape reality because of an inability to cope with it. Or, in the words of Madame de Staël, "Have you not observed that faith is generally the strongest in those whose character may be called the weakest?"^(1a) Actually, quite the opposite is true. True character is developed by exercising faith in God which brings belief in what He says. (The ability within us is exercised as an activity within us.) Then that belief generally motivates us to some action either one of commission of good or one of omission of evil. In the words of Paddington, "As has been pointed out (earlier in his book from which this quote is taken), a moral nature is the result of creation, or birth; but moral character is produced only by probation, by the free personal choice of good in the presence of evil and with full power to choose evil." In this case, we had a moral nature which is then transformed into a moral character by our choice to do what is right, have faith in God as He commands.

Mk 11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.
To turn the tables on Madame de Staël, we might say, "Have you not noticed that true character is almost non-existent in those whose faith is the weakest."

And faith in God can come only by first having a knowledge of Him.

Assent:

This is an agreement from the heart that what God says is true.

Mk 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth:

Jn 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:

In Jn 1:12, they received Him (received Him to be who He claimed to be- they had the knowledge, they took Him at face value) they then gave a heart assent to that knowledge and believed on His name and became the sons of God.

Appropriation:

This is a personal appropriation of the things known and assented to. Neither intelligent perception nor assent to knowledge are necessarily spiritual faith. They could easily remain in the realm of natural faith. It is the appropriation of Christ that brings Salvation. Likewise in the other areas of faith, it is the appropriation of God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) as an object of our faith that makes our faith a spiritual one. The appropriation of God as the object of our faith is the one deciding factor that makes the difference.

Particular meaning- According to Evans faith in particular is faith in connection with various things. Such as in connection with: The Name of God; the Person of Christ; Prayer; the Word and Promise of God. He teaches us that in order to connect with God in any one of these four, (and by interpolation we can say that the same holds for any others) we must go through and include the three things listed under the previous section, “*General meaning*,” those being, “knowledge, assent, and appropriation.” For the purposes of our study we can apply this to spiritual faith. When we exercise faith in God and the things of God (the Name of God; the Person of Christ; Prayer; the Word and Promise of God, etc.) then we must have, “knowledge, assent, and appropriation.” To properly exercise spiritual faith we must not only know that God is there and know what He says; but we must give assent to those facts, i.e. we must not doubt Him or His abilities and truthfulness. Then to receive we must believe. That is a personal appropriation of God and His promises. That is exercising our spiritual faith (faith in the Creator not the creation). You might say that faith is the ability and belief is the activity. Belief then would set strongly within the area of appropriation wouldn’t it. I said earlier that faith and belief were inextricably intertwined, now you see why I said that.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

“Faith is fundamental in Christian creed and conduct.”^(3a) It was what brought the Lord’s reward to the sick, blind, dumb, or lame. (Mt 15:22-28; Mt 8:6-13; Mk 10:46-52)

The Bible states that “faith” is one of the foundation blocks of our Christianity (the outworking of our Salvation.)

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Evans stated it quite succinctly, “In faith all the other graces find their source.” Without faith we cannot believe that God is, we cannot please Him, we cannot believe that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him (that He confers blessings, including Salvation); in short, faith is the building blocks of our entire Christian existence. This is true from the laying of the foundation (Salvation in Christ) to the building of the walls to keep out sin (ongoing sanctification of the soul and body) through God’s grace and strength; and, finally; to the aesthetic finishing of our Christianity through the additional blessings of God, above those needed for our strength, which are added for our edification and advancement toward the perfection of Christ.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Two types of faith

Earlier, I said that there is only “one scriptural faith.”

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

The reason I used the word “scriptural,” is because there is another type of faith. Faith itself is an ability; an ability to believe which carries with it the connotation of trust. The only difference between the two types of faith is one of object. Faith, we might say, is an inborn “ability” to trust. We all have that. What I would call “natural” faith is when we have faith in objects (our car, a chair, people, the government) the problem is that those objects, in which we have faith, can fail us. Our car can break down, a chair can give way, people can turn on us, and the government can betray us. (As if I needed to tell you that last one!) The problem is not our faith, we give that (actually in this case we “exercise it” toward some material object); the problem is that the objects of our faith are fallible, changeable, temporal, material. The objects of our faith are all part of the “Creation,” of God which is currently in a fallen and cursed state. Nature is cursed; and man, the cause of the curse, is fallen. Therefore, anything that is part of the creation: beasts, vegetation, inanimate objects, and even including fallen man and his constructs and organizations, is naturally fallible. Our faith in any of these is bound to be violated,

sooner or later. From these observations it is easy to see that it is not our natural faith that is the problem, it is those “objects” of our faith. (I also include all created spiritual beings. Even though they are not part of the physical realm they still are created beings and the devil and his angels proved that they too are fallible.)

The other type of faith I would call “scriptural” faith. This type of faith is no different in essence than “natural” faith. In actuality, the faith is the same, the only difference is the object of that faith. Whereas “natural” faith is faith exercised toward something created (generally the material creation), “scriptural” faith is faith exercised toward God and the things of God. It is not depending on a fallen and fallible creation to reward our exercise of faith toward it, rather it is depending on God to reward our exercise of it toward Him and the things that He tells us are worthy of our faith. Coupled with this, and inextricably bound up with it, is a dependence on, as well as a trusting of Him to see that our faith will be rewarded without fail. Granted, importunity may be necessary in certain askings or seekings by faith, but our “scriptural” faith in God is such that any delay in His responding in such situations is seen as merely a delay for a reason He deems fit, not a failure of God’s ability to respond as is the case, many times, with the objects of our “natural” faith. Likewise, if He refuses to answer that is also, by spiritual faith, to be taken as the best for us.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

To summarize, faith is an ability, existing in every person, that can be exercised toward fallible objects (part of God’s Creation) or toward infallible objects; i.e., toward God and the things and plans of God that He unstoppably and infallibly will bring about. Which to you is more logical and sensible; to have faith, and its inseparable ingredient trust, in a temporal, fallible, and many times impotent created object or entity, or to have faith in the eternal, omnipotent, and infallible God?

The importance of faith

When we consider the importance of faith we, again, have to divide it into “natural” and “spiritual,” and examine it from both of those angles. Remember, when I say “natural” faith, I simply mean faith exercised toward a created object, creature, person, or human construct and/or organization. When I say “scriptural” faith I mean faith toward God and the things of God, including the plans He promises to bring to pass. I do not mean to infer that “natural” faith is necessarily ungodly, although it can be at times, I simply mean that it is faith that is not exercised toward God and His things and plans; i.e., it is not toward the Creator but rather toward the creation.

Natural faith- The importance of natural faith is easy to see if we simply examine a typical day in our own life. Since I am writing this and I know myself much better than I do yourselves, I will use one of my own typical days.

If I should happen to need to rise early, as I did this morning to give one of my sons a ride to work, I would usually set my alarm clock to wake me at the proper time. Normally

I would have faith (natural faith) that the alarm would go off at the proper time. The problem is that my alarm clock has something wrong with it and I have lost my faith in it. I no longer trust it. It failed me, once, in the past and it could possibly fail me in the future. Because of my lack of faith in it, I did not set it. Instead I told my son to come over and wake me up. Because of my lack of faith in the clock I had to make other arrangements. After my son had left to go home, I remembered that last week he had failed to wake up to his own alarm clock, which by the way did work properly. Because that remembrance of his one time lapse crossed my mind right before I went to sleep, I woke spontaneously about four hours before it was time for me to get up. After checking the time I went back to sleep. Subsequently, I woke up every hour from then until he came over and woke me up, on time. Because of my lack of faith in both the alarm clock and my son, I paid the cost of a restless night and a lack of a good night's sleep. That was just to start off the day. Twice already faith, or in this case a lack of it, had played a part in my day.

To briefly synopsize the rest of the day:

I had faith in the food that I ate for breakfast that it would sustain me through the rest of the day; that it was good to eat, i.e., that the manufacturer was trustworthy not to poison me either accidentally or intentionally; that the microwave that I warmed it in would do the job for which it was designed; that the plate I ate it off of would hold the food and not disintegrate during use; that I could eat it with a fork without accidentally stabbing myself (that last one was a real exercise of faith in myself since I have stabbed myself while eating on several occasions).

I had faith that the chair I sat in while eating would hold me up and not collapse.

To digress for a moment, I had exercised an extended period of faith the night before during my restless night's sleep that the waterbed on which I slept would not break during the night and drown my wife and myself while we slept.

That morning I had faith that my clothes would still fit me and properly cover me so as to spare me the embarrassment of having improper parts of my body exposed.

I had faith that the seams, buttons, and zippers would hold together and function properly and that I was coordinated enough to dress without injuring myself with a zipper, a belt, or a snapped loose suspender. (All of which I have injured myself with more than once in the last 52 years.)

I had faith in my car to take me to where I needed to go.

I had faith that the other drivers on the road would not run into me and maybe kill me as I drove.

I'll not go on with the manifold more times during just this one day that I had exercised "natural" faith, or manifested a lack of it to my own hurt, in some part of the creation.

Without exercising faith during just the normal mechanics of living our day to day lives, we could not function with any semblance of sanity or effectiveness. Without this daily faith we would soon be a candidate for a long-sleeved jacket with arms that tied in the back and a rubber room in a sanitarium somewhere. And even in that situation we would still be exercising faith that we would have air to breath when we inhaled and that

we would not sink into the floor when we walked, or faith in some object in the creation. Even mental illness cannot totally stop faith, it can only cloud it or suppress it or change its direction or the object toward which it may or may not be exercised; but, some measure of faith in some object or another remains with us as long as we are conscious living beings. In fact, one of the major factors in much of mental illness and the inability of psychiatrists to treat it is that when a person “loses faith,” or “loses heart,” or “gives up,” on life and the creation which science (falsely so-called) says is the only “reality,” and retreat within themselves so they will not exercise faith in that hurtful or untrustworthy “reality,” then the psychiatrist tries to get them to come to terms with “reality” and accept it on its own terms, not theirs. That attempt is what I would call “true insanity!” To accept it on its own terms one would have to become as demented as that “reality” that has already proven hurtful and untrustworthy. Instead the psychiatrist should teach the patient to shift his faith from the hurtful and untrustworthy creation or creature to a different object, one that is eternally trustworthy. If you will allow me the liberty, one that is “faithworthy.” We know that the only one that fits that description is God. Because God is the only one faithworthy, we also know that the psychiatrist is never going to try that particular method of guidance since he (the psychiatrist) does not believe in God. (Even many so-called Christian psychiatrists do not totally believe in the God of the Bible and the methods outlined by him for treating mental problems.) That is the failure of modern psychiatry. They function on the premise that the only reality is the physical one. If that were true, then that fact alone would negate the possibility of our natural faith never being betrayed; because objects of faith that are part of the fallen creation will have to eventually fail us.

Where does that leave us? We have to have faith to function in this world, this contaminated creation. We can hardly pass a second of our lives without exercising faith in something or someone. Since faith is an inescapable part of our lives and our makeup we are left with only one alternative; since we cannot deny it, we must learn to direct it. This is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, the Christian has another reality in which to exercise his faith. (And I mean a true Christian, one who is saved and has direct access to God and the spiritual realm and reality.) He has two roads to travel, two objects to choose from in which to, and toward which to, exercise his faith. The first is toward “the creation,” (physical or spiritual); or he can choose to exercise his faith toward “the Creator,” (the spiritual, i.e., the scriptural reality.)

As we pursue this further, I want to clarify that I am in no way advocating some weird, devilish heresy, of which there are and have been multitudes down through the centuries.

I am not denying the physical reality as Hinduism is apt to do:

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan-

Oxford University, eventually President of Independent India.

“The visible world is the symbol of a more real world. It is the reflection of a spiritual universe... Samkara... tells us that... changing existence such as human history has not ultimate reality... the world we see... is a world

reflecting the condition of our minds, a partial construction made from insufficient data under the stress of self-conscious individuality... The soul has risen from the sleep of matter, through plant and animal life, to the human level, and is battling with ignorance and imperfection to take possession of its infinite kingdom. It is absolute not in its actual empirical condition but in its potentiality, in its capacity to appropriate the Absolute.”^(4a)

Nor am I advocating some form of Gnostic heresy in which the physical “reality,” the creation, is evil and that God (in the spiritual reality) is totally isolated from it and only vaguely aware of it, if even aware of it at all:

“All Gnostics viewed the material creation as evil. Sparks of divinity, however, have been encapsulated in the bodies of certain ‘spiritual’ individuals destined for salvation.”^(5a)

What I am saying is simply this. There are, ultimately, only two possible objects of our faith, the creation or the Creator, the physical or the spiritual. The first, the creation (the physical), is real and tangible to the physical senses. The second, the Creator (the spiritual) is also real but is normally intangible to the physical senses. But! The second, the spiritual, is tangible to the spiritual senses through the channel of faith; and, also through the channel of faith we can even see and understand those physical attestations to its existence. Therefore, since those physical attestations are tangible to the physical senses, through faith the spiritual reality can become as tangible to the physical senses as is the physical reality.

As human beings we are body, soul, and spirit:

I Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as this tripartite being we can exercise our faculties in more than one realm. However, as unregenerate man we had one section of our being in a state in which its use was entirely abrogated. In such a state our soul was alive, as was our body (at least temporarily), but our spirit, however, was dead. Since it is the only portion of our being with which we can perceive spiritual things, it is obvious that at that time it was totally useless to us in that or any other area.

Eph 2:1 And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins;
:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Jn 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.

Although our spirit was dead we still retained that strange ability called faith. Because of the deadness of our spirit we had a sense of emptiness deep within. A longing for wholeness. We sought for that wholeness in the physical world and our physical appetites. These did not satisfy, nor did they fill the void within us. We tried exercising our faith in the purely physical again and again, but our faith was not being rewarded. The physical reality would fail us here or it would fail us there; sometimes immediately, other times

only after a long period of time. The latter only made things worse because our hopes would get higher with the passage of time to only be smashed to the earth; and it seemed like the longer time it was that our faith was being rewarded, until that one day it was betrayed, the harder and the more devastating that betrayal was to us when it finally came. Our dreams for the future were being hindered; not necessarily by our lack of faith but by the lack of trustworthiness of the people or things of the physical reality in which we were placing our faith. Meanwhile our dead spirit left the phantom sensation like that felt by some when an arm or a leg is removed, and faith was still operating but it had no trustworthy object in which it could be placed. This could only lead in one direction; a downward spiral in our willingness to exercise faith. Over a long period of time our faith began to deteriorate and shrivel like a muscle not being used. Atrophy of faith began to set in. We were being buried alive in unrewarded faith.

Spiritual faith-

Then, like the light of his rescuers to a miner trapped in a cave-in, came Christ searching for us. He was searcher, rescuer, light and a breath of fresh and reviving air all rolled up in one. He had dug through the rubble of our life and faith to reach the small chamber in which we were trapped. Within this chamber were we trapped with a small spark of faith still intact. True, the faith was stagnant, bruised, injured, and next to dead, but it was still there, an inborn natural ability given to us through our first earthly father, Adam, and as much a part of us as the soul, in which it resides, which was passed to us from him. While we had physical existence, that faith could never completely die, as did the spirit, but would be a part of us until our physical death. The old saying is true, "Hope springs eternal," and hope, at the end of the cave of tribulation, patience, and experience, is an eventual and natural outcome of faith; and as long as we have faith we can have hope.

Ro 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our 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. And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

If faith is dead then hope is dead. And if hope is dead then existence becomes useless to us and our physical death will be soon upon the heels of the death of our faith and hope. We had already experience the negative, natural side of faith in our lives. That is faith placed in the fallible creation. As an outcome, tribulation, patience, and experience, had all worked but they had worked to bury us in a cave of despair. But Christ had burst through the fallen rubble and the stifling darkness to rescue us and bring us up to the light and freshness of His eternal day.

II Pet 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

What now is different? The same faith that we had in the natural is still functioning. The ability is the same, bruised and wounded to be sure, but it is still the same ability, the

same faith. What has changed? There is but one answer: the object of our faith has changed! We no longer have the natural as an object or objects of our faith, but the spiritual. We have changed the direction of our faith from the natural to the spiritual, from the creation to the Creator, from the temporal and fallible to the eternal and omnipotent. There is now no possibility that our faith will go unrewarded and we are rescued from our darkness and brought into eternal light.

The unregenerate must, however, beware. The adversary, the devil, is a master imposter. He will try to give them false glimpses of the spiritual. He will come striding out of the darkness like a mighty god carrying a candle into their caves of despair. If they could observe closely and be aware of their surroundings they would soon understand that what this false saviour was actually doing was quickly burning up what small amount of air (sustaining faith) that might remain in their cave. Instead of rescuing, in which guise he comes, he is actually destroying. He is trying to defeat the true Rescuer by seeing that those whom He, Christ, is trying to save will be dead and beyond hope. He wants to be assured that their faith will be nonexistent when the true Rescuer arrives. What the destroyer will not admit is that faith can never completely die as long as the holder of it is still alive. He keeps trying and in most cases succeeds. Not in the way that he thinks he will, however, by destroying their faith, for that ability remains as long as there is life. The way he succeeds is by destroying their willingness to exercise their faith. He can get most so wrapped up in the disappointments and failures that had come from their exercise of their faith in the creation that they are no longer willing to try and exercise it toward the Creator. And so when the true Rescuer comes they reject Him and slip from physical death and despair into eternity and unending despair. Hell and the lake of fire are real. The punishment suffered by the lost who are consigned to them is real. And just is real is the death of faith and hope that consigns the lost to an eternity of the sufferings of total despair. The combination truly is called Hell. It is total punishment of the body, soul, and spirit. Punishment of the body by the flames; punishment of the spirit with total and eternal separation from the Spirit of God; and punishment of the soul with the removal of the very ability of faith and the dashing of all hope for eternity, leaving only excruciating, eternal, despair!

Process and Results- Now that we have shown that faith can have two objects on which to be exercised, the creation (created objects) and the Creator (spiritual objects) and that spiritual faith is faith in the Creator and the things of Him, we can go on to clarify the process and results of having spiritual faith rather than natural faith.

The main result of not exercising spiritual faith we have already discussed. It causes us to reject the one true Saviour, Jesus Christ. This causes our eternal damnation and consignment to the flames of Hell and the Lake of Fire and the eternal punishment of our body, soul, and spirit. We will now go on to the positive side, the wilful exercise of spiritual faith.

The process- We will begin with the process of our exercise of saving faith. The term "saving faith" must not carry with it any idea that our faith saves, because it doesn't. It is merely a channel by which salvation comes. This is proven by the Scriptures:

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

It is obvious that we are saved by grace not faith, faith is the channel “through” which salvation comes. The process then is: by grace, through faith, to salvation.

The results (of spiritual faith) We have seen the process, now we will go on to the results.

***Salvation-* This first result of spiritual faith we have already discussed, Salvation.**

***Christian living-* We will now go on to one other. I say “one” in a categorical sense, since this area is composed of many parts all together working to bring about the one category, “Christian living.”**

A Christian should, notice I do not say “will,” but “should,” live in the spiritual. Our sights should be above the temporal and physically perceptible and centered on the eternal and spiritually perceptible. We have, by salvation through faith, perceptions that are not available to the unsaved. We are able to “receive,” and “perceive,” i.e., apprehend as real to our spiritual senses, things that are not apprehendable to those with mere physical “sight.” These include but are not limited to: the promises of God that are sure to come to be, some in the physical and some in the spiritual realms; His plans for our future physical and spiritual states; and His plans for the Kingdom and its existence, laws, and eternal order.

I Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.

Jn 3:3b Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Because of our Salvation, by grace through faith, we can apprehend the things of God. We do not do so, however, through physical perception but through spiritual perception.

Another portion of this Christian living that is available to us, but not to the unsaved, is the ability, through spiritual faith, to resist sin, i.e., to live in the spirit and not in the flesh.

We alone have this ability to resist sin:

Ro 6:17-18 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

The unsaved do not:

Ro 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Ro 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Ro 8:5-7 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

And faith is the channel of grace not only for salvation but also for Christian living.

Ro 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our 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.

All of the above scriptures are from an extended passage in the book of Romans. The context of that passage, composed of several chapters, is our freedom from sin, both in its consequences and our servitude and subservience to its dominion over us. This context is not confined just to pre-salvation but also to the ongoing sanctification of us after we are saved; i.e., we are admonished by God to grow in grace from salvation onward to the end of our lives.

II Pet 3:17-18 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know [these things] before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory both now and for ever. Amen

We are not to become highminded about it but remember where the faith to stand, live right and serve God comes from:

Ro 11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.

Be not highminded, but fear:

Ro 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

God has given faith to us; He is the one that deserves all the glory for whatever we may do and however we may live and serve Him after our Salvation.

After our salvation comes Christian living. It should be in the realm of spiritual faith; but we have the choice. If we choose to live by spiritual faith we shall be profitable servants of God. If we choose to live by natural then we are living in a foreign land. Doing so will make us impotent and feeble as we are trying to live in a land that operates by rules that, as children of God and possessing His righteousness and inclinations, we can no longer follow. It is a land that we left, as Abraham did, by faith, and we can never go back. Things are no longer the same for us and we must, I repeat, “we must,” go forward to the land God has promised us and we must never look back, for any reason.

Lk 9:61-62 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

We have seen in earlier segments that faith is an ability inborn in us. The following scripture used to be quite a problem to me in that I mistakenly thought that it meant that the word “that” referred to “grace” rather than salvation.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

If my perception of this scripture were right, that would make “faith” the gift given by God. I, as well as others, have used that mistaken thought as the basis for preaching that God gives us everything for our salvation, even the faith to believe. I still believe that He does, but I now glean that truth from a different scriptural basis. This particular verse does not state that “faith” is the gift but that salvation (being “saved”) is the gift. I state this for the following reasons:

The word “that,” in this passage, is translated from the Greek word “*tauto*” (too-taw) which is in the neuter gender.

The word “faith” is from the Greek word “*pis-tew-ohs*” (pis-tew-ohs) which is feminine gender.

Obviously the gender of the two words does not agree. Therefore “that” cannot refer back to “faith.”

Neither, however, does it agree with the gender of “grace,” which is feminine, nor with that of “saved,” as it is in the masculine.

What then does “that” refer to? Since it is not to one of the other words then it must refer to the meaning, sequence, or process being discussed. Process seems to be the most logical of the three. The scripture here is very process oriented. The sense of this scripture is apprehended in the process given, “by grace - through faith - are ye saved.”

Although the sequence is not stated as one, two, three, yet the process is very apparent. This passage gives the means, the channel, and the result. Then, following that, it gives the motivation, the source, a clarifier and an explanation:

Divisions of the text:

The context is: we were dead in trespasses and sins; but God gave us life (quickened us) because of His mercy and great love toward us. This quickening was in Christ and was for the purpose of showing His great grace through the ages. In short, the context is our salvation in Christ by God’s actions. (Eph 2:1-8)

The means: grace. (Eph 2:8)

The channel: faith. (same verse)

The result: Salvation. (same verse)

The motivation: a gift, denoting charity (self-less love.) (same verse)

(cf Ro 6:23b “... the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”)

The source: God. (same verse)

The clarifier: it is not of ourselves. (our works - v:9)

An explanation: our good works are not the means of our salvation but the natural result of it. (V:10+)

If you disrupt the sequence by removing the channel, faith, then salvation is an impossibility. This we do when we refuse to exercise spiritual faith; there is no way for the grace of God to reach the sinner, us. When the Spirit of God draws us to the cross, and we know who Jesus is, then we are left with one of two things that we can do. We can reject Christ by refusing to exercise spiritual faith, or we can accept Him by spiritual faith. He cannot be apprehended with the physical eye (natural faith) but He can be by the spiritual eye (spiritual faith.)

Faith is from God- I stated that I still believe that faith is from God, even though I no longer use Eph 2:8 as a proof verse. The reasoning I now use is this: the soul that I possess is from God through Adam. Within that soul resides an ability called faith. Through propagation from Adam, God has handed down to me this ability; ergo, faith is as much from God as my soul is from God. If God had not installed that ability within my essence, as he did to all people, then it would be impossible for anyone to be saved. A good example would be: if there is no channel then all of the dam building and reservoirs in the world would be to no avail. The water must have a channel to carry the water from the source to the people. Likewise, grace must have a channel, faith, to carry salvation from the source, God, to the people. God gives it all, including the channel, faith. We can stop up the channel but it is still there. We can refuse to exercise faith in the Creator and be saved; but the channel is still there. It was given by God in His mercy to all mankind with the creation of Adam. Propagated down through the centuries, faith has been there in every person since Adam, waiting for its exercise by our free will. It can be exercised toward the creation, for failure and condemnation, or toward the spiritual, God, for Salvation and success.

**Ro 8:1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them
which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh,
but after the Spirit.**

Reconciliation of other scriptures and views-

Evans, The Great Doctrines of the Bible, tells us that the source of faith has two sides. From the divine side, he maintains that it is from God, directly.

God the Father:

Ro 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen.

12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

***Beginning-* Phil 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;**

(Here Evans is understanding “believe” to mean faith.)

***Development-* I Cor 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.**

I Cor 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit;

In the words of Evans, “Faith, then, is a gift of His grace.” ^(3c)

God the Son:

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith...

Mt 14:30-31 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

God the Spirit:

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith,

I Cor 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit...

Evans then goes on to make this statement:

“Why then, if faith is the work of the Godhead, are we responsible for not having it? God wills to work faith in all His creatures, and will do so if they do not resist His Holy Spirit. We are responsible, therefore, not so much for THE LACK OF FAITH, but for resisting the Spirit who WILL CREATE FAITH in our hearts if we will permit Him to do so.”
(caps added)

This is where Evans and I part company. At the moment of Salvation faith is not created in us by the Holy Spirit. Quite to the contrary, faith has been with us all of our lives. That ability, although exercised toward the wrong object, the creation, has allowed us a modicum of sanity in our lives. Exercising faith toward our fellow man has kept us from paranoia and chaos.

Without faith, natural faith, I could not trust in anyone or anything. Even though it went unrewarded many times, which taught me to be very cautious in exercising it, still when the time came that it was necessary for me to once again put my faith in someone or something, faith was still there, waiting, ready to be used by me again. Whether for good or for evil it was an ever-present ability that was mine to command.

If faith was always with me, passed to me in my soul from God through Adam, then what are those scriptures that seem to teach the contrary really talking about. Are they really referring to what Evans and many others think and maintain that they are referring to, the direct creation of faith by God at the moment of Salvation? Let's see.

Ro 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen.

12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith...

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

I Cor 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit...

I agree with Evans and the others that these verses show that Faith has its source in God. The only place we differ is as to when and how that gift came to mankind. These verses do not address and, therefore, cannot settle those matters. I maintain through those proofs that I gave earlier that faith, natural faith, has been with me all of my life. What was different at salvation was the object of my faith. I passed through the different stages, knowledge, assent, and appropriation, at different times in my life; but, all three were present at the moment of my salvation. What of the working of the Holy Spirit? He opened the gates of my heart and soul to allow my faith to extend in this new direction. He had worked circumstances and longings in my life and, at the direction of the Father, “drew” me to the cross of Christ and then left me there to decide whether

to exercise my faith in this new object. Only then, when the faith that God had instilled in me by inheritance had become a spiritual channel for the saving power of God, only then could I choose to believe on Christ and be saved or believe not on Christ and remain lost. The power of God was so strong and the wooing of the Holy Spirit so adamant and convincing, all of this flowing through the channel of faith between God and myself in an unimpeded, rushing torrent, that to refuse would have taken an exercise of my free will of proportions larger than any other in my entire life. And yet, I knew that if I chose to do so I could have refused, but praise God, I DIDN'T! But the faith given to me from God through my first birth was the same faith exercised at my second birth. The difference was that my inborn ability of faith was exercised in this new direction and served as a channel for God's saving grace. Everything made possible by God through no effort of my own- all I could do was make a decision to be saved or not be saved. Accept or reject.

Evans then goes on to state that, "There Is Also a Human Side to Faith." ^(3c)

He gives the following proof texts:

Ro 10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Acts 4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed.

Then Evans states that the several scriptures variously refer to both the "spoken word, the Gospel," and "the written Word, the Scriptures." ^(3c) And he also presents the belief that either one or both of them are "instrumental in producing faith." Once again I agree, partially, but I also disagree, partially. I agree that both the written and the spoken Word are referred to as instrumental in bringing about something. What I disagree with is what that "something" is. The something cannot be the production of faith. Faith, as we have already seen, was there all along, given to us, by God, through our first parent, Adam. So if it was not "produced" as Evans and the other proponents of the directly created faith view maintain, then what is brought about by hearing the Word or reading the Word? I maintain that what was brought about was the initiation of a new direction for our faith. One that was foreign to us. One that was totally different from our normal exercise of faith; one that we would not have come to naturally but could only come to through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The reading and/or hearing of the Scriptures changed our direction of faith from its "natural direction," toward the creation, to a new "spiritual direction," toward the Creator. This change of direction of our faith did not save us; because Salvation is not by faith, faith is only the channel. Once the channel was opened in this new "spiritual" direction, toward the Creator, then access to God and His saving grace made it possible for us to be saved. If we chose so to be. We still had free will to completely reject salvation.

Their teaching that it is a special gift, given only to those who will be saved, leaves me with a sour taste in my mouth. It raises too many questions. Like: who decides who will be saved, i.e., who will receive this special gift of faith? Does God decide who will be saved and who will be lost? Then what of free will? If faith itself is a special gift from the Holy Spirit, then how do we get it, and when? How can we get

this special gift from the Spirit when we are lost and have no access to the Spirit. And yet we cannot be saved by God's grace without the channel of faith. Now we are in a Catch 22. We can't be saved without faith but we can't get that faith until we are saved! What can we do? All is lost and our eternity settled on condemnation unless God forces faith upon us and saves us. That, however, leaves God in an unscriptural position. He says in the Scriptures that He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Pet 3:9) And yet, if He forced faith only upon some and not on every man then He would be willing that those not so forced would perish. They would have no choice nor opportunity to receive the gift of faith, to repent, to be saved; i.e., God would be forcing some to Heaven and some to Hell.

When I started to write the previous segment the thought came to mind that their view smacked somewhat of Calvinism. Now I have changed my mind. I no longer think that their view smacks of Calvinism; I now know that it is absolutely a raging promoter of Calvinism. Unwittingly so, on the part of many of its proponents, I am sure; nevertheless, a fact is a fact.

Summary- So I totally agree with Evans, and the other proponents of the "faith by direct creation of God" view, that faith is a gift from God. I disagree, however, as to when we receive that gift; what that gift, faith, really is; how we receive it; and whether God decides that some get it and some do not. I am fully convinced that it, faith, is a gift of God, given to Adam and propagated from him to his progeny, all of mankind. I further believe that faith is an ability, exercised by all men normally as "natural faith," i.e., faith in the creation (including those spirit being that are created by God). Then God, through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, gives us a new direction in which to extend our faith. That direction is toward Himself and His things. This faith I call "spiritual faith," or faith in the Creator. Free will decides who will be saved and God is the one that has chosen for it to be this way. Therefore, those who do exercise spiritual faith when wooed by the Holy Spirit, which happens to all men, open a channel for His saving grace and then utilize that grace by believing in and appropriating Jesus Christ as their Saviour, by doing so they are fulfilling the will of God.

The key to understanding faith and the scriptures concerning it is to realize that faith is an ability. And belief, therefore, is closely related to it but is more of an activity; i.e., it is faith in action, so to speak.

WHAT IS FAITH TO US

I call faith the building blocks of Christianity. The different manifestations of it are the basis for everything in our lives. From our salvation, to our ability to live truly Christian lives, to our hope for the future, all are built upon our faith.

Remembrance- We must start off with one of those "remembrances" that I mentioned in the introduction. We must first of all remember that nothing of our faith is from us, it is from God.

I can no more be puffed-up about my faith than I can be about being a person. I did

not make me a person, God did. A person is delineated by the possession of emotion, intellect and will; all of these were given to me by God. These three reside in my soul, which is from God, and I have no cause to glory as though I had something that someone else does not have. From the lowest to the highest of the creatures called man, all possess this thing called a soul. Why then get puffed up, none of us are unique in this respect. Some can further develop certain portions, others cannot; but the possession of the soul is not something we have a choice in, all of us have one. Every human from Adam to now has been given this from God. God breathed into Adam and he became a living soul. That was the only such mention in the Bible. From Adam has been propagated all of mankind from then until now. Physically and immaterially we are descendants of Adam. We have inherited the image of God from him and we inherit our souls from him.^(6b) We also, sorry to say, inherit our sin nature from him and that is why we need to be born again so that we can receive our new nature from Christ at our new creation.

Faith also resides in the soul, in the real person, not in the body, which is just a construct of God used to allow the soul a way to interact with the physical creation. I don't mean to denigrate the body, it is a wonderful construction of God. And there is an unbreakable bond of some sort between the body and the soul; which is witnessed by the fact that it will be resurrected one day, perfect, and it and the soul will once again be reunited for eternity. I merely want to reinforce the fact that the real person is the soul not the body. Therefore, since faith resides in the soul, and that soul was given to us from God, then I can be no more puffed-up about the fact that I have faith than I can of having the soul in which it resides.

Now to clarify a few things. When I say that faith resides in the soul I do not mean that in the sense that it is a separate entity that has taken up residence there. I mean it in the sense that faith is an ability of the soul. Much in the same way that emotion, or intellect, or will, are said to reside in the soul so does faith. All are abilities and characteristics of the soul. Each can be used or misused, fed or starved, exercised or restrained, but they cannot be denied. Neither can they be a reason for pride because we did not gain a single one of them through any effort or worth of our own, they came to us totally from God, through Adam.

Like any other inherent ability, faith can be increased or decreased, strengthened or weakened, exercised or atrophied. What faith means to you and I depends almost exclusively on what we do with it. In the same way that a wife becomes more precious to us depending on whether we treat her like something precious or not, even so with faith. With a wife, if we treat her with disrespect and misuse her, soon she will become calloused and disrespectful and worn out. So with faith. If we treat faith with disrespect, as if it were a wife to be beaten, downtrodden, ignored, and shared without thought of the consequences, then it too will become useless to us in the same way that the wife would. We will come to not trust it, or we will not give notice to its deteriorating condition, or we will pass it around so freely that it will become naturally untrustworthy to us. If we misuse faith it will become worn and tired and threadbare; and eventually it will run and hide or try to escape from us or avoid us, or maybe it will even try to die. But if we

cherish it like the Bible says we are to cherish the wife of our youth then it will develop into something worthy to be cherished. Faith will become to us whatever we make it. It can be a trusted companion, a fellow helper in service to the Lord, a channel for strength and power. It can be a channel for God's grace, or His healing, or endurance. Faith can be a channel for wisdom in the things of God. It can support us in our Christian walk; and be a witness to other Christians and an encouragement to them. It can be a testimony to the lost and point the way to salvation for them. It can be a channel for God's healing in our lives and give us access to God's limitless power to enable us to help others to heal. It can be the law by which we live our lives or a merely a feeble whisper of inclination to try to live godly; whichever we choose for it to be, that it will be. It can be the deciding factor in the proportion of our ministry for God; and it can be the delineating factor for our actions. It can be of great value to us and for us; or it can be empty and vain. It can be failure giving faith; or it can be future giving faith. It can give us great gain; or it can give us great loss. It can be upward building; or it can be downward tearing. Whatever we want it to be, it will be. Properly directed it can give us everything; improperly directed it can take everything from us. Directed toward the Creator it can be the channel of life's greatest blessings. Directed toward the creation it can be a black hole sucking in the very life and peace of our souls; and giving nothing back out. It can be so great a force for godliness in our lives that our very religion will no longer be just a religion to us but it will become what God calls it, our "faith!" Or, it can be the great destroyer of hope and thecrippler of our service to God. We alone decide what it will be to us; God's great gift- or God's great curse. Depending on our exercise of it toward the creation or our exercise of it toward the Creator, we will rise by the lifting up of us by God's hand or we will fall by our own or someone else's hand. Maybe we will decide not to exercise it at all. But remember, our success or failure in our Christian lives and the magnitude and effectiveness of our service to God depends on the measure of faith we exercise toward Him.

chapter two

How to Use Faith

One of the things we need to know is how to use this ability that God has given us. Can we help it grow? Can we help it to be strong? Will God give us more of it if we ask? In short, now that we know what it is and where it comes from we need to know how to use it. I can know what a rifle is, how it works, and what it is for; but, I still need to know how to use it. I need to know how to fix it, or where to find someone to fix it if it gets broke. I need to know how to load it and where to get the ammunition. But paramount for effective use of it, I need to learn how to aim it, shoot it, and how to hit what I am aiming at. The same thing is true for my faith. I need to know how to effectively use it in my life. I need to know how to load it, aim it, fire it, and how to hit what I am aiming for. Otherwise it is useless to me.

Exercising Your Faith - Increasing Your Faith

Exercising your faith- The first thing we must realize is that faith withheld is useless. Faith is an ability. An ability can be transformed into something profitable only by its use. Our exercise of faith will bring about belief (scriptural belief, not just mere knowledge) and belief will bring about an action. We will either do something by faith or we will not do something by faith. Or, by faith we will trust someone else to do or not do something. Either way, faith has to be used in order for it to be profitable to us.

What happens when we exercise our faith? That's easy, it gets stronger. Think of all of the guys and gals that you see going to the gym. The more they exercise the bigger they get. Of course the women can overdo it, and many do, then pretty quick you can't tell if they are really women or not. They work until they get ugly, bulging, masculine looking muscles and ruin every last vestige of their femininity. With faith, however, thank God that is not possible. There is no gender to faith. Strong faith always looks good. People see it and it gives them heart in their tribulations. Having someone with strong faith on your side in a physical or spiritual battle is like having Arnold Schwarzenegger as your partner in a knock-down, drag-out, back alley fight.

Weak faith does not have to stay weak. It is an ability; and exercising it makes it grow stronger. Remember that it is like a "muscle" given to you from God and He expects you to feed it and exercise it until it is strong enough to pick you up and carry you along when you get tired or weak. God is the strength of your faith. When you exercise strong faith in your life and service for God you are merely opening a channel for Him to manifest His power in your life.

Increasing your faith- There is a scripture given in Luke where the disciples asked the Lord to increase their faith.

Luke 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

What do you think the Lord did in response to their request? Did He stand tall and

ominous looking in front of them? Hold one hand high over their heads and contract and twist His fingers into clawlike shapes like we see the actors do in the portrayals of Him in the Hollywood movies? Did He pronounce the words in a sonorous voice, “I COMMAND YOUR FAITH TO INCREASE!!” And as the omnipotent God, Creator of the universe and all that is in it, did strength and power flow from Him to them with a light as of a thermonuclear explosion and the sound of a thousand thunderclaps? Did the shear force of the energy flowing from Him cause them to momentarily shrivel and then begin to shine back with a glow like that around the core of a nuclear power plant? And in the end did that energy distort their images as the light coming from them bent and shimmered from the superheated air around them. Then as the phenomenon mellowed did the energy they had absorbed settle and center around their heads like the circles seen around the heads of Mary and Jesus and the Saints in a medieval painting as their faith, now increased to world shaking and miracle performing size, could not be contained completely in their mere human bodies but shone forth for all to see?? Sounds good doesn’t it. If I wanted to go back to work for the devil, which by the grace of God I will never do, I could probably sell that phoney-baloney story to Hollywood so they could turn it into another lie about Christ to mix with the thousands they have already propagated. They could easily foist it off on an anti-God world that is ever ready to gobble up such mixtures of scripture and science-fiction. Probably could be worth millions, don’t you think? Well, if you have read your Bibles at all you already know baloney when you hear it. At least when it’s stacked that high. Let’s see what Jesus really did.

Lk 17:5-10 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Now we’ll dissect this piece of scripture and find out exactly what Jesus did do.

1. They asked Him to increase their faith.

Lk 17:5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

2. Then the Lord told them the tiniest amount of faith was enough faith for them to perform miracles.

Lk 17:6 If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

3. Then He told them a story that shows that the servant should serve the master, not the master serve the servant.

Lk 17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

What is the context of this passage? A request by the Apostles for an increase of faith. Therefore, I am going to apply this story to their request; and I will do so in this manner:

- a. The Apostles are the man that hath the servant.
- b. Faith, because of the context of the passage, is the servant.
- c. The servant is busy about his business of serving the master. He, faith, has been working hard all day.
- d. When the servant, faith, has completed every task set for him by the master, he then returns home.
- e. Even though faith, the servant, has completed all of his assigned chores he is still at the beck and call of the master.
- f. When he, faith, returns home the master does not tell him to rest and refresh himself, in fact the master has more things for the servant to do. In this case, he is expected to cater to the master's needs and wants.
- g. The idea being given here is: faith is your servant, not the other way around. You tell faith what to do, when to do it, where to do it, and when it must work and when it can rest. It must serve you unfailingly, and that is merely its duty as a servant.

Lk 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

4. Finally Christ tells them that faith is like an unprofitable servant in that it will only do what it is told to do. It will not go beyond what they tell it to do. It will not grow and expand into new work on its own initiative, it has none. Your initiative is its only initiative. If you give faith new things to do it will accomplish those things; but it will not go beyond the tasks you set for it. If you want it to increase then give it more things to do. If you do not, then it will only carry on with its current tasks. That is unprofitable for you and it. Eventually you both will stagnate. We are told to strive toward the perfection of Christ; not tread water in the middle of some spiritual lake. If you tread water long enough you will begin to sink. Your faith is the same way. That only makes sense because it is a part of you. As the part goes, so goes the whole. And then Christ tells us that when we also don't go beyond and do more than only what is our duty then we are just as bad as our faith.

Lk 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that

which was our duty to do.

5. The idea here is that they are expected to use the faith they have. Help it to grow and expand, on their own, by their usage of it. And then when they do so, they are still only doing their duty. Nothing more, nothing less.

Lk 17:10 We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

NOTE: This would seem to indicate to me that those who do not use and expand their spiritual faith into new territories are actually breaking a simple and direct commandment of God. I have already considered how that might apply in my Christian life and service; now you think about that and how it might apply in yours.

Dr. JEV

Analogies- If you want your faith increased then go about increasing its sphere of action. I will illustrate this for you with several simple analogies.

According to Luke 17:6, you have an amount of faith sufficient to perform any task. To do so is as simple as setting the faith to task so that the task is enclosed in the sphere of action of the faith.

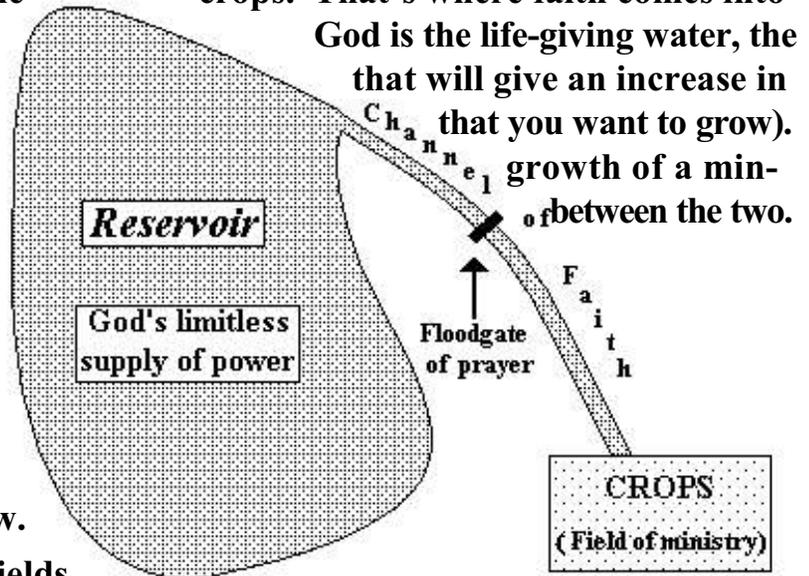
A good analogy would be a bomb and an obstacle. The bomb represents God's limitless power. You don't expect a bomb to blow up an obstacle unless the two are in close proximity to one another. Set the bomb next to the obstacle and it will demolish the obstacle.



If, on the other hand, you don't set the bomb next to the obstacle, then it won't demolish the obstacle. Now let's look at faith, God's power, and an obstacle. You must exercise your faith toward the obstacle or else nothing can happen. God's power only works in your life through the channel of your of faith. If you want an obstacle removed, and you know it's according to God's will, then open the channel for God's power by exercising your faith toward the obstacle, i.e., have faith that God can "blow it out of the way," and it will happen. Your faith then becomes the "vehicle," that conveys God's power to the obstacle

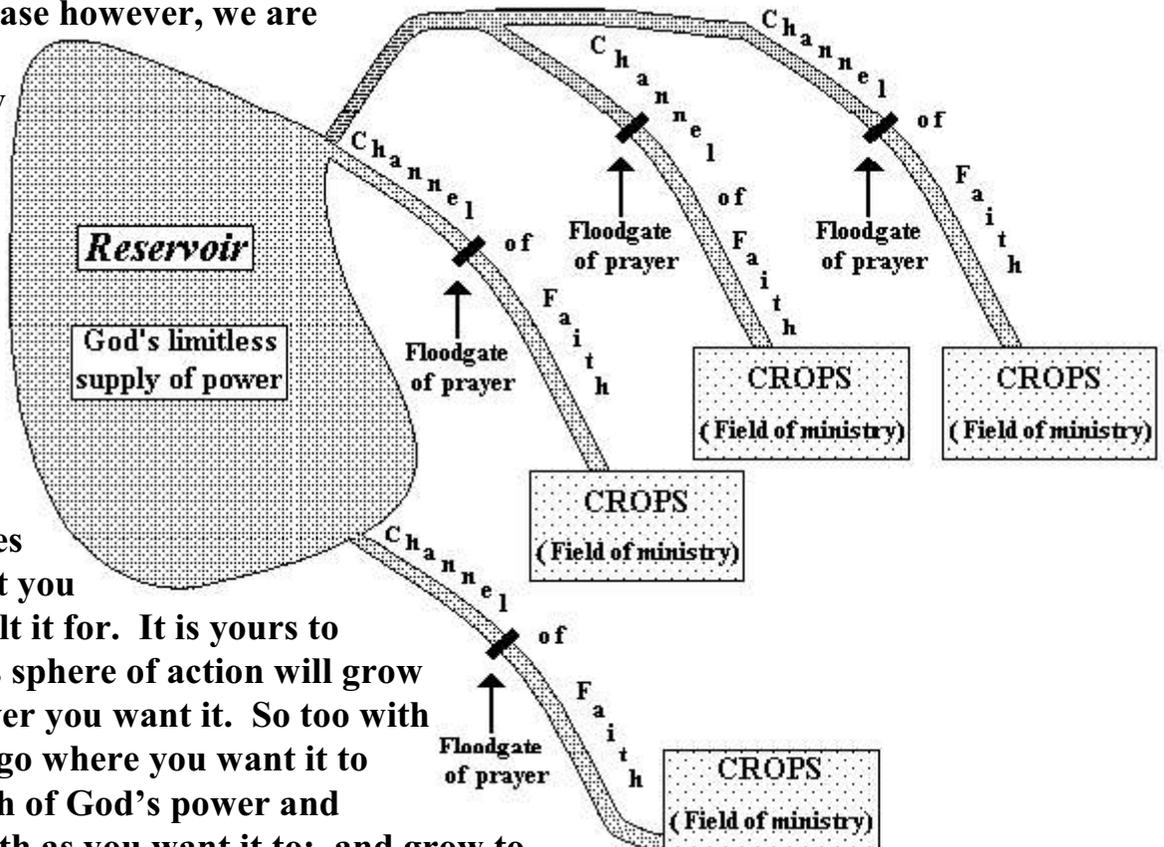
How about one more. Maybe you want faith to bring about an increase in some particular ministry. An analogy for that one would be: If you want the crops to grow then you have to give them water. Its obvious that if the water is in the reservoir and the crops are in the field there's a problem, the crops won't grow unless the water and the crops are in very close proximity to one another. Do you bring the crops to the water? No! You bring the water to the crops. You have to extend the sphere of action of the water to include the crops, not the sphere of action of the crops to include the water.

How do you bring the water to the crops? The solution is both simple and obvious. You dig a ditch to bring the water to the crops. That's where faith comes into the picture; it is your system of ditches. God is the life-giving water, the strength, the power for growth that you want to grow). If you want God to help with the growth of a ministry then open the channel of faith between the two. Of course you do have prayer involved; but it is like the floodgates that you can either close to restrict the amount of water going through the channel or which you can throw open wide to allow the maximum amount of unrestricted flow.



You may have many ditches to other fields and other crops; but, if you want this crop to grow then you must increase the sphere of action of your ditches to also include it. Faith is yours to command just like a channel; in this case however, we are calling the channel by its country name- a ditch.

A ditch doesn't argue about where it goes, it goes where you make it go. It doesn't argue about how much water flows through it, it takes whatever amount you designed and built it for. It is yours to command and its sphere of action will grow and go to wherever you want it. So too with faith. It too will go where you want it to go; carry as much of God's power and life-giving strength as you want it to; and grow to encompass as many crops and fields as you think, under God's guidance, that you need for it to reach. Spread it out. Increase its sphere of influence. It will grow only as you make it grow. That is its job; and you are the boss!



Summary- That was a long and detailed dissection of the scripture. It and the analogies given to help understand it may have seemed complicated but they can be summed up quite easily and briefly. Christ taught that if you want your faith to increase- then use it.

Tell it what to do and it will do it. The more you use it the more it will increase. The wider you open the flood gates of prayer and the more directions you extend faith out to reach various areas of your Christian life and ministry, the more of God's power will flow through the channel. The more you want it to increase in its sphere of action the more you have to use it; that's what will enable it to grow. Like every talent and ability that God gives you- you must "Use it or Lose it!" If it is not being forced to become stronger, then eventually it will stagnate and begin getting weaker.

Strengthening or Weakening of Faith

Sometimes we don't understand exactly what is happening in our lives. We can't see God's whole plan and our little finite minds couldn't understand it if we could see it all. Sometimes what seems to be a burden is really a blessing in disguise. The same Sun that withers the flowers also bakes the clay. When God turns the heat up on us it is never meant to wither but to harden the clay and make us better vessels for His use. Sometimes we feel like the devil has us in his hand and is alternating between beating us mercilessly and trying to consume us in a furnace. We feel that we must soon perish and that God has allowed it. Then we feel that the freezing rain that falls in our lives after that gives us but a moments respite from the heat and then it quickly turns into an uncomfortable punishment. It is then that by faith we have to realize that we have been molten and shapen according to God's will, like an iron sword, and that the cold water is what tempers the metal so that it can become a sharper weapon for His use. The reason I am laboring the point is to get the idea across that sometimes what we think is a force for weakening us and our faith is in reality circumstances, allowed by God or brought by Him, that are there to strengthen us. To illustrate this I will tell you a true story from mine and my wife's recent past. What I thought was an episode that was inexorably eating away at and weakening my faith and that at one time I thought would cause the eventual and unstoppable destruction of it, turned out to be the strongest builder of my faith in my entire Christian life. At the end of the incident I thought it had finally killed my faith; but, as it turned out, that one single incident above all others was the thing that brought my faith alive as never before. On with the story.

It was the spring of #####. I was associate Pastor at the church. My wife and I had started a Christian school and had been running it for five and a half years. There had never been a cross word between the senior pastor, Pastor ****, and myself during the whole time. I looked up to the man as a man of God and as a leader. I did not question his leadership nor direction but followed him as he followed Christ. I performed every task that he set for me, no questions asked. I had been taught by other men of God that if God put you in a position of service under a pastor, then you followed your pastor to the best of your ability until such time as God moves you somewhere else. I followed this advice gladly since I knew that it was straight from the Bible. I had pastored before and I knew that to be a good leader you must first learn to be a good follower. I also knew that, that was why God had put me there under Pastor **** so I could practice followship in order to better learn leadership. I knew that God expected me to be as loyal as a dog and to gladly work like a mule. I was to use all of my God given abilities to help in the ministry under my pastor, and, with his approval, I started various ministries, including the school mentioned earlier, and many others that would put my talents and gifts to the best and fullest use. From music to preaching and from teaching to writing, God made it

clear that anything less than my best and my utmost as a servant of His, and a helper and an associate to the senior Pastor, would not be tolerated by God. If I wanted God to give me good and loyal helpers when He finally moved me somewhere else to pastor, then I had to rely on His method, that of sowing and reaping, in order to insure that He would reward me in kind. Pastor **** had to work in real estate to support his family and by his choice he did not want to go full time again as a pastor. The school brought in enough for a subsistence living for my wife and myself so that I could be full time, which of course was absolutely necessary in order for the school to continue operation. This allowed me to take up many of the tasks that the senior pastor did not have time for and these I gladly did. This was in complete accord with his wishes and was carried out at his prompting since, as I said, he did not want to be full time, he wanted to continue working his outside job.

Now the other side of the coin. Did I make mistakes while I was serving there, of course I did. The one that never makes a mistake is usually the one that is not doing anything at all. But the mistakes were never malicious or purposeful, and they were always rectified the instant that they were recognized. If it was a matter that required an apology then an apology was made post haste. If it was a matter of bad judgment then the mistake was acknowledged and rectified immediately. If the rectification of the problem required eating a little crow: then I ate it with a smile and apparent relish and then, wiping the feathers from my face, laughed at my own ridiculousness' and failings and got right back to work. I take no credit for any of this, I was merely doing what I know God required of me. To do any less would have been disobedience to Him and would have brought His chastisement. To do anything else would have been a betrayal of the Lord that loved me and died for me. It was my expression of my love and appreciation to Christ for what He did for me; and, to do less than my best would have been a betrayal of that love and sacrifice that He first showed toward me when He gave me His best.

Now we come to the last year of our service there.

The school had been running for about four and a half years and the Lord had taken it to twenty-eight students. The church had grown from about twenty to around seventy or eighty. The music ministries, the childrens ministries, the retirement home ministries, and two Public access television program ministries were in full swing. God had fought for us and won many battles. Battles against the city government, battles over facilities, battles against grumblers, battles over finances, and scattered amongst those other problems, the inevitable battles over apathy. It was obvious the devil was fighting us and that we were drawing so much attention from him because of so many people getting saved, baptized, and added to the church. (You know how mad that makes him.) After God had overcome the biggest of those problems, apathy, then the church grew to over a hundred. Once the baptistry was hooked up in the new facility we were seeing from four to six people saved almost every week. Pastor **** had me do the baptizing and I was allowed the privilege of performing 2 to 4 Baptisms for the Lord nearly every Sunday for several months. I even was allowed the indescribable joy of baptizing as high as 7 on one Sunday morning alone. May not sound like much to many big churches but it was a highlight and a joy for me.

Much of this was during our last two-and-a-half years there. It was at the beginning of that time that one day the still small voice whispered, "Well, your time here is almost up." Of course, in my usual perceptive manner, (I'm making fun of myself) I thought it was just white-line fever, or simply my imagination. But, the feeling would not leave me so I discussed it with

my wife and she said she had exactly the same feeling and couldn't shake it, so I finally told Pastor **** that I knew that the Lord was going to eventually move Bonnie and I to some other place of service, I told him I didn't know when, but I knew that some day he would. I used to think that we would have been better off if we had moved right then; but now I know better. Oh, we would have been spared a lot of discomfort, unpleasantness, intense heart-break, and faith-shaking emotional and spiritual tumult, but we also would have been out of the will of God.

From that time on things began to go downhill. The church ran into some financial difficulty. There were a lot of people coming to church but the facilities were costing us an arm and a leg. Pastor**** and his wife, along with three pre-teen girls and one late-teen son were going to move into the missions apartment in the church-school portion of the commercial building we were leasing at the time. They were going to do this so they could put the extra money saved on their rent back into the church. Their son was already giving over half of his monthly earnings to help out. I talked it over with my wife and we went to pastor and told him that it was not right that his big family would have to cram themselves into the tiny, one room missions apartment. They would have to have some of them sleep in his office on a fold-out couch and others on the floor. We told him that there were only two of us and that we wanted to move into the little room instead. I also told him that some of the people that were in our church would not understand and they would look down on him (as the pastor) if they were living in the church building. I told him that it wasn't right for them to look down their noses at someone's circumstances, especially when it was being done to try and save the church, but that my wife and I had gone through it several times personally in our Christian lives and that right or wrong some people are just that way. For the good of the church and out of our love for him and his family I asked that he would allow Bonnie and I to move in, in their place. He agreed and his wife thanked us profusely. We moved into the apartment for what was supposed to be a few months that turned out to be nearly two years. Talk about the grace of God. The apartment was about twelve foot by twelve foot, or sixteen by twelve if you included the church kitchen on the other side of the wall. There were no windows at all and my wife is claustrophobic; but the Lord saw her through that for nearly two years. During this time part of the money from the school was able to go back into the church instead of having to pay rent for my wife and myself. This varied from a usual three hundred to as high as a thousand dollars a month on a couple of occasions. Then the church gave up the auditorium part and built a small auditorium in the section where the school was. Then six months later the Lord began shutting the school down. At that time we were up to twenty-eight students; twenty two of which were paying students and six were children of staff members, which included the senior pastor's three girls, these six attended for free. They only had to pay for PACEs. That lasted about one month and then we began losing students. Within the next six months we dropped to about eighteen students, twelve of which were paying students. Within four months of that we were down to eight paying and six non-paying students. Then, because of fire regulations and zoning codes, my wife and myself had to move out of the missions apartment and into a home-made bus conversion RV that was half paid for out of our pocket and half paid for by a special offering from church members. Total cost, a thousand bucks. We lived in it the last year we were there in *****, paying our rent from my wife's SSI which the government finally gave her after her being disabled for twenty years. Funny how after twenty years God

worked that out isn't it; and right when we had to have the money too. Meanwhile, because of those same zoning regulations and fire codes that necessitated the moving of my wife and myself, we also had to move the school and the church back into the other half of the commercial property which had been our original Auditorium. We then, for financial reasons and zoning code regulations, totally gave up the old space and moved into the auditorium side permanently. By the end of that six months the Lord had completely shut the school down.

Meanwhile unrest was starting to sweep through the church. I mentioned to the senior pastor that I could sense a bad spirit in the church but he said he didn't feel that anything was wrong. Then the quarrels started between pastor and several families in the church. His resentment and their hard feelings began to grow. Friction was starting to throw sparks left and right. Then the final financial axe fell and we had to give up the commercial property altogether and share a church building with several other churches. This necessitated moving our Sunday morning services to noon and our evening services into the cabana at Pastor ****'s apartment complex. Our midweek service was moved to Thursday night at the shared church building.

By the time of the move, six or eight families had already left the church. Not primarily because of scriptural differences, although that was the reason for several families leaving, but mostly because of personal differences between them and the pastor. The remaining members were told that they could not fellowship with the members that had left. Some had been friends for years.

After that, I told pastor that we were going to stick around rather than leaving as I had told him we were going to do several months before, because I would feel like a rat abandoning a sinking ship if we left right then after so many others had.

We had been in the new facility for about three months and the church had stabilized in numbers, and had even grown some; and, in addition, things were coming around quite nicely financially. Then I felt it was the proper time, so I told the pastor that God was done with Bonnie and I there and that He was moving us south and east. He forbade me to tell anyone in the church, and convinced me to stay four more months. He said that if I did tell anyone, it would destroy the church. So in deference to his wishes, we told no one and made our regular plans to head to Salt Lake for the yearly April missions conference. After we left Salt Lake we took a run down to Mesquite, Nevada, on the Arizona-Nevada border, and from there we checked out towns diagonally across Nevada to Oregon and then headed back home. I could see that a church was needed most in Mesquite and God seemed to have opened some doors when we went there on that exploratory trip. This was in April. Upon our return, I had told the pastor that I felt that we would like to come forward and announce to the church that God had called us away and that we were going to start deputation since we had a little less than three months left. Again he forbade me to tell the church we were leaving, stating, once again, that it would destroy the church. So, once again, we told no one. We started deputation locally which was possible because our services were still not on Sunday morning nor Wednesday night. Things began getting tense because people in the church could sense that something was up and were questioning me about it. Some wondered why I didn't get a secular job and some began resenting the fact that I didn't. I couldn't even tell them it was because we were on deputation and making preparations to leave, by then in less than two months. I'm a very open type of person and I began to feel devious because I could not answer their question openly but had to constantly side-step the issue. Finally I went to Pastor **** and asked him about it and

told him that it really bothered me that I was feeling devious about something that was supposed to be a cause of joy and expectation, our being called to a new field. That's when he got extremely angry and blew up at me, verbally, and showed me a side of him that I had not seen in all of the previous five years. There had been several times in the previous six months that he had gotten short with Bonnie but we always went to him and reconciled the problems before they could get out of hand. But this was the first time that I had experienced his hot temper personally. It was very unsettling to me and gave me a strange sense of foreboding. I was not aware at that time that he was in the early stages of more conflicts with other members of the church; but I had been aware that over the previous several months since we had moved into the new building that his demeanor toward me had begun undergoing a subtle change. Now that change had become increasingly more obvious and now it had culminated in this near rage toward me because I had disagreed with him. (I want to add that this disagreement was brought up totally in private. I would never publicly disagree with the pastor that God has placed in authority over me because I know that God absolutely does not allow it.) My wife is my discernor of spirits and she had warned me for several months that something was wrong, neither one of us knew, however, what it was; but we did know it had something to do with pastor and the church, and us. Anyway, after he had calmed down I again deferred to his wishes and told no one. I knew something was wrong when he told me that keeping the truth from people who had a right to know was not devious. But, he was the pastor.

From there things deteriorated at a breath-taking rate. Then, about a month before we left, I saw several members at another church on a Wednesday night. (Remember that our services were on Thursday night.) We had been to this church in search of support several times and were there on that night to say goodbye to some old friends who were now members there. I could not tell the members from our church why we were there because pastor had forbidden us to tell anyone in the church that we were leaving. The next night, Thursday, my wife and I went to our church for our midweek service. I didn't know it but pastor had been told by someone that those other members had went to the other church the previous night, so when I arrived at church, he gave me a strange look and asked me to go outside on the steps with him for a minute. He said he wanted to talk to me about something. As soon as we stepped out onto the church porch, he looked at me and with extreme anger in his voice asked me "Are you trying to split this church on purpose or is it something you are doing by accident. Because you're sure doing a good job of it!" I had no idea what he was talking about and I told him so. He then accused me, in a controlled but angry voice, of inviting members away to go to services at other churches on Wednesday nights. I then told him that Bonnie and I had been at that church, and others on deputation, which he knew, and that I had never invited, nor would I ever even think of inviting a member of our church to go to another church. I tried to keep my voice soft so that others would not hear what was going on; because I was still under promise to him to not let anyone know that we were leaving. Also I wanted to calm his obviously overwrought emotions and assure him that I was not a turn-coat, sheep-stealing, back-stabber, like he obviously thought I was. After a few minutes he had calmed down and we went back inside.

I thought the incident was over. He disappeared for about fifteen minutes with the two men that had attended the other church the previous night, one of which was a preacher boy about to leave for Bible college and the other was the man that ran the bus ministry, and then began the evening service upon his return. I learned later that he had severely raked those two over

the coals in front of another preacher boy as well as in the presence of his three daughters and his twenty-one year old son who was also a preacher-boy. This all happened in a staff meeting during that fifteen minutes right before services. The results of that incident were that the preacher boy that was in the room during the angry chewing-out session left the ministry, the church, and (worst of all) the Lord within a week; the bus ministry man left the church within three weeks and the other preacher-boy (in his late twenties) left the church three weeks later, one week before leaving for Bible college. I counseled him that he needed to reconcile with the pastor but his and his wife's final words to me on the matter, privately, were that he never wanted to see the pastor again.

What does all of this chaos and these heart-wrenching accusations, all of it instigated by the devil, have to do with faith? Bear with me and you will see, the story is almost over.

That night's service was totally in the flesh for everyone there. You could almost see the devil dancing around the room, gleefully cackling. Thinly veiled personal accusations were spread about like black-widow spiders webs from the pulpit. The venomous bite of fleshly words fatally wounded several who were there. Then at the end of the service there was no invitation given, only an announcement made. Pastor announced that Bonnie and I were leaving in a month and that he was taking a months sabbatical before I left. He asked me to be interim pastor and then- he walked out of the building, got into his car and left. After he left, I closed the service and most of the people asked me in bewilderment "What just happened?" Many wondered if pastor was quitting as Pastor because that was the impression he unmistakably gave when he left. There was absolutely no mistaking the feeling that it was final.

On the way home my wife said, "Oh no! Do you see what's happening? You're being set up as a scapegoat!" (Listen to your wives guys- there is such a thing as women's intuition. They read people and situations better than we do sometimes and then process it both subconsciously and spiritually. When they're done, people call it intuition. I call it all part and parcel with what God calls, "discerning the spirits.")

For the next month, as interim pastor, I preached and counseled basically three things: love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The church was being torn apart by doubts, hard feelings, and fleshly obstinacy and pride. ("Only by pride cometh contention.") God led me to hold the senior pastor up in my preaching; and to tear the devil down as the one true enemy. In my counseling I told those who had been personally attacked that whether they decided to stay or leave they had to get rid of what I call, "excess baggage." I counseled them that if you leave one church with unresolved differences, especially with the pastor, then the devil will use that to discourage you and cause trouble in the next church. Every time your new pastor does something that rubs you the wrong way then the devil will remind you of the past and whisper to you, "See! It's happening all over again!" I counseled nothing other than, "Obey the scriptures and go to the brother that you have had a problem with and resolve it!" This is what is demanded with any brother or sister in the Lord, and even more so if it is the pastor.

After Pstr. **** left, several asked me if I would stay on as pastor if he didn't come back. I told them no, and, besides that, it wasn't ethical for me to even consider it until such time as pastor **** officially resigned. They pressed me for counsel, asking "Then what do we do if he doesn't come back?" I told them that in that case they would set up a pulpit committee and search for pastoral candidates; but not to even discuss it with other members until pastor ****

decided what he was going to do. They asked me if I would candidate at such a time as that and I again told them “No,” it was not right for me to even consider doing so.

God used Bonnie and I to soothe much of the hurt left by the abrupt, and seemingly final, leaving of the pastor. I kept him informed of the progress of the healing and, at his request, explained to him some of the problems that were brought to my attention. In a gentle way I told him that some members thought that he was a dictator and that if things didn't change they were leaving if he did come back. He asked me what my opinion was as to why they would say that. I told him that since so many had already left the church that maybe he was holding on to the remaining members so tight that he was smothering them instead of letting them grow. He asked me what else, so I told him that others had misunderstood some of his statements that a “truly separated church, to an outsider, would look like a cult.” He pressed me for other problems so we had a discussion that lasted about 45 minutes. When he told me that he doubted that he would be coming back, I then encouraged him to continue as pastor because God had put him there and he had held the fort for twenty years and that God wasn't done with him there yet. And I told him that I was simply holding the pulpit for him until he was rested and ready to go again.

After the month was over, he returned to his pulpit. Immediately he told everyone that things were not going to change. Some more members then left the church as they said they would.

My wife and I were making final preparations to leave and some of our friends wanted to throw us a going-away party. Some were still members of the church and some were former members but all had been friends for several years and many were like family to us. The ones planning the party did not invite Pstr.****. The day after the party, we were loading some things out of the old building and I called Pstr.**** to let him know that we were coming over to his house to get a few computer disks and such. Before I could say anything he immediately accused me of trying to split the church again, of being a turncoat, and that I would “Party with the devil himself if he gave you a party and a love offering.” He said that I had done more to destroy the church in the last month than, “any good you might have done in the past five-and-a-half years.” He said that he had told his girls a month or more before that I would have a, “meeting,” with the old members before I left. He said several other cutting things and then hung up the phone. I was devastated.

Object oriented faith That night my wife and I went to where we were staying and, later, after we were in bed I began praying. My wife was asleep and I was setting up in bed in the dark. I began to get frightened. I could not believe that a man I had served diligently for 5½ years could accuse me of those things. I began to pray, “God, if this is Christianity I'm not sure I want any part of it.” I began to doubt everything about Christianity and Christians. I began to lose my faith. I began to wonder if Christianity was real; if Christ was real; if GOD was real. I agonized this way for 3 or 4 hours. I would pray and pray and question God about what had happened, how could it happen? If Christianity was real then how could someone that I looked up to as a pastor, and teacher, a man of God, a preacher; if he could do such a thing then how could God really be God and let such a thing happen. I felt I had completely lost my faith and that the last 15 years of my life had been a farce. Oh, let me tell you, the devil was setting right on my shoulder and egging me on. He whispered in my ear and led me on down a dark path.

“How could God let this happen to you. You’ve served Him faithfully for 15 years. You deserve better than this!” And I was just sucking it up; having the biggest pity party I have ever had in my entire life. I was agonizing over it. My faith had been shattered. Then the devil would whisper. “How could Pstr. **** do something that horrible to you? You served him, you looked up to him, you believed in him and stood up for him when people told you that he was wrong. You did his job when he wouldn’t! HOW DARE HE DO THIS TO YOU AND HOW COULD GOD LET IT HAPPEN?” He began to shake my faith that there even was a God or Christ. If they were real then “something like this COULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED,” hissed the serpent. “Your wife was right. Pstr. **** set you up for a scapegoat and then cut your throat. He couldn’t take the blame for destroying the church with his dictatorial ways- so he led YOU to the slaughter.” All the time I was praying and soul searching and asking God how could it happen- how could it happen- HOW COULD IT HAPPEN??? I cried out over and over with a combination of anger and hurt and confusion; but it all was really just a cry for help! And in His love and mercy and grace God was letting me get it all out. Like lancing an ulcerated sore to let out the poison and pus he allowed me to open the wound wide and deep. He wanted every last vestige to drain out so he let me carve and slash at the wound to completely expose it so that none would be covered and hidden. Sometime an infected wound requires major surgery to scalpel away large pieces of tissue to remove all lingering infection so that the rest of the tissue can heal. My grandfather had gangrene of the heel that eventually cost him his life. God was preventing that from happening to me. For my grandfather it had been too late; but for me, God had gotten to me before the infection could spread, in my soul. God cut away at my hurt and removed it, just like the doctors had cut off my grandfather’s heel. Then God allowed all of my doubt to be cut away just like my grandfather’s foot had been cut away. Then last of all, God had removed my pride, just like they had removed my grandfather’s leg. God knew that without immediate and decisive surgery I would soon die of gangrene of the soul. The infection had to be stopped. In my grandfather’s case it had been too late; in my case God knew that the infection had to be let out or I would just as surely die. I would die of soul-poisoning from the hurt and doubt and pride just as surely as my grandfather had died of blood-poisoning from the gangrene.

After I had spilled my soul and emptied it of all of the pain and pride and doubt that had filled it like an infested, festering sore, then, God spoke to me. There had been too much hurt and “me” in there for God to fill it with His Spirit. He had to wait until I was emptied and exhausted before He could come in and commune with me.

Spiritual faith / Natural faith

Then He spoke to my heart.

Quietly and with love he said, **“You haven’t lost your faith in me- you just lost your faith in a man.”**

Immediately I began to heal. It took quite a while for the process but to begin with I forgave Pstr. **** and began to pray for him. I prayed that God would work on BOTH OF US to make us both better servants of His.

After that last phone call we didn’t see Pstr.**** for about two months. God had moved us to Ogden, Utah and I was pastoring Ogden Bible Baptist Church. (That story will be given later, in another section. Dr. V.B.K.) We went back to **** state two months later to get the

rest of our things and make the final move to Utah. God had impressed upon my own heart exactly what I had preached to the people as interim pastor. He brought it to my attention that I could not carry any “excess baggage” with me either. He had made it perfectly clear in His Word that I MUST go to my brother and attempt a reconciliation. When we went to his house he was still very accusative and angry. He said that he had been told that I was conspiring with an ex-member of the church to “destroy this ministry because it was a cult.” I explained to him that it was not true. I reminded him that he was the one that said that it should look like a cult and that was probably where the story came from. I also let him know that, that particular ex-member was one of those that I had counseled over-and-over to also reconcile with him- no matter who was at fault! He said that he fully expected me to apologize for my conduct before I left, and so I did. I apologized for hurting his feelings by going to the going-away party thrown by those that had had a falling out with him. We talked and I cleared the air of some other things that I knew he had against me. He said that he would think about it and consider maybe “restoring fellowship” with us. And then we left and headed for Utah.

In the car my wife said, “He hasn’t forgiven you.” And I told her, “I’ve done what God commanded that I do; therefore, my conscience is clear before Him.” And that, “If Pstr. **** did not forgive me for hurting his feelings and the other gross things that he thought I had done to him then that was now between him and God.”

We have not seen him since then but we did receive a card from him in the mail at Christmas; maybe God is working things out on that end.

A Destruction or a Strengthening of faith

Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

What I had thought was the single most destructive incident in my entire Christian life, turned out to be the single most faith building and strengthening one of those 15 years. I thought it had destroyed my faith but instead it had given me a new direction for it and a deeper understanding of it.

Which direction for faith?

I learned, as I could have in no other way that the direction in which I had to exercise my faith had to be toward God and not man.

Natural faith- When I exercise my faith toward a person, lost or saved, even toward someone in authority and stature in my eyes (like a pastor) I must always remember that they are not the Creator, they are the creature. They are just as fallible as I am. There is always the possibility, since that is an expression of “natural faith,” that that faith may go unrewarded. No matter how hard we try, as human beings we all have feet of clay. We are not perfect yet; no one is. God is working on all of us and, and Praise God, He ain’t finished yet. Since He never gives up on us, then why should we give up on each other. As I said earlier, we have to exercise faith, natural faith, constantly in our everyday lives. But remember, it is natural faith and when it goes unrewarded we must not let that shake us. I had a teacher in Bible College that taught me, “Never automatically EXPECT anyone to do anything and you’ll never be disappointed.” We rejoice when they do what we ask them to do; but, we can’t let our happiness depend on it. We can’t let our peace of mind depend on fallible people. Natural faith is not the right exercise of faith when it concerns our peace of mind, our happiness, or our

strength to keep on keeping on for God. If our service for God depends on what other people do then we are fighting the fight like a one-armed man fighting with his one remaining hand tied behind his back. We have only one good hand of faith, and that is the hand of “spiritual” faith. Why not use it toward God instead of using our other hand of “natural” faith, which many times turns out to be no hand at all, to fight the fight. We have had that other hand cut-off so many times that it is a wonder that it keeps growing back. Why don’t we use the one hand that never has failed us- the hand of spiritual faith.

Spiritual faith- If we use our “spiritual” faith then what seems to us like a devastating blow from the enemy can turn into a strong guiding hand from God. What feels like a raging torrent that threatens to sweep us away to certain destruction can be turned into the deep, life-giving well of God’s strength. When those times come, then we must remember that everything in our lives is either BROUGHT by God or ALLOWED by Him. Nothing ever takes Him by surprise. And if we love Him, then all things will work together for our good. From the darkest valleys to the highest mountains God is leading us on a path toward himself and the image of His dear Son. He has predestined us Christians to become what we are, saved, only one way, by being conformed to the image of Christ; which is to vicariously experience the torment and punishment of His crucifixion. And by faith we appropriate Christ for ourselves. Then why should we leave it there? We are commanded by God to keep striving for the perfection of Christ. And spiritual faith, the same faith that was a channel for God’s saving grace, is the same channel by which we have access to His sustaining grace and the power to live righteously in a wicked and lost world.

Summary- Let God be God! Don’t tell Him how he is going to mold the clay. Let Him allow or bring whatever He wants into our lives. Have true, spiritual, faith in Him. What can seem like the worst and most debilitating turn of events to us can turn out to be the most strengthening, faith building moment of our entire Christian lives. It can be the deciding moment when we turn from natural faith in the creation to spiritual faith in the Creator as the basis for our lives. The first, undependable and fallible; the second, eternally dependable and rewarding. Faith must always be exercised toward the right object- the omnipotent Creator of all that exists.

Use and Misuse of Faith

The proper use of faith is to make it your servant. (Lk 17:5-10) That is its job. Make it work for you. Don’t ever let it rule over you. It is to be a servant to do your bidding, not a master to rule over you.

The use of faith-

Natural faith- Use your natural faith to make your life easier, not harder. As we have already seen, we have to exercise natural faith in order to live in this world. But be very picky about how and toward whom or what you exercise that faith. And if its not rewarded “think it not strange.” Be prepared ahead of time for that possibility, since it will come almost every day, and roll with the punch. Keep this thought when it happens, “Well, what more could I expect from a fallen and fallible creature.” Then use this failure of your natural faith as an opening to help the one that let you down. Their fallibility is not only on your mind but, in many instances, it’s on theirs also. Find a way to help them do better next time; just like God does for us when we fail Him.

If they're lost, then lead them to the Lord so they have God's power to help them do better next time. If they're saved then do as God commands:

Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Spiritual faith- This faith can only be exercised toward God. Do so in full expectation that He will never let your faith go unrewarded. If He does not answer, then your spiritual faith tells you that He is doing what's best for you. And never be surprised when this faith is rewarded because it always will be. It will be with either a yes or a no; but, it is always rewarded.

The misuse of faith-

Natural faith

No parachute- Misuse of natural faith is when your happiness or peace of mind depends on this type of faith being rewarded. If you do so then you are simply setting yourself up for a fall. And I guarantee it will come because you are letting faith rule over you instead of you over it. If the devil knows that this is the way to get to you, to discourage you, to maybe even put you out of the ministry, then this is exactly where he will hit you. He will maneuver you into putting your faith in someone or something and then work it out so that they or it let you down. In fact, he'll get your faith so high that when he brings you down, it'll be like a free fall from space- with no parachute.

Spiritual faith- Spiritual faith can never be misused. As long as your faith is really spiritual, really is faith in the Creator, then that can never be wrong. The only wrong use of it that could possibly, although remotely, be considered a misuse of it would be to simply never use it. But that is not really a misuse of it. That would be better called a neglect of it.

Examples and Rewards of Faith
(An odyssey of faith)

Of Natural faith- Faith in the creation instead of the Creator.

Music business- I started in the music business, professionally, when I was fourteen years old. I had faith in my ability to sing and entertain people so I hitchhiked to Montana during summer vacations and started playing in the bars. As I got older I began hiring other musicians to play with me in bands. I had faith that they could help me realize my dream. I expected to achieve stardom. That was natural faith and the reward of it was failure. I became locally famous, but I never became the superstar that I had hoped I'd be. I worked diligently and hard at the business but I still came up short. My faith in myself went unrewarded. And as for the musicians that I hired to help me, I normally kept them a few months to a year and then I would fire them and go back to doing a single. My faith, natural faith in them, also went unrewarded. I just never seemed to have the money and the connections to become a famous musician so my faith, my natural faith in myself, went unrewarded. Then, in 1982-83, I began attending church and quit the music business. But I still was not saved, so I had no access to God's power in my life. No spiritual faith, no channel. No channel, no access. No access, no power. So I was still operating on my own on natural faith and not on spiritual faith.

Music ministry- After quitting the bars and the professional music scene, I decided to start a professional music ministry to Independent Baptist churches. The problem was that I was still trying to serve God by natural faith. I thought that I could serve Him using just my natural talents and my natural faith in those talents. The reward, once again, was failure. My family and I wound up stranded in Texas far away from our home in Washington state. Other than the pastor that I knew in Irving, Texas, and two other pastors that he knew that would let me come in and sing, I couldn't get any other preachers in Texas to allow me to come in and minister in their churches. Again, my natural faith in myself and my abilities went unrewarded. Then, one week before Mother's Day, 1985, as music director in Emmanuel Baptist Church in Irving, Texas, I had to get down off of the platform and get saved. I had been serving God for nearly two years, but up until that Sunday evening I had been lost and trying to serve God by natural faith not spiritual faith. That night I exercised spiritual faith, faith in God and His ability to do what He promised, and, in return, he saved my soul through that channel of spiritual faith.

Then, after that, I tried to continue in the music ministry for a short time, but it didn't work. I still had not learned to exercise this new thing in my life, spiritual faith. I still didn't understand that the same channel used for God's saving power had to be used for His power to flow in my life and the ministries that I was attempting to accomplish for Him now as a Christian. Instead of letting Him work through me, by faith (spiritual faith), I was still trying to work for Him, to work in His stead. I did not quite understand, yet, that it would only be by His power and use of me that anything would be accomplished for His kingdom. Only by Him and faith in Him, not by my own abilities or talents. Old habits of natural faith in myself and mine own abilities are hard habits to break. And no matter how many times your natural faith has gone unrewarded, even

when it's in yourself just as mine was in myself, you will still probably have to learn exactly the same way I did- **THE HARD WAY!** That's why God allowed me to go through what I have gone through so that I could warn you. And now I have; so there is no way you can blame God when, or if, it happens to you. You will have no one to blame but yourself, any more than I could blame anyone but myself. I thank God that He didn't give up on me though and you'll thank God likewise.

God's providence and Sovereignty- After those things happened, some before and some after I was saved, then I finally understood. He had allowed those things to teach me not to rely on natural faith. He was using what I had, natural faith, to guide me until I learned to use what He wanted me to use, spiritual faith. Not a change of faith but a change in the object and direction of my faith. But all the time, in His Sovereignness, His will was being done in my life. By His providence I was being protected from utter disaster and guided toward eventual success. I had not yet developed an understanding of my need for a change of direction for my faith; but I did have a love for God. Therefore, I knew enough to understand and appropriate the promise in Romans after I got saved:

Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

This was enough to keep me hanging on, sometimes by my fingernails, but still, hanging on. And God was faithful; His Word is true. And we would save ourselves a lot of worry and heartbreak if we would just believe it and Him.

Job 17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Ps 37:23-24 The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.

Ps 138:6-8 Though the LORD [be] high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The LORD will perfect [that which] concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, [endureth] for ever:

John 15:4-11 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep

my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full.

I was protected by Him but I had not yet opened up the channel for His power in my life until that night. It was like I had not yet opened the channel of God directed faith so that the life-giving sap could flow freely from the vine to me. If I had done it His way I would have enjoyed it more. But, since I insisted on doing it my way, I enjoyed it less. But! His sovereign will was still accomplished in my life. The only difference was the amount of enjoyment and comfort experienced by me and the family for which He held me responsible. Remember, those in your immediate sphere of influence will rejoice with you or suffer with you. They will pay or profit just as much as you do according to your use or misuse of faith. You decide for them by choosing the direction of your faith. Whether it will be toward the creation or the Creator is your choice; but the consequences will be shared by all. And in that you have no choice.

Spiritual faith- Faith in the Creator instead of the creation. After being saved, through spiritual faith, in 1985, I surrendered to the ministry. I told God, "You're the boss." I no longer was going to tell God what I was going to do for Him, like I did with the music ministry, I was going to let Him tell me **WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO THROUGH ME!** Oh it was hard. Those old habits of natural faith would kick up their ugly heads quite often; but, with God's help and His gentle, and sometimes not so gentle guiding hand, I made it through. Sometimes bruised and bleeding but, praise God He brought me through. Even the tough times helped make me stronger. In fact, in retrospect, those tough times were what made me the strongest because it was then that I had to turn to God and depend totally on Him and not on myself.

Going to College in Texas- I prayed and surrendered to God to be His servant. I said, "I'll preach when you want me to preach, I'll sing and play music when you want me to do that, and I'll wash toilets when you want me to wash toilets. You tell me when to do which. Point at the Bible when it's time for preaching, at the guitar when it's time for singing, and the toilet brush when it's time for washing. And if there's anything else, you tell me and I'll do that too." Then God then made it clear that I needed to go to Bible college and learn how to do the preaching and teaching part. So the following fall He opened up a Bible college just for me in Bedford, Texas, just 10 or 12 miles from where I lived. Myself and one other student, Bro. Kevin Finch, were the first two students in the college. At the time I was working part time at McDonald's to support my family and going to college full time. I was bringing home about \$360.00 a month. During that time obviously we had to live by faith. There were times when we would be down to our last meal and the Lord would send someone over with several bags of groceries. Sometimes being broke can be humorous, believe it or not. We had one lady in the church whose husband was called to preach but she wouldn't let him. So sometimes she would kind of get on my wife's case about, as she put it, "the way you have to live." One time she told my wife, "The problem is that you and Terry live beyond your means." My wife burst out laughing and said, "First you gotta have means before you can live beyond them!" Well,

by faith we kept on keeping on. God had laid it on my heart that I needed to go to college so that had to be my number one priority as far as the ministry was concerned. Obviously we didn't starve to death.

In my last year of college, God laid it on my heart to start a church in Coppell, Texas, about 12 miles north of Irving where we were then living. That community is what is called a "bedroom community." In other words, not much in the way of a town, businesses and such, but about 99½% residences. And a very expensive community at that. How were we going to find a place to rent on my tiny wages? How were we going to find a place to meet? Well, I was learning. If you know it's what God wants you to do, then by faith, spiritual faith, go do it. Don't look at the obstacles look at the opportunities. By natural faith, in your own abilities, things look like obstacles. But, by spiritual faith, in God's abilities, those same obstacles become opportunities for God to work wonders. Well to make a long story short, God did work wonders. My wife got a small insurance settlement at just the right time for us to buy a small trailer (8' X 30') and we moved to Coppell.

We rented a building and started the church. By faith, spiritual faith, God had worked through us, through that channel of our faith, to accomplish something that we could never have done on our own. We saw several people saved as a result of God's working through us. At that time I was 41 years old, kinda late to be getting started in the ministry, don't you think? Also kinda late to be going to college to prepare for the ministry, don't you think? Also a little old to be going to bed at 11:00 P.M. every night and then getting up at 3:30 A.M. to go to work. And then from work at 7:30 leaving to go to school. And then at noon getting out of school and going home to eat lunch and then spending the afternoon trying to get a church going and doing my homework before going to bed again at 11:00 p.m. A bit much, true, if you're operating on natural faith. But with God's help all things are possible. And when you open the channel of spiritual faith, then God's power can flow into and through you to do what He has called you to do. To sum it up, God did it and we just went along for the ride. We did the work that He told us to do and left the results to Him. That's spiritual faith in action.

Well, I finally graduated from college and turned the church over to another preacher and bought a bus which we converted to a motor home. I packed my wife and kids in it and headed home for Washington state. I knew that God wanted us in the northwest. I didn't know exactly where, but I knew He'd show me when we got there. By the way, on the trip home to Washington the bus blew a transmission and we were stranded in Rock Springs, Wyoming. We had a mechanic look all over a twelve state area for a used transmission and he couldn't find one. He finally located a rebuild in Texas for \$3,000 and said he'd put it in for another \$500. We didn't have the money for that so by faith we waited on God to do something. (When you're broke you don't have much choice but to have faith and wait on God.) Well, when it was all over four days later, God had a transmission for us just a half-mile away for \$500; and we got the whole job done for \$1,000 instead of \$3,500. And by the way, God supplied the \$1,000 also.

Training in faith- Over the next several years God had us in several places.

First in Port Angeles, Washington, where I pastored a church and we lived in the bus

that God had given us. Without that bus we could never have been able to stay there and I wouldn't have been able to pastor that church. It was too small to pay me much in the way of a wage, generally \$25 - \$50 dollars every week or two; but, we had faith in God and He always provided. Another bit of humor in being broke. Several of the men had a meeting and decided that \$50 a week (which was supposed to be what I was to get paid) was not enough. The church voted to give me a raise to \$150 a week. Their heart was in the right place but the only problem was that I never did get paid anything after that. Not even the \$50 that I used to get once in a while. But you know what? God was faithful and He took care of our needs in other ways and through other channels. He was training us to have faith, no matter what the circumstances that surround us. We stayed there a year and finally managed to merge the two warring factions back together. (The church had went through a split just before we arrived.) Half wanted the previous pastor in jail. And they could have put him there. I counseled that you do not go before the unbelievers with problems in the church. So we handled it internally as a local church. We withdrew his ordination papers in an effort to bring him to repentance. But, it didn't work. He had moved to another state and we worked with his pastor there to try to affect a solution but all to no avail. I don't want to go into that any deeper, I just wanted you to know that when, by faith, you tell God you'll wash toilets, you'd better be sure you mean it. Because it might not be quite the way you think. In this case it was a spiritual toilet that needed washing. By faith He saw us through it and everything was done in a scriptural manner. And our training in faith continued.

The next place God took us on our odyssey of faith was to Butte, Montana. We got there by way of Salt Lake City, Utah, where I first served as associate pastor under pastor Marshal Warneke. During the two years in Salt Lake we finally got to move out of our bus after several months. While there we lived on a small amount of money but God always took care of us, He was teaching us a few more things about living by faith and in the mean time was preparing us for Butte, Montana. Upon taking the pastorate in Butte, by a unanimous vote of the church there, we settled in for what we thought would be a lifetime ministry. The people loved us and we loved them. What I didn't realize was that there was a Judas in the church. I began to place my faith in the people there because they were, on the surface, such loving and nice people. God took the church from about 25 members to about 75 members in six months. And then the problems started. I won't go into the details but in general the previous pastor, who told me that he had "somewhat of a bishopric" there, had left the treasurer as his informant. He then counseled them to put their tithes into a bank account and starve me out. God, of course, didn't let that happen. So then they began calling the new members and telling them, "we don't want your kind here. Why don't you go somewhere else." Then they called one of the founding members and told him the same thing. God would not let me leave for several more months. Remember what I said about washing toilets, well, here we go again. Finally, when those seven or eight members who wanted me gone (two men and five or six women that wanted to run the church, and thought they did) started having meetings on Wednesday nights with the previous pastor to figure out how to get me out of the pulpit against the wishes of the majority, then God told me to preach Sunday morning and then

preach on church discipline on Sunday night, and then get my family on the road to Washington state. Which I did. The purpose of this story I will get to right now. God was teaching me that I must place my faith in Him, not in people. Those who had welcomed us with open arms eventually had been seduced by the devil to betray the faith that I had placed in them. That hurt me very deeply. He also wanted me to see the results of not teaching my children to have faith in Him, and I mean the kind of spiritual faith that will sustain them when their natural faith in people is betrayed. That particular incident taught me as no other that those in my immediate sphere of influence will be drastically affected by my misuse of faith. I was growing and that particular lesson was one that I learned the hard way. It cost me several of my children. From that time on they began to drift away from God and the church. Praise God, He is bringing them back slowly but surely. Remember I said that this was God training me in faith? Well, learn from my mistakes, that's why God allowed them to happen. Don't be pig-headed like I was and learn the hard way. Instead, listen when God's trying to teach you and learn from my mistakes. Place your faith in Him and it will always be rewarded. But, if your happiness, and the happiness of those around you and under your influence, depends on your faith, natural faith in what other people will do, then you will live a very unhappy life. And if you don't teach your children that they need to have their happiness centered around faith in God, then they too will have to pay the price just like mine did. From there we wound up in *****, Washington.

Living in the Missions apartment- One of the things that we had to do while in ***** was to see our living arrangements go from a five bedroom house to a one room missions apartment. As I have already recounted in a previous section, God had taken the Christian school from twenty-eight students to almost nothing and the church had fallen from well over a hundred to around fifty or sixty members. As a consequence my wife and I, by faith, moved into the missions apartment. We did this to allow more money from the school to go into paying the bills of the church. God rewarded that faith by giving my wife of His power and comfort to enable her to live in that one room apartment with no windows without her claustrophobia causing her to panic and run. We were supposed to be there for two months; but, we lived there for nearly two years. Then, preparing us for our eventual move to Utah, he moved us from that into a much more comfortable, and windowed, RV bus conversion and gave Bonnie (my wife) her SSI which the government had refused to give her for the previous twenty years. When I think of the way changed their minds at exactly the right time so that they gladly gave it to her after twenty years of absolute refusal, I am reminded of a bumper sticker that I have standing on one of my book shelves. The bumper sticker has an explosion on it with the words: "The Big Bang Theory: God spoke and BANG! It happened."

Living in the bus- Well there we were, living in the bus with only Bonnie's SSI check, a food allowance that went along with it, and maybe another \$100 or so that was still coming in from the Christian school that was closed but still serving a couple of home-schoolers with curriculum and records keeping. We were comfortable. Bonnie was happy to be out of that one room missions apartment with no windows, as well as happy because

our youngest son had moved home and was living in the bus with us. All in all we were happy, comfortable, well fed, and relatively broke. You know, I find it is most easy to live by faith, spiritual faith, when there is not much around in which to exercise your natural faith. Maybe that's why God seems to keep so many of us preachers and other Christians broke, so we'll have to depend on Him. Maybe once we learn that lesson, He'll let us have some more money. Of course, by then, we will have enough ability to use our faith in Him to turn right around and plow that money back into His ministry and keep on living by spiritual faith. The odyssey continues.

*Praying for the Church building in *****-* One of the things that happened during the last several months that we were in ***** is that the conservative Baptists decided to get rid of a very large church in *****. They could not find a pastor for it so they decided to close it and put it on the market. The thought of a church closing and probably being sold to someone for use for a commercial business broke my heart. We began praying that God would give that building to us as a church. Praying that somehow He would work it out so that we could get it. We had no way financially that we could buy it so we prayed that God would give it to us in some way. We prayed earnestly for several months. During one meeting we were taking turns praying and when it came to my turn I bared my soul to God publicly. Sobbing nearly uncontrollably I asked God that, "If Bonnie and I have been faithful and have any blessings coming then we ask that this be the blessing." We both love old churches. They have character. And I could not believe that God would want one of His churches closed and turned over to the world. I knew, by faith that God was going to give us a building and I wanted it to be that building. And God gave me a peace about it. I just knew He was going to do it. Well, that was another leg on my odyssey of faith. God was going to answer my prayer; I just knew, by faith, that He was. What I didn't know was that He was going to answer some four or five months later; and that it was not going to be that building but another. I also did not know that I was going to be the pastor and not the associate pastor, nor that it was not going to be that building, nor even in that city, nor even in that state. He did give me my hearts desire which was a beautiful old church. The thing was, that church was already prepared and waiting for me in Ogden, Utah; not in *****, Washington. The lesson that God was teaching me, and through me, teaching you, is that we must wait on God's timing and planning for the answer. If we do wait on Him the answer will always be forthcoming and it will be, "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," (Eph 3:20), and it was. Not only did He give us the beautiful old church building that we had prayed for; but He gave us some loving, wonderful people for me to pastor. He gave us a church (remember the church is the people) that takes care of all bills (building payments, utilities, gas allowance and our car insurance, etc.) and that leaves the small income that we receive from Bonnie's SSI, plus her food allowance, for us to live on. This leaves me to be full time in the ministry including many hours to study and write sermons, books and study materials, as well as songs. Oh yes, and for you ladies, my wife has dreamed of having a beautiful old brick house to live in since she was eight years old. And guess what the parsonage is that God gave her to live in? You guessed it, a beautiful old brick house. If that answer

from God of our prayer of faith is not “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” then I’m not really me, I’m the Rajah of Punjabi.

*Leaving ***** for a New Land-* When God made it perfectly clear that He was done with us in ***** then we began making plans to leave. The problem was that we didn’t know where He was sending us. I have had preacher friends tell me, most adamantly, that you “have to have a call to go to an area.” Well my question is, “How does that call come?” Is it an audible voice or just a burden in your heart. The problem I have is that I see dozens and hundreds of places that need churches. And I feel a burden for all of them. So now what? You know what I have found in my 15 plus years in the ministry? That the gospel can never be delivered to the wrong address. When God calls me to go He doesn’t always tell me where I’m going. He just makes it perfectly clear that He is done with me where I am serving right then and that He has another job for me to do. With the toilets that we sometimes have to wash (spiritually speaking) and some of the hardships that He is going to bring us through, I sometimes think that He purposely doesn’t tell us where or what’s ahead because He knows that it might scare us to death. Maybe it’s our lack of faith as young Christians that forces Him to work in our lives through circumstances rather than direction. I call it “slam-dunk,” direction from God. He just picks us up and plops us down where He wants us. But you know what? By faith we know that that’s OK too. To get back to the odyssey. When we left ***** I followed a principle that I have preached for 15 years. “It’s easier to steer a moving object than it is to steer one that is setting still.” It’s the same way with serving God. If you’re already working, then it’s easier for Him to change your direction than it is to motivate you to get off of your hind-end and start working in the first place. So when I knew that He was moving us from ***** I took a trip with my wife and we did a road survey looking for a likely place to deliver the gospel. We settled on Mesquite, Nevada. I did so for statistical reasons like the amount of growth and so forth in the last several years. I said, “Well God, we’re headed out. I picked a likely destination at least to give us an idea of what highway to take when we leave town, but you can feel free to change it any time you want.” Well, at least I had the right highway, if not the right town.

Some of my preacher brethren tell me that’s not the way to start a new work for God. They say it’s not right to just up and go without God unmistakably giving you a goal. Well, my problem is that I keep thinking about Abram (Abraham). Isn’t that what he did, just up and go when God told him to, without knowing where he was going? Didn’t God just tell him to pack up and go and then He’d tell him later where he was going? (I think we just slaughtered one of those “sacred cows,” that I mentioned in the introduction.)

The odyssey ends- There we are, with everything we own in a U-haul trailer. Well maybe not everything. I should say, everything that would fit in the trailer. Which did not include my wife’s washer and dryer. (I’ll get to why I mentioned them in just a while.) Phil, a good friend of ours, had the trailer hooked up to his truck and we had our old Toyota crammed full and we hit the highway headin’ south. My wife and I had left a day earlier than he did in order to spend the night with my folks a hundred miles down the road; and Phil was going to meet us there early the next morning to begin our trek. Upon

arriving in Ellensburg at my dad's house we had a good visit. Bonnie's check was going to be automatically deposited in our bank about a week later and so I asked my dad if he would hold a check for \$500 until then. We couldn't wait until then to head out and we only had a \$150 to go on. He took the check and gave me the cash; and then, about 45 minutes later, he handed me back the check and said, "Here, you take this back and keep the five hundred and I don't want to hear any argument about it!" Praise God, we had headed south by faith, not even knowing how we were going to live when we got there. This gave us enough money to get started when we arrived. Well, morning came, Phil arrived, and we headed out for St. George, Utah.

We were headed for Mesquite, Nevada, but we didn't have a place there to even put our stuff, let alone a place to live. A preacher friend of ours in St. George had offered us a trailer to live in just for the cost of the lot rent. And that was less than an hours drive north of Mesquite. So we unloaded everything we had in St. George and stayed two nights there. On Friday morning we headed north to Salt Lake to show Phil the headquarters for Mormonism (he has Mormons in his family) and to visit Pstr. Warneke for a few days at our old church. I took one suit for church and two other changes of clothes. My wife took along a couple of changes of everyday clothes and two good dresses for church and left everything else in St. George. After all, we were only going up to visit for three or four days and then return to start working in Mesquite.

We arrived in Salt Lake and then God began revealing His plan. He started us on a new road that would lead to His answering my earlier prayer of faith that He had promised me would be answered. When we got there, Pstr. Warneke asked if I would go up and preach in Ogden while the pastor there was on a sabbatical. It kind of took me by surprised because that particular door had been slammed shut (I thought) five or six months before. My wife and I talked about it and agreed to go up there for a couple of weeks. We arrived on Sunday morning and I saw the building for the first time. It was beautiful. Then I met the people, and they were wonderful. They took us right in like they had known us for years. After five or six weeks as interim pastor, the previous pastor resigned and the church asked me to stay. I agreed and they unanimously voted me in as pastor. There my prayer of faith was answered not only to the fullest but exceedingly above and beyond. And those in my immediate sphere of influence reaped the benefits with me. I am happy, my wife is happy, and for the first time in years we are able to help some of our boys down the road to recovery from their disappointment brought on by their placing their faith for happiness in the natural instead of the spiritual.

Remember, faith in God will always be rewarded. Leave the details to Him and the greatest possible happiness and fulfilment awaits you through your exercise of faith in Him.

Your rallying cry and remembrance ought to always be that:

"Everything is either brought by God or allowed by Him."

The odyssey begins anew- Well we finally reached the goal that God had set for us. We moved our things from St. George to Ogden and settled in. Our faith was rewarded far

above what we ever could have conceived as being possible. Not only did we get the beautiful building that we had been praying for, by faith, but also the sweetest bunch of members that it is possible to have. They practice good fellowship and that is a reward of my faith from when I practiced the same thing in *****. They allow me to lead as pastor as I allowed my pastor to lead back then. My wife and I headed out with very little money, by faith, and God got us here. We left some things behind, by faith, and God gave us more when we arrived in Ogden. I have always preached, "God never takes anything away from you without giving you something better in return for it." I've told my wife that many times since we began our life of spiritual faith. Her faith was rewarded many times over. She now has the brick house to live in that she has wanted since she was eight. She now is in a church where the Christians love instead of oppress. Where they love her and ask her for spiritual advice instead of spiritually brow beat her. They look up to her as a role model instead of look down on her for "the way she has to live." Oh yes, the washer and dryer that she had to leave behind, God has given her a brand new set through one of the members in the church. And they are much better than the ones she left behind, by faith.

And for me: the church we left had a small computer on which I wrote and studied; here, however, a man in the church has loaned a computer to me for my use that is ten times better than the one I left and now he is talking about getting a better one just for the audio and video work that I do. Instead of being able to study and write twenty hours a week, here I can study forty hours a week. Instead of teaching a three or four preacher boys and full time workers in the school we left, I am privileged to be able to teach dozens and will be privileged to teach maybe hundreds here at the college over the coming years. Instead of following, by faith, I am now privilege to lead, by faith. Again, for both my wife and myself, our faith was rewarded, "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

But, by faith, I know that the journey is not over, it has simply begun anew in this place. God expects us to never turn back but to continue onward and upward, by faith, until He takes us out, either in death and glory or by the rapture and glory. The odyssey of faith has but one beginning, right now, and but one ending, in Heaven.

The gift of Faith

One of the reasons that theologians put forth faith as a special gift for salvation are passages of scripture in I Corinthians chapter 12 and Romans chapter 12. These passages are talking about gifts of the spirit.

I Cor 12:1 Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I would not have you ignorant.
:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

One of these gifts is "faith." (I Cor 12:9) The explanation of this verse is quite simple. We are talking here about a special gift given to a Christian. The context is one of all gifts work together to edify the body, the church. Therefore, when the Spiritual gift of faith is given, the receiver has simply been given a propensity to exercise spiritual faith above that of many other Christians. All have it, but those with the gift are simply more prone to exercise it. In fact, like any other gift, they find that it becomes necessary for them to

live more by faith than their brothers and sisters in the Lord. They have been given the extra need to do so. This has nothing at all to do with salvation. As I said before, all have been given the measure of faith for salvation from God, by inheritance, through Adam. On the other hand, whenever faith is talked about as being a special gift, directly given by God, by special measure, as it is in I Corinthians and also in Ro 12:3 “... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,” we must look at the context of the passage to glean the meaning. In Romans, once again, it is talking about special gifts for the edification and operation of the body of Christ, which is the local church. It is not faith for salvation but faith for edification that is being talked about.

In the interpretation of these verses, in fact in the interpretation of every verse, we always must remember that, “A text without a context is a pretext.”

Summary- So far we have found that faith is an ability, given to us from God by inheritance through Adam. In addition, when that faith is exercised toward the natural, it goes unrewarded much of the time. We have also found that when that ability is exercised toward the natural that it can have no effect on our eventual state after we leave this natural reality. It is only when that ability is exercised toward the spiritual, toward God, that it can bring about an eternal salvation, by grace, through that channel of faith upon our appropriation of Christ as our personal saviour. After salvation we have seen that the saved have a choice of two realities, the natural and the spiritual, in which to rely upon for their peace and happiness. If we rely on the natural by faith then the unrewarding of it, which will happen quite frequently, will lead to disappointment and unhappiness; but, if we rely on God, by exercising faith in Him, then our peace and happiness are unfailingly enhanced because He will never fail to reward our faith in Him. We can lose our faith in man but we can never truly lose our faith in God. To manifest faith in the fallen and fallible creation and to base our eternal destiny and present and future happiness on it is not logical. This is easily deduced simply based upon our experience of it's unreliability. On the other hand, to base our eternal destiny and present and future happiness upon the omnipotent Creator and sustainer of the entire physical creation, knowing of His power, truthfulness, and unchangeable and unforceable nature as presented in His infallible Holy Word is eminently logical. To have faith in God is not an illogical attempt at an escape from reality, instead it is a manifestation of an intelligent choice of the infallible Creator and the true spiritual reality over that of the fallible creation of the fallen and unreliable physical reality. Lastly we have found that when God rewards our faith in Him, He does so exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. And, finally, we have learned that everything in our lives is either brought by God or allowed by Him and that whatever comes, good or bad, He lets only those things happen that are for our benefit. Therefore, by faith, we can claim the promises that:

Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

Ps 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

chapter three

What Does God Expect Us To Do With Faith?

When I preach I admonish people to live inside, i.e., internally in the spirit not externally in the physical. If they can learn to seek their happiness, joy, fulfillment, peace, and direction, inside in the spirit instead of outside in the physical, then their lives will be much happier. In the spirit, exercising spiritual faith, inside with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that is where protection, strength and guidance are. Outside, exercising only natural faith, is where tribulation, pain, doubt, failure, and the drains upon us are. The devil is the prince of the power of the air and he and his army will bring everything they can to bear upon our external circumstances in order to try and defeat our natural faith in order to cripple us. If we live out there, by natural faith, then he will succeed much of the time. If we live inside, by spiritual faith, then all the devil and his minions can do is affect our external self, our bodies, our comfort, but he cannot touch us in our refuge.

Deut 33:27 The eternal God [is thy] refuge, and underneath [are] the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy [them].

Ps 62:5-8 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation [is] from him. He only [is] my rock and my salvation: [he is] my defence; I shall not be moved. In God [is] my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, [and] my refuge, [is] in God. Trust in him at all times; [ye] people, pour out your heart before him: God [is] a refuge for us. Selah

External circumstances can only make our temporal life comfortable or uncomfortable but they cannot affect us eternally. They can however affect us internally, in our soul, but only if we let them. If we live by spiritual faith we will realize that everything that happens to us is either: caused by God or it is allowed by God! Nothing ever takes God by surprise. Therefore, by spiritual faith I trust God and know that my life's circumstances are by the cause or allowance of Him and, as such, they must be what He wants for me. To put it even stronger, I trust, by faith in Him, that since they are by His consent they have to be the best things for me. By exercising spiritual faith I can know that everything in my life, whether good or bad, is for my profit. The things that happen might be a lesson or a testing, a tempering or a sharpening, a curing (as in leather to make it stronger and more durable) or a mending. They might be God letting a hole be cut in me to let some sin-poison drain out (as out of an ulcerated sore), or it might be that He is letting the devil prick a hole in my balloon to let some hot air out. It may be a way of strengthening me for a future battle or preparing me for a greater service; but, whatever it may be and from whatever direction it may come, by spiritual faith I trust God that it is necessary and for my greatest good because it is according to His will.

I Pet 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

I Pet 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls [to him] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

II Cor 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him (Jesus) hath given him (the lame man) this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Summary- It is obvious that exercising spiritual faith (faith toward God and the things of God) was necessary as a channel for God's grace for our salvation. It is also just as obvious that we are to exercise that same spiritual faith in order to live godly, productive lives of service for God after we are saved.

The Faith chapter of Hebrews - Chapter Eleven

If we exercise spiritual faith, faith toward God and the promises and things of God, then that ability, exercised, will bring about an activity, belief. And in turn, that belief has certain rewards and brings about certain actions in our lives. To repeat an axiom of science, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." In the realm of the spiritual, however, there are two separate laws at work. Concerning the devil the same law holds true in the spiritual as does in the physical. An action of good brings an equal and opposite reaction from the devil, he reacts with evil. If, however, we do something evil then he reacts with something good, a blessing or a lack of opposition. On the other hand, from God, the law is reversed. When we do something evil then He has to bring something evil into our lives; i.e., He reacts with a negative to match our negative. If we do something positive then He reacts with a positive. It's kind of funny but we can decide the direction of God's force in our lives. He will be with us, adding to our strength for good, or He will be against us, canceling out our negatives and not allowing them to benefit us. And by faith we know that He always operates for our benefit. His reaction to our actions prevent us from succeeding in evil and empower us to succeed beyond our power and expectations in doing good. In our lives this is know as the law of reaping and sowing.

Gal 6:7-9 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

And because this is a law of God then the devil automatically wants the opposite and works the opposite in our lives. And by faith we can sow to the spirit and reap accordingly; or, we can choose to sow to the flesh and reap also accordingly. God casts His vote that we will live godly lives and gives us of His power to help us do so. The devil

casts his vote that we well do evil and does everything in his power to entice us to do so. We then cast the deciding vote as to which way we will go. Spiritual faith is the channel by which we vote on God's side in our lives.

Now, on to what God expects us to do with our faith and the manifestations of it in our lives. By studying the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews we can see some examples of faith and the rewards realized by those who exercised it. We will see some heroes of the faith who utilized what God gave them, faith, and allow Him to do great things through them. Not only that, but some endured intense persecution by means of their faith. It, faith, was the substance of their hope and the evidence of the unseen. Thus, it was the building blocks of their lives for God as it is the building blocks of our Christianity which is the outworking of our lives for God.

Divisions of the chapter-

In this section we will use Pink's threefold division of the chapter.

- I. The excellency of faith. (verses :1-3)
- II. The life of faith. (verses :4-7)
- III. The achievements of faith. (verses :8-40)

We will begin, however, with a description of the context of the chapter and then an exposition of the Bible definition of what faith is.

Context- To gain the context of the chapter we must go back to the preceding chapter. Remember that the chapter and verse divisions were not in the originals. They were added later for convenience in referring to portions of the scripture. It was not the intent of the translators to confuse but to help; and this they did immensely. Bear in mind, however, that those chapter and verse divisions are not meant as divisions of context and that context can easily cover several chapters. If you do so, then there will be much less confusion when it comes to the meaning and the flow of particular passages of scripture, many of which are not understandable at all without a thorough understanding of the context in which they are given.

For the context of Hebrews chapter eleven it is necessary to go back to the previous chapter.

Heb 10:38-39 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.

According to Pink, "[Heb 10:38] really forms the text of which Heb. 11 is the sermon."

One must, however, remember that Pink is a Calvinist and believes in predestination of heaven or hell for the soul strictly at the discretion and planning of God and leaves no place for free will or choice. Being aware of this will allow us to filter the words of this undeniably brilliant writer through that particular preconception and reach the truth of what he says minus the theological error of his Calvinistic thinking and teaching.

Division One- The excellency of faith. (verses :1-3)***What Faith is-***

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

We as human beings can perceive only one reality, the physical. And we spend our lives exercising natural faith in that physical reality. The devil does everything in his power to keep us enslaved to the creation, the physically perceptible reality, in order to prevent us from ever exercising our faith toward God, the Creator. As we have seen earlier, the unsaved have access to only this one reality, the physical. (I Cor 2:14) Once we exercise our faith toward the spiritual, specifically God, then we are born again with new senses in addition to our old senses. We now have access not only to the physical reality through our natural senses but also to the things of God through our spiritual senses. By faith (spiritual faith) we can believe His promises. By faith we have access to His power and protection. To the unsaved, our new senses seem like just so many flights of fancy. They can't touch, see, hear, smell, or taste the spiritual so they have to believe that we are merely mouthing fanciful imaginations when we tell them we believe something exists by faith. They are stuck in a time-bound reality. We have access to an eternal reality. To them seeing is believing. To us, believing is seeing. And the access that we have to that belief is through the ability of faith; but, it is faith exercised in a new direction, toward God.

These two realities, the physical and the spiritual, are both real. The first (the physical) is tangible to our five senses. It is made up of molecules, which in turn are made up of atoms, which in turn are made up of sub-atomic particles, which (according to quantum physics) are really nothing but organized energy and mathematical possibilities. By natural faith we trust that the physical reality will continue to function as it always has. From that faith comes the action of belief and trust. We set on a chair believing and trusting that the organized energy we perceive of as matter will hold us up and that we won't fall right through its atomic structure which is in reality 99.999999+% so much empty space. Our natural faith is not the substance of our physical reality, the physical reality is its own substance. (At least to our natural perception of it.) The other reality, which we now have access to since our new birth, also has substance and tangibility. The substance is brought to spiritual tangibility, and that substance is made up of faith. In fact, to be more Biblically accurate, we must state that faith is the very substance of that reality. Faith helps us to transcend the time element of the physical reality and projects us to the fulfilment of God's promises at unknown times in the future. We must view things the way God does. He is an atemporal being. He is not bound by time. He does, at times, refer to times when speaking to us about future events in the Bible; but, that is only for our benefit or for the benefit of those He was speaking directly to in the Bible. But these instances are few and far between. We must, however, remember that for God there is no past, present, or future, only an all encompassing now. This fact can be seen in such phrases as:

Ex 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt

thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Is 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Is 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I [am] he; I [am] the first, I also [am] the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: [when] I call unto them, they stand up together.

48:16-17 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there [am] I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I [am] the LORD thy God...

Jn 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Once we grasp this fact, by faith, then that makes it perfectly clear that to see with the eye of faith one must ignore the eye of sight. The eye of sight is in the here and now; but, the eye of faith is in the there and then. It is seeing through the eye of God which is always in the present, not the future or past. Therefore, what appears to the eye of sight to be something not present but a long time off into the future, appears to the eye of faith (spiritual faith) to be in the here and now; i.e., the eye of faith, which perceives reality through the eye of God, makes the future real and present since to God past and future are all encompassed in the now. We must do and view reality in the way that God does and, "... calleth those things which be not as though they were." (Ro 4:17b)

So what is the substance of that current reality (speaking by spiritual faith) that seems so distant in the future according to our natural senses and natural perception of time? According to Hebrews 1:1 the substance of it is faith. Not only that, but faith is also the evidence of it.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Its current reality for us, by spiritual faith, is coherently organized and spiritually tangible to us through faith. Its current existence is constructed of spiritual particles of that thing called faith. In the same way that the physical reality is made up of molecules which are made up of atoms, which in turn are made up of sub-atomic particles, which scientists tell us are really only organized energy; so too, you might say, is the spiritual reality made up of spiritual molecules of faith, which in turn are made up of spiritual atoms of faith, which in turn are made up of spiritual sub-atomic particles of faith, which in turn are really only organized spiritual energy, known as faith. How is our spiritual faith in God any less logical that their natural faith in the physical? Both are built on the intangible; those intangibles being different types of energy. One in the physical realm and one in the spiritual realm. Their only hope lies in faith and trust in a decaying physical reality (the law of entropy shows that) while our hope lies in faith in the

unchanging and unchangeable reality of God. Furthermore, we know that that seemingly future event exists, even though not currently tangible to the physical senses, because we have the evidence for it in the spiritually tangible evidence of our faith which gives it, the event, its current existence for us spiritually. Therefore, we can say with God, by spiritual faith, that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Of course the world will call us crazy or foolish but it matters not what men think but what God thinks.

Ro 3:4b “... let God be true, but every man a liar...”

Our spiritual faith in God gives us assurance of, and current substance to, our future.

Their natural faith in a decaying physical reality can only lead to decaying hope, which becomes hopelessness and despair.

Which to you is more logical?

The great cloud of witnesses-

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed
about with so great a cloud of witnesses

We will jump ahead for just a moment to see the purpose of chapter eleven. To do this we must go to chapter twelve. There, the writer of Hebrews gives us a summary of chapter eleven. He shows us that we not only have faith as the substance of our future but that we also have a cloud of ancient witnesses to faith in the ability of God to bring it about. Much of their faith in a future reality had, by the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, become manifested as a physical reality. They had faith in what God was going to do in the way of Messiah, we have faith in what He has already done in Messiah. These accounts of the fulfillment of some of those things that they perceived only by faith are tangible proofs of the efficacy of faith; and this in turn will encourage us to continue in faith toward what He has yet to do in the way of still even more future events. Now back to chapter eleven.

God's approval- :2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

God tells us first that the elders (the O.T. saints) received His approval because of their exercises of their faith. He does this to encourage us to emulate their example and exercise our faith, and in that way we also can gain His approval.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]...

Creation- :3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

A good place to begin anything is at the beginning; so that is exactly what God does here in this third verse. He goes back to the very creation of the universe, the moment of Creation itself. This is to show us that faith is not something that is just exercised toward things of our future but that it also is exercised toward the past. By understanding the past upon the evidence of our faith it too can become real and understandable to us. It

is by faith that we understand that the physically tangible reality (“... the worlds... things which are seen...”) were not simply made out of physically tangible substances already existing then and now (“things which do appear”) but by the spiritually tangible “word of God.” In other words, by faith we know that God did not just construct the worlds out of physical substances already existing, but spoke those very substances themselves into existence. To the unsaved that depend totally on their natural faith in the physical reality this seems like unprovable foolishness. On the other hand, their faith in what is called “The big bang theory,” is but unprovable foolishness to us. Their theory states that all matter is a product of a million to a billion years process started in one instance by an explosion (not a violent one but an extremely rapid expansion) of a point, smaller than a single atom, of infinite mass, at a temperature of 1,500 billion °K. Also it states that that point itself was the product of a previously collapsed universe which was but one of an infinite numbers of previous collapses and explosions. This scenario begs the question—where did the first such “singular state” come from?” This is the point where their natural faith in their “scientific theory” deteriorates into foolishness. They simply state that there is no explanation because there never was a first such singularity because there is a progression of such back to infinity. If you can believe that, then you are practicing a religion that believes in intangibles. And yet they accuse us of believing in intangibles. Remember that I said earlier that most scientists now espouse the theories of quantum physics and view matter as being only made up of organized energy? Then it seems to me that that view also is proof that they base their perceptions of the physical reality on intangibles. It seems that our expressions of faith are not so different after all. Both are exercised toward intangibles. The difference being that they exercise their faith toward the essential intangibles that “make up” the physical realities, while we exercise our faith toward the intangibles of the spiritual reality. Their faith then is no more logical than ours, in fact it is less logical, scientifically. They believe in an effect without a cause, which is contrary to observable facts in the physical reality, and deny the possibility of a spiritual reality. While we, on the other hand, believe in a prime cause, God, for both of the realities, physical and spiritual. Which to you is more logical? (We will not discuss at this time the heresy of “deistic evolution,” or, as some call it, “deism.” Suffice it to say that God is not just a watchmaker that started it all and then let it go. He is both Creator and Sustainer of the physical reality.)

In this one verse, verse :3, God has set the foundation for the logicalness of the creation of the universe by Him and the necessity of our faith in His existence and ability. He also has shown us that faith is just as much an evidence of the past as it is the substance of the future. In other words, the eye of faith is not bound by the constraints of time but perceives the future, the past, and the present, not as being sequential with only the present as being tangible, but as being equal and concurrent and thus, by faith, one is as perceptibly tangible as the other. Matter is the substance of the present, faith is the substance the future; and in addition when it is exercised in the present it is the evidence for both past and future. The past is not forever gone and none-existent, it is still with us. Likewise the future is not yet some ephemeral possibility but is currently tangible to us

by faith. And our faith is the evidence of both. Remember though that our faith, while it is the substance of the future and the evidence of both future and past, is not placed in the future nor the past but in God the Creator and sustainer of past, present, and future. If our faith were placed in the past, present, or the future of the creation then that would, once again, be an exercise of natural faith. Instead our faith, our confidence, is in God, and thus is a spiritual faith. Our faith is not in “it,” the creation, but in “Him” the Creator. The one that, “calleth those things which be not as though they were.”(Ro 4:17b)

Division Two- The life of faith. (verses :4-7)

Faith's Worship

The life of faith is put forward to us first in the example of Abel.

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Because this is listed as the first example of faith then it can be considered as the beginning of the life of faith. Abel was the first human being to exercise faith in God. His parents had failed to do so and I'm sure that he knew that and saw the results of misplaced faith: expulsion from the garden and the cherubs and the flaming sword barring re-entrance to it and the thorns and thistles that prevented easy growing of their food; instead he saw that they were forced to sweat and labour exceedingly just to raise their food. He surely had heard his mother speaking of the pain and discomfort in carrying himself and his brother Cain before him. And I'm sure that the cries of her birth-pangs at the births of the children had been commented on by either his father or mother. Maybe he even had observed her pains at the births of those others born after him. Not only had he observed the results of disobedience but he also must have heard from his parents that God had promised deliverance. I say this for the following reason.

In Ro 10:17 we find that an exercise of spiritual faith is brought about by a revelation from God of it's necessity.

Ro 10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Obviously then, Abel must have heard the story from one or both of His parents of how they had been given coverings of animal skins from God himself. So by faith he offered a blood sacrifice to God in imitation of the blood spilled in the garden from the animal which was slain by God to provide the coverings of animal skin for his parents. He was made aware that from the death of the innocent came life for the guilty. Since it is obvious that God's revelation was made known to Abel then we must assume that it was also made known to Cain. Then the rejection of Cain's sacrifice becomes reasonable. And God is always reasonable. When Cain offered a different sacrifice than the one revealed by God, through Adam and/or Eve, as necessary, then God told Cain:

Gen 4:6-7 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

It is obvious that Cain knew how to do well. Again, he must have heard from his father or mother the way that God had given the example of an acceptable sacrifice, and yet Cain had offered something totally different. God even gave him another chance to do right but Cain ignored Him and stormed away in anger.

Abel, on the other hand, bowed to God's righteous demands and offered a blood-sacrifice. By doing so, Abel was acknowledging five things:

ONE: That God had executed righteous judgment by driving man from the garden.

TWO: That he (Abel) was a guilty sinner before God and was worthy of death.

THREE: That God was holy and as such must punish sin.

FOUR: Abel acknowledged that God was merciful and would accept an innocent substitute in his place.

FIVE: Without knowing it, he, by faith, was asking for God's acceptance in Christ, the Lamb of God, the fulfillment of the type offered by Abel of: "the firstlings of his flock." Thus prefiguring Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and the "firstborn of every creature: " (Col 1:15)

As I said at the beginning of this segment, the example of Abel is one of the beginning of the life of faith.

How then did Abel's life of faith begin? How does our life of faith begin? With an acknowledgment that God is righteous and we are hopelessly unrighteous. That we can do nothing to merit salvation and, therefore, that it is only by God's mercy that we can be saved from His righteous judgment. And that the shedding of the blood of the innocent is acceptable to God as a substitute. Then by faith we, as Abel did, appropriate the Redeemer and lay all of our hopes and expectations of pardon and acceptance upon Him. Then, and only then, do we receive God's own testimony, as did Abel, that (in Christ the blood-sacrifice) we are righteous.

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

When we have thus thrown all of our hopes and expectations upon God's mercy and offered up the blood sacrifice (Jesus Christ) between ourselves and His justice, only then is our name written down with the testimony of God that we are righteous.

For Abel, as an example to us, it was written in the Word of God. (Heb 11:4)

For us, and Abel, it was written in the Lamb's book of life.

Rev 13:8 ... the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

(Also see: Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19)

The sequence for us is the same as the sequence followed by Abel: hearing, followed by an exercise of faith, and lastly an appropriation of the Redeemer (in type by Abel and in fact by us).

Contrast- Now we come to a contrast; that being between Cain and Abel. Why was Abel's sacrifice considered a "more excellent sacrifice," than Cain's? First we must consider the demands of God and the response of the two worshipers. Yes, Cain was also a worshiper in that he brought an offering to God. But, there the similarity between the

two worshipers ends. These two brothers give us a foreshadowing of the church and represent the **ONLY** two types of religious people in any age, including today. All claim to be worshipers but not all are accepted of God.

Let's begin with Cain. Because he is mentioned first (Gen ch.4) he can be considered to be the predominant group in the "mixed multitude," known as "Christendom." The first thing we notice in the story as recounted in Genesis is that Cain hated Abel. This can be seen in the church (generic) from antiquity until now. This would include those from before the birth of Christ and those who have lived since. Those who claim to be worshipers, but who in reality are not, generally hate and persecute those who really are. This part of the group, typified by Cain, are the ones who claim, and have claimed, to be Christians but by their actions deny their profession of faith in Christ. They are the ones who, during the Dark Ages alone, killed some thirty million true believers, calling them heretics. The world calls this group of false Christians "hypocrites." What are some of the characteristics of this group? They are easily seen in the characteristics of the Old Testament type, Cain. He brought an offering to God, true, but what type of an offering? An offering of the work of his own hands. But what had God shown in the Garden when He had covered the sin of Cain's parents? That the work of our own hands was not sufficient. The coverings made by Adam and Eve were not acceptable to God. In their place, He (God) had given them coverings from Himself. Second, what Cain had brought was a bloodless offering; whereas, God had insisted on a bloody sacrifice, i.e., the animal from which He had taken the coats of skins for Adam and Eve had to be slain before its skin could be removed and given to Adam and Eve. What it all boiled down to was that Cain was rebelling against the will and demands of God and sought to cover that rebellion with an hypocritical act of worship. It is obvious from his actions that he did not consider himself a sinner deserving of death, God's judgment on sinners, or else he would have bowed to God's demand that only the blood-sacrifice of the innocent could atone for his guilt. According to Pink, it is the "way of Cain... (Jude :11) ... the way of self-will, of unbelief, of disobedience, and of religious hypocrisy."

Now we will contrast that Cainish type of "will worship," with the true worship of Abel. Abel, by faith bowed his head to the will of God and, by faith, offered the only type of offering that God would receive. He did so in obedience, in such a manner as to plead for God's acceptance, and in full expectation of that acceptance. All of this showed his faith was in God.

To both of these "worshipers," we can apply the key of acceptance, faith. To Cain, the key was turned one way, toward the natural; his will; his way; an offering of his hands; all of which are tantamount to a challenge to God's sovereignty in an exaltation of himself above the righteous demands and commands of God. Cain's expression of faith was that of a natural faith in the creation (himself and his will, the works of his hands, and an offering from the earth, knowing that God had said that the ground, the creation, was cursed.) (Gen 3:17; Ro 8:19-22) This was a purposeful wrong turn of the key and did not unlock the door of God's acceptance. Abel, on the other hand used the same key, faith, but turned the key the other way. Instead of turning it toward the natural, the creation,

he purposely turned the key toward the Creator. By this exercise of spiritual faith he gained the blessings and testimony of God. The blessings: acceptance and forgiveness. The testimony: that he was righteous. This spoken from God's own lips and recorded in the unchanging and unchangeable Word of God. (Heb 11:4)

As I said at the beginning of this segment, Abel is put forward as the beginning of the life of Faith. Thus God has shown to us that the only thing that makes a difference in our faith is the direction. Is it exercised toward the natural, as Cain did; or is it exercised toward the spiritual, as Abel did? When God speaks of faith in regard to Himself and the things of Himself, then He refers to that as "faith," as He did in Heb 11:4. When referring to an exercise of that ability toward the natural, that erroneously claims to be toward God, as in the case of Cain, He will not even use the word faith. The reason being that the only thing that is acceptable and pleasing to Him, when we exercise faith in the context of a Godward direction, is the exercise of true spiritual faith, faith directed toward Himself. This type of faith is what is referred to in Heb 11:6. It is the type of faith that is pleasing to Him and acceptable to Him.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The example of Abel shows us that our lives of faith must begin with a simple turn of the key, faith, away from the natural (the creation, including ourselves,) and toward the spiritual, God and the things of God. By doing so the foundation of our future is set and by it (spiritual faith) we obtain, exactly as did Abel, the witness and assurance of God that we are righteous. That righteousness being by declaration of God; not by any works of our own. Abel was not justified by his sacrifice any more than Cain was by his. We too are not justified by our sacrifices. All are justified by God, in Christ, the ultimate sacrifice. The deciding factor of that justification and declaration by God that we, or they, are righteous or not is our faith. In the case of Abel, and those of us saved that followed his way, the key of faith was turned toward God. In the case of Cain, and those through the following millennia who followed in his way, the key was turned away from God and toward the natural, to the everlasting damnation of their souls. Those who follow Cain are simply following a precedent set by Lucifer before the foundation of the world in which they set "I" (self) before "He," God. (Is 14:12-13 "... I will...")

Faith's Walk-

Now that God has shown us, in Abel, where the life of faith begins, He now goes on to tell us what, by faith, is to follow. This He does through a mention of another early saint of God, Enoch. I would put forward this question to you; does the life of faith end or begin with Salvation and a true worship of God? Since, as I said earlier, faith is the channel for God's power in your life, then the answer is obvious- NO! It, the life of faith, does not end with salvation, it begins there. Once we are saved, by grace through faith, we have gained a whole new order of enemies; the devil and his minions. On becoming a child of God we automatically become the enemy of Satan. Since he is millennia older

and smarter than any human being on earth today, it is obvious that we cannot fight him in our own power, we need to appropriate the power of God. That is where continued faith in God becomes our greatest asset in the ensuing battles against the Prince of Evil-Satan. Therefore, it is obvious that since Abel was put forth as an example of the beginning of the life of faith then the next example would carry on from there. This is exactly what is given to us in the next example God puts forth in this eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Enoch.

To understand what is typified in Enoch we must go back to the Old Testament references to him. These are found in Genesis chapter five.

Gen 5:21-24 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he [was] not; for God took him.

What repetitive phrase do we find in this passage of scripture? That's easy:

“And Enoch walked with God.”

This is the key to the example of Enoch as given in Hebrews. After giving us the beginning of the life of faith in Abel, then God wants to show us that we must continue our progress through this life with a “walk” of faith like Enoch did. In these two examples, Abel and then Enoch, God is giving us the first two of a sequence that will soon, with Noah, become three. It is a divinely appointed order that we must bear in mind when considering our own life of faith or the life of faith of others. Those of us that will be given the awesome job of pastoring one of Christ's churches must, I repeat must! keep this order in mind when considering giving ministries in the church to those members God has entrusted to us. We must observe the worship of the one being considered for a position; be it Sunday school teacher, bus driver, or leader of one of the other many ministries in the church, before anything else. That worship must be Abelian and Enochian in essence. It must be a true submission to the ways and will of God which will manifest itself in obedience to Him in matters of worship. Only then will it be possible for that person, generally it is a new convert that is in sight here, to truly walk with God as Enoch did.

God tells us this very fact in the book of Amos:

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Unless we humble ourselves to the will of God in our worship, we cannot truly walk with God. This must be foremost in our minds before we ever allow a new Christian to be given the responsibilities of a position of service that is one of authority. We are warned against making that very mistake in the book of I Timothy:

I Tim 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Unfortunately we do not listen to God. Instead we press any willing member into service immediately. We are so short on willing hands to do the many tasks needed in our churches that we fall into this trap so quickly that many times it looks like less of an accidental fall than it does a headlong leap. So many times we pay for our folly with a

ruined worker, a ruined ministry, and maybe even a split church. To prevent these we cannot take a new convert and place him in a place of service immediately upon his appropriation of Christ as Saviour. We must follow the plan of God; and the first two steps are a surrender to God in worship (Salvation being the most obvious first part of that) followed by a continuing walk with God. And these two must precede any sort of service for God. We cannot, if we are to follow God's sequence revealed here in the book of Hebrews, jump from Abel (salvation) to Noah (service) ignoring the necessary step in between, Enoch (a walk with God). That walk of faith is pleasing to God:

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And from this verse we see that the walk of Enoch is not a "surface only" kind of seeking after God but a "diligent" one. This takes work and study, both of which the novice has not had the time nor the ability to carry out. Not "the time," because of his newness concerning his spiritual ability to perceive spiritual things, which only started at his recent salvation. And not "the ability" to diligently seek God since he has not had the time to dig under the surface and even find out what the "questions are," let alone have developed the ability to find the answers (from God's Word). To much too soon leads to a swelled head and a tendency to fall into the snare of the devil, pride, and an eventual fall. First let them, and help them, develop a walk with God.

With the example of Enoch we are shown that no walk with God is possible without complete surrender to His will. In the book of Amos we are given the criteria for the Enochian walk with God. When two are agreed and walk together, then there is only one direction for the two, one objective for the two, and one destination for the two. It is as though the two are being controlled by one mind. And yet when one walks with God it is a sign of voluntary surrender of ourselves to Him. God did not force Abel nor Enoch, nor does He force us. We must voluntarily, by faith (spiritual faith), volunteer to walk with God. Volunteer to surrender our will to His. Voluntarily align our direction, objectives, and final destination with His. In so doing we become spiritually lifted up above our present situation as Enoch was physically. He was translated out of this world physically after his walk with God; we are translated spiritually when we walk with God.

We are "in the world," but we are not "of the world." God has "raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:" (Eph 2:6)

So in Enoch we have been shown *where* to go, by faith, with that life of faith we started with our Abelian surrender to the will of God in matters of worship. That "*where*" being a continuation of faithful surrender to God's direction and control of our lives.

According to Heb 11:6, this life of faith, spiritual faith in God, is the only way to please Him. In addition, by that exercise of faith, we are lifted up above the corruption of this earth and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. This fact gives us access to the blessings of God that allows us to live a separated life above the corruption and chaos.

Eph 1:3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ:

Faith's Witness- Now that we have been shown *how to begin* a life of faith (in Abel) and *where to go* with it (in Enoch) now God will show us *what to do* with it. This He does with the example of Noah.

Heb 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.

Here in this passage we see three things: Noah's faith; God's warning; and the results. *Noah's faith*- Comparing the remainder of the verse with this first part, I would ask you several questions.

First: Was Noah's faith a natural faith or a spiritual faith? Let's examine the verse. He received a warning from God; believed God would do something in the future; and then acted upon that knowledge. It is obvious that he believed, by faith, that God would do and could do what He said He would do. Is this faith in the natural or the spiritual? The spiritual, of course, because everything he (Noah) did was rooted and grounded in his faith in God and God's truthfulness and ability.

Second: Did Noah do what he did after heeding God's warning out of fear of God or fear of what was to come? The answer is, both. A fear of the terrible hand of God is sometimes a necessary motivation to obey him in hard things. Sometimes we don't understand a particular situation and God has to motivate us to remove ourselves from it so that we won't suffer with the others there when the chastising, or sometimes even punishing, hand of God falls. Sometimes, the motivation used by Him is the emotion of fear. Also, however, when we by faith believe that the hand of God is about to fall, then His warning of impending judgment allows us, by faith, to perceive the awfulness of what is to come. That perception instills fear in our hearts and compels us to take action to remove ourselves, and our loved ones, from the path of that oncoming destruction. So, to ask was Noah motivated by a fear of God or a fear of the coming destruction is really to ask two different versions of the same question. God and His judgment are really inseparable. The first, God, is the cause. The second, judgment, is the effect. And the righteous God must punish the evil-doer. His righteousness demands that He do so.

Third: Was God reasonable in warning only Noah so he could escape with his family and yet destroying the rest of the world after Noah and his family were safe?

The answer is, absolutely. As I just said a few sentences ago, God must punish the evil-doer. Was Noah absolutely sinless and deserved to be saved? No. But one thing was said of him as was said of Enoch, that "Noah walked with God." (Gen 6:9)

In a world filled with wickedness and violence, unjustness and ungodliness, Noah strove to live a life that was pleasing to God. He did not pursue ungodliness and worldliness, but "walked with God," in his everyday life. By faith he strove to obey God in his daily walk; and I am sure that when he fell, he exercised faith in God that God would, in His mercy, forgive the repentant man. Noah did not deserve to be saved from wrath any more than the rest of the wicked world. But, he had one thing

in his favor, he had faith that God would forgive and placed any hope of favour with God strictly in the Almighty and All-merciful hands of God Himself. As a result, (Gen 6:8) and strictly by that grace, God gave Noah a warning of the destruction to come.

In Gen 7:1, we find that God declares of Noah, “for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” But, we must keep in mind that righteousness, to be in accord with the doctrinal teachings of the entire Bible, is something that is not earned but is something that God declares us to be, through faith, by His grace. This is born out in Gen 6:8 when God declared, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

This gives us several lessons to apply to our life of faith:

One: That we must serve God for a twofold reason: We have to fear God’s power that must be unleashed against evil-doers, many call this a reverential awe, and we must also fear the resultant chastisement as that power is unleashed.

Two: When God says get away from the bad guys something bad is about to happen to them, then by faith and out of fear of what is to come, do whatever is necessary to GET AWAY!

Three: He will always tell us exactly how to escape and make it possible to do so.

Four: We should fearfully consider that we no more deserve to be spared than the unsaved and it is only by God’s grace that we are.

Five: That it is impossible to continue in our walk of faith without God’s grace; exactly as it was impossible for Noah to pass through the flood to continue his walk with God on the other side of the flood without God’s grace.

Noah’s actions-

Heb 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.

What can we glean from this passage and the original passage in Genesis chapter seven?

Most obvious is that Noah believed what God said.

Next, that he then took action and did something with what God told him.

From Genesis chapter seven we find that he followed God’s instructions to the letter. From the massiveness of the job and the limited amount of labour available to him, his own family only, we must conclude that he started immediately on the task.

Matthew Henry said, “Faith first influences our affections and then our actions.”

In the book of James we find that, “Faith without works is dead.” (Jas 2:20)

That to continue in our life of faith, God gives the instructions and we must do the work.

That to do right, in obedience to God and that obedience being manifested by our actions, shows that those who do not follow God are guilty of disobedience by their actions in a different direction than what are followed by us. Our direction toward God shows that their actions in an opposite direction are wrong. Our

obedience to God is said to “condemn” their disobedient actions and makes their actions even more grievous. This is so because they not only have ignored the right path shown them by God but have even ignored the example of the godly as we travel that path.

Mt 12:41-42 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas [is] here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon [is] here.

Heb 11:7 ... by the which (his actions of obedience to God; i.e. the preparing of the ark) he condemned the world

We also can learn that our exercise of faith toward God and the actions carried out by us because of our faith in Him, affects everyone in our immediate sphere of influence. On the other side of the coin, our lack of faith will also affect those around us. Since God tells us that Noah, “prepared an ark to the saving of his house,” then it is obvious that if he had not, by faith, prepared the ark then his lack of faith would have resulted in the destruction of his family.

In the words of Pink,

Noah’s diligent and costly labours increased the guilt of the careless, who rested in a false security. Though we cannot convert the wicked, (remember Pink’s Calvinistic theology) yet we must be careful to set before them such an example of personal piety that they are left “without excuse.”

Summary-

We are shown in Abel *how to begin* the life of faith. In Enoch we are shown *where to go* with that life of faith. And in Noah we are shown *what to do* with that life of faith.

Now comes another division in the chapter. Up to this point God has used pre-flood examples to give us proofs of the excellency of faith, verses :1-3, and an outline of the life of faith, verses 4-7. Now, he will start with examples from the post-flood saints.

Division three- The achievements of faith. (verses :8-40)

Abraham’s faith-

It is quite fitting that God has the writer of Hebrews begin this segment with Abraham. Before the time of Abraham God had dealt with mankind as a whole. From this time on, God will deal almost exclusively with Abraham and his posterity. From the loins of Abraham, separated out and you might even say “singled out” from the rest of humanity, would come the promised seed of Genesis 3:15. Also we may note that God has called Abraham the “father of all them that believe,” (Ro 4:11) and this includes both Jews and Christians as he is their father (of faith) also. “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (Gal 3:7)

The first achievement of faith is exemplified in father Abraham. This is the call to

come to God, given by God, of a heathen to leave what he was and where he was to go where God wanted. The obvious connection is that God did the same to us as He did to Abraham, called us out for Himself from the heathen life that we had led before.

Heb 11:8 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.

To see from whence Abraham came it is necessary to go to **Is 51:1-2**

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock [whence] ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit [whence] ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah [that] bare you:

From this admonition we go to **Josh 24:2**.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, [even] Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

It is obvious that Abraham came from a long line of heathen and probably spent the first seventy years of his life serving the strange gods of his family. Then came the call of God, which by faith, he answered.

Acts 7:2-3 The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

Here several things are obvious that apply to us Christians, as the children of the faith of Abraham.

ONE: That we, as Abraham was, were totally given over to heathenism and without God in our lives.

TWO: That one day, in His mercy, God called to us and manifested Himself as a reality that we had never before conceived of in our lost state.

THREE: Then, by faith, we yielded to the call of this eminently real God and accepted His grace and headed out from our heathen dwellings and headed for a land of promise not yet visible to our natural eye.

Acts 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

This verse, talking of Abraham's obedience, show us the next step that we take as Christians after believing God. We step out, by God's grace through faith, and leave our lost condition and head toward a land (salvation) that, by faith, is already ours by the promise of God and which can be seen with the eye of faith, but which will not be revealed to the natural eye until a later time.

I Pet 1:4-5 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The call from God to Abraham was for a complete break with the old life, externally

and internally. He was to leave behind family, friends, habitation, and habits, and throw himself wholly on the God that had become real to him. According to Pink, "Now the evidence of regeneration is found in a genuine *conversion*." With this I would have to agree. There is always a visible change of direction and activity that accompanies Salvation; and I am talking about a true possession of Christ not a mere profession of Him. An appropriation of God's mercy, by faith, is an appropriation of His only begotten Son Jesus, by faith, and a change of direction, by faith. When one sees a sinner that claims to have been saved by grace, and yet who had evidenced that change by not the smallest amount of change in direction, then that sinner is a liar. He would not necessarily evidence a huge change in a short time, but he would necessarily evidence some change. And that change would tend to accelerate quickly. Whereas with no change one must return to the book of James to see what God says about such evidenceless faith.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Your works show whether your faith is a living faith or a dead faith. The first, a spiritual faith directed toward God that is effectual as a channel for God's grace to the saving of the soul; the other, a dead faith, a natural faith, directed toward the dead and dying creation. When you are truly saved then your works will show that to the world, both saved and unsaved.

Jas 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Therefore, in Abraham God is showing us that the first achievement of faith, true spiritual faith, is that it causes a complete break with the old and a total embracing of the new. Remember however that there is a time element involved. The inner man experiences an instantaneous break and embracing. The outer, however, may take some time to manifest that break, and even may hinder the manifestation of it.

Ro 7:22-25 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But, the process of change, (Sanctification,) will continue inexorably even as Abraham must have taken some time to pack his belongings, make ready his family, and take all of the necessary steps of preparation for a journey of unknown length

and unrevealed destination. Nevertheless the account is that he, by faith, did obey, did leave the old, and did journey in the direction specified by God. And by faith we will also. If we are truly saved, by God's grace, through true spiritual faith, then it will be obvious that the Lord is the Lord of our lives from that time on. Else we will hear the Lord say to us,

Lk 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

In second Corinthians we find the depth of the change:

II Cor 5:15-17 And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more. Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Thus our works are an evidence that we have passed from the faith in the flesh, the creation, to faith in the Creator. We no longer live in the flesh but in the spirit.

Ro 8:8-9 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his

Lastly with us, as it was with Abraham, our walk of obedience, by faith, in the spirit, shows to the world that we are freed from condemnation.

Ro 8:1-2 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

And that work of faith perfects our faith.

Jas 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

One last thought before we go on to verses nine and ten. We do not work to BE saved; but we work because we ARE saved.

In the final two verses of this segment we are shown that the land of promise does not become the land of promise until the plan of God be complete.

Heb 11:9-10 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

We, like Abraham, dwell here in a temporary fashion, content that in God's timing the true promise of God will come to pass. By faith we tabernacle here but look with that eye

of faith to the eventual fulfillment of God's promise at the appearing of the city whose builder and maker is God. Faith being the substance of those things not seen.

Sarah's faith-

Now God teaches us another achievement of faith, the overcoming of seemingly insurmountable objects and circumstances. In our walk of faith we must keep our eyes on the object of our faith, God. When we take our eyes off of the Creator and place them instead on the creation, then we have left the life of spiritual faith and entered the dark realm of natural faith. In Sarah, we are shown the problem of looking with the eye of flesh and not the eye of faith. As we have already seen, that realm of natural faith will be used by the devil to cripple us. He will manipulate circumstances to oppress and drive us down and farther and farther from our only source of power and protection, God the Creator.

In the example of Sara (Sarah) we find a fellow human being with all of the same frailties as ourselves. She was no superwoman of faith; but merely an example that the doubts and struggles of those who try to follow God are a common occurrence. She went through the process of following God through the difficulties and doubts to the shining manifestation of the promises of God. She, like us, did not see the end fulfillment of God's promises but the beginning of them. In the birth of Isaac she witnessed that beginning. In addition she saw in him, as it were, a promise and an example of the resurrection; for from the deadness of her womb had sprung this life now standing before her. This fact surely helped bolster the faith of Abraham when he was told later to sacrifice Isaac. He knew that the promise of God had been specifically stated as being through Isaac and by faith trusted God that He could resurrect Isaac and had an example of that in the very birth of the child.

Now on to an examination of the faith of Sarah.

Heb 11:11-12 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. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

First we will see the process that Sarah went through. To do this we need to go back to the Old Testament account of the events spoken of in Hebrews chapter eleven.

In Genesis chapter eighteen we find Sarah in the first steps on the road to spiritual faith. Remember, faith is a God-given ability passed to all people from Adam. Sarah had spent her life exercising faith in the creation. Her natural faith had gone unrewarded, specifically in the area of child-bearing, for at least a half-a-dozen decades.

Gen 11:30 But Sarai was barren; she [had] no child.

Gen 16:1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children:

Not only had she never had any children, but she now had passed the time of child-bearing.

Gen 17:17 ... and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

Gen 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old [and] well stricken in age;[and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

Here we see Sarah's problem. The natural eye sees only that which is physical. After so many years of having her natural faith go unrewarded, it is no wonder that she cannot at first redirect it. But when God comes to us and makes it plain that He is and He is able, then she, like we, must take one more chance with this thing called faith. With hesitating hands we begin to exercise it toward this new object, God. And then, eventually, wholly embrace Him in faith.

Let us watch the process.

Sarah hesitates in unbelief.

Gen 18:10-12 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard [it] in the tent door, which [was] behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old [and] well stricken in age; [and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Here we see the place where we all start, disbelief, brought on by our previous years of unrewarded natural faith. We see our past containing those years of disappointment and sorrow. People we have trusted have betrayed that trust. Time after time our faith in someone or something has gone unrewarded. Not only do we see our past experiences but we see our present circumstances. And, finally, we perceive that the future will only become more difficult and untrustworthy because of our own fading abilities with the advancement of years. Put yourself in the place of Sarah. Years of childlessness (the past) and now old age has set in and the ability to bear has passed years hence (the present). From observing the other women around her that have born children, she is quite aware that once those women have ceased the "manner" that they no longer are able to bear. Her natural faith has been worn thin and is only grudgingly given by this time.

Because of that, when she hears this stranger say that she will bear a child in the face of these obvious "proofs to the contrary," then she laughs in disbelief at the words of this stranger.

Now we come to the time in Sarah's life when she finds out who this stranger is. We all come to this same place in our lives; the time when God makes himself known to us and gives us the chance to exercise our faith in Him. Sarah is in the tent listening and the stranger reveals His identity. Speaking to Abraham in the hearing of Sarah He says:

Gen 18:14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD?

Now Sarah knows who the stranger is who said this impossible thing (that she would have a child). In fear she denies that she laughed in disbelief. This is not unusual. How many of us deny our sin to God? Even when we find out who it is that is come to us (God) don't we stumble and falter at first? The exercise of faith in this new direction does not come automatically. At first we fumble, maybe even deny, but eventually we let faith flow in this new direction and receive the promise of God, or we never let it go and keep it in the natural and never receive the promise. God comes to all, but not all receive. God

wants all to repent and be saved, but few enter in at the straight gate.

II Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Mt 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The achievement of Sarah's faith.

Now we come to the lesson that God has for us in the account of Sarah's faith and the achievements of it. Where did Sarah start? The same place we did, in unbelief. But then she, like we, was confronted by the Lord and made to face her sin and unbelief. (Gen 18:12-15) From that we are made to understand that Sarah eventually gave her faith its new direction and opened the door for God to work a miracle in her life.

Heb 11:11 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.

God wants us to do the same. We exercised our faith in Him to the salvation of our souls by His grace; but, we cannot draw back and place our faith back in the natural and expect Him to do miracles in the rest of our life. The achievements of Sarah's faith can be the achievements of ours. By faith in God she overcame the obstacles in her life. We can do the same. For her, and us, we must by faith appropriate the promises of God to overcome all obstacles of Christian life and service. To overcome all hindrances to our continued walk with God is possible through the power of God. And the channel for that power is faith, spiritual faith. When faith is directed toward the Creator then we can truly say:

Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

This promise was made to us as it was made to Sarah:

Heb 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, If God can do for Sarah what was completely contrary to nature, then surely he can do whatever is necessary in our lives to enable us to conquer all obstacles and serve Him in whatever he has called us to do. To walk with God, in faith, to believe God, in faith, to serve God, by faith, is to have the Omnipotence of God as our power source. No matter what circumstances may say and show to the contrary, God is able. And through Christ, so are we.

Martin Luther said, "If you would trust God, you must learn to crucify the question-How."

Take obedience upon yourself, by faith; and leave the "how" to God, by the same faith.

The perseverance of faith-

We are now given a list of those who persevered in faith despite seemingly overwhelming trials. Remember, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And also remember that faith is not only the channel for God's power and the bringing of His miracles to overcome natural difficulties, as it was for Sarah; but, it is also

our shield against the darts of the devil.

Eph 6:16 taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Many are named in this chapter, but one thing they had in common, they persevered in faith no matter what befell them.

Heb 11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of [cruel] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and [in] mountains, and [in] dens and caves of the earth.

And then God tells us that they persevered in spite of the fact that they could only see the fulfillment of the promise with the eye of faith- afar off. But those things afar off to the eye of flesh were made near and given current substance to them by faith, by which they obtained a good report.

Heb 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Christ had not yet been born and so they only could, by faith, look to a future time, given substance by their faith, when God would send the promised Messiah.

Heb 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

They were made perfect in Christ exactly as we were made so. They were not made perfect without us nor were we without them. One Lord, Jesus Christ, is over all. They looked forward to Christ, we look back to Him.

The “better thing “ provided for us is the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was a shadow of the true. The sacrifices of the Old were types, the fulfillment of them is found in the New. Christ was pictured in the Old and realized in the New. The purpose of the Old, the Law, was to bring us to the New, Christ.

Eph 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And all saints, Old Testament and New Testament, are one in Christ. The Old were brought to Him by faith in God’s ability to perform that which came after, the birth of Messiah, the actualization of the promise. The New were brought to Him the same way, by faith, the only difference being the temporal extension of that faith. For us that temporal extension was backwards, theirs was forwards. However, the direction of the faith of both was toward God. Spiritual faith was the tie that binds us to them. (New

Testament saints to Old Testament saints.)

Gal 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

SUMMARY

Spiritual faith brings salvation to both Old and New testament saints:

Ro 4:16-24 Therefore [it is] of faith, that [it might be] by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, [even] God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Then we found that, that same faith is the channel for God's continued power in our lives to overcome obstacles, resist the devil, and live a life that is pleasing to God as well as one that is of service to Him.

Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Throughout this study we have gone through some personal experiences that show that placing too much faith in the natural, specifically people, and allowing our happiness and peace of mind to hinge upon the unstable walls of faith in fallible people can be used of the devil to direct our thoughts away from God and even use them to make us doubt God and everything about Him.

To much exercise of natural faith will push spiritual faith into a state of dormancy that will eventually result in its stagnation and atrophication.

We have learned that faith is an ability given to us from God through Adam. And that when we, at the wooing of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of God to us, exercise that faith toward the spiritual, God, then we can transfer that ability of faith into the activity of belief and appropriate the Saviour, Jesus Christ, as our own.

At that point, Salvation, the life of faith, true faith, does not end- it begins. God wants to walk and commune with us the rest of our lives. He wants to give us of His grace and power to live lives that are pleasing to Him and a witness to the rest of the world of what God can do and how He can work through a truly yielded Christian that lives by faith.

We have seen that there are many kinds of manifestations of faith. The most obvious was saving faith; and that saving faith is not a special faith given to only the Calvinistic “elect,” but is a manifestation of the ability that God gave all of us through Adam. All can be saved because all have the ability of faith. The only difference is that of the direction of our faith. We can exercise it toward the natural or toward the spiritual, God. When God manifests himself to us as real then we have the choice of exercising faith toward Him or not. When we do, then that faith becomes a channel for His grace that saves us. When we refuse to exercise faith toward Him (spiritual faith) then there is no channel for His grace to flow to us and we cannot be saved.

We have found that faith can be living or dead and that the indicator of true, spiritual, living faith, is always works. (Works because we are saved, not works to be saved.) We have found that faith can be little or great; strong or weak; visible and personal; increasing or missing; failing and weak or full and purifying. We have seen that it can be a healing and life-giving faith; and a mutual, sanctifying and justifying faith. God has shown us that true spiritual faith must be directional, toward God, Jesus Christ, His blood, and the promises of God; and that it is a law in itself. Faith can be edifying, justifying, substituting, supporting, and is the channel for God’s power in our lives. We have seen that faith is cross-national; and that the effectiveness and scope of our ministries in God’s service are directly determined by the proportion of our faith. Faith delineates whether we do something by liberty or whether we transgress. It is logical and powerful and can be valuable or vain, depending on whether the direction of it be toward God, the Creator, or toward the natural, the creation. God has shown us that faith is so important that the ways we practice our congregational worship of Him, our public and private service for Him, our spreading of the Gospel about Him, and our way of life in order to glorify Him, are not called our “Religion,” in His Holy Word, but they are called “the Faith.” We have seen faith defined and the importance of it. We have studied where it comes from and the falsehood of the Calvinistic view of it being a special gift to some, for salvation, and that God purposely withholds it from others so that they will go to Hell. We have answered the question of what faith is to us personally and how to use it. We have learned the scriptural method given by Christ to increase our faith and at the same time found out that the amount of our faith is not the important thing but how we use what we have. We have seen that to let our happiness and peace of mind depend on our natural faith is a gross misuse of it. And, on the other hand, we have found that to command your spiritual faith like a servant, which Jesus said it is, is the proper use of it and that it will do whatever we tell it to do. No more, no less. We have studied personal examples and rewards of faith, both positive in the realm of spiritual faith and negative in the realm of natural faith. We have followed an odyssey of faith in my own life; how that God took me from natural faith to spiritual faith and the ups and downs along the way. Ups when I placed my faith and trust in God; and down when I put my faith in myself and other people and let my happiness depend on them and not Him. At the last we studied from God’s “hall of faith,” in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and saw the excellency of faith, the beginnings of faith, and the achievements and rewards for those

who persevered in it.

Through the whole of this study I have endeavored to show that God gives all to us. He gave us our faith through Adam, our call to turn from the natural exercise of it to the spiritual, and instructions on its use after salvation to enhance our lives and by our use of it in Christ, He wants to give us, "... life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly."

God has taken us in these pages from asking Christ to increase our faith, to an understanding that He has given us the way to do that for ourselves- USE IT, order it to go to a specific task, make it our servant, not our master.

Dear reader, please learn from my mistakes. I have bared my successes and my follies to you in these pages. God has allowed me to go through these things so that you may profit from them. Please do so. That will make it profitable to me. I thank God and praise Him that He counted me useful and allowed me to go through those things so that He could teach you a better way.

MY ADMONITION TO YOU IS-

LOVE HIM, SERVE HIM, PUT YOUR FAITH IN HIM, AND LET HIM USE YOU TO CARRY OUT HIS GOOD WILL IN YOUR LIFE.

**PRAISE HIM ON THE MOUNTAINS AND IN THE VALLEYS.
LET HIM TEST YOU, TRY YOU, AND MOLD YOU FOR HIS USE.**

NEVER TELL HIM WHAT TO DO OR WHAT NOT TO DO IN YOUR LIFE FOR WHAT YOU MAY THINK IS WEAKENING YOU MAY BE THE MOST LIFE-CHANGING AND FAITH-BUILDING EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE.

REMEMBER HIS PROMISES AND CLAIM THEM FOR YOURSELF

Hab 2:4

the just shall live by his faith.

Mt 9:29

According to your faith be it unto you.

Mk 11:22

Have faith in God.

Ro 4:21

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Phil 4:13

**I can do all things through Christ
which strengtheneth me.**

**May God bless you richly in your
walk of faith with Him.**

Dr. T.E. VanBuskirk

Ogden, UT April 11, 1998

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