

Church of God Sunday School



THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — FAITH

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Faith is necessary (Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 6:16).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** You can read a list of heroes of the faith (Hebrews 11:4-39).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Faith is believing without seeing (2 Corinthians 5:7; John 20:27-29; Hebrews 11:1).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Jesus is the foundation of faith (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:14).
- ❑ **Friday:** Read how to build or strengthen your faith (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 2:1; Philippians 4:9).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God is looking for men and women with faith (Proverbs 20:6; Luke 18:8; 1 Corinthians 4:2).

MEMORY VERSE: *"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."* —Hebrews 11:6

A Man of Faith

George Müller lived in London during the 1800s. He was born in Prussia, but after giving his heart to the Lord, he moved to England. He felt this was where the Lord wanted him to go. He wrote, "My whole life shall be one service for the living God." In time Müller and his wife began what was called "God's Orphanage," where through the years nearly ten thousand orphans were fed, cared for, and educated. Müller strongly believed in trusting God to provide. When there was no money or food, he told only the Lord.

On one such occasion, there was no food for the orphans nor was there money to purchase food. Müller had the children sit down at the table, where plates, cups, and utensils were laid out. While Müller and the children were praying a prayer of thanks for the breakfast, a baker knocked at the door. In the middle of the night, God had woken him up, telling him to bake bread for the orphans. As soon as he left, the milkman's cart broke down right in front of the orphanage. He donated all the milk on his cart to the orphans. It is not surprising that George Müller wrote: "Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith begins where man's power ends." (Sources: Wikipedia.org, *George Mueller - Man of Faith*, and Muellers.org)

Stories such as this about strong faith are encouraging, but is it possible to have such faith today? Have you ever not had any food in your house? Has there ever been a time when you did not have a place to live? Can you remember going barefoot because you did not have any shoes to wear? Perhaps none of these things have ever happened to you. If so, you are blessed! Yet, faith is a tool every Christian (rich or poor) should have. What exactly is faith, how does one's faith grow, and what are the dangers to having weak faith? These are questions that the Christian should give serious consideration to.



Heroes of the Faith

Hebrews, Chapter 11, is often called the Hall of Faith or a list of Heroes of the Faith. One of the best ways to learn what faith actually is comes by studying the lives of the men and women in this chapter. These men and women did not live to see all of God's "promises," yet they were "persuaded of them, and embraced them" (verse 13). Because of their faith in the promises of God, they "obtained a good report through faith" (verse 39). Verse 1 of this chapter explains carefully what faith is: "Now faith is the substance [reality] of things hoped for, the evidence [proof] of things not seen." Faith is believing the promises of God, although you cannot see any proof.

Second Corinthians 5:7 describes the Christian's way of life as "walk[ing] by faith, not by sight."

One of Jesus' disciples named Thomas was doubtful when he was told that Jesus had risen from the dead. It was only when he could see and touch Jesus that he believed. Jesus told Thomas to "be not faithless, but believing. . . . because thou has seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:27, 29). Faith strengthens your belief that there is a God, that He sent His Son to be the sacrifice for sins, that His Holy Spirit will come and live in the heart of every child of God, and that the Bible is true. Faith does not wait until evidence proves these things to be true; faith stands strong when there is little or no proof. Paul wrote to Timothy, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded" (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul's faith was not based on what he had seen or heard but what he knew in his heart to be true.

Building Your Faith

It was faith that made it possible for you to be saved. To confess your sins and accept Christ as your Savior required believing. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is." Faith does not come by being determined to believe. To just believe is not enough. Ephesians 2:8 says that it is "not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." The foundation of faith is not an emotional experience or a special answer to prayer. It is a Person. Jesus is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). He is the One who encouraged or motivated you to believe in the beginning (before you were saved), and He will continue to encourage you to strengthen or build up your faith.

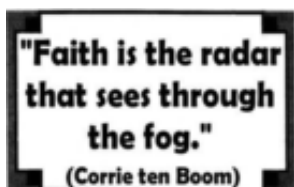


What are some ways your faith can increase? One way is through hearing the Word of God preached (Romans 10:17). Hebrews 2:1 tells us that once you have heard God's Word, you must "give the more earnest heed." In other words, pay close attention and apply what you have learned. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and see in me, do" (Philippians 4:9). When you put action to the things you have learned in Sunday school, through the preaching, or during family worship, your faith will begin to grow. You will find that God's promises are true because you have proved them to be so. Talking to God (prayer) and thinking about God and His Word (meditation) are other important ways you can strengthen your faith. When God answers your prayers for healing, direction, safety, or help, your faith that God is real and that He truly cares about you is strengthened.

But what if you feel that your faith is very weak? The Apostles must have felt somewhat like that when they asked Jesus to "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). Jesus told them that having "faith as a grain of mustard seed" (verse 6) would see great things accomplished. Too many people have comfortable faith or circumstantial faith. Their faith is based on whether or not everything is going well in their lives. As long as God is answering their prayers and everything in their life makes sense, they have a strong faith in God. But that faith is fragile. There will be times when life does not make sense. Sometimes bad things do happen to good people. Your faith must be built on something stronger than feelings, emotions, and good outcomes. It must be rooted in Jesus Christ. A faith like this can say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). A faith like this will not change even if God does not answer your prayers in the way you think He should (Daniel 3:17-18). This faith is unchanging; it is not based on what you see; it does not readjust according to your circumstances. It is because of Jesus that we can "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Hebrews 10:23).

Your Faith Will Be Tested

Do not be surprised if you have times when your faith is tested. You might think: "Why would God let this happen? Why isn't God answering my prayers? Does God even care about what I am going through?" Can you find examples of people in the Bible who might have felt the same way? What about Joseph in prison or Israel at the Red



Sea or Elijah when fleeing from Jezebel? How was their faith tested? These stories can be helpful when you are going through difficult times. First Peter 4:12 says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you" There is an old saying, "Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death." Continue to read your Bible, pray, meditate, and attend church services. God is looking for men and women of faith. "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8b).

Bible Quiz



1. Why was George Müller called a "Man of Faith"? _____

2. Write down the name of one of the Heroes of the Faith listed in Hebrews, Chapter 11. _____

3. Why do you think his or her name was included in this chapter?

4. What is the definition of faith? _____

5. What is the foundation of faith? _____

6. List three ways to strengthen your faith:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

7. What is circumstantial faith? _____

8. Read Daniel 3:17-18. Describe the faith of the men in these verses. _____

9. Read John 20:24-29. Describe the faith of the man in these verses. _____

10. What is a good verse to read when your faith is being tested? _____

Men & Women of Faith

Read the Scripture, and write on the line who was faithful.

_____ 1 Samuel 22:14

_____ Acts 11:22-24

_____ 2 Samuel 20:16-19

_____ Hebrews 3:5

_____ Nehemiah 7:2

_____ Hebrews 11:4

_____ Nehemiah 9:7-8

_____ Hebrews 11:5

_____ Daniel 6:4

_____ Hebrews 11:7

_____ Matthew 9:2

_____ Hebrews 11:11

_____ Matthew 9:20-22

_____ Hebrews 11:23

_____ Matthew 9:28-29

_____ Matthew 15:22-28

_____ Matthew 25:20-21

_____ Acts 6:5, 8

