

Feeding My Faith

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. 1Kings 17:1-16

1. Knowledge fosters understanding, but it does not guarantee courage.
2. Persons learning to skydive know the theory and can believe it works, but at some point must jump.
3. No matter how much one learns about God and His word, eventually he must put his trust in Him enough to jump.
4. Many Christians equate knowledge and academic acceptance with faith
5. They study the Bible, often to the point of becoming scholarly
6. They're totally convinced that God is and that Jesus is His Son, but they don't jump; they won't take a risk - James 2:19

B. To grow from knowing to believing, from knowledge to faith, one must:

1. Trust God completely. Anything that we can do for ourselves is not done by faith.
2. In the normal course of events, an overwhelming percentage of our lives are lived by sight.
3. Walking by faith is the willingness to step completely out of our comfort zone and trust God to sustain us.
4. Like jumping out of a plane means that we are not in control; the equipment and laws of physics are in charge. So it is with trusting God, doing what He asks, even though it takes the control away from us and seems counterintuitive, but believing He will take care of us. This is not an easy change to make.

C. The Adversary attempts to give us many excuses:

1. Are you crazy? Everyone will laugh. You will be rejected by your peers. How dare the Lord ask that much of you? You've got responsibilities; people are depending on you. This is not a good time; you need to get your life in order first.

D. Believing is easy, but it requires a complete transition to begin living by faith.

1. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:20-24
2. For example, the Lord knew how much trouble we would have with material things while living in this world as a soul housed in flesh. Note the emphasis in His teaching:
3. "Jesus taught more parables about money and things than anything else (16 of 38 parables). One out of every ten verses in the gospel accounts is about money and things (288 verses). In the Bible there are: about 500 verses on prayer, 500 verses on faith, and over 2000 about money and possessions." (Howard Dalton, Leadership Magazine)
4. Why? Because He knew that the challenge to our faith and trust in Him and His provisions for us will be in the area of our desire to control our material good and needs
5. The man who says: "I will fly in a plane as long as I can keep one foot on the ground."

I. OUR FAITH MUST GROW

- A. Our hearts cannot be divided - Matt. 6:19-21, 24
 - 1. There is no such thing as joint custody in the Lord; our heart either belongs to God or the Adversary.
 - 2. Therefore, we must choose loyalty to God and act on it - Matt. 6:25-35
 - 3. He is not talking of simple anxiety; He is addressing our fear of letting go and trusting God to care for us
- B. So, if our faith is to grow, we must choose to grow and jump out of the plane

II. THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO GROWING OUR FAITH

- A. We cannot develop faith without knowledge - Rom. 10:17
 - 1. However, billions hear the story of Jesus and do not believe it.
 - 2. Therefore, it must require more than simply hearing the word to develop faith. One must choose to allow the Word to enter his heart and decide to accept it as truth, the same kind of effort it takes to choose not to believe and accept it
 - 3. James. 1:21-22; Luke 8:15
- B. We do not have faith until and unless we act on it
 - 1. At some point the skydiving student must leave the classroom, get into the plane, and actually jump out of it before he can be a skydiver
 - 2. There is no merit in just reading or studying if the word does not transform our lives, both in obeying the Gospel and in living as a Christian trusting God in more than just professing it.
 - 3. Academic faith is not faith - James 2:14-26

Conclusion:

- A. The apostle Paul was a man who purposefully cultivated his faith - 2Tim. 4:6-8