

ACCORDING
TO
YOUR
FAITH

LET IT BE
DONE TO YOU

Mat 9:29

Leslie Rendell

According To Your Faith

Copyright 2022 by Leslie Rendell

Visit the Author's website at www.leslierendell.com

Second Edition, license notes

All Rights Reserved.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without the written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review.

But under no circumstances may it be sold for financial gain.

Book Cover by Leslie Rendell

Published by Leslie Rendell at Draught2Digital

Second edition 2022

All scripture is from the World English Bible unless otherwise stated.

The World English Bible (WEB) is a Public Domain (no copyright) Modern English translation of the Holy Bible. That means that you may freely copy it in any form, including electronic and print formats. The World English Bible is based on the American Standard Version of the Holy Bible first published in 1901, the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia Old Testament, and the Greek Majority Text New Testament.

We all struggle from time to time with our faith in God. When times are good and you do not have a lot of worries in your life, it can be easy for our faith to seem strong. Then, when troubles strike, our faith can take a massive blow as we ask God, "Why has this happened to me?"

Maybe we have been suddenly stricken with a major health problem, or we have lost someone who was very near to us. Something has happened in our lives to cause us much pain and suffering. It is at times such as these that our faith in God and His goodness will come into question.

When our lives appear blessed, we may fool ourselves into thinking our faith is strong. But is it? As I hope to show you in this book, our faith is only truly tested in times of trouble or persecution. When our lives depend on how we react to certain people or circumstances. This is the Litmus test for our faith. Will we continue to trust God no matter what the world throws at us? Or are we going to give in and conform to the ways of the world just for the sake of a peaceful life? We can see from the following scriptures that having faith in God is vital for our very salvation.

Rom 1:17 (NIV) For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Heb_11:6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

We can see from the above scriptures just how important faith in Jesus Christ is in the life of a Christian. It is essential. Without it, no-one can truly call themselves a

Christian or claim that they are saved.

The Bible that I have used for references in this book is the “World English Bible” (WEB). If you have a different version of the bible that is perfectly OK. The wording may be different, but I am sure you will find the meaning of the verses to be the same. I sincerely hope you gain a lot of pleasure and understanding from these pages.

I pray that our amazing God will lead you into truth from his word, The Holy Bible. Please read the following scripture from the book of John and think about the true meaning of this verse.

2Ti 3:16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

All scripture means both the old and the new testaments. Remember that the only scriptures that were available to Jesus and his disciples were those contained in the old testament. It was the Apostles that wrote the books of the new testament, and it was many years later that they we compiled into what we know today as “The New Testament.”

Therefore, do not ignore the “Old Testament”. This was the only “Bible” Jesus ever knew. The “New Testament” was only written after his death and resurrection.

We can see from the introduction that faith in Jesus Christ is very important. And in the following verse we see we need faith if we are going to please God.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

So, exactly what is faith. The bible gives us a very good definition of faith in Heb 11:1-6. This faith is not just believing in a certain teaching. It is much more, it is a very strong belief that the entire universe is a part of God's greater plan for all mankind. This faith will even be evident when the world appears to be in complete chaos and is out of control. We must keep in mind our true home is not here on earth, but it is in God's Kingdom. Therefore, we see ourselves as being more than mere animals, we instead see ourselves as the sons and daughters of God. If we believe, and have true faith it will drive all of our actions and thoughts so they will align with our beliefs.

In Hebrews 11 verses 1-6, we can see an excellent description of what faith actually is.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.

Heb 11:2 For by this, the elders obtained testimony.

Heb 11:3 By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible.

Heb 11:4 By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had testimony given to him that he was righteous, God

testifying with respect to his gifts; and through it he, being dead, still speaks.

Heb 11:5 By faith, Enoch was taken away, so that he wouldn't see death, and he was not found, because God translated him. For he has had testimony given to him that before his translation he had been well pleasing to God.

Heb 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

Faith is believing what God has revealed in his bible, and having confidence that he will fulfil all of the promises he has made. The Bible refers to faith in many places, such as Rom 1:17

Jas 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach; and it will be given to him.

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

We all need wisdom to understand the bible, and as we can see from the above verse, we need to ask God for this wisdom, but we must ask with faith. If we doubt we will receive it, then we will not receive it

1Jn 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith.

So, having faith is vital for us, but how do we define it? I think we found the answer earlier in Heb 11:1, the faith chapter. Every one mentioned here simply took God at his

word and obeyed his commands. And for this, they were all remembered for their faith. Believing the word of God and acting on what we know is living by faith. Faith is not hoping something will happen, faith is knowing that it will happen.

Consider the incredible faith of both Noah and Abraham in the following verses. Noah took about 100 years to build the ark, and during this time he must have been the laughing stock of everyone who saw what he was doing. Abraham left his homeland and went where God directed him to go without knowing where this would be.

Heb 11:7 By faith, Noah, being warned about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared a ship for the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Heb 11:8 By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he went.

Heb 11:9 By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

Our faith, like Abraham's is not just intellectual knowledge and agreement. It is much more than just acknowledging certain facts about God. The life, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are all recorded for us in the Bible to read and understand. Faith is indeed needed here to believe what was written for us. But it is the promises from God about the future where the greatest test of our faith will be.

Throughout the entire Bible, there are prophecies

pertaining to a yet future time, some that are terrifying and others that are glorious. Genuine faith in God is accepting these prophecies are true and will all happen in due time. It is taking our entire life and making a stand that is based on our confidence that these facts are real. Genuine faith is life changing.

One way to explain faith is like this. Consider a man who pushes a wheelbarrow across Victoria Falls on a tightrope. The first time you see him do this, you are worried and chew your fingernails while he does the crossing. When he reaches the other side, you give out a loud sigh of relief. Then you come back again the next day and see him do it again. This time you are less apprehensive, as you have seen him do it before. You continue doing this for a full year and by this time you hardly even watch him; you have seen him push that wheelbarrow across Victoria Falls hundreds of times.

Then one day he approaches you and asks, “do you think I can push this wheelbarrow across with falling?” And you reply, “of course you can. I have seen you do it hundreds of times.” “All right.” He says to you, “get into the wheelbarrow.”

There is a difference between believing and faith. We may believe that he can do the crossing without falling (intellectual knowledge) Getting into the wheelbarrow is when our belief in the facts becomes an active trust, or faith. If we refuse to get into the wheelbarrow, then we may have doubts about whether he can actually do it, because now our life will depend on him being successful. If we eagerly get into the wheelbarrow, then our trust, our faith, is powerful. Just how strong is our faith?

It is the same with our faith in God. Are we prepared to

commit everything to God (get into his wheelbarrow) to trust Him with our futures and our lives no matter how hard thing may become? We who live in Australia have always been blessed and not had to suffer any form or persecution, (but things are changing rapidly) so our faith has never really been tested.

So, if God is pushing that wheelbarrow, then we must scramble to get in. Put our faith in Him. He who is in control of all things. If gale force winds and hurricanes are forecast, and the ride looks like it is going to get very bumpy. Then we must believe that the safest place to be is in God's wheelbarrow. We all experience these bumpy times. It may be because of ill health, lack of employment, family break-ups or hundreds of other things that make our lives more difficult. This is when our trust or faith in God must not waiver.

We do not have faith in God because we can see into the future. No, we have this faith because we know that all is going to end well for those who choose to trust God.. We cannot see the future, so all of our trust in God is for unseen things. Or as recorded for us in 2Cor 5:7. We walk by faith and not by sight.

2Co 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Remember that Jesus has never promised us a life free from troubles. But it is the exact opposite, as we can plainly see in Joh 16:33.

Joh 16:33 "I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble; but cheer up! I have overcome the world."

There are many people in the world who believe in a "health and wealth" gospel. Where if you believe in Jesus, then all of your troubles will go away, you will be healthy and

have money to spare. This type of gospel is a false gospel, as you can see from the above scripture. Jesus has warned us we will have troubles in the world, then he tells us he has overcome the world. So we can be reassured that our troubles will only be temporary.

* * *

There are many other scriptures that we can read that support this idea of taking what God has already provided. We know that God's number of completeness is 7, so let us look at the following 7 verses that back up this idea about faith.

*Mat 9:29 Then he touched their eyes, saying,
"According to your faith be it done to you."*

Mar 10:52 Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you well." Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.

Luk 7:50 He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Luk 8:48 He said to her, "Daughter, cheer up. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Luk 17:19 Then he said to him, "Get up, and go your way. Your faith has healed you."

Luk 18:42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you."

Mat 15:28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you even as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

OK, one more passage just for luck. In Acts 14:7-10, we read an interesting passage that also supports this truth.

Act 14:7 There they preached the Good News.

Act 14:8 At Lystra a certain man sat, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

Act 14:9 He was listening to Paul speaking, who,

fastening eyes on him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole,

Act 14:10 said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet!" He leaped up and walked.

When we read this passage of scripture, it can be too easy to just say how wonderful it was that Paul healed this crippled man. But if we read carefully, we can see four things that occurred. First, in verse 7, Paul preached the word of Jesus. Second, the crippled man listened to Paul. Third, Paul realised that the man had faith to be healed, and finally, Paul told the man to get up and walk. But it was because of the man's faith in what he heard that healed him. If the man did not have faith, then Paul would not have seen it and he would not have been healed.

How Faith Can Change Your Life

When we turn to God and trust him and his written word "The Bible". This is when we can experience some changes in our lives. Some of them may be only minor changes, but others may be massive and help us be almost completely changed. So, if you are prepared to trust God, then you may find the following changes in your life.

1. Faith in God Will Strengthen You

This type of strength is now muscular, the type you get by going to the gym each day. This is the strength of character that helps you to withstand troubles and turmoil that will certainly come into your life from time to time. Consider what the writer of Psalm 138 had to say:

Psa 138:3 In the day that I called, you answered me. You encouraged me with strength in my soul.

If we will trust God, we may find we have to courage of

David when he killed Goliath. He did not doubt God was with him and would give him the victory.

2. Faith in God Can Give You Courage.

If you truly have faith, then you will withstand all attempts by Satan to distract you and to lead you away from God. There is coming a time when Satan will seek to destroy anyone who claims to be a Christian. This is the seven years just before Jesus Christ returns to this world to establish his everlasting kingdom. The trials and tribulations of this period will be horrific. Many people are going to abandon their faith in God during this time as they assume God has forsaken them. This is when we will need to be at our faithful best and cling to the many good promises that God has made for us.

During this time of tribulation, God wants us to be faithful to Him even if it costs us our lives. We remember that the rewards of being in God's kingdom far outweigh any troubles we may encounter in this temporary life.

Read the book of Esther in the old testament to see a woman of courage and faith who trusted in her God.

3. Faith gives you stability

You may know of people in your life who are unshakable in what they believe and how they live their lives. If unforeseen circumstances come their way, they just take it as it comes. They understand that when life feels like it is out of control, God is always in control because he never changes.

Faith always sees the victory well in advance. Faith expects us to win the race no matter what troubles and trials we are now facing. Remember the words from Romans 1:16-17.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News of

Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.

Rom 1:17 For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous shall live by faith."

Faith will play an important part in your life if you let it. Faith, or trust in God, will give you the power and strength to accomplish many things that you never would have thought you could accomplish.

It is common today for the words faith and belief to be used interchangeably. Most times, they are synonymous, and sometimes they are translated from the same Greek word Pistis (the word for faith). There are different types of faith. There is a living faith and then there is the type of faith the Apostle James warns us of, a “dead faith” as we see in Jas 2:14-20.

Jas 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but has no works? Can faith save him?

Jas 2:15 And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food,

Jas 2:16 and one of you tells them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled;” and yet you didn’t give them the things the body needs, what good is it?

Jas 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.

Jas 2:18 Yes, a man will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

Jas 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder.

Jas 2:20 But do you want to know, vain man, that faith apart from works is dead?

A living faith is to believe in God and then to act upon what you know to be right. A dead faith is to just believe and then do nothing. Even Demons, the servants of Satan, believe in God and Jesus, so if we just believe, then our faith is at the same level as these demons.

If we are inspired by what we read and learn from the bible, then act upon what we know to be right, then we have a living faith and a good relationship with God, our Heavenly Father. Our faith will increase as we allow ourselves to be

drawn closer to God through prayer and the study of his words. This is explained for us in:

Rom 10:17 So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Therefore, faith is trusting God and being confident in the promises that we have received from Him and Jesus Christ. If we ask God for more faith in our prayers and studying, he will listen and respond to our prayers.

Jas 2:18 Yes, a man will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

Jas 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder.

A man can believe in God but do nothing about his belief, he has a dead faith. But another man with faith will do good deeds because of his faith. his is a living faith.

* * *

There are several examples in the Bible of characters who possessed true faith in God. One exceptional case is encountered in Chapter 8 of the book of Luke. This story is about a woman who experienced a flow of blood for twelve years with no ending. She had treatment from doctors, but no one could cure her of her dilemma.

Apart from the discomfort and embarrassment she encountered every day, she would still have been prevented from worshipping at the temple because of her blood flow. This was an important issue for her because she could not worship God in the temple. This is clear from the record of Leviticus.

Lev 15:25 “When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period.”

The story of this woman begins when a leader of the Synagogue, whose daughter remained seriously ill, appealed with Jesus to go with him and heal his daughter. This is documented in Luke Chapter 8 and verses 41 through to verse 48.

*Luk 8:40 When Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.
Luk 8:41 Behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus’ feet, and begged him to come into his house.
Luk 8:42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as he went, the multitudes pressed against him.*

From these verses, we observe a considerable crowd watching for Jesus to return and they pressed against Him. The NIV version of the Bible reads “the crowds almost crushed him”. So the crowd really pressed hard up against Jesus as he followed the Ruler of the Synagogue. This is when we are introduced to the woman in verse 43.

Luk 8:43 A woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her living on physicians, and could not be healed by any,

This story was likewise recounted in the book of Matthew, and here we discover how much faith this woman possessed. Notice in Mat 9:21 she declared to herself she would be healed, not that she might be healed, but her attitude was remarkably positive and she expected she would be healed if she could merely touch his cloak.

Mat 9:21 for she said within herself, “If I just touch his garment, I will be made well.”

One thing we must learn from this is the attitude of this woman and the way she approached Jesus. She came behind Jesus. She would never have thought that Jesus would notice that she had touched his garment. So she tried secretly coming up behind Jesus, not in front of Him, and secretly touched the fringe of his cloak. When she did this, her bleeding ceased immediately.

We know from Mat 9:21 she believed she would be cured, and now she is rewarded for her faith in believing all she had to do was touch the edge of the cloak of Jesus. She did not doubt, but having witnessed some miracles Jesus had performed, she would have been extremely confident he had the power to heal her of her burdens.

Luk 8:44 She came up behind him and touched the

edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

Notice that it was an immediate cure that happened as soon as she touched his robe. It is essential to understand she never planned to approach Jesus personally, but she just preferred to do it all in secret and later quietly go home. But that would not happen. Even though the crowd was pressing hard against Him, Jesus knew someone had touched Him.

Luk 8:45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

Verse 45 again tells us again the crowd was pressing against Him, so how could he possibly know this woman had touched his cloak? We have the answer in the next verse.

Luk 8:46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

Again, we are told that the people were crowding Him and pressing against Him. I believe Peter repeated this so we would be certain that the crowd was really close and touching Jesus. So how could he know his garment had been touched by this woman? Jesus could not have felt the woman touch his cloak, but he felt that power had gone out of Him. This force was the healing energy that healed the woman.

The woman's intention to return home unnoticed was made impossible. Jesus knew power had gone out from Him and he said "Someone touch me". Now the woman could not hide and we see in the next verse what happened next.

Luk 8:47 When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared to him in the presence of all the people

the reason she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

When she came to Jesus and fell at his feet, she acknowledged she was the one who had received power from Him and how she was instantly healed of her ailment. It is critical to understand she was cured as soon as she touched his cloak, not when she fell at his feet. Not when she came face to face with Jesus. Look now at verse 48 and realize why she was healed. It was her faith.

Luk 8:48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Jesus did not tell her he would cure her. She was already cured as soon as she touched his cloak. Remember, in Mat 9:21, the woman accepted, or had faith, she would be cured just by touching the corner of his cloak. This woman believed that there was something in Jesus that she could take if she wanted it, without asking for it. Was she right or wrong about doing this? Well, she was cured, and Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

This woman did not doubt that she would be healed, as we observed in Mat 9:21, because if she had any doubts, then her healing would not have taken place. We see evidence of this in James 1:6-7.

Jas 1:6 But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

Jas 1:7 For that man shouldn't think that he will receive anything from the Lord.

According to what Jesus declared, we are made to understand that it was not he who healed, but the woman seized the healing!! This should have us all understanding

about our faith. We must ask, “is God waiting for us to find sufficient faith before he will act?”, or should we, by faith, take what God has already made available to us?

I believe everything recorded in the bible is there for a reason. So why was this event documented in the Bible? Was it to provide for us a perfect lesson of what faith is, and what it can accomplish for a genuine believer?

This story has a powerful message for us even today.

Daniel in the lion’s Den

The story of Daniel in the lion’s den is another outstanding lesson of someone who placed their hope in God regardless of the circumstances he was in. This is a remarkable story that most people have heard many times over.

Daniel was in a prominent position in the government of King Darius. Other members of this government were very resentful of Daniel and the high regard the King held him in. They devised a plan to get rid of Daniel by deceiving the King into signing an order whereby any person who prayed to anyone other than the king should be thrown into the lion’s den.

Dan_6:7 The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den.

Dan 6:8 Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Dan 6:9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

The ambush was now set and all those who were scheming against Daniel just had to wait, because they all knew Daniel prayed three times a day to God. Even though Daniel knew of this conspiracy, he continued to pray to God three times a day, as he had always done. He prayed in an open window, as was his custom, where he could be seen by those who were plotting his death.

Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel learned the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Dan 6:11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

The ambush is now sprung when Daniel is heard praying to God, so they go to the King and reveal what Daniel is doing, knowing he will be thrown into the lion's den.

Dan_6:12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

The king is now compelled to carry out the order he had earlier been deceived into bringing into the law. Daniel's fate is now sealed, and he is thrown to the lions.

Dan_6:16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The

king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

It is interesting here to notice the King speaking to Daniel as he was about to be lowered into the lion's den. "May your God rescue you". The King valued Daniel and did not want him thrown to the lions, but because of the law, he was deceived into signing. He could not go back on his orders. Then we see the King going to the lion's den at first light the next day and finding Daniel has indeed been protected from the lions.

Dan_6:19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.

Dan_6:20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Now King Darius knows Daniel is safe. He then deals with those who conspired against Daniel. It is obvious from verse 24 that the lions were hungry, so why did they not devour Daniel? The answer is obvious; he was protected by God because of his faithfulness towards God.

Dan_6:24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

There are many places in the Bible where faithfulness is commended by God. It is also relevant here to recognize that Daniel was conscious of the conspiracy and realized the consequences he would suffer if he prayed to anyone other

than the King. Knowing this threat to his life, he prayed to God, and not to the King.

If we live our lives to please others and not follow what we know is the right thing to do, then we are showing a lack of faith. Having faith in God, trusting God is a way of life, even when it means you are persecuted because of your trust in Him.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

These three Hebrew boys also had great faith in their God, as we see in the story of them being thrown into the furnace of King Nebuchadnezzar. The King set up a statue of himself and commanded everyone to worship this idol, otherwise they were to be thrown into the furnace.

Dan 3:6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

Again, we see jealousy coming to the forefront, and these three boys being bought before the king for refusing to bow down and worship the idol.

Dan 3:12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

When the King warned the boys that they would be thrown into the furnace, they replied to the King.

Dan 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

Dan 3:17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace,

the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand.

At this, the King ordered them to be thrown into the overheated furnace. But again, we see the hand of God in rescuing them. The King acknowledged that the God of the Boys had saved them when they came out of the furnace. When they came out of the furnace, they did not even smell like smoke, so great was the protection they had received from God. When the king saw this, he made the following decree.

Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

Dan 3:29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.

We can also see God is faithful to all the promises he has made throughout the entire Bible. It is not just a case of us being faithful to God, but also of God being faithful to us. It is vital to keep in mind that we are not always rescued from our troubles. There have been millions of followers of Jesus Christ who have died rather than turn away from Him.

David And Goliath

Another story about faith in the old testament is about David slaying Goliath. It is important to remember that David was still just a shepherd boy who could not even meet the

prophet when he came to his house, demanding to see all of Jesse's children. David was the last in the family to be considered.

When Israel was in a battle with the Philistines, David came to the Israelite camp and was confronted by his oldest brother. We can see in 1 Sam 17:28 what his brother thought of David.

1Sa 17:28 Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride, and the naughtiness of your heart; for you have come down that you might see the battle."

1Sa 17:29 David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

So the lowly David was not thought of very high, but this did not worry him, and he approached King Saul and said that he was prepared to fight this giant of the Philistines when no one else in all the Israelite army was brave enough to fight him.

Notice verses 36 and 37. Here we see David is confident, or full of faith in God, that he can kill this giant of a man.

1Sa 17:36 Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.

1Sa 17:37 David said, "Yahweh who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go! Yahweh will be with you."

David has already attributed his victory over the lion and the bear to God, and is now confident that God will again give him victory. He did not doubt. So David went into battle against Goliath with just a sling shot and a stone and confident God would help him in the fight. In verses 45-50 below we see David address Goliath and tells him this is Yahweh's (God's) fight.

1Sa 17:45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

1Sa 17:46 Today, Yahweh will deliver you into my hand. I will strike you, and take your head from off you. I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines today to the birds of the sky, and to the wild animals of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

1Sa 17:47 and that all this assembly may know that Yahweh doesn't save with sword and spear; for the battle is Yahweh's, and he will give you into our hand."

1Sa 17:48 When the Philistine arose, and walked and came near to meet David, David hurried, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

1Sa 17:49 David put his hand in his bag, took a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

1Sa 17:50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

David's remarkable faith was rewarded with a victory over the Philistines giant. Now let us look at the amazing faith of Noah.

Noah

Consider also the faith of Noah. During the over 120 years that it took him to build the ark, he must have suffered an enormous amount of ridicule from the surrounding people. But he stuck to his guns and completed his task of building the ark and saving his family and the animals on the ark.

Heb 11:7 By faith, Noah, being warned about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared a ship for the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

It is not proved whether there was rain on the earth before the time of Noah or not. Some people believe the flood was the first time that it actually rained on the earth. If this is the case, then consider the faith that Noah must have had. To spend 120 years building a massive vessel on dry land and never have seen rain, but also never doubting the word of God. This is genuine faith in action. So Noah was a perfect example of living by faith and not by sight, as is recorded for us in 2Cor 5:7.

2Co 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Faith Of Queen Esther

OK, we have seen the faith of several men here, so I had better give an example of a woman of faith just to show that I am not prejudiced. Actually, 2 of my favorite books in the old testament are Ruth and Esther.

So, let's look at the book of Esther. Esther was the wife

of the Persian King, King Xerxes. It was a death sentence to approach the king without being invited to do so. Even for his Queen.

Life must have been very good for Queen Esther, who was Jewish, as she would have lived a life of luxury in the King's palace. Her guardian was Mordecai, also a Jew. Mordecai offended one noble of the King's court, Haman, by refusing to bow down to him as he rode past on his horse. This infuriated Haman and he convinced the King to have a decree passed that would see all Jews, men, women and children exterminated. His plan was to exterminate the entire Jewish race.

When Mordecai heard of this, he sent word to Esther to tell her to approach the king and get the decree changed. Esther replied to Mordecai, as we see in Est 4:16.

Est 4:16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Susa, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Esther knew it could be fatal to go to the king, but she went there anyway. She had faith in God and approached the King to plead her case. When she entered the king's presence, he extended to her the gold scepter that meant she could approach him without the death penalty being applied. The result, Haman's plot was exposed, and he was executed instead of the Jews. So all Jewish people were saved from what would have been certain death.

Whenever we find ourselves in difficult times, this is when we must rely on God even more. It is just too easy to think that he doesn't care and that we are on our own. But that

is never the case.

We may ask God for something that we need and we will not always get what we want. Sometimes it is “not now”, or it may be “not that way” and sometimes we may have to wait for years before we get that answer that we want. I know that for me personally, I have been making the same request to God for several decades and so far, he has chosen to not grant my wish. If what I am asking for is not according to “his will,” then I will not get the answer I want. Maybe I need more patience and keep asking for another decade or two!

So we have many people of faith in the bible that we can get inspiration from.

Faith of Abraham

I think one of the greatest acts of faith in God in the entire bible must have been when Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah when Sarah was well past the age of childbearing. This child was a fulfilment of the promises that God had made to Abraham, That every nation would be bless through his son.

Then, suddenly, God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. We see this in Genesis 22:2-4:

Gen 22:2 He said, “Now take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you of.”

Gen 22:3 Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his donkey; and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which God had told him.

Gen 22:4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes,

and saw the place far off.

How would Abraham feel? Isaac was the promised son through whom all of God's blessings and promises were to be upon. So how could this occur if Isaac was dead? He had three days to think about this on the way to where God had commanded that he sacrifice Isaac. But he never argued against God. He just carried on in faith, knowing that God was in control of their futures. Imagine the talks he would have had with his wife Sarah and Isaac. Imagine how he felt as he raised the knife to sacrifice Isaac. He was prepared to do all of this, but only because he fully trusted God. His faith was never in question. No wonder Abraham is regarded as the father of the faithful.

But before Abraham could sacrifice Isaac, God intervened and provided Abraham with a ram for the sacrifice instead of Isaac.

These are just a few of the occasions when a select few were empowered with enough faith in God to do some mighty works.

Now we have seen examples of faith. We need to know where faith is from. How do we gain faith?

Faith is based solely on God's promises, therefore there is only one source that exists for us to have true biblical faith. In Rom 10:17, we are told the following spiritual truth:

Rom 10:17 So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We cannot possibly have faith in anything that we know nothing about. Before we can have faith in anything, we must learn about the subject, study it, and only then can we decide about the subject. When we are born, our minds are a blank canvas and as we grow and learn, we can then form opinions and choose what to believe and what not to believe. The same with having faith in God. We must learn about Him from the knowledge that is available to us in nature, books, the church, and from his written word, the bible.

We need to get the information into our minds before we can have faith in anything. Like the man crossing Victoria Falls, if we have enough faith to get into the wheelbarrow, it has come from seeing and believing. We could not have any faith in him getting us safe to the other side the very first time we see him do this. It takes time and evidence before we believe.

This truth is the starting place for anyone to get faith. It will only come to you by reading God's words in his book, The Bible. It is imperative we understand we will never get faith from our own efforts. If we pray for it, fast hoping to get it, have someone lay hands on us or try any other way to get it. We will fail. Faith is only gained by hearing or reading the word of God.

Even after you read and learn from the Bible, you must still learn to accept what the Bible is telling you, not only sections of it you are comfortable with, but the entire Bible. The Bible has been written to reveal God's will in our lives. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Heb 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

Notice here it is those who seek God that are rewarded. This means reading and studying the Bible regularly. Anyone who is just a casual reader of the Bible will certainly not see their faith growing as much as someone who is diligently studying the bible.

Heb 12:1 Therefore let's also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:2 looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 12:2 lets us know Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. Since the Bible is the word of God, and Jesus is God, then this is how he perfects our faith. We study his words and try to live by them. The Bible reveals God's laws and is a guide for us how to live our lives.

Gaining faith is a process. We must read from his words and then we will learn to trust in Him more. The Bible mentions several levels of Faith, from very little faith to

mountain-moving faith. When we exercise the muscles of our bodies, we get stronger and fitter physically. It is the same with our faith. We must exercise it more and more until our faith grows strong. As we trust Him in every area of our lives, we will see his guiding hand in all we do.

But it is imperative we hear the message if we are to have faith. God is not just going to give us faith, he wants us to seek Him because it is what we want to do. He will never force us to do anything we do not want to do. The greatest gift he gave mankind is our free will, and therefore, he will not just give us faith without us even trying. We must choose to seek Him from our own free will.

In Acts 18:7-8, we see an example of Paul's preaching and those that heard the message, believed, and were baptized.

*Act 18:7 He departed there, and went into the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.
Act 18:8 Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house. Many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized.*

Again, in Acts 6:7, we see the effects of preaching the gospel

Act 6:7 The word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly. A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

And again in 1Th 2:13

1Th 2:13 For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of

the message of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you who believe.

Here we see that the word of God is at work for those who believe. This work is building our faith and love for God. We can see the wonders of nature and the intricate and beautiful way things were created. These things all point to a creator, but the crucial evidence that God has given so we may have faith in Him is from his word, the Bible. It is from this amazing book we learn to trust God. We see in Titus 1:2 that it is impossible for God to lie, so we can have absolute confidence, or faith that he will keep his word to us.

Tit 1:2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who can't lie, promised before time began;

Please notice what Tit 1:2 states. God cannot lie, it does not say God will not lie. No, God cannot lie, so since God cannot lie, we can completely believe what is revealed for us in Romans 10:8-17. This is a great passage of scripture that really explains for us how we get faith.

Rom 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart;" that is, the word of faith, which we preach:

Rom 10:9 that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Rom 10:11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed."

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is

rich to all who call on him.

Rom 10:13 For, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Rom 10:14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher?

Rom 10:15 And how will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Rom 10:16 But they didn't all listen to the glad news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

Rom 10:17 So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Remember, especially verse 17. Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God. The more we learn and believe what God is telling us in the Bible, the more we will turn our lives over to Him. We believe Jesus is the "Son Of God" and obey his laws and accept his guidance. There will certainly be times when your faith or trust in Jesus will be sorely tested, but if you have been diligently seeking Him, he will be your help in the time of need.

The importance of reading and studying the Bible cannot be underrated. To go to church every week is good, but if that is all you are doing, then it will be of little help to you. Your devotion to God and your willingness to submit to his way of life can only come about by a regular and committed study of his words. The more you study, the more you will realize that you still have much more to learn. You will never learn all there is to know about the Bible, even if you study it for a lifetime. Therefore, study should never bore you because you

will keep seeing things differently as you dig deeper into his word.

Now we come to see that we cannot get faith from our own efforts apart from the study of God's words. The word of Christ coming to us will impart faith to us. This is the only way we can get this precious gift of faith from God.

Gal 5:22 has recorded for us the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Notice that faith is included. This is the faith of God and since the Spirit of God lives in Believers, we have that faith.

Gal_5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,

Then, when we read Eph 2:8-10 we see everything is a gift from God and we see why this is when we read verse 9. To gain faith and salvation by works would give us the ability to boast about how good we are. But as it is a gift, given freely, then we cannot boast but must instead give all the credit and glory to God.

Eph 2:8 for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Eph 2:9 not of works, that no one would boast.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

If we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us, then we also have the other fruits of the spirit as well. Since God wants us to be good stewards of the talents, or fruits of the spirit, then he expects us to share our time, money, talents, and gifts with anyone we come into contact with. If we place anything as more important than God, that would be idolatry.

* * *

We live in a world where scientific proof is needed to explain everything. Anything that cannot be explained this way is usually not accepted as the truth. Therefore, just how do we live in a world that demands physical proof, even for matters that are spiritual? Spiritual matters cannot be tested by science, they are outside science.

To just openly dismiss faith in God on the grounds of no physical proof is to miss the point of faith altogether. Faith defies the “seeing is believing” idea the world demands. God’s elect will always hope for his Kingdom, even though it cannot be seen physically.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.

When we turn to God, he will remove the veil of uncertainty, because Jesus Christ is where our faith comes from. We read in Rev 14:12 that it is the faith “of” Jesus that we possess, not our own faith but Christ’s faith within us. It is from Him we get our faith, as we see in Heb 12:2.

Heb 12:2 looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In Hebrews 11:6, God tells us it is impossible for us to please Him if we lack faith. We need the faith of Jesus to please God. Remember the faith of the woman with the blood issue, Daniel and the three Jewish boys who were thrown into the furnace? These examples of faith are there to encourage us.

Heb 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must

believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

We must rely upon the faith of Jesus to be in us and then we can please God the Father. There are many questions that we will not have the answers to in this lifetime. This is where our faith comes into play. When we choose to believe in what we do not see, God will show Himself to us in various ways that are without doubt the works of something that is much greater and bigger than we are. he accomplishes this through his amazing creation, our moral compass and our own consciences that tell us what is right and what is wrong. Through his son Jesus Christ and the leadership of The Holy Spirit.

We will never have all the answers to our questions, so we must rely on faith. We can also look at God's track record in keeping his promises, as we can see he has never failed to keep them. All the prophecies in the Bible have been kept, except, of course, for those that are yet future promises.

What we must do is to care a great deal more about building a relationship with God than to search for answers that are not revealed to us.

For questions we should not ask

1. Why me? Rather than ask that question, we should seek to learn what we can from the experience. How can I grow and build my character, strengthen my faith, and become more like Jesus?

2. Don't ask "Where are you Lord?". Move closer to Him through daily Bible study and prayer. God is an unchanging God, so if you feel distant from Him, remember that is it you who has moved. Not Him!

3. Don't ask God "What is your will in my life" and then wait for God to knock on your door and give you a 100 page job description. Rather, seek God's will daily and follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. Ask with an open mind and a willing heart and be prepared to surrender to the leadership of The Holy Spirit.

4. Why did you allow this to happen? There will be many times throughout our lives when we will be tempted to ask God why he allowed something to happen. Whether it is something personal or a general problem in the world. Ask God for his comfort and guidance through all of life's troublesome times. Trust him with the future.

If we spend too much time searching for answers that may not be available right now, we are taking time away from building that all important relationship with God. First, build a loving and trusting relationship and follow his lead in your life. When we do this, we are living by faith and not by sight. We learn what it means to be compassionate, humble, loving and self-disciplined.

James 4:7-10 contains some precious advice.

Jas 4:7 Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Jas 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Jas 4:9 Lament, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom.

Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

If we are prepared to "live by faith," we are accepting an invitation from God to change our way of thinking (or to

repent) and to trust Him for the “here and now” as well as for the future. Notice in the verses above that if we resist Satan, he will flee from us, and if we draw near to God, he will draw near to us.

We will all struggle from time to time when we feel we are lacking in faith. But this is when we must get closer to God through studying his words and through prayer. Never give up, because God has promised to never leave you, not fore-sake you. Many people believe that if it is from God, then it must be easy, but this is far from the truth and most times, if it is from God, then it may be the hardest thing you have ever been asked to do.

* * *

A true understanding of faith is critical for a true Christian, not just understanding, but also living by what we learn from the Bible. Consider the following verse and you see that righteousness is revealed in the gospel and that righteousness is by faith from start to finish.

Rom 1:17 (NIV) For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Faith will also carry a cost. The cost will be as people see you as being different. Many will resent what you are becoming and criticize you for your alternative way of living. Those who do this will most times be members of your own family. Husband, wife, brother, sister, parents and many of your friends.

Living by faith is required to live a Christ honouring life. God is not talking about a one time event about placing your trust in Jesus, it is much more than that. Living by faith will always apply to your present and your future Christian life. It means you will believe in everything Jesus has done for you, including to die on the cross. What he is doing now in your life now by building your trust and faith. And certainly what he has promised you he will do for you in the future. This is always going to be a 24/7 lifestyle.

The only real promise I can make for you is that it will not be any simple thing to do. Altering your lifestyle is bound to bring opposition from people who know you. To be a Christian in this present day and age is to go against what most of the world believe. Look around and observe the hatred where is exposing itself on social media, and on many news outlets for Christians, Christian teachings and the Jewish people.

If you accept the need to find God, to find answers to our troubles today, the only place you will find the answers is in the Bible. So now let us examine how the Bible describes faith. The answer is in the book of Hebrews, Chapter 11 and verse 1.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.

That is what faith is, it may sound simple but as we go further into this topic, I am sure you find it is not simple at all, but it can be, and is, the most difficult thing to understand, specifically for a new Christian.

Believing in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the start of our journey to trust God for everything we need in our lives. The gift of God's grace, through the finished work of Jesus, will bring eternal life, but faith should not end there. His death has saved us from the penalty of sin, but we must continue in faith if we want to be free from the power of sin. These realizations will affect every part of our daily lives. It will deepen our dependence on God, as we realize we cannot live a perfect Christian life without his help. We will always be sinners as we stumble and occasionally mess up. But we have God's promise that we are still forgiven.

When we live by faith, we are also looking forward to a time when we will be free of sin in his Kingdom. Christ will one day return for his Bride, The Church. If we can keep this thought in our minds, we should be filled with joy and gladness, even when things get tough and it seems the universe is against us. If we are confident in the work Jesus Christ has already done for us, by dying on the cross, what he is now doing, and what he has promised he will do in the future, then we can live our lives in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Right now is the time to start living by faith. We know Jesus is going to return one day. Therefore, we should live today as if he will return today. But we must also plan for his return being a little in the future. We must carry on living our lives by faith until he returns, and never give up.

Take the first step

Now you understand a little better what faith is, and how you can gain it. It is time to apply faith in your own life.

That is easier said than done. Remember how a baby learns to walk? They are very unsteady and fall often, then they get better able to stand with no support. From there, they become steady and can walk without help. Finally, they can run and not fall. This is like how your faith will grow slowly but becoming stronger each day. Growing in faith is exactly that. Growing. You will need to keep learning very day as you continue to study the words of the Bible. There is simply no other way to grow in faith.

When you feel Jesus is drawing you to Himself, do not resist Him. Because God has given every one of us free will. We can be drawn to Him, or we can resist Him. This choice is ours and ours alone. No one can make this decision for us either way. To accept Jesus as our Lord is a very personal thing to do. To reject Him is also personal, but an enormous mistake.

Trust God.

1Ti_4:10 For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we have set our trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.

It is OK to stumble occasionally. Just remember that

God will always be there to help you up again. Like any good and loving Father will do for his child. Believe he will take care of you and all he asks for in return is your love and praise. He will give you courage and strength when you need it the most. Make Bible study and prayer times a priority in your life.

Be a friend.

Php 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

You can start living your faith by simply being a friend to others and especially to those who may be underprivileged, poor, unwell or even in jail. Be a good listener and allow Christ's love to shine through you. The worst thing you can do is to be pre-occupied with your mobile phone or other device and not listen attentively to your friend. Always be authentic and inclusive when communicating with other people.

Mar_9:35 He sat down, and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."

This is like the verse above and is one of the harder things to understand and to live by. In this present world, people are very self-centered and care little for the well being of others. They live by the opposite of what God expects from his Children. When you see so many people taking "selfies" and posting them on many social media sites. This is the effects of living for yourself, and neglecting others who may need your help.

Sharing your money and time is vital for a Christian to do if they are living by faith. I believe the most important of these is to share your time. Being a friend and maybe leading

others to Jesus Christ. What greater gift can you give to anyone apart from showing them the way to eternal life?

Use Your God-Given Gifts

1Pe 4:10 As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms.

1Pe 4:11 If anyone speaks, let it be as it were the very words of God. If anyone serves, let it be as of the strength which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We have all been given a unique gift, and we are expected to use it for the glory of God. There are many types of gifts, so the first thing you will need to do is to discover what your particular gift is. This can be the hardest part, recognizing your talent. But when you realize what that talent is, then you can use that gift to help other people.

You may be a wonderful host and enjoy entertaining people. Maybe your talent is public speaking, where you can impart your knowledge to your listeners. Can you teach the word of God? Are you drawn to visit the elderly, the handicapped, or even prisoners who all may feel lonely? There are many unique talents one can possess. Just find your own talent and use it to the glory of God.

Meet with others of Like Mind

Heb_10:25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Find a group of believers who have the same values as yourself and meet with them regularly. I do not belong to a regular church, but I meet every Sabbath with some friends who are all believers and we study the Bible together. During these times of the Covid virus crisis, we meet via zoom when we cannot get together physically. Remember what Jesus has said in Mat 18:20 and also from the book of Proverbs in the “Old Testament”.

Mat 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them.”

Pro_27:17 Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens his friend’s countenance.

When you gather as God’s family of believers, there are many benefits. The first is the presence of God among his Children, and another is we can all learn from each other. That is what “iron sharpens iron” means. There can never be a lone Christian. We need each other for moral, physical and spiritual support. So if you are just starting out on your life of faith. Seek others who believe similar to yourself. You will find when you are in the company of God’s Children you will feel at peace with them.

Always be Positive

Pro 17:22 A cheerful heart makes good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

There is nothing worse than being in the company of people who are always negative and gloomy. So develop a positive attitude and always be this way. And certainly when you are in the company of others. We have the option to be positive or negative when situations in our lives go bad. Choose to be positive by glorifying God with your attitude

and living your faith.

I have known some people who were always negative about everything. They looked for the worst in people and seemed to enjoy the bad news. They are very difficult to be around and I usually try to get away from them as soon as possible.. When in the company of positive people, I feel uplifted and encouraged and want to stay as long as possible.

Many medical doctors claim it can be bad for your health to be negative. As the quote from the book of Proverbs above states. It dries up the bones. So be positive in all you do and especially when talking about your God.

* * *

The term “Salvation by faith alone” has caused many an argument between different Christian groups. Therefore, in this book, I intend to explain how this statement is correct. Many will quote from James 2:24 and claim this is absolute proof works are needed for us to be justified with God.

Jas 2:24 You see then that by works, a man is justified, and not only by faith.

Now is the perfect time to look deeper into God’s word to see if there are other verses that shed a different light on this topic. To use this one scripture by itself is to ignore what God is telling us in other parts of his Holy Scriptures. Take, for instance, Romans 3:28.

Rom 3:28 We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

And what about Romans 4:5?

Rom 4:5 But to him who doesn’t work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

Clearly here we are told “he who doesn’t work” is justified by believing in Jesus Christ and his faith has made him righteous in God’s sight.

In Ephesians 2:8-10, we find a passage of scripture that in my mind wraps up the entire argument about works and faith. In verse 8, we read where we are saved through faith, and then it is very important to understand that this is a gift from God. If you receive a gift from anyone, you do not need to work for it, otherwise you are receiving a reward for your works, and it is not a free gift. The same with faith. This is a free gift from God (no works needed) and then notice verse 9: That no one would boast.

If I was to be justified with God by the works I do then, I have every reason to brag about how good I have been and tell of all the good works that I have done. But what does God say in verse 9? Not of works that no one would boast. We are all on an even playing field here with God. Faith and faith alone have saved us and no amount of good works can accomplish this.

Now notice verse 10. We are created in Christ to do good works. What does that mean? It means we will do good works because we have already been saved. Our way of saying thank you to God is to follow the example of his son Jesus Christ, and do any good works we can do.

Consider the unique works that we may do. A very rich person can do many good deeds and can help maybe hundreds of less privileged people. Some people are so poor they can only help through their prayers. They are both doing good works, so why should one be seen as doing more than the other? Therefore, God does not judge on the amount of good works you may do. If he did, then the rich man is more justified than the poor man. No, we are all made righteous by faith and our works (either great or small) result from our being saved.

Eph 2:8 for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
Eph 2:9 not of works, that no one would boast.
Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

Therefore, Faith is a free gift from God. Good works are then done because we know what God has done for us. Made us righteous because we believe in Jesus Christ.

Anyone who claims to have faith, but refuses to change their life to please God, has a dead faith.

The Bible clearly tells us we are “justified by faith”. But what exactly does Justified mean? Let us first understand the meaning of the word justified from the online dictionary. Dictionary.com.

Theology. Usually the justified. A person or persons believed to be worthy, redeemed, or absolved:

This idea of being justified in the eyes of God is a most blessed hope any Christian can have and to strive for. To be found not guilty, to be worthy, to be redeemed or the last part of this definition is absolved.

We have come before the Almighty God in his court room; he has examined us and sees the righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, he declares us to be free of all unrighteousness. Free of the curse of sins. This is the amazing free gift Jesus bought for us by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead three days later.

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;

Rom 3:24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

Rom 3:25 whom God sent to be an atoning sacrifice, through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, in God’s forbearance;

Rom 5:1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;

I had, for many years, struggled to fully understand this passage of scripture. The significance of it eluded me for a long time until I discovered an excellent description of the entire process that goes as follows.

All mankind are sinners and there is absolutely no way we can get ourselves right in the eyes of God. We all stand convicted of our sins and no amount of good works, self sacrifice or prayers will ever give us a clean record for our guilt before God. But in the Gospel (the good news) God has revealed his plan for us to be completely forgiven of our sins.

What I am about to reveal is the amazing results of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and what this means for you and for me. Jesus Christ was born to Mary and lived a perfect sinless life, something impossible for any human to accomplish. Then he died the atoning death on the cross by which he became our “substitute” or “representative”.

Justification is a part of the saving work God is doing for us. In his court of law, he makes two very important judgements on our behalf. The first judgement is to put the sins of those being justified into the record sheet of Jesus Christ, who then pays for these sins with his own blood. The remarkable second judgement from God is to put the righteousness of Jesus Christ into the sinner’s record sheet, making us “right” with Himself.

From these actions, all done by the grace of God, we are justified before Him. Our sins are totally absolved. We are now redeemed and made worthy.

Therefore, we receive this absolution, this justification before God by our faith alone, in Christ alone. There is no other way for us to get this amazing gift. It can only be in faith alone, in Christ alone.

The short version of this is “Justification is the judicial act of God granting complete absolution from all of our guilt and total release from the penalty of sins through faith alone, in Christ alone.”

There are many people who will object to this doctrine, but you can read it for yourself. Just believe what has been recorded for us in his holy bible.

In the book of Romans, the first four chapters speak about the gospel being a message about the righteousness of God that has been given to people because of Jesus Christ.

Paul describes the problem that everyone deserves to die because we all fall short of what God expects from us.

And then Paul describes the solution to this problem. That the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our lord. It is important to note that this is a gift, not the result of keeping the law or doing anything else. It is 100% a gift from God, or his grace. Paul gave us the example of Abraham. He was declared righteous based on faith, even before the law was given. Salvation is by Grace and Faith, not by any works of the law.

Rom 4:2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. Rom 4:3 What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

In Rom 4: 2, we can see that Abraham was not justified by anything that he had done. It is only because Abraham believed what God has said and that this was credited to him as righteousness.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Rom 1:17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first

to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

In the letter from Paul recorded in Rom 1:16-17, Paul describes that the righteousness of God has been revealed in the gospel. And this righteousness is by Faith from first to last. It was written for us to believe the righteous will live by faith.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rom 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the glory's hope of God.

Rom 5:3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

Rom 5:4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Then in Rom 5:1-6 we come to understand the enormity of what Paul is talking about. First, he tells us we are justified before God only because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We can now boast about our hope of glory, our faith, our Lord and all he has done for us and will continue to do. Then comes the part of this letter that is a little more difficult to accept, but accept it, we must. We must expect to experience suffering or persecution because of our faith.

But when these troubles come to us, we must remain

loyal to our God and not conform to the ways of this world. From verses 3-6, we can see the benefits of being persecuted, but remaining faithful to God. It will build us up to being what God wants from us.

We will become patient, grow in character, and our hope for a future with God will increase. We now have the Holy Spirit in us to guide and help us in all we do. In verse six. We see this has happened for us at just the right time. God knows exactly when you are ready to be drawn to Jesus Christ.

Many people are today saying there are many ways to God. It does not matter if you are Muslim, or any other religion that does not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord. As long as you are a good person, God will forgive you and you will be accepted into his Kingdom. Unfortunately, this is being taught by some of the largest religious organizations in the world.

But what does the “word of God”, the Holy Bible, say on this matter?

Joh_14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Here, we must now make a choice who we are going to believe. The teachings of man that are seriously flawed, or the word of God. There really is no choice. The Bible must always be our guide in life and we must always believe what we read in the Holy Scriptures. Since Jesus Christ is the only way to The Father and his Kingdom, we must accept what the holy scriptures tell us.

* * *

Fear is a genuine feeling today. There is the fear of losing our jobs, fear for our families and for what the future holds for them. Fear of catching the Covid-19 virus and how that will affect your life. Most governments around the world are forcing people into doing things they do not want to do, such as getting the Covid-19 vaccine. They are forcing people into isolation and restricting travel.

This is a natural fear, and is not bad. But when we refuse to stand up for our beliefs in God just to keep the peace with family and friends. This shows a great lack of faith in God. You may be tempted to believe it is not a very great matter to God. But that is not correct. It is a major concern to God, as we can see from Rev 21:7-8.

Rev 21:7 He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son.

Rev 21:8 But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

In verse 7, we see the reward of those who have overcome. They are the sons and daughters of God. But those who are fearful, those who lack faith and did not overcome their fears, are listed first, even before murderers. They reject God and will conform to the ways of the world to save themselves embarrassment, or being rejected by their friends, families and the general community.

Rejecting God because of being fearful shows a lack of faith, and the penalty for this is severe. Look at the last part of verse 8 and understand the fate of the cowardly is to be cast into the lake of fire and sulfur. This is also known as the

second death.

The sins following that of being cowardly may seem to us to be greater sins. Sins such as murder, lies and whoremongering. These are in our eyes greater sins than being cowardly. So why does God list being fearful first in this list, and make it punishable by the second death? Anything deserving the second death has to be a very serious sin against God.

These fearful people do not show loyalty to their sovereign God. They will put their own desires and welfare before the will of God. They violate the very first of the commandments by not putting God first. Therefore, it is not surprising the first sin listed here violates the first and greatest commandment as told to us in Mat 22:36-37.

Mat 22:36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Mat 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

If we have this type of love for our God, a true and strong love, it will make us fearless and give us the faith we need to resist Satan. This is shown to us in.

1Jn 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

I hope you can see just how damaging it is to reject Jesus because you fear for your own welfare. Many people throughout the ages have suffered great pain and death because of their faith and trust in God. Satan is always in the shadows, trying to steal our faith and have us conform to the

ways of this world. But our faith must drive out all fear as we earnestly cling to Jesus.

We see here that fear will cause us to reject God in favour of caring for ourselves. If we are to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind, we will fear no-one, or anything that may cause us to doubt the goodness of God. This fearfulness comes about from a lack of faith. Genuine faith will never be fearful of the future with God. Study Mat chapter 10:26-28 to see who you must fear the most.

Mat 10:26 Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and nothing hidden which shall not be known.

Mat 10:27 What I tell you in darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear, proclaim on the housetops.

Mat 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Therefore, do not be fearful for matters of your faith. And do not shrink away from God. We must trust our Almighty Creator and reject any thoughts of fear of being intimidated or bullied because we put Him first in our lives. One very important thing I need to point out is the meaning behind verse 28. Read carefully the last part of this verse and notice God can destroy both body and soul in the fires of hell. This disproves the commonly held idea by many churches that we have an immortal soul that lives forever. If God can destroy it, then it is not immortal.

God expects his children to live by faith. We cannot see our futures, so we must believe in God and accept all that he has recorded in his Bible by faith. Faith in God is vital if we are going to please Him as we see in.

Heb 10:38 And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back."

Heb 10:39 But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

We are not of those who shrink back, those who are fearful, or those who are fearful because of the word of God. Verse 38 explains Jesus will take no pleasure in those who shrink back, those who are fearful because of his calling. We must learn to rely on God for everything, as we see in Pro 3:3-6.

Pro 3:3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Pro 3:4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Pro 3:6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

This is the best advice I can give to anyone who is seeking God. Seek Him with your whole heart and do not be fearful about what any man can do to you. Do not be afraid to speak the truth whenever the occasion arises. Lean not on your own understanding. This means to rely upon God.

When are you being fearful because of your faith? When you are too afraid to speak the truth in love whenever you have the opportunity. Or when you refuse to answer a question honestly in case you offend. This is when you are being fearful. Whenever you fail to keep God's laws due to what other people may think of you, and this includes family

and friends, you are committing a sin against God. It is better to offend those who disagree with you than to offend God.

This world is rapidly approaching a time of trouble that has never been witnessed before. Seven years known as the tribulation. A time when Christians will need to rely upon God for everything. When they can expect to be persecuted, and some will even experience death at the hands of those who hate Christians.

As I do not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture, I can foresee this time of trouble as being a dangerous time for Christians and Jews alike. A time when we are going to need God, and his indwelling Holy Spirit, for the ability to withstand the forces of evil that will be directed against us. Remember the following scriptures to help strengthen you during this time. Starting in.

2Ti 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Also

Deu 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

And

1Jn 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

God's spirit will give us power, love, and self-discipline. He will never leave nor forsake us, and his love will overcome our fear if we remain in Him. Beautiful promises

we can depend upon, even when our situation may seem hopeless. To enter God's Kingdom is worth far more than what other people may think of you now. Keep your eyes on this remarkable future and never be fearful in matters of God.

* * *

Today, we live in a very different world from just a few decades ago. And a totally different world to when Jesus walked this earth. Today's lifestyle is fast, and more and more people are losing their faith in God. Many people no longer believe that God even exists. There are movements afoot, trying to remove God from every walk of life. From our schools right through to our political leaders, God is being ignored and rejected.

And we find many churches being vandalized and Christians being persecuted more and more. It is becoming more dangerous almost by the day to be a Christian.

Having faith in God, trusting Him in every part of your life may not always be easy, but it will always be well worth it. Remember that this life is only fleeting and very temporary, but life in God's kingdom is eternal, never ending.

We must be prepared for opposition to our faith. We live in a world that is becoming more and more anti-Christian. It is about two thousand years since Jesus was here on the earth and many are becoming impatient for his return, with many others not believing he will ever return, as we see in 2Pe 3:4.

2Pe 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Sharing your faith expresses thanks and is an act of obedience to our Lord. But do not force your beliefs onto others. Remember that no one can come to Jesus unless God the Father draws them.

Joh_6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at

the last day.

It is a waste of time to believe in God without a living faith. It is impossible to please God. Learn from his words what he wants from you. You must welcome Jesus Christ into your life and always seek his will.

Having full faith in God is not an easy road to travel, but the destination is a fabulous place. Be one of those who are saved, as we see in Heb 10:39.

Heb_10:39 But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

So when we have faith in God, when we get into his wheelbarrow, we are not alone.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is well known as the faith chapter. Here Paul has listed some famous names from the old testament. Names such as Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Joseph, Jacob and Moses, just to name a few. Then consider the millions of Christians who have been murdered over the centuries because of their trust and faith in God, and we are certainly not alone.

I started out talking about the man crossing Victoria falls with a wheelbarrow. If we watched him every day for a year, then he would have encountered just about every weather condition you can imagine. Storms, snow, rain, hail and shine. When we are in God's wheelbarrow, we are not guaranteed a smooth ride. Indeed, we will also experience the storms of life. These storms are the problems that we all face each day. Money problems, marital problems, trouble at work, or no work at all, health troubles will strike us all during our lives. Some will have to live their entire lives in some sort of pain. When bad things happen, we must put our hope and faith in God, no matter how hard it may seem. We need to remember Romans 8:28.

Rom 8:28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

There are no exceptions here. When God says all things, that is exactly what he means. You will never be in a situation where God cannot bring some good from it. Maybe it will benefit you in the future, or maybe it benefits others. We do not know the mind of God or how he works things out. This is when faith comes into play. God has promised to never leave

us nor forsake us, so when things get really tough, we must consider what the Psalmist said in Psalm 46 1-3.

Psa 46:1 For the Chief Musician. By the sons of Korah. According to Alamo. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psa 46:2 Therefore we won't be afraid, though the earth changes, though the mountains are shaken into the heart of the seas;

Psa 46:3 though its waters roar and are troubled, though the mountains tremble with their swelling. Selah.

There is a time of tremendous trouble coming to this world, and we just may see these prophecies come to fulfilment. If we are here for these events, then keep in mind Joh 16:33.

Joh 16:33 I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble; but cheer up! I have overcome the world.

So we can see from this verse that troubles in this life are to be expected. No-one is going to be free from all problems. And Satan will also try to tip us out of God's wheelbarrow. That is his one aim, to separate us from God. But when we have faith in Jesus, we can recall John 10:28 and remember our futures are certain.

Joh 10:28 I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (or tip them out of my wheelbarrow)

When we are in the wheelbarrow, let us enjoy the ride.

When the storms of life buffet us. Hold on to the sides and you find they are not cold and hard like metal, rough and

splintery like wood, or impersonal like plastic. No, the sides will be warm, inviting, soft and full of love. Because when we look closer at where we are, we see we are not in a wheelbarrow at all, but we are in God's hands.

One reason I started this message was to find out for myself how to increase my faith in God. I think I have done that, and I hope you have all gained something from this message as well. May we all continue to grow more each day as we learn to rely on God and not our own understanding? May our faith be strengthened each day as we pray and read the scriptures.

There is one thing that is certain, and that is the time of tribulation is very close at hand. A time of terrible troubles for the entire world. A time when our faith and trust in God will be tested to the limit. Many will fall away from God as they lose their faith, so this is when we must be the most vigilant and faithful to God.

And remember, Faithlessness is a two-way street. God will always be faithful to us.

1Co 10:13 No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

In Conclusion, Let me remind you to study God's holy scriptures every day if possible. There is no other way to get the faith we seek. May our amazing God bless you in all you do.

Leslie Rendell has been studying the bible for most of his life. When he is researching a topic, he looks at what other people have said in their books, or on the world wide web. He believes it is important to see opinions from every angle of a subject to give his own informed decision. But still the most important reference is always the bible. There is no other authority for matters of what God expects from those he has created in his own image. If there is a conflict between the bible and man's thoughts, the bible will win every time.

Although he has had no formal bible education, he believes the bible can be understood by the average bible reader. Otherwise, how could they ever understand what God's will is for their lives?

Apart from bible studies, Leslie loves to spend time with his family watching his daughter grow into a wonderful woman and mother. His grand children starting on their life journeys, and now some great grandchildren to watch growing up. It is a special time in his life to see his family grow.

He is retired and now lives in the South West of Western Australia. Apart from his love of the Bible and his family, his other hobby is photography, where he loves to photograph God's creation.

If you have read one of Leslie's books, he would appreciate you leaving a comment on his website (www.leslierendell.com)