

## Building *Our* Faith

It is *essential* to our **faith** that we constantly grow so that we may *know* the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 13:5-6** - Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

Let us pursue then a faith that is *ours*. With all due respect, it is not the beliefs of our family, or our church or our preacher that gets us into heaven. **Are we using a borrowed faith, or do we have our own?** We must develop our own faith, and *own* that faith which is ours.

*How do we know that we are in the faith and how can we increase it?*

**Romans 10:17** - So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Let's talk about the word hearing used in this verse and elsewhere in the Scriptures. When we look at the Greek word, it is easy to understand that the meaning is not necessarily limited to a literal hearing with our ears (this is only part of it) but it speaks of listening with understanding, *attending* to or *considering* what is heard. For example, God *hears* our prayers - think about a judge hearing a case. Also for us, we hear the word of God, not necessarily just listening with our ears, but understanding and **attending** to it (taking action).

Let's get back to the bigger picture: **faith** comes by *hearing* the word of God. (We will not go into detail now about how we understand the Bible and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles as the word of God - I have faith that these things are so, undoubtedly so, and I'd be happy to address any questions about its accuracy). That being said, the Bible that we recognize today contains the word of God. So it's very simple. Our faith is increased when we read and study the Bible with humility towards God. He will provide for us all the knowledge and wisdom and understanding that we need to come upon the knowledge of the truth (**James 1:2-8**).

**Colossians 1:9-10** - For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God

All I want to do is please the Lord as I am called. How wonderful that would be to know that God is pleased with us, that He might be joyful in calling us His own. Kind of like He did when His Son was baptized in **Mark 1:9-11** or how Job and many others pleased the Lord through their faith and devotion to Him. Well we *can* know that! And this is what we are called to do: to continue to be filled with knowledge and wisdom and spiritual understanding! When we have this and we apply it to our lives we can *know* that we are of God and that He is pleased with us.

**2 Timothy 3:10-17** - But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How I love this passage! It's so simple and plain to understand. We are not following men, no, but we are following Christ, and the Apostle Paul as he follows Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). The Lord *will* deliver those who worship Him and serve Him in spirit and in truth, just as He promised us! It's not going to be easy, because narrow is the path that leads to life eternal and there are few who find it, but it is *doable*! But only through *our faith*.

**What are the Scriptures useful for?** *All* of them or *some* of them or the ones we *like*? Surely **all** of them. The entire Bible is our ultimate guide, through which God speaks to us today. *Do you believe it?* The word of God **is powerful**. Some may say it has lost its power and it's out of date. I beg to differ. The Word of God **is**. And always has been. It's not 2000 years old, it's eternal and it has been with God since before the beginning! **Always**. And through it, we can become sanctified as we were called, we can *be* who God **created** us to be.

**Hebrews 4:12** - For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**Philippians 1:3-11** - I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

I pray that you will devote yourself to God's word. If you give your time to God through prayer and study and fellowship, *even when you don't have it*, God **will** reward you and bless you! Let's discuss practically how you can do this if you would like some guidance. The Bible is very simple to understand, and God will help you, for sure, as long as we have the right attitude!

If you'd like to discuss any of this further, or anything else, we can totally get together and talk about it. Any time God's word is opened, big things happen, and that's exciting to me. Please let me know if you need **anything** at all. I want to do all I can to fulfill the love of Christ, not out of obligation, but out of a sincere compassion. If prayers need to be made, let's do it. If you need guidance or help-I know we all have struggles and situations-so let's talk about it. Whatever you need, put your faith in the Lord and He will **hear** you.

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