

BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

Faith Formula - Part 4: Always In Progress

Hopefully you've been following us as we've begun what I hope is a very intimate and comprehensive discussion about "Faith". It's an exhaustive subject, one that causes you to discover that once you've reached one pinnacle, the beginning stages of another one arises. When it comes to faith, you will never know as much as you could know at any given time, neither do you know as much as you should know. If you did, obstacles in life would be far less challenging. So as we continue this area of study, know that reaching that next pinnacle of spiritual growth in this walk of faith will continue to be a work in progress throughout your life.

We have delved into the subject of building faith by utilizing a paradigm that is closely aligned with one admonished by the Apostle Paul, which is "*building a platform*". The foundation has been laid by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but God has ordained that you and I should get busy building upon what Christ has already provided. I believe the Apostle Paul has given us a magnificent model for doing a little reprioritizing and renewing in our lives.

And just in case I haven't made it clear, let me state for the record that one of the main goals of talking about "*building a platform*" is to encourage you to make the decision starting right this very moment to change your building materials. What you have done in the past...the decisions and choices you've made thus far....are directly responsible for where you are today. The very choices you make today will determine where you will be in the future. So if you want to alter your course for the better, make better choices about what you are doing, thinking, and saying.

You cannot see yourself as a victim of fate. You are not an arbitrary leaf, blowing about, landing wherever the wind takes you. Your steps are ordered. There's a purpose for the direction of your life, and if you want to fall in lockstep with the Father's plan, you'll have to pay attention and understand the direction He has ordained you to take. Going against the grain of His plan will only cause you more pain.

There are swarms of folks who will tell you that you can never know the Father's plan for your existence, but God tells us in Romans 11:25 that He doesn't want us to be ignorant of our calling, lest we get sidetracked and make the mistake of thinking that we are more or less than what He has called us to be. Ignorance is darkness, and God wants us to walk in the light.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

"Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the ***Holy Bible, New Living Translation***, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

"Faith Formula - Part 4: Always In Progress" written by Reverend Fran Times-Mack, edited by Kim Times for Sundie Morning Sistas ©2009.
All rights reserved. All done to the glory of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Sundie Morning Sistas is dedicated to spiritual inspiration and encouragement through the Word of God.

Walking in the light requires that you trust that God desires the best for you, that He is always providing guidance and direction to help you get the most out of life. If you will begin to trust this one central belief, then you will have a basis from which to resolve life's problems using the power that God has given you through Christ. When trouble comes--instead of asking "God why?" you'll respond with "God I.....I forgot to take care of this, or I forgot what You told me about that..." You'll begin to see that some of the most troubling circumstances in your life can be traced back to the poor decisions and choices that you have made.

A few weeks back, I had one of the most emotional and gut-wrenching conversations I've ever had. It was with a very attractive middle-aged man who was struggling to hold his life together. To look at him, one would think he had the world on a silver platter, but he was really very miserable. He believed that he had so damaged his relationships with his children that he would never be able to do anything to repair them. He believed that all was irreparably lost and that he could never have the one thing he wanted most out of life, which was the love of his family.

I was stumped. Usually after I've spent some time with folks, they feel more encouraged, invigorated even, to take on the challenges they face, but this gentleman seemed to be more emotionally distraught after our conversation than he was before it began. It perplexed me on so many levels I tell you. I was of course ultimately encouraged after much prayer for him and his plight, but it reminded me of just how complicated a life can be. It reminded me how we can spin a web so tight and intricate that we trap ourselves into feeling there's no way out.

Notice I said that we trap ourselves into "FEELING" there's no way out. This is one of the really big areas we must put into perspective: that feelings do not dictate our reality unless we allow them to. Feelings carry a tremendous amount of energy and they do have the ability to transform our realities, but by the same token we can change our realities by changing how we feel. You can choose not to feel sorry for yourself and begin to use your energy in a more productive way.

To use your feelings productively is a God-given gift. It's a very important faith concept. But don't take my word for it. Examine the flow of activity on the days when you feel your emotional worse. Goodness gracious, it's as if you wore a sign that says "*I feel bad today, and I want to feel worse, so please annoy and bother me all day long.*" Why do you suppose this is...that things have a way of flowing much better when we have a greater sense of peace? Because order and peace are the natural flow of things, that's why.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

"Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the **Holy Bible, New Living Translation**, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

"Faith Formula - Part 4: Always In Progress" written by Reverend Fran Times-Mack, edited by Kim Times for Sundie Morning Sistas ©2009.
All rights reserved. All done to the glory of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Sundie Morning Sistas is dedicated to spiritual inspiration and encouragement through the Word of God.

God doesn't tell us to have a renewed mind just because. He tells us to renew our minds to His Word because there is power in our thoughts and emotions. When we emote feelings of thankfulness and joy, we are aligned with what God intends for us, but as I've said before, there's no faking it. There's no way we can muster enough emotional energy to transmit real joy if we don't believe deep down that God is rooting for us to have, be, and present the best.

This is one of the things that is essential to building a solid platform on the foundation of Christ. I'm not talking about harnessing enough strength to get you through what you may be dealing with today. Neither am I referring to stocking up enough of God's good stuff to get you through the next crisis. I'm talking about having your mind, heart, and soul soak up so much confidence in the goodness of God that you see yourself masterfully building your life. You understand that your life can be good ground on which to support all the things you want and then some.

Philemon 1:6 (NIV)

6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

This is the benchmark. You never have to question it. God's desire is that you come to a full understanding of all the good things He's provided through Christ. Not only can you view yourself as a work in progress, but through Christ, you can continually achieve excellent progress towards meaningful fulfillment. No matter what troubles you may face...no matter how tough life seems, the ultimate goal is for you to triumph over it and achieve a greater understanding of what you're made of through Christ Jesus. This is your work...to master your life, to allow its challenges to boost you higher as you endure in faith and know beyond knowing that victory is yours.

My mom has a saying that if you don't beat life, it'll sure beat you. Is life challenging? You're darn tootin' it is. At the root of my mother's saying is the underlying truth about the courage, strength, and faith that it takes learn life's lessons wisely and quickly so that you can build upon them and move on. I've provided some very practical Godly principles that will work for your life, IF you build upon them. Being confident in God's goodness by having confidence that He desires to see you win; disciplining your mind, heart, and soul to watch what you do, think, and say; and always having the humility to accept responsibility for your poor choices and decisions; these are the three things that will ensure your platform is strong and steady. You must be so intensely anchored in these three things that no matter what happens, you can bring your mind back to what God is showing you; not to what you think you know or see, but to what He would have you to see.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

"Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the ***Holy Bible, New Living Translation***, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

"Faith Formula - Part 4: Always In Progress" written by Reverend Fran Times-Mack, edited by Kim Times for Sundie Morning Sistas ©2009. All rights reserved. All done to the glory of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Sundie Morning Sistas is dedicated to spiritual inspiration and encouragement through the Word of God.

Hebrews 6:1 (NLT)

So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start all over again with the importance of turning away from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.*

God is always, always pushing you to open your eyes and have a broader view, so that you will cease to miss the opportunities around you. Stop placing stumbling blocks in your own way by repeating the same lessons over and over again. It's time to shift your thoughts and focus into high gear. Make a habit of kicking negativity to the wind and bring your mind back to the tremendous reality that God is partnering with you to build something wonderful and great. Until he returns, building your own personal platform will be the work that continues to propel you onward and upward...in progress!

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

"Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the ***Holy Bible, New Living Translation***, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

"Faith Formula - Part 4: Always In Progress" written by Reverend Fran Times-Mack, edited by Kim Times for Sundie Morning Sistas ©2009.
All rights reserved. All done to the glory of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! Sundie Morning Sistas is dedicated to spiritual inspiration and encouragement through the Word of God.