

BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

Faith Formula - Part 5: Conclusion: May the Works I've done...

There is an enormous amount of believers who have confessed that they have been waiting—believing in faith for years and years for something to come to pass. Many of them are no closer today to what they want- than they were before they made the confession. That's because they haven't taken the appropriate action. We are not justified by our works, which means that our actions can't make us righteous in the eyesight of God. The scriptures tell us that we have been justified and made righteous through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can't work our way to salvation—it's a gift from God, and it comes by way of what Christ accomplished on the cross for our sakes.

Romans 10:9,10 (NLT)

9 For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

No, your works cannot save you, but there is no doubt about it, when you make this life-changing confession, something is activated, and that "*something*" is faith. Our introduction to this extraordinary, intelligent thinking substance called faith is when we first accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. You made a choice. At the point you accepted Christ, your mind, heart, and soul were all in agreement that making him Lord and Master would save your life. At that very moment your whole being embraced God. You trusted the Father to set things right between the two of you. From that moment on you have the great privilege and honor to develop a close and lasting relationship with Him.

At the point of salvation you trusted that if you did your part by confessing and believing, you could also trust that God would do His part. You had to possess an unwavering trust that God would honor His promise and do what He said He would do. What we have here is a fail-proof equation for results. If we have faith, back it with the right works, results are eminent. Among countless other infamous examples of believing and receiving, go to Luke 8 (NLT) to read an example that really hits this home:

Luke 8:40-48 (NLT)

40 On the other side of the lake the crowds received Jesus with open arms because they had been waiting for him.

41 And now a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell down at Jesus' feet, begging him to come home with him.

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42 *His only child was dying, a little girl twelve years old. As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds.*

43 *And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors^[fn3] and still could find no cure.*

44 *She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.*

45 *"Who touched me?" Jesus asked. Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you."*

46 *But Jesus told him, "No, someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me."*

47 *When the woman realized that Jesus knew, she began to tremble and fell to her knees before him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed.*

48 *"Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace."*

The woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment had struggled with a health issue for 12 long years. She perhaps had placed her faith in home remedies, doctors, and other things thought to bring about healing in that day and time. None of those things had worked for her particular ailment. It wasn't until she placed her trust in the healer of all healers, the Master, that she received results! But not so fast...what do you supposed would have happened had the woman just stood there or went along in the crowd, never making any attempt to reach out to touch Jesus. Would she have been healed? No! Her action was required. And not just any ol' action, but the right action—action that backed the faith she had so perfectly aligned her heart, mind, and soul to exhibit. And she stepped outside her comfort zone to do it. Verse 47 bears record that she was as nervous as can be. She began to tremble and fell to her knees. This lets you know emphatically that she was stepping out of the ordinary in expectation of receiving the extraordinary. She knew that betting on Jesus was a sure thing.

This woman took a chance on Jesus and there was no possible way that he would let her down. In this same way, you and I took a chance that if we confessed and believed in Jesus Christ, that he would save our souls. Had you NOT made the confession and believed to receive, you would not have received the gift of salvation. You need only look at the millions of folks who are not saved to prove that point. One of the most apparent differences between those of us who have received salvation and those who HAVE NOT or WILL NOT receive it is the fact that those who *"have not or will not"* just flat out refuse to first confess Jesus as their Lord, and secondly, they refuse to believe to receive salvation. They're stuck, blind, and cannot move forward through Christ.

Sometimes those of us who DO confess and believe to receive get stuck too. Even though we're saved, we stop right where we first believed and never grow much beyond that point.

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We're still going before the Father, always with a hand out—expecting to receive without doing our part. I say and write this all the time, but It's such a dynamic truth that it bears repeating: salvation is just the beginning. It begins our spiritual journey forward in the things of God. It's the beginning of a spiritual life—a life that is built upon lessons of love, one where we rely on Heavenly Father to teach us how to step up to the plate, employ faith, and get things done for the Kingdom.

Our relationship with God is the singular most important one of our lives. He gives us parents, siblings, spouses, and loved ones to teach us two things: #1) He teaches us that relationships are integral to sustaining a quality existence, and #2) He teaches us how to give and receive love through those relationships, so that they will continue to grow and flourish. In a nutshell, God teaches us commitment through our relationships, because that's how we learn to be committed to Him. Being committed to Him yields rewards! It gets us to a place where life is fulfilling and satisfying, where we enjoy God's best. This is what He wants for us.

We build our relationships on earth by communicating with each other and enjoying one another's company, but the thing that really binds and cements the intimacy in a relationship is the commitment. It's when the people involved can count on each other to hold up their end, no matter the circumstance...good or bad. God desires our total commitment. He desires that we hold up our end. In Romans 12:1-2, He tells us to fix our attention on Him and to offer our entire existence...our minds, bodies, and souls...to Him; this is the least we can do for all that He has done for us.

The song says "*May the works I've done speak for me...*" The works we do absolutely speak for us! They make a statement about who we are and what we believe. If we refuse to hold up our end of the bargain, if we do nothing or go along with the crowd, wondering about with no real sense of purpose or destiny, then we will not please God.

Hebrews 11:6 says that it is impossible to please Him without faith. Most of us have heard the saying "*The same things you do to GET the man or woman are the same things you have to do to KEEP the man or woman.*" Well the same faith that you exhibited to come to Christ is the same faith you have to exhibit to keep your relationship with the Father strong. This faith has to be backed up with the right kind of action—action that demonstrates you believe in the example of Christ. And if you believe in it...you'll walk by it! This is what humans do. We follow what we believe.

This verse also says that those who come to God must believe that He exists and that He is a Rewarder... a Gifter... a Giver to those that diligently seek Him. To seek Him diligently is to make a constant and earnest effort to present to His Kingdom something of consequence.

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If you don't back up your faith by loving, sharing, giving out the love of God to all who need and will accept it, then exactly what are you believing? If you don't do those things to build your relationship with God, how will it grow and develop? How will YOU spiritually grow and develop in the faith if you don't present yourself before the throne with a strong desire to live and do right? Romans 12:1-2 already tells us that God has an expectation that we will do what we committed ourselves to do when we accepted Christ. He wants you to get your mind settled on His goodness and then begin to walk in it. And remember, you can only walk in what you believe, and you can only believe in what you know.

2Timothy 1-7 (The Message) tells us that *"God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible. ¹³⁻¹⁴So keep at your work, this faith and love rooted in Christ, exactly as I set it out for you. It's as sound as the day you first heard it from me. Guard this precious thing placed in your custody by the Holy Spirit who works in us."*

Know that every step you take to commit yourself to Godliness will yield something great, because this step backs up your faith. This step indicates your choice to build your platform in God's territory on the foundation of Jesus Christ. The only way that you can truly have confidence in your ability to exercise faith is if you have confidence that you are doing your part, you are backing your faith with the right works; works that build your relationship with God. This is what it takes for you to step up to the plate the same way the woman with the issue of blood did—with the full assurance that your trust in Christ is not misplaced and that through him, God will deliver on His promises.

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