

## March 2009 Week 1 TEACHING

# Keep the Faith

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible to please our Heavenly Father without Faith. Why do you suppose that is? We've heard it a million times, but hardly anyone ever explains why faith is such a crucial and necessary component to one's relationship with God. Well, this verse goes on to tell us that when we come to God we have to believe that He exists, and here's the big whammy, we have to believe that He will reward those of us who put a sincere effort into seeking Him out.

God wants to be sought after and He wants to be found. He knows that if and when any of us expend the energy to look for Him, we are not shucking and jiving, but we plan to step up to the plate in a very real way. And when we find Him, it is because we had faith that indeed we would. He likes that.

You see God looks for an opportunity to bless us. 2 Chronicles 16:9 says that the eyes of God run to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking to show how strong His love is for each of us. But here's the thing, we have to hold up our end of the bargain as well. Our hearts have to be right, and the only way to get them to be right is to have faith.

A lot of us think of faith in terms of getting what we want. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 17:20 that if we have the faith of a mustard seed, we can tell a mountain to move and it will giddy up. But there's a little bit more to the story than that. Sometimes, when we read the Word we forget English 101; we neglect to put the verse in context with the subject matter at hand. When Jesus Christ talked about the faith to move mountains, he was speaking to the disciples in the context of ministering, blessing, and healing people.

So often we forget our mission. We forget that the faith we employ as Christians is the faith of Jesus Christ. This means that as we grow in faith, as we exercise it by gaining victory over our circumstances, that we will grow in love as well. God expects that we will be interested in accomplishing something for the kingdom, because that was certainly the kind of faith Jesus Christ had.

At some point in your life you will be faced with a situation that forces you to learn where your help really comes from. You will have to trust Him, and He will answer your call.

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But you needn't think that your relationship with God can be summed up in you needing Him and Him answering the call; much more is required of you.

The faith that it took for you to become a born-again believer is just the beginning. Sure, there may be times when you go through struggle, where you ask "*why does my life seem so difficult?*" And you lean on the Lord because you know He'll help you, but each victory should bring a deeper window of love in your heart.

God knew you long before you arrived on the scene, because Ephesians 1:4 says that you were predestined before the foundations of this world. He makes no mistakes and we certainly can't think that he made a mistake when he called us. He knew that we would look for Him and that we would find Him. And now that we have found Him, He said in Romans 8:37 that we can have overwhelming victory through Christ, who loved us. Verse 38 goes on to say that no matter what comes our way, nothing can separate us from the love of God, not death, not life, not angels or demons, not even the fears and worries of today. Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Boy, you can't help but to be reassured when you read that. It just blesses your heart.

God has told us this in His Word because He knew we would face times in our lives where we would need that extra reassurance. Not because the bill collectors are calling us 24/7. Not because we have to endure a ridiculous supervisor at work. Not because the husband, wife, or child ain't acting like they should. These are all things in which the Lord will help us get through, but we have to put things in context here.

If the bill collectors are calling, it is probably because you bought more than what you could pay for. If the supervisor at work is acting out, you can be thankful you have a supervisor and a job to go to. If hubbie, wifey, or the youngens are misbehaving, you can be thankful that your family is alive and well enough to get on your last nerve. We can be thankful, pray, and have faith that God will make all of these things all right, but let's not forget that we've got a stride to hit and a mark to make. We've got a high calling to live up to.

God told us that we could have overwhelming victory. He told us this so that we would not be afraid to administer His overwhelming love. Romans 8 references a time when Christians were being brutally attacked and killed simply because they were endeavoring to spread God's Word. They were convinced of God's great big love and

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that's why they didn't stop talking about it. They didn't stop sharing it. They were keepers of the faith, no matter the cost.

We have nothing like their circumstances, but we too are keepers of the faith; God has called us to be. He expects more from us than to just sit on it and use it only when we are in crisis. Jesus said in John 13:35 that people will know that we are keepers of the faith by the way we love. In other words, we have to understand and hold up our part of the agreement. We knew God was about loving His people when we sought Him out. And we also knew that when He loved on us, He expected us to pass it on. So remember---that as you grow in the faith, it is definitely yours to keep, but with it comes a bounty of love to give as well.

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