

True Faith

By

Gale Palmer

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Foreword

My impetus for this manuscript is the fact that, most religion desperately complicates faith in God. *"The just shall live by faith."* The Word of God is quite clear on this subject. There are no works of man that could ever merit God's favor. The Work of Salvation was done by God Himself on the Cross of Calvary over two millennia ago, and there is nothing more to be done. Christ shouted to His creation while giving His Life *a ransom for many*, "IT IS FINISHED!" God said it, and that settles it! Nothing more is necessary; however, do not confuse the Works of Salvation with the works of righteousness.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; {7} That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
(Titus 3:5-7)

Works of righteousness without faith will never please God, because *without faith it is impossible to please Him*. Righteousness is simply doing right. Anyone can "do right," but if right is done without faith in God's Word, it is worthless. "Good works" only count for the truly faithful. If you want to go to Heaven, you must please God, and without "True Faith" you cannot. True Faith is implicit obedience of God's Word. You can try it any way you wish, but there is only one way that actually works. All roads **do not** lead to Heaven.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: {14} Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. {15} Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Mat 7:13-15)

You have to be a "seeker" to find the narrow way. Most people are depending on their good works without the admixture of "True Faith." Very few are true seekers. Are you a "seeker"?

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: {8} For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Mat 7:7-8)

I do not claim to be the sole authority. What I do claim is, that God's Word IS! God has delivered His Word down through the centuries to the world, but only a faithful few ever understood its vital veracity. In these later years of man's existence the devil is trying desperately to cloud the waters with many different "versions" of the Word of God. If you don't believe in the devil, then he has succeeded in deluding you. I believe by faith that the King James authorized version of the Bible is God's Word. I will not debate my faith with anyone. There is only One Person I need to please - God! Opinions are of no consequence.

"Man's free-will, does not threaten the Sovereignty of God!" - Pastor Michael Setser Sr.

God is the Sovereign Creator of the universe. You either *believe it, or not*. If not, I only have one question, "***What if you're wrong?***"

- Gale Palmer

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I - Divine Currency

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire..."

- Jesus Christ (Revelation 3:18)

How do you buy from God? Of course, you would probably ask, "Why *should* I buy something from God?" God Word counsels us to do so. In the passage above, Jesus is rebuking the Church for their apathy towards their own wretched condition. They were depending on material things for their wealth instead of relying solely on the Word of God. They had sunk into apostasy. The devil has learned well that popularity and wealth will undermine faith a whole lot quicker than persecution ever could!

"Friendship with the world is enmity with God! His ways and thoughts are not ours! What army in their right minds would march around a walled city for 7 days, 7 times on the seventh day, and then shout to capture it! If something is popular with the world, you can mark it down, it is not of God! Satan is glad we have so many different "religious" denominations, non-denominations and Bible versions because it confuses people. God is not the author of confusion, and I'll give you one guess who is! Whenever and wherever Christ's church has been persecuted it has flourished!"

- Virginia Bahs

Note in verse twenty that Christ is outside of the church trying to gain entrance. Jesus makes an appeal to the individual. "...*if any man...*"

(Revelation 3:20) "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

The word "sup" refers to the evening family meal when all would be finished with their day's work and gather to relax and fellowship together about the day's events. (*Gr. deipneoô: Pronounced; dipe-neh'-o. Means: to dine, that is, take the principal (or evening) meal:—sup (X -per).*) It isn't as much about the food as the fellowship, the food and the Door in this case being one and the same, the Word of God.

(John 1:1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

(John 10:9) "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

What exactly is pasture to a sheep? There is no sustenance for the human spirit and soul outside of Jesus, The Word, and The Door! He is saying, "Open My Word! Read! Let's have fellowship! Supper's ready!"

You would probably ask me, "What would I use for money? What do I have that God wants? What is *gold tried in the fire*?" Let me ask you, "What does the little boy who wants to buy something for Dad, do?" He asks Dad for the money. He has none of his own. We have nothing, and God must give to us so we may give back to Him. Do you think you can earn your own way to heaven with good deeds? Here's what God thinks about your best efforts.

(Isaiah 64:6) "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses [good deeds] are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

For you to think that you could do something more than what Christ did on the cross is in insult to God. Christ did a perfect work. How can perfect be made better? Anyone who thinks they can do anything to merit God's favor assumes that they can do more than Christ has already done. They are "*vain in their imagination.*" God wants your faith, His gift, returned with interest. He wants to refine it, and make it pure. Our wretchedness pollutes our faith, and it must be "*tried in the fire.*"

(Job 23:10) "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

(Hebrews 11:6) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

(1 Peter 4:12) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:"

(1 Peter 1:7) "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"

When we return pure faith to God we are restored to the fellowship lost in Eden. We walk and talk with The Creator once again. God desires this restoration, because He loves us. His love is so great He gave His very own life that we might once again live. What we buy from God has to be purchased using what He gives to us. The things of heaven must be purchased with the currency of Heaven, faith.

(Romans 4:5) "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Ephesians 2:9) "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Like the distraught father of the sick child we must cry out to the Everlasting Father.

"...Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24)

II - Substance

Those strong in faith are people of substance. We say, "He is a man of substance." What we mean is:

He has no lack.
He doesn't have to go to others and ask for help.
He has what he needs and wants.
He can purchase what he wants when he wants it.
He has the ability to give to others.
He knows how to get more.

(Hebrews 11:1) "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Think for a moment:

Wood is the substance of oak furniture.
Sand is the substance from which we make glass.
Clay is the substance of pottery.

God's Word says "*faith is the substance of things hoped for.*" (Hebrews 11:1) What do we hope for? Something more? Heaven? Peace? Life after death? To see God? Something beyond what our five senses can detect? Let me ask you this. Do we sit on the furniture? Do we drink from the glass? Do we put plants in the pottery? We can hang our hope on faith with the same surety! "I *hope* someone gives me money for my birthday!" is not the same hope as, "I *hope* in God's Word!" The first is an anxious awaiting, while the second is simply marking the time. There is no doubt about its taking place. Faith assures the Faithful.

*(Romans 10:17) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
(Ephesians 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

Faith is the sixth sense. Faith allows me to be absolutely positive about things my physical senses cannot detect. Faith, being a gift from God is proof He exists. Faith pleases God. Faith believes and trusts the Word of God above all else! We smell dinner cooking. We hear dinner cooking. We see dinner cooking. We touch the food with our mouth and our tongue confirms that, "Dinner is cooked," each sense confirming the other's truth. Our senses can be fooled. Faith cannot! Faith doesn't need other senses for confirmation. It simply "knows!" I do not need outside confirmation of who I am. I know. I'm sure. Faith is like that. It is sure of what it knows.

*Faith mighty Faith! The promises that look to God alone,
Laughs at impossibilities and shouts, "It shall be done!"*

III - Faithlessness

The sin of Adam and Eve was faithlessness, not believing God. Unbelief is a sin. The penalty for sin was, and is death. Death is the absence of life. God is Life. God leaves and Life is absent. We say a person is dead when we can no longer detect life. A spiritual death is just as real as a physical death. We are not a body with a soul; we are a soul with a body. The body is dead without the soul, and the soul is dead without the Spirit of Life.

*(Genesis 2:17b) "... for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
(Romans 6:23) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

God's Word tells us that Jesus Christ was the Word made the flesh.

(John 1:14a) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..."

We have life through the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

*(John 1:1-4) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} The same was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. {4} In him was life; and the life was the light of men."
(1 John 5:11-12) "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. {12} He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

When God, who is life, departed from the presence of Adam and Eve, they died, because their souls became separated from the life that is God, and their spirit died.

(Genesis 2:16-17) "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: {17} But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Adam and Eve disregarded God's Word. They believed the word of another, essentially stating by their actions that they believed God to be a liar. They hid their faith in the earthen vessels God had made, and manifested another. As He promised, God's Word did not return void!

(Isaiah 55:11) "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void..."

The day that they ate, they died. God separated Himself from them. We no longer have record of God walking and talking with them in the cool of the evening.

*(John 4:24) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.**"*

We cannot worship the Living Spirit with a dead one. Adam and Eve counted the word of another as more worthy than the Word of God. They forsook Truth, and God left. Their spirits died. They could no longer worship God. They passed this attribute down to all their descendants. Christ came to restore what sin took away.

(Romans 5:12, 15) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

(Ephesians 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

Man's spirit cannot be alive apart from God. The Father, The Word, and The Holy Spirit are one and the same.

(1 John 5:7) "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

(John 4:24) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The Holy Spirit/God, who is Life, by virtue of His presence, quickens our dead spirit. When "The Word" is preached, It falls on the ears of men with lifeless spirits, and by virtue of its presence, quickens. What a man does after he hears and knows the Truth will determine his eternity. Men are in condemnation when they are born. Unless they trust God by faith, they will stay condemned. You do not escape the sinking ship by standing on the deck mistrusting the call to the lifeboats. You will surely perish if you do. You condemn yourself with your unbelief. This world's ship is sinking. Will you be on it?

(John 3:16-18) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Christ's perfect work on the cross fulfilled the requirements of God's perfect Law, and justified those who believe. God can once again walk and talk with His children. A dead spirit cannot commune with The Living Spirit any more than a dead body can commune with a living person.

(Ephesians 2:1) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:"

You may still live *in this world* of sin, but you are no longer *of this world*, because those who believe are no longer “*dead*.” Worship is more than adoration. Worship counts worthy every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God! Worship is intimate communion. Christ gave His Life so men’s spirits could be restored by faith to this Divine communion. Believers must earnestly convey the Word of the Gospel to the dead that they might live!

(Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

A man born blind can never hope to understand color. No matter how intelligent he may be, without the sense of sight, he can only relate to his other senses. Faith is the gift of sight. It allows me to see with clarity what the “blind” can only surmise.

*Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see! - John Newton*

IV - Discernment

There are all kinds of seducing spirits. Spirits that whisper, “*Hast God said?*” We are told to try/test the spirits,

(1 John 4:1) “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

The rest of the passage gives very specific instructions about how you do this. You measure what prophets say against God’s Word. If anything they say is not true according to God’s Word, it is a lying spirit. A false prophet is not a spirit, but one who lets a lying spirit control his thoughts. The prophet himself may even be fooled. Never trust anything that disagrees with the written Word. God never leaves us in the dark.

(Psalms 33:11) “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

(Psalms 100:5) “For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

The devil is the master of deceit. He creeps in through whispers of doubt, “*Hast God said?*” Why do you think there are so many different “*versions*” of the Bible? He doesn’t say outright that God is a liar, he simply plants doubt. He doesn’t want you to know who he is, or what the truth is. He wants to remain anonymous. He uses your trusted friends, acquaintances, family, and people you admire. How can you trust someone whose words do not line up with truth? Mythology was written by men who wanted their gods to be like them. God wants us to be like Him. Ever heard phrases like this?

*“Well, they say...” “But I heard...” “You know what I think...”
“Well, perhaps...” “Maybe...” “What if...”*

The devil creeps into the weak minds of influential people. (College “*professors*,” parents, friends, etc.) He uses their own thoughts and ego against them. Any intellect that elevates “*self*” above the Truth becomes weak and susceptible to the influence of the “*whisperer*.” He corrupts them with “*worldly wisdom*,” and then uses their influence to corrupt others.

(Proverbs 16:25) “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

(1 Corinthians 1:27) “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;” (Take time to read this passage, vs. 18-31)

Satan infiltrates your mind with doubt. “*Hast God said?*” He can’t read your mind, but he can give your mind something to do. The whispers of thought must be tested and tried against God’s Word. We cast out false thoughts. God, too whispers to His children, and His whispers are always true to His *written* Word.*

(2 Corinthians 10:5) "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

*(Matthew 4:10) "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: **for it is written**, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

Faith and doubt cannot co-exist any more than light and dark. You believe all of God's Word, or none. There is no middle ground.

(Philippians 2:5) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

What mind is this? It is the mind or attitude of selfless obedience.

(Luke 22:42) "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

John the Baptist explains this attitude of holiness.

*(John 3:30) "**He** must increase, but **I** must decrease."*

God said, *(Isaiah 1:18) "Come now, and let us reason together..."* (Related passages - John 8:1-11 – esp. 15:1-8)

Reasoning that disregards the Truth of God's Holy Word will be worthless. Results arising from this type of reasoning are worthless and unprofitable. To reason with God, one must "*believe that he is*", and that He rewards "*them that diligently seek him*." One must believe that God exists to seek Him. To reason with God requires faith in what He says, "**I AM.**" I must trust God's Word! This is what God said to the unbelieving Pharaoh. "**I AM!**" Pharaoh refused to believe, so God made an example of him. Pharaoh hardened his own heart the first few times, and then God hardened it for him. Be careful that you don't become a "Pharaoh." Our God gives second and third chances, and maybe even fourth. But there is a limit. Pharaoh pushed the limit, and he paid the price.

(Galatians 6:7-8) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

V - Absolutes

(2 Timothy 2:16) "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

A statement used frequently as a premise by those who would challenge truth is: *"There are no absolutes."* If you accept this premise, it allows room for doubt about what we believe to be absolute. The ego/vanity of men assumes that their reasoning and intellect can discern the Truth through reason alone. I give you Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. These are men that many today still follow. *"There is a way which seemeth right..."* May I say that because some of what a man says is true, it does not follow that everything he says is true. The best lie is 99 percent truth!

A truth, though not readily apparent, is still truth. Ungodly philosophers like to cloud truth with reason. Truth upholds reason, but not all reason upholds truth. Faith is not rational. It believes in the "unseen" with nothing more to go on than God's Word. Men rationalize truth into a lie, because it's more convenient. Situational ethics is a good example of how men use reason to hide the Truth. If a woman is raped it's O.K. to murder the baby. One crime is used to justify another.

(Isaiah 5:20) "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

"Even the one who says, "There are no absolutes" contradicts himself because his statement in and of itself represents an "absolute." He is saying, "Absolutely there are no absolutes!"

- William Holko

(Proverbs 16:25) "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

The statement, *"There are no absolutes"* in and of itself denies itself. It masquerades as an absolute, yet logic dictates that the only thing absolute about it is that it is an absolute lie. Who is the "father" of all liars? God's Word again enlightens us.

*(John 8:44) "Ye are of your father **the devil**, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."*

The opposite statement, *"There are absolutes."* is an absolute. An absolute is an absolute even before it is known to exist. An absolute is eternally true. God's Word is absolute. God spoke it.

(Titus 1:2) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Let me give you a simple example: "...and God divided the light from the darkness." (Gen. 1:4b) A small phrase of God's Word, yet it is absolute! God divided the light from darkness, and I defy you to put them together. The laws of the universe were created by God. How about the Law of Gravity, the laws of thermodynamics? Can any of these be changed? The very nature of flight depends on gravity to hold the air molecules in place. We need gravity to resist it. Tremendous amounts of energy must be expended, yet gravity simply is! We can trust God. We can accept God's Word absolutely. God said it, and that settles it!

(Psalms 119:89) "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

If you reject God's Word you have immediately made God your enemy. Sadly, the very thing you reject will be your destruction.

(Revelation 2:16) "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

There are no second chances after death. You must believe before you die.

(Hebrews 9:27) "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Those who think to find a contradiction in God's Word are vain in their imagination. They are blind men trying to explain light and color. They assume their own intellect equal to the omniscience of the Being who "spoke" the known universe and everything in it into existence from absolute **NOTHING!** They side with Lucifer, who said,

"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Is. 14:12-15)

God's Word is so powerful that even if something did or didn't exist, it would exist or cease to exist if God said so. The mere utterance of the sound of His Voice transforms nothing into substance, and substance into nothing. When He whispers, His child is reassured! When He speaks, enemies vaporize and worlds collide! When He thunders, existence flees! Yet, foolish men dare to challenge Him! Amazing arrogance!

(Romans 1:25) "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

*(Isaiah 5:21-24) "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! ...Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! **Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.**"*

As I said before, "An absolute is an absolute even before it is known to exist. An absolute is eternally true."

(Romans 12:19b) "...for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Everyone knows what they know because of people or books or experience. Experiences can deceive, as anyone who has ever watched a magician knows. Don't base your faith in experience, base it in Truth. People lie. A person's veracity is determined by how reality matches their words. The truth of a book is determined by application, by doing. Who better to explain a book than its author? Who better to guide the "doing?" If we come with a faithful heart, the Holy Spirit is our guide as we study the Word of God. If we do not come to God's Word in *spirit and truth* we cannot follow. We must come in truth, and be willing to follow Truth.

(John 4:24) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

(John 6:37b) "...and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

(John 16:13) "... When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..."

(John 8:32) "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Knowing Truth frees us from error and death. Those who trust God never pass through death, only its shadow.

(Psalms 23:4) "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Faith in God frees us from death and its sting! What we do in life will be free of error, if we do it "by the Book."

(John 8:36) "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

(John 14:6) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

VI - Responsibility

Carefully read Matthew 25:13-30

Consider the Parable Of The Talents. The talents represent faith. Even unprofitable servants are accountable. Fearful men with little faith are still God's servants. A man may not want to be God's servant, but whether he wants to or not, he will be held to account.

(Hebrews 9:27) "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Every creature God created has a responsibility to perform the function for which it was created.

(Revelation 4:11) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Men fail their responsibility. Christ often rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. In the parable, the master gave each of his servants a responsibility to perform while he was away. The master expected each of his servants to carry out their duties. Note also, that each responsibility varied. They were rewarded according to their deeds. The profitable servants received the same reward even though their responsibilities varied. A good master knows the limitations and capabilities of his servants. You would not expect a child to perform like an adult. God created man, and He knows our limitations and capabilities. He also provides for us that which we need to perform our responsibilities. Without Him we are nothing.

(1 Corinthians 10:13) "...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (John 1:3) "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (Colossians 1:17) "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Hebrews 11:6a) "But without faith it is impossible to please him."

The master expected results, and the servants knew it. God expects us to trust Him, to take Him at His Word. God's word enables me to receive the gift of faith from God.

(Romans 10:17) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Ephesians 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

We know what God expects!

*(Romans 1:20) "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that **they are without excuse:**"*

God has entrusted His Word to us until He comes back, and He expects us to use it well. Doing nothing is not an option. By doing nothing, we indicate by our actions that we think

God is a liar. We place our intellect above God's omnipotence. Like the unprofitable servant we know, but still do nothing. We think somehow we can bargain our way around God. How foolish!

(Isaiah 55:11) "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

What we do with God's Word will either condemn us or bring us into favor. God's Word will determine what God does with us when He returns. If we believe and obey God's Word, it pleases Him. If we disregard it we will die. Regardless of their accomplishments, the profitable servants in the parable were rewarded equally. We can therefore conclude that we are either profitable or unprofitable servants of God. I'm certain that all the servants feared the master. The unprofitable servant could have sought council, but he did not. He trusted himself, and his own reasoning, and he paid the price. We dare not trust our own intellect.

(Proverbs 14:12) "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

*(Matthew 4:4) "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

God's assets are unlimited, but He does not waste words. **Every** Word of God is vital to our existence, but we spend so little time with them!

VII - Multiplication

Faith earns faith just like money earns money. If I use the faith I'm given, it multiplies. In other words, I act upon God's Word. I obey. I become a profitable servant. If I do nothing, it will be taken from me. I will become unprofitable to God.

(2 Timothy 2:15) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The servant said he was afraid of the master. He wasn't fearful enough.

(Matthew 10:28) "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Psalms 111:10) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

To fear God you obviously would have to believe in His existence. Fear of God is the beginning. Doing His commandments brings understanding.

(Proverbs 29:25) "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." (Romans 8:31) "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Fear of man refers to our fear of being rejected, ill thought of, persecuted, killed, deserted, or shunned by other men.

(Revelation 21:8) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Do you think God is talking about those that fear Him and keep His Word? Those who are afraid to do His commandments are the ones talked about in this passage. If I fear men more than God, what kind of fool does that make me?

(Isaiah 35:4) "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."(Rm. 12:19b) "...Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

The only thing between men and God is the key of faith. Will they lay hold of and use it? Or will they disregard it and try to get in some other way? Will they be profitable or unprofitable?

VIII - Obedience

(1 Corinthians 1:21) "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Some would say man is destined to choose unwisely. It's his destiny. He can't help himself. If this is so, it would mean that the "...foolishness of preaching..." cannot save those that believe, because believing would be a wise choice. Isn't the Gospel God's Word? Isn't God's Word the vehicle of hearing? Isn't hearing the Word the vehicle of faith? Faith, God's gift, enables a man to wisely choose. If he still chooses unwisely, he does so knowingly. He is "...willingly ignorant." It's usually because fear of what others may do or think combined with the doubt sown by the "whisperer" We are commanded to be of "good courage!" God enables men with His Word!

(Romans 10:17) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

(Romans 1:16) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

The dead spirits of men stir when the Word of God falls on their ears, just as the dead ears of Lazarus heard the command to come forth. Man is not dead physically, he is dead spiritually. He can't hear God speak, but he can hear a man speak God's Words. If man speaks/preaches the Gospel of Christ to him, the Word of God comes to him through the foolishness of that preaching, and faith by that Word. God's Word is the power unto salvation, not the preacher, his preaching, or any works of the listener. If I hear God's Word preached, it brings faith to me by its own virtue, and I am subsequently enabled by that faith to believe and be saved. If I reject what I then know to be the Truth, I have no one to blame but myself. I made my choice. No one forced me one way or the other.

(Romans 1:19-20) "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. {20} For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse"

You might say Lazarus came forth because Jesus used his name. God's Word is clear.

*(Acts 17:30-31) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now **commandeth all men** every where to repent: {31} Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; **whereof he hath given assurance unto all men**, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

Men are not predestined to hell by God's choosing, but their own!

(Romans 1:19) "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them." (Romans 1:21-22) "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified

*him not as God, neither were thankful; but became **vain** in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. {22} Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"*

It is because that **when they knew God** they glorified Him not! Every man in Hell received "The Gift" of the truth and by it faith, but rejected it like Adam and Eve, because of their own vanity, and chose the lie. "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" Preaching the Gospel of Christ is a foolish activity by man's reasoning, but it is the way God has chosen to save men. It depends entirely upon the power of the Word of God to succeed. Therefore, it will succeed in the bringing of faith! Men can receive the gift, or they can reject it at their own peril! We need more *preachers* of the Gospel.

(Mark 16:15) "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Matthew 28:19-20) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: {20} Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Did God command them to preach the gospel to every creature? Are we to obey as well? Do you believe God? Faith demands obedience. If there is no obedience, there is no faith. It is like separating wet from water.

IX - Diligence

Every one that truly seeks God finds Him. It is a promise from God.

(Matthew 7:7) "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:"

It is an absolute. *God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* If what you seek is gold, what is your reward? If what you seek is God, what is your reward? Do you have to be diligent in your search for gold if you are to find it? God is His own reward if you diligently seek Him. The power of the universe is in His Word! Paul the Apostle put it this way,

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection..."

Not gold, not heaven, not even eternal life! Paul wanted the giver, not the gift! Faith makes that possible. Faith is the special lens that lets me understand God's treasure map! If I am to acquire the treasure, however, I must search diligently. A half-hearted search is no search at all.

(Psalms 119:10) "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments."

God is jealous of his children's love.

(Deuteronomy 5:9-10) "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, {10} And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

God will not tolerate half-heartedness. God tested Abraham's faith to the limit. He asked for the one thing that perhaps could have been dearer to Abraham than God, his son, Isaac. However, Abraham did not hesitate, but rose early in the morning. (Genesis 22) Because of his devotion to God, Abraham is called "The Friend of God."

(James 2:23) "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

Are we God's friends? Incidentally, this is the first place in the Word of God where the words "love" and "worship" are found. (See vs. 2, 5) Incredible faith memorialized in several New Testament passages! (Rm.4, Gal. 3, James 2) Faith cannot be feigned! God knows all!

(Hebrews 4:12) "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

You can't fool God! Faith believes the Word of God absolutely! Faith alone saves! If it were not alone, you would be adding your works to the works of Christ on the cross, thus defiling it. Only Christ could do the righteous work of salvation. Our gift of faith in His work is what saves us.

(Titus 3:5-6) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

We then do the works of righteousness (obedience to God's Word) produced by our faith.

(John 14:15) "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

If we truly love God, we will keep His commandants.

(1 John 4:19) "We love him, because he first loved us."

*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.*

- George Mattheson

X - Feelings

I chose to deal with this subject last, because faith should not be based in experience, or how one feels. It requires courage to believe and act upon the unseen. It's even harder to wait for it to happen. In the great chapter we call, "The Hall of Faith," it is said of those heroes of faith:

*"These all **died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**"*

How did they see? They "saw" with their Faith! *"The evidence of things **not** seen"*

(1 Chronicles 22:12-13) "Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding,... be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed."

(Psalms 27:14) "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

(Psalms 31:24) "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD."

Faith however, is not an intangible to those who have it. It is the substance of their hope. It makes hope sure. The more faith is tested, the stronger it becomes. Like a muscle, the testing of our faith may cause pain and suffering, but it will be stronger by reason of it. The stronger our faith is, the more sure our hope becomes. Why would God give men other proofs if He wants them to simply trust His Word by faith? Why would we then need faith? Faith is not anxiously awaiting results; it knows the results already. "I *hope* someone gives me money for my birthday!" is not the same hope as, "I *hope* in God's promises."

(Romans 8:24-25) "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Faith is not a feeling, although faith will produce feelings. Faith does not always result in happiness, but it will always keep me at peace with my circumstances. Faith assures me that God is in control of everything, and nothing escapes His attention.

(Matthew 10:29-31) "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. {30} But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. {31} Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

(Psalms 119:165) "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

There's an old parable that goes as follows:

Three fellows, Fact, Faith, and Feelings were walking atop a narrow wall together to escape the mud beneath.. Fact was in front, Faith followed, and Feelings followed Faith. Feelings began to be troubled by the narrowness of the way. "Will we fall?" he asked. Faith said, "Not if we look straight ahead and follow Fact." but Feelings could only look down by reason of his fear, and subsequently teetered and toppled off the wall into the mud. Fact kept going straight ahead, but Faith turned to look at Feelings who was crying, and fell off the wall himself.

Moral:

We should not let our feelings distract our faith away from the promises of God's Word.

Being distressed by the rain will not stop it. Complaining about the heat will not keep the sun from shining. Feeling unsure of God's Word won't make it less sure. Many a pilot has crashed, because he trusted how he felt instead of relying on the instruments. Sometimes we must go against every shred of human reason to follow our faith. You may say you believe something, but until it produces action, it is only words. Consider the story below:

***Charles Blondin** (28 February 1824 – 19 February 1897), French tight-rope walker and acrobat, was born at St Omer, France. His real name was **Jean François Gravelet**. When five years old he was sent to the Ecole de Gymnase at Lyon and, after six months training as an acrobat, made his first public appearance as "The Little Wonder". His superior skill and grace as well as the originality of the settings of his acts, made him a popular favorite. He especially owed his celebrity and fortune to his idea of crossing Niagara Falls on a tight-rope, 1100 ft. long, 160 ft. above the water. This he accomplished, first in 1859, a number of times, always with different theatric variations: blindfolded, in a sack, trundling a wheelbarrow, on stilts, carrying a man on his back, sitting down midway while he cooked and ate an omelet.*

- Wikipedia

According to the story, Blondin had proved he was the master of the wire by doing it many times. Before the man climbed on Blondin's back he and others may have believed it could be done, but he alone had the faith in Blondin to do it. That is the difference between saying you believe, and actually proving it.

(James 2:17-20) "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. {18} Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. {19} Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. {20} But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

James goes on in this passage to tell how Abraham proved his faith with his actions. Your faith, whatever it is, will move you to act. However, if you place your faith in a non-absolute, it is an unprofitable faith. I give you suicide bombers as an example. Just because you believe something to be an absolute, does not make it so. I may believe the sky is green. It does not make it so. God adds to our faith His own presence, The Holy Spirit, bearing witness to the Truth, and my faith in God's Word gives me absolute understanding. Your faith must be in God's Word alone to be profitable. Can you walk the high wire of Death

alone? Christ proved His power over death by raising himself from the dead! He alone has power over our greatest enemy! He not only defeated death he came back better than he left. He left bruised and beaten. He arose glorified! **God killed death!** Have faith in God, dear Reader! God is absolute!

(Hebrews 6:13, 18) "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, That by two immutable things, [God and His Word] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

What God promises cannot, **not happen!** It is ABSOLUTE!

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with his goodness, lost in his love.*

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.*

Fanny J. Crosby- blind hymn writer

(Matthew 11:28-30) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. {30} For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

(John 14:1-3) "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. {2} In my Father's house are many mansions: if it

*were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. {3}
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive
you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

- JESUS, Son of God