

LEAP, week 2 - What Is Faith, Really?

"Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Eph 6:2-3

Moms of faith have prayed millions into the Kingdom of God. If you have a praying mom, give up!

Moms keep you centered, tell you you're wonderful, and bring you down need to be humbled.

Everybody needs somebody who's willing to deflate their egos from time to time—even movie stars like Denzel Washington. I walked in the house one day and—feeling full of myself, a movie star—I said to my mother, "Did you ever think this was all going to happen?" She was like, "Please. First of all, go wash the windows for me. You have no idea how many people have been praying for you when you were being a knucklehead."

Last week we looked at why we need faith:

- To please God
- To Live Life
- For answered prayer
- To resist the attacks of the enemy.

Today we are going to look at what faith is. Some starting point other bring you back.

Don't want to assume that you understand or really believe.

In making the Christian faith (miracles) more palatable and understandable we have taken out the mystical parts we can't control or explain.

We've learned to say we live by faith in God but really trust ourselves and our resources which God never intended. This is why we are overwhelmed, under attack and feel defeated.

We also don't want to look foolish. What if I tell people I'm believing God and it doesn't happen? What if it does?

The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

- Foolish to think you can walk on water (seems reckless, irresponsible)
- Foolish to think you can feed 5,000 people with one Happy Meal.

JESUS SETS UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAITH AND MIRACLES.

What does it mean live by faith or act in faith, to exercise faith?

We've replaced faith with ideas such as hope, knowledge and presumption.

Hope – is always future tense, faith is present tense.

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Rom. 8:24-25

Knowledge – “I know God can...” Agree with truth but not believe it in the heart.

For it is with your heart that you believe Rom. 10:10

John Wesley said, “The devil has given the church a counterfeit for faith- mental assent”

Charles Blondin – was an acrobat that started tight rope walking at age of five. He stretched a cable 1,100 feet across and 160 feet above Niagara Falls. He crossed the Falls blindfolded, on stilts, pushing a wheelbarrow. He even stopped once and cooked an omelet half way across. One day after crossing with the wheel barrow he asked the crowd, “how many of you believe I can cross back pushing a man in this wheelbarrow?” The crowd roared back, “we believe!” “Then who is willing to volunteer to ride?” The crowd went silent. Finally, one man “I’ll do it.” That man had true faith.

Presumption – Not acting in faith but presuming we know what God wants for us or what we want.

Webster: *the act of supposing something is true without examination or proof; to take for granted, assume.*

Example of guy who threw away glasses because he was believing for God to give him perfect vision. That is okay if that is what God put in your heart, but wait until you can see perfectly and then you can throw your glasses away. Go read that chart and then you’ll have a great testimony.

So what is true Bible faith that God honors, AND ANSWERS.

Look at 3 things that make up faith and since it’s Mother’s Day we’ll draw from 3 example of women in the Bible who exercised real faith specifically about children.

1. Faith is complete trust in God’s Character

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.” 1 Sam. 15:29

...it is impossible for God to lie. Heb. 6:18

I CAN ONLY BELIEVE SOMEONE TO THE DEGREE I TRUST THEM.

Example: Hannah

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. ¹¹And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

¹²As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

¹⁵"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. ¹⁶Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

¹⁷Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

¹⁸She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

¹⁹Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him." 1 Sam. 1:10-20

Attitude was different hadn't seen baby, nothing had changed but she trusted in God who doesn't lie.

1988 Olympics featured an **exhibition of blind skiers** going through a slalom course being directed from behind by skiers with sight who would yell out left or right at the precise moment they had to turn. By trusting the skiers who could see they successfully navigated the course.

2. Faith is complete trust in God's Word

Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see. Heb. 11:1
Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. Heb. 11:1 KJV

This legal language that you have to understand to see what the writer is communicating.

Word "**substance**" is the greek word "hupostasis" a legal term referring to the transfer of property. It meant the "title deed". This was a piece of paper showing you owned the property.

Like when you buy a house. You put a contract down but until you have the contract or really the title you don't own it. You can hope, plan to, or presume, but until you have it in your hand it's not yours.

Lori in real estate had a master key to every home in Indianapolis for sale. We could go and spend the nights in any of them but they were not ours. No hupostatisis.

Faith is the hupostasis. It is the title deed, the promise from God that what you are believing Him for will happen. His Word is the guarantee.

Evidence a legal term used in court of the ancient greek. It is the word elengchos. It meant irrefutable evidence that a prosecutor presented in a courtroom that so convinced a jury it was if they were present at the actual event.

Let's look again at this Biblical definition of faith found in Heb. 11:1 with this added insight.

Faith is the title deed, the proof that you own what you are believing for, and it is also the evidence that is so clear it is as if you already have it.

Contractual and legal proof of what you are praying for. This built on what we have already said, that God can be trusted.

Example Mary –

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Luke 1:38

3. Faith is believing in spite of circumstances.

After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. ²¹She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out.

²²She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return."

²³"Why go to him today?" he asked. "It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath."

"It's all right," she said.

²⁴She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I tell you." ²⁵So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, "Look! There's the Shunammite! ²⁶Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'"

"Everything is all right," she said. 2 Kings 4:20-26

My needing \$ 200 for my trip to Mexico.

Lori needing money \$ 100.

Closing:

- Is there something you would like to believe God for?
- Do you believe God is able and wants to meet your need?
- What will it look like or how will life be different when this happens?
- What does God's Word say about your situation?
- Are you willing to trust God, completely?