

**Warm-up**

Do you remember what Jesus said about a tiny amount of faith put in motion? *"...if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."* (Mat. 17:20)

- ▶ Exercising faith empowers me to do great things.

**Foundational Faith** (vs. 1-3)

*"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval."* (vs. 1-2)

Do you have a godly grandparent or great-grandparent in your family tree? I believe that having spiritual roots of this kind is a powerful factor in a man or woman's life. Consider this:

*"Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Dt. 7:9)*

God promised to bless the generations that follow the life of a righteous person, and especially a righteous man. Certainly there is no guarantee that all succeeding generations will produce godly men and women, but these people *will* be influenced by the godly life that preceded them. Isaiah 55:11 says, *"So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."* God's word flowing through a saint is a powerful thing!

Even God's creation influences our faith. Verse 3 says, *"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."* And Romans 1:20, speaking about the lack of excuse all men have if they reject God, says, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."*

- ▶ *What are your spiritual roots? On what foundation does your faith lay? Perhaps better yet, what roots are you growing that will impact those who follow you?*

**Lasting Impact** (vs. 4-5)

*"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks."* (v. 4)

What was the problem with Cain? What is the problem with "going through the motions" in our relationship with the Lord? David commented on this in Psalm 51:

*<sup>16</sup>For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.*

*<sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*

When our heart is right before God He is pleased. When we are arrogant and self-sufficient we're in trouble.

I believe that the influence of a godly life cannot be extinguished by death, as was the case with Abel. That is true of my father, Jacob Meyer Kinnoin, who changed residence to heaven 23 years ago. If anything, his witness has grown stronger since his departure. His life evidenced the presence and power of God, and those who contested with him no longer have any argument. His legacy and his godly character are on permanent display through the generations that have followed.

- ▶ You can only say something is a success after it has been tried and tested. *"The proof of the pudding is in the eating"*.

**Faith's Reward** (v. 6)

*"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."*

In Mark 4 Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat when it began to take on water. Here's what happened:

*<sup>37</sup>And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. <sup>38</sup>Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. <sup>40</sup>And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? **Do you still have no faith?"***

Romans 12:3 says that *“God has allotted to each a measure of faith”*. So, as believers we ALL have faith, sufficient for our present circumstances if we choose to exercise it. Remember verse 1, *“the conviction of things not seen”*? Notice in Mark 4:40 that Jesus *expected* His disciples to both have and use the faith God gave them.

When you *“come to God”* when your faith is being tested, i.e. during a severe trial, you experience what Heb. 7:19 refers to as a *“better hope”*. Our hope is in Jesus Christ alone. Col. 1:27 says, *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

► *God is pleased when we exercise the faith He gave us. The “reward” is His peace and His presence.*

### **Faith in Action** (v. 7)

*“By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”*

Have you ever had the sense that you should do something but could not justify it with human reasoning? Do you know what it is like to *“take a step of faith”*? In this verse the words *“in reverence”* actually mean, *“having become reverent”*. Noah had grown in his faith and trust in God so that he clearly heard His voice when no one else did. His confidence that God would do what He said He'd do was so strong that he obeyed Him completely, against all logic, without regard for the criticism of others.

Faith in action is developed *progressively*. We take small steps, then larger ones, and experience more and more of God's assurance. And when a trial hits, we recall His faithfulness to us over the seasons and say, *“I know I can trust Him in this situation”*.

► *God loves to see us trust Him in difficult times, and makes us more like Himself in the process.*

### **Faith that Follows** (vs. 8-10)

*“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out...”* (v. 8)

Notice that Abraham was called. In other words, *He heard God calling*. You can't follow God and experience His blessing in doing so if you are not listening to Him. The better you know Him the better your hearing becomes. And the more time you spend with Him and His word the better you get to know Him. And the more you say to Him, *“I trust You Lord”*, and then *actually* trust Him, the more your faith grows.

Jesus is in the habit of saying, *“Come, follow Me”*. Faith that follows also rejoices in close fellowship with the Lord. Abraham stepped out and took action without evidence of where or how. He sought God and His dwelling place, not things.

► *When my eyes are fixed on Jesus my faith is in gear.*

### **Faith that Trusts** (vs. 11-12)

*“By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive...”* (v. 11)

What do you think; can faith in God actually produce in us an ability that we otherwise would not have? If Sarah had not believed God would she not have been able to conceive? Consider Eph. 3:20,

*“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us”*

If God can do MORE that we ask or think it's fair to say that we cannot do these things without faith in Him.

► *What can you trust God to do that is impossible for you to do without Him?*

### **Group Discussion**

1. Share a time when your faith was tested and you *“stepped out”* to exercise it. What happened?
2. How would you counsel someone who is young in the Lord to develop their faith?
3. Talk more about *“Faith that Trusts”* (vs. 11-12). Throw in Jeremiah 33:3, *“Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know”*.

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**NEXT TIME: Lesson 9: FAITH / Effects** – Hebrews 11:13-25