

The Same Faith

Any child of God, who will faithfully honor Him and give Him time, can accomplish the most extraordinary things

I desire that all who read these details may increase their simple confidence in God for everything they need. I trust that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray, particularly for the conversion of their friends and relatives, their own progress in grace and knowledge, the state of the church of God at large and the success of the preaching of the Gospel. Especially, I affectionately warn them against being led by the tricks of Satan to think that these things are unique to me, and that they cannot be enjoyed by all children of God (see 2 Pet. 3:17).

Although every believer is not called upon to establish orphanages or charities and trust in the Lord for the support of these institutions, all believers are called upon to cast all their burdens upon Him (see Ps. 55:22). They are to trust in Him for everything (see Ps. 37:5; Prov. 3:5), and expect answers to their petitions according to His will (see Matt. 21:22).

Think not that I have the gift of faith that we read in 1 Corinthians 12 (NKJV), and which is mentioned along with “gifts of healings” (v. 9), “the working of miracles” (v. 10), and “prophecy” (v. 10). It is true that the faith I am enabled to exercise is altogether God’s own gift. It is true that I continually depend upon Him for it, and that, if I were only one moment left to myself, my faith would utterly fail.

But it is not true that my faith is that [spiritual] gift that is spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:9 for the following reasons:

First, the faith that I exercise with reference to the orphanages and my own necessities is the same faith that is found in every believer, the growth of which I am most

sensitive to within myself, for it has been ever increasing throughout my Christian walk.

Second, this faith shows itself in the same measure, for instance, concerning these points: I have never been permitted to doubt since I accepted the Lord as my Savior that my sins are forgiven, that I am a child of God, that I am beloved of God, and that I will be finally saved. This is because I am enabled, by the grace of God, to exercise faith upon the Word of God and to believe what God says in those passages that settle these matters (see John 3:16; Acts 10:43; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 3:26; 1 John 5:1).

Further, when I would have been overwhelmed in grief and despair, if I had looked at things "according to the outward appearance" (2 Cor. 10:7), at such times I have sought to encourage myself in God by laying hold in faith of His mighty power, love and wisdom. I have said to myself, "God is able and willing to deliver me, for it is written, 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'" (Rom. 8:32.) As I believed this promise through His grace, my soul was kept in peace.

Also, in connection with the orphanages and day schools, trials have come upon me that were far heavier than the lack of sufficient resources. When lying reports were spread that the orphans did not have enough to eat, or that they were cruelly treated in other respects, at such times, my soul was stayed upon God. I poured out my soul before God and arose from my knees in peace. Thus, because the trouble that was in the soul was cast upon God, I was kept in peace, even though I saw it to be the will of God to remain far away from the work.

Further, when I needed houses or fellow laborers for the orphans or for the day schools, I have been enabled to look to the Lord for everything and to trust in Him for help. I may seem to boast, but, by the grace of God, I do not boast in

speaking the way that I do. From my inmost soul, I ascribe the glory to God alone that He has enabled me to trust in Him.

By the grace of God, I desire that my faith in God might extend toward everything: the smallest of my own temporal and spiritual concerns, the least of the concerns of my family, the saints among whom I labor and the church at large. Do not think that I have attained in faith (and how much less in other respects) to that degree to which I might and ought to attain. But thank God for the faith that He has given to me. Please pray that He will uphold and increase it.

Finally, I remind you not to let Satan deceive you in making you think that you could not have the same faith. When I lose something, such as a key, I ask the Lord to direct me to it, and I look for an answer.

When I do not understand a passage of the Word of God, I lift up my heart to the Lord and pray that He would be please, by His Holy Spirit, instruct me, and I expect to be taught, though I do not set the time and the manner in which His answer will come. When I am going to minister from the Word, I seek help from the Lord, and while I, in the consciousness of my natural inability and utter unworthiness, begin His service, I look for His assistance and I believe that He, for His dear Son's sake, will help me. And thus in all of my temporal and spiritual concerns, I pray to the Lord and expect an answer to my requests.

Common Faith

Do not think that I am an extraordinary believer, having privileges above any other of God's dear children. Give it a try! Stand still in the hour of trial, and you will see the help of God.

But there is so often a forsaking of the ways of the Lord in the hour of trial, and thus the means whereby our faith may be increased, are lost. You ask, "How may I, a true believer,

have my faith strengthened?" Here is the answer: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

As the increase of faith is a good gift, it must come from God. Therefore, He ought to be asked for this blessing, utilizing the following means:

(1) Studying God's Word. Carefully read the Word of God and meditate on it. Through this, the believer sees more and more what a kind, loving, gracious and faithful God He is. Therefore, whatever the circumstance, he will rest upon the ability of God to help him, because he has seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His power and wisdom have been exercised in helping and delivering His people. And the consideration of this will lead us with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him.

(2) Keeping a pure heart. With reference to the growth of every grace of the Spirit, it is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience. Therefore, we should not knowingly indulge in those things that are contrary to the mind of God.

How can I continue to ask with faith in God concerning anything if I am habitually grieving Him and seeking to detract from the glory and honor of Him in whom I profess to trust and depend? If I cannot trust in God because of a guilty conscience, then my faith is weakened by that instance of distrust. For with every fresh trial, faith either increases by my trusting God and receiving His help, or it decreases by my not trusting Him.

(3) Embracing trials. If we desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried and strengthened. In our natural state, we dislike dealing with God alone.

Through our natural alienation from God, we shrink from Him and from eternal realities. Even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone and from depending upon Him alone. Yet this is the very position in which we ought to be if we wish our faith to be strengthened.

Every fresh instance in which He helps and delivers me will tend to increase my faith. On this account, a believer should not shrink from situations, positions, or circumstances in which his faith may be tried. Instead, he should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities in which to see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf to help and deliver him, and whereby he may thus have his faith strengthened.

(4) *Letting God be God.* The last important point for the strengthening of our faith is that we let God work for us when the hour of the trial of faith comes, and do not try to work a deliverance of our own. Wherever God has given faith, it has been given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried.

However weak our faith may be, God will try it gently, gradually and patiently. At first our faith will be tried very little in comparison with what it may be afterward, for God never lays more upon us than He is willing to enable us to bear (see 1 Cor. 10:13).

When the trial of faith comes, we would rather achieve a deliverance of our own somehow or other than simply look to God and wait for His help. But if we do not patiently wait for God's help, then at the next trial of our faith, it will be the same as before. We will once again be inclined to try to deliver ourselves.

Thus, with every fresh instance of this kind, our faith will decrease. But on the contrary, if we were to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (2 Chr. 20:17) and trust in Him alone, then our faith would be increased. If the believer,

therefore, would have his faith strengthened, he must especially give time to God, who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him.

George Müller (1805-1898) founded five Christian orphanages in England that, in his lifetime, accommodated more than 10,000 children. Never comfortable with soliciting funds for these orphanages, Müller trusted that the Lord would supply the need. At the age of 70, he began a 17-year period of missionary travel, spending the remainder of his life ministering throughout more than 40 countries around the world.

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