

What You Need to Withdraw From Your Heavenly Account

What we believe in our hearts and speak with our mouths connects us to God's supply.

Faith is a powerful currency in the spiritual realm. If we want to receive anything from God, we must have it. Those who possess great faith enjoy incredible spiritual wealth, while those who suffer in fear live in an impoverished state.

Any study of faith must start with the definition God gave us in Hebrews 11:1-3: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (NKJV).

Quite simply, faith is believing in God and what He tells us. How do we get it? "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Paul wrote (Rom. 10:17).

Heavenly promises and provisions are available for every need we have on Earth. Faith is the way we withdraw what God has stored for us in heaven and bring it into the tangible realm here on Earth. It is like a funnel we hold up to God so He can give us heaven's supply.

When we use the word "tangible," our mind tends to think in terms of physical blessings such as food, shelter and money; but God's provision encompasses so much more. We receive His direction for our lives, strength to press through difficult circumstances, physical and emotional healing, and whatever else a human might need through one thing: faith. It takes faith to receive anything from the Lord.

God used words to create the world out of nothing. He also

uses words to speak things into our lives, but we must believe those words in order to see them become substance, or reality.

Paul showed us how this principle works, using the example of Abraham's believing God's promise to him. He wrote that Abraham "believed God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, 'So shall your descendants be.'

"And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform" (Rom. 4:17-21).

This is a practical description of faith: We don't look at our physical circumstances or waver at the promise of God through unbelief but are fully convinced that God is able to perform what He has promised. Faith is relying on what God has spoken more than we rely on what our five senses tell us.

CONFESS WITH CONFIDENCE In order to operate with that level of trust, we must not only know what God has promised but also have confidence in His character. Championship tennis player Chris Evert knew the value of confidence: "You've got to take the initiative in playing your game," she once counseled. "In a decisive set, confidence is the difference."

In the "decisive sets" of our lives, we must show confidence in God, the kind of confidence that is born out of an intimate relationship with Him. God takes pleasure in rewarding our faith, "but 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 diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

If we have deposited faith into our spirits by reading and hearing the Word of God, it is a simple matter to get that faith working in our lives. Faith is energized by taking what we believe in our hearts and speaking it out of our mouths.

Our faith operates, on an ongoing basis, the same way it did to initially save us. We hear, we believe and we confess what we believe. This is the way God has designed faith to work. In his letter to the Romans, Paul described this pattern, referring to Deuteronomy 30:12-14, where the pattern was originally given:

“But what does it [the Deuteronomy passage] say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:8-10).

Faith begins in the heart and is energized by the mouth, a fact confirmed by Jesus Himself when He said, “‘Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them'” (Mark 11:22-24).

Jesus told us to have faith in God. True faith works because we are trusting in the faithfulness of God to keep His Word. It's not because we have prayed forcefully enough or because we have repeated verses as if they were magic incantations.

Speaking God's Word is indeed effective in dismissing our doubts and resisting Satan's attacks. After all, that is how Jesus resisted Satan's temptation in the wilderness—by quoting Scripture to crush the perverse attraction of sin.

But the power in our words will be proportionate to the belief in our hearts. Our words must be connected to our faith in God's power and His goodness.

It isn't what we are saying when we are speaking to others in "faith lingo" or "Christianese" that counts. It's what we are saying the rest of the time! That is the true indicator of what is in our hearts.

If we really want to determine our faith level concerning a particular problem, we need to pay attention to what we say about it when our guard is down. Do our words line up with what God has said? Or are they filled with doubt?

If our words reveal that doubt is dominating, we must change more than our words; we must change what we believe. We must go back and settle the matter in our hearts, meditating on the faithfulness of God more than dwelling on our problems. Paul wrote, "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak" (2 Cor. 4:13). What we speak reveals what we believe.

FAITH WORKS BY LOVE Love is another important element involved in the working of our faith. Scripture tells us that faith works through love (see Gal. 5:6). These two are linked again when Paul tells us to put on "the breastplate of faith and love" (1 Thess. 5:8).

In Mark 11:25-26, Jesus adds another vital element to the faith equation: "'And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.'"

Wait a minute! Jesus was talking about faith. Isn't forgiveness a little bit off the subject?

No, Jesus was right on target because faith works by love. We are not walking in love when we have unforgiveness in our hearts; unforgiveness produces strife, and strife kills love, rendering faith useless. As Scripture indicates, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

When faith is coupled with love, it is powerful. Sever the two, and you have just a lot of useless words. This truth has not been emphasized enough in the "faith message," and many believers have wondered why their faith isn't working. As a result, they have become discouraged.

"Love never fails" (Rom. 13:8), and neither will faith, when it works through love. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians reflected the strong connection between our revelation of the love of Christ and the strength of our faith.

He prayed: "That [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19).

We can be filled with the fullness of God and spiritually strengthened in our faith only if we are rooted and grounded in His love.

FAITH, NOT FEAR While love is a powerful ally of faith, its opposite—fear—can literally choke the life out of our walk with God. Fear is a terrible enemy; it looks to devour our spiritual blessings at every opportunity.

Scripture refers to fear as a spirit. Paul notes that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

Renewing our minds with the truth of God's Word will drain the life out of the fear attacking our minds. Fear is like a dense fog that surrounds us and clouds our vision.

However, meditating on God's Word ignites a fire that burns away the fog, enabling us to see things from God's perspective. By focusing on God's ability and willingness to deliver on His promises, we shut the door to fear's entrance and open the door in faith to receive all God has planned and provided for us.

Since "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18), it is essential for us to meditate on God's perfect love for us to move forward in faith. In fact, faith and love go hand-in-hand in our defense against the enemy—in Galatians 5:6, we are told that the only thing that counts for anything is "faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love" (The Amplified Bible).

John, the disciple closest to Jesus during His time on Earth, provided a wonderful summary of the important relationship between love, obedience and faith. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:3-4, NKJV).

If fear has been a stronghold in your life or an obstacle to living a faith-filled spiritual life, I suggest using prayer and fasting to experience freedom. Try fasting from fear for 14 days. Tell yourself every day, "I refuse fear, I refuse fear, I refuse fear."

When you find fear assaulting you again, look at it and say: "I refuse you. I choose not to have you. I will not have you." Then replace that fearful thought with truth from God's Word.

God has called us all to live a life of abundant faith and

love. Though the enemy is determined to steal our provision, we need to remember Jesus' great promise to us: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Abundant life—grown out of faith and love—is our inheritance as a follower of Jesus. Let's live in it to the fullest!

Read a companion devotional.

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