

Have You Been Misunderstanding What Faith Really Is?

What is faith? And what does it look like to actually live by faith?

These are important questions, because we receive and experience the blessings God has for us through faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]” (AMP).

I like to define faith as the hand that reaches out and receives what God has for us. By faith we believe what God says in His Word is true, that it’s for us, and that we will receive everything He wants to give us. We believe we have His promises before we get them or experience them.

Everyone has faith, but not everyone puts their faith in God. For example, when a person sits in a chair, they have faith that the chair will hold them. People drive to work because they have faith in the traffic laws that make it possible to travel on the roads.

But first and foremost, we need to put our faith in God and the truth of the Bible.

Romans 1:17 says, “For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith [disclosed in a way that awakens more faith]. As remains written, ‘The just and upright shall live by faith.’”

This verse reveals that we’re saved by faith and we are

created to live by faith. In order to live by faith, we have to release it, and there are three ways we do that: praying, saying and doing.

Prayer is the greatest privilege we have! It's amazing that we can personally communicate with Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe. That means we can talk to Him and He hears us and that He wants to talk to us.

One of the main ways we hear God's voice is through His Word, which is why it's critically important for us to study the Bible. When we diligently study the Word, we get revelation of who God is, how He loves us and what His will is for our lives. We learn how to pray for the things He wants to give us ... the kind of life Jesus died for us to have.

James 4 says that people live in strife, quarreling and fighting, because they try to get what they want and they're jealous of what others have, but they can't make it happen for themselves. The end of verse 2 (NLT) says, "You don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it." And verse 3 says, "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure."

Have you been trying to get something or make something happen and you're frustrated because you can't achieve it? Maybe you're struggling because you're striving to do it in your own strength, and maybe you're going after things that aren't right for you or in God's plan for your life.

We need to pray and ask God for what we want, but we need to ask for the blessings He wants to give us. I often pray like this: "God, I'm going to ask You for everything I want, but if I ask for something that's not right for me, please don't give it to me. I really only want what *you* want for me, because You know what's best for me."

There are some situations where we may not know for sure what

God's will is, and that's when we need to trust that if we don't get what we think we want, it's because He has something better for us. But there are many things we can ask for with assurance and confident expectation that God will give them because He promises them to us in His Word. Here are a few:

- You don't have to be lonely because God is always with you (Ps. 73:23; Heb. 13:50).
- You can have peace in every situation (John 14:27; Phil. 4:6-7).
- You can have God's wisdom for every decision (James 1:5).
- You have the strength in Christ to do whatever you need to do (Phil. 4:13).
- God loves you, and He has an amazing plan for your life (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10; Jer. 29:11).

God has so much more for you than what you have experienced so far in your life. Make it your No. 1 priority to spend time with Him every day in prayer and Bible study, and begin boldly asking Him to give you every good thing He's planned for you.

Put your faith in God in every area of your life and everything you do, and you'll discover how living by faith really is an amazing adventure!