

Live by Faith One Step at a Time

Faith in God is a foundational principle of the Bible. It's the key to experiencing the promises we find in God's Word. For example, Jesus tells us in John 10:10 (NIV) that the enemy "comes only to steal and kill and destroy," and that He came so we can "have life, and have it to the full."

Being a Christian is not about a "brand" of religion; it's all about having abundant life through a personal, intimate relationship with God. That's a life we can enjoy!

But we can't have this life unless we know what the Bible says and receive it by faith.

Romans 12:3 (NKJV) says that "God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." Every person has faith; the question is what are you putting your faith in?

Is your faith in yourself, your friends or the government? Who, or what, do you really trust to make your life work out the way it should?

When a person puts their faith in Christ for salvation, they trust that Jesus has done everything that needs to be done for them to be forgiven of their sin and make them right with God. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) says, "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

The same way we're saved—believing and trusting in what Christ has done—is the same way we're supposed to live: by faith!

So how do we live by faith, or release our faith, to experience the promises of God?

I remember when I was going to church every week but I didn't

have any idea about the blessings God had for me as a believer in Christ. I wasn't benefitting from any of them because I didn't know what they were and I didn't have a clue that I could release my faith to have them.

But when I began to seriously study God's Word, I discovered what was available to me through Christ and how to release my faith to receive what He wants to give me. That's when God began to do amazing things in my life: healing my soul from the horrible abuse in my past; restoring my hope that I could have a great life, not a second-rate plan because I was "damaged goods"; and taking me from miserable and full of self-pity to having real joy and peace in my soul.

The key to effectively releasing your faith is basing your faith on God's Word. That's why it's so important to diligently study the Bible. It's absolutely full of all the blessings Jesus bought and paid for with His blood. We need to devour the Bible and remind ourselves every day of how much God has done for us.

For example, Jeremiah 29:11 says God has "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God loves you and He has a good plan for it's not just going to happen on its own. You have to release your faith to have it.

Faith is a powerful force in your spirit and when you use it, that's when things happen. You have to do something, say something, pray something—take some kind of action based on what you believe God has put in your heart.

Many years ago, when I felt like God wanted me to begin teaching a Bible study, I didn't have any idea how to do it. But I had a deep desire to help people and teach them God's Word.

My initial reaction was, "Who is going to come? Nobody knows cares what I have to say. And I don't know how to teach!" The Lord spoke to my heart and said, "I do." So my first step was

to say, "Okay, I'll do it." My next step was to invite some oddly enough, they said yes!

Those were steps of faith for me. I could have been so afraid of failure, my weaknesses and inability that I wouldn't even try. I had to "step out and find out" if this was really God's direction for me.

That first Bible study consisted of 12 people; that group grew to 25 and as I continued, it eventually led us to start the ministry we have today.

I want to encourage you not to settle for a passive existence ruled by fear of failure, change, rejection or anything else. Instead, be determined to have everything God has for you.

Pray about the desires in your heart or ask God to show you what He has planned for you. When you have an idea, pray for specific wisdom to take a take action based on your faith in God.

If you really want to have the life God has for you, you will have to take a chance—you'll have to step out and find out. Choose to put your faith in God because that's when amazing things will begin to happen for you!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's two-teaching CD series What Is Faith and How Does It Work? You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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