



KINDS OR DEGREES OF FAITH

VAIN FAITH: TRUSTING IN HUMANLY CREATED THINGS

⁹ All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. ¹⁰ Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? ¹¹ Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together.

¹² The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. ¹³ The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. ¹⁴ He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it.

¹⁵ Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. ¹⁶ Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" ¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

¹⁸ They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" ²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"
Isaiah 44:8-20 (also Romans 1:19-31)

WITHOUT FAITH IN GOD: UNBELIEF / ABSENCE OF FAITH

⁵ And he [Jesus] could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief.
Matthew 13:58 (also Mark 5-6)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
Hebrews 11:6

LITTLE FAITH: VACILLATES WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" **Matthew 8:23-27**

³⁰ But when he [Peter] saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. **Matthew 14:30-32**

IMMATURE FAITH: IN PROCESS / DESIRING GROWTH

²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us

²³ And Jesus said to him, "'If you can'! All things are possible for one who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" **Mark 9:20-24**

MATURE FAITH: EVIDENCED BY OBEDIENT ACTION

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

³ *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:3-5*

FAITH DEMONSTRATED BY ACTION

¹⁷ *So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

“Work” is a deed/action that carries out/completes an inner desire/intension/purpose.

^{18b} *But someone will say, “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” James 2:17-18b*

1. The first action step of faith leading to godly change is accepting Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

⁹ *If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

¹⁰ *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:9-10, NIV*

⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10*

2. Lordship involves the faith-based action step of committing ourselves to being Jesus’ disciples - apprentice/students - to seek and follow His will based in believing 4 truths about God:

A. That God is all-powerful.

B. That God is totally good.

C. That God unconditionally loves me.

D. That I can trust that as I take steps of obedience God will lovingly use His power to bring His good into my life.

¹² *And now, Israel, [Followers of Christ] what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today...*

WHY?

“for your own good...” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

⁶ *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. Isaiah 55:6-7*

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

3. Consistent action steps of faith keeps moving us from where we are right now and moves us closer to where God wants us to be - like Him and with Him.

¹ *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are... ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. 1 John 3:1-3*

¹¹ *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-14*

REMEMBER WHAT JOHN TRENT SAID ABOUT FINDING SUCCESS IN DOING HARD THINGS THE RIGHT WAY:

The habit of doing what is best, rather than what is comfortable, to achieve a worthwhile outcome.

...This habit focuses on doing whatever is best to reach the good goal, even if it is difficult, uncomfortable, takes longer, and requires more energy.”

4. Turning all our life and will over to Jesus results in resting in godly well-being!

²⁵ *...Jesus said... ²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Matthew 11:25, 28-30

And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. Isaiah 32:17

EXAMPLE OF FAITH IN ACTION FROM THE POOL OF BETHESDA

¹After this [second miracle in Galilee- healing a boy] there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁵One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” ⁷The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” ⁸Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

1. If we simply compare ourselves to others, we may minimize our condition as not being that bad or conclude that being an invalid is simply normal and all we can hope for.
2. We need to face the fact that there are areas in our lives where we have been stuck for much longer amounts of time than we like to admit.
3. Fortunately, the length of our “stuckedness” does not deter God from offering healing.
4. God’s healing is available, but we must want it.
5. We need to need to be careful how much we simply expect others to put us in the position for healing.
6. The sooner we act in faith to obey God’s directives, the sooner we will experience healing.
7. Jesus does not heal us to simply have us sit back down in the very same place.
8. We must start walking intentionally in God’s ways and do so from now on.

THE LIMITS OF TRUSTING MAN-MADE THINGS

¹Hear the word that the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. ²Thus says the Lord: “Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them, ³for the customs of the peoples are vanity.

A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. ⁴They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.

⁵Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.”

...⁸They are both stupid and foolish; the instruction of idols is but wood! ⁹Beaten silver... They are the work of

the craftsman and of the hands of the goldsmith; their clothing is violet and purple; they are all the work of skilled men.

¹¹Thus shall you say to them: “The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”

¹⁴Every man is stupid and without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols, for his images are false, and there is no breath in them.

¹⁵They are worthless, a work of delusion...Jeremiah 10

1. Things that are trusted in, besides the God of the Bible, only exist through mental creativity, ingenuity, and the skill of human beings.
2. The thing created cannot communicate, move, do evil, or do any good without human empowerment.
3. The Bible says trusting in imagined or created things is stupid and foolish.
4. They can only provide for the trusting person to the level they have been given.

Everything created must have a creator, and the created thing cannot be any greater than the greatness of the one that made it.

So how much trust one puts into something made is limited to the greatest of the creator.

THE LIMITLESS POTENTIAL OF TRUSTING THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

⁶There is none like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is great in might.

¹⁰But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King...

¹²It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

⁷Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you.

1. The God of the Bible exists independently of man’s mental images, creativity, ingenuity or skill.
2. God communicates and moves, cannot do evil, but only good, all within His free and sovereign will.
3. There is none like the Lord because He is the true and living God; the everlasting King.
4. Unless you need more power, wisdom or understanding than what it takes to create and manage the universe, there is nothing you need that He can’t or won’t supply.

**OUR FAITH IS ONLY AS GOOD AS WHAT
OR WHO WE PUT OUR TRUST IN.**

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. I Corinthians 13:11

In the early stages of faith, we are children. Our faith vocabulary, our thinking about faith, and the way we use faith in reasoning the way we deal with life are all immature. That is to be expected. But as disciples of Jesus, we are to be growing up in our faith. The deeper we grow in our knowledge of God's word, and grow in our commitment to mature in our faith, the better we will be able to communicate our faith, be more mature in our thinking about our faith, and more able to apply our faith to how we deal with life.

AT LEAST ONE WAY THIS WEEK I WILL TRY TO PUT THIS LESSON INTO PRACTICE IS:

**Weekly Going Deeper Study Guide
For Faith Plus Action Leads to Transformation**

- 1. Without being in a rush, read through this week's lesson 3 times – once on 3 different days, and as you do keep #2 in mind to see what God might show you.**
- 2. Before you begin, pray a prayer like the following and below it write down something the Lord shows you that you can do or can stop doing right now to help you move forward.**

Lord I believe that you're the God of forward motion and blessed futures. I trust that you have a better future for me than I have been able to create on my own. I also believe that working cooperatively with you miraculous things can happen, doors can open and opportunities can become available to me. I trust you Father that you know what is best for me and that you can lead me towards spiritual well-being.

And I know that you do not want me to be in neutral gear doing nothing to grow in my Christian life, and you certainly do not want me to go in reverse. However, I know if I don't intentionally work on my wounds, hindrances and unhealthy dependencies, I will stay right where I am, or worse, I will go backwards.

So right now I pray in your name Jesus, will you show me something practical from the lesson this week that I can do or stop doing right now to keep me moving forward and to take me in the direction of spiritual well-being?

Something practical you believe God showed you to do or stop doing that would help you move forward is:

HERE IS WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IN GROUP AS TO HOW PUTTING THIS LESSON INTO PRACTICE WENT THIS WEEK:

