

Chapter 5 - Walking by Faith - Part I

5.1 Introduction

When we “walk worthy of our calling”, we conduct ourselves daily in a manner which pleases God. This is not something which we do on the rare occasion, but rather it is an ongoing striving, a conscious daily lifestyle, a deliberate mind-set, a long-term goal involving patience, persistence and determination. In this series, we are exploring ways to help us to walk worthy, so as to please God. And the Bible tells us that it is impossible to please God without **faith**.

Heb 11:6 *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.*

So in this chapter, we will examine aspects of **faith**. The key verse is the following:-

2 Cor 5:7 *For we walk by **faith**, not by sight.*

Thus the Bible says that we are to “**walk by faith**”. So the focus of this chapter and the next is the whole question of **faith**. What is faith? How do we exercise our faith? How do we grow our faith? How do we walk by faith?

5.2 What is Faith?

A dictionary defines faith as complete trust or confidence; as a firm belief in divine truth, without logical proof. For our purposes, the words *belief* and *trust* can be regarded as being synonymous with *faith*. The biblical description of *faith* is in harmony with the dictionary definition:

Heb 11:1 *Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Biblical **hope** should always be understood as *overwhelming confidence*. So **faith** gives us overwhelming confidence or complete trust in what we believe, to the extent that we are so certain of *things not seen* that they are regarded as having *substance*, as being completely and perfectly *evident*. This is illustrated by Job’s faith, as shown in the following verses:

Job 19:25-27 *For I **know** that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I **know**, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

In the Bible, the word **faith** occurs only rarely in the OT, for example:-

Hab 2:4b *But the just shall live by his faith.* (Quoted in Rom 1:17 and Heb10:38)

However, the word **faith** is frequently used in the NT, occurring over 300 times. Typically, for one seeking salvation, **faith** is seen as the attribute whereby a person abandons all reliance on his own efforts to obtain salvation, and relies fully on Christ alone for all that salvation means.

Phil 3:8b,9 *... that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through **faith** in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by **faith**;*

The following are some well-known verses in which the word **faith**, or its synonyms, occurs.

Jn 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

Rom 3:21f *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through **faith** in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who **believe**.*

Rom 5:1,2 *Therefore, having been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by **faith** into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in **hope** of the glory of God.*

1 Jn 5:4 *For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our **faith**.*

Eph 6:16 *above all, taking the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

1 Thes 5:8 *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of **faith** and love, and as a helmet the **hope** of salvation.*

Jas 1:5,6 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in **faith**, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

1 Tim 6:11f *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, **faith**, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of **faith**, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also **called** and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

5.3 The Faith of Abraham

The great faith chapter, Hebrews 11, focuses a lot of attention on the faith of Abraham. God had told Abraham that he would have a vast number of descendants, but Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, his wife Sarah was ninety, and they were childless. Yet by faith Abraham believed God.

Gen 15:6 *And he **believed** in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

Paul, in his great argument about righteousness by faith in Romans chapters 3 & 4, also cites the example of Abraham's faith.

Rom 4:18-21 *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.*

We see that Abraham "was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God." So the very essence of faith is that which gives glory to God. As we give glory to God we shall be made strong ourselves, and our faith will be strong. Abraham had good reasons not to believe God. In terms of their physical abilities to bear a child, both Abraham and Sarah were as good as "dead". And God's promise was overwhelming in terms of the number of descendants promised. Yet Abraham, instead of stumbling in unbelief, looked to God and at God. That is the real secret of faith. In a remarkable passage of Scripture, God calls Abraham "My friend"! (Isa 41:8) One of the main explanations of the troubles and difficulties which most of us experience in our lives is that, instead of keeping our eyes steadfastly on God, we look at ourselves and our weaknesses and the staggering greatness of the life to which we have been called. We look at these things and we become weak and begin to stagger. Think of Peter, waking on the water to Jesus:

Matt 14:30f *But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of **little faith**, why did you doubt?"*

Abraham did not stagger for the reason that he gave glory to God, he kept his eyes on God, and he looked to God. He was strengthened in **faith**, giving glory to God, and being **fully convinced** that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

5.4 “Giving Glory to God”

As we have noted about the faith of Abraham, *he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.* (Rom 4:20) Giving glory to God is an important part of exercising faith, and always results from having faith. We glorify God by realizing who God is and what God is. Contemplate and meditate on the glorious **attributes of God**. Here is a brief list of these attributes (in alphabetical order), which may be helpful in strengthening our faith

- a. **God is Creator.** God created everything; space, time, the heavens and the earth.
Rev 4:11 *“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”*
Jn 1:3 *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

- b. **God is Eternal.** God is timeless and eternal – from everlasting to everlasting.
Deut 32:39f *“Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; ... For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, “As I live forever ...”*
Rev 1:8 *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

- c. **God is Faithful.** God is eternally faithful; with Him there is “no variation or shadow of turning.”
Ps 36:5 *Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.*
Ps 89:1 *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.*
1 Cor 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- d. **God is Good.** “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” (1 Jn 1:5)
Ps 34:8 *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*
Ps 25:8 *Good and upright is the Lord*
Ps 33:5b *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*

- e. **God is Holy.** Holiness epitomizes God, as the following verses demonstrate:
Ps 99:9 *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.*
Isa 6:3 *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”*

- Rev 4:8** ... *And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"*
- Rev 15:4** *"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy."*

- f. **God is Immutable.** God never changes. "I AM WHO I AM". (Exod 3:14)
- Heb 13:8** *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*
- Mal 3:6** *"For I am the Lord, I do not change*
- Jas 1:17** *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.*
- g. **God is Just.** God judges, but His judgements are always just, fair and appropriate.
- Ps 33:5a** *He loves righteousness and justice*
- h. **God is Majestic.** The majesty and glory of God are a constant theme of Scripture. God is full of glory, ineffable glory, beyond our comprehension, beyond our imagination. He dwells in light that is unapproachable, "pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise."
- Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, Victorious, Thy great Name we praise.*
- Ps 19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.*
- 1 Chron 29:11** *Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all.*
- i. **God is Merciful and Gracious.** God's actions towards humans are always rich in mercy (not doing to us what we deserve) and grace (giving us what we don't deserve).
- Ps 103:17** *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him*
- Ps 108:4** *For Your mercy is great above the heavens, and Your truth reaches to the clouds.*
- Joel 2:13** *So rend your hearts, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.*
- j. **God is Omnipotent.** God is all-powerful; there is nothing He cannot do.
- Ps 62:11** *God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God.*

Jb 42:2 *“I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.”*

Matt 19:26 *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

k. **God is Omnipresent.** He is present everywhere; wherever you are, there He is.

Ps 145:18 *The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*

Prov 15:3 *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.*

Jer 23:23f *“Am I a God near at hand,” says the Lord, “and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?” says the Lord; “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the Lord.*

l. **God is Omniscient.** God knows everything; there is nothing He doesn't know.

Isa 40:28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

1 Sam 2:3 *... the Lord is the God of knowledge*

Job 34:21 *“For His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps.”*

Ps 147:5 *Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.*

Heb 4:13 *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

1 Jn 3:20 *For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

m. **God is Perfect.**

Ps 18:30 *As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

Matt 5:48 *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”*

n. **God is Righteous.** His actions always conform to His will and His nature

Ps 145:17 *The Lord is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.*

Ps 119:137 *Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgements*

o. **God is Spirit.** He is without physical form or presence. Listen to what Jesus said:

Jn 4:24 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

p. **God is Truth.**

Deut 32:4 *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.*

2 Sam 7:28 *“And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true ...*