

# REAL FAITH

Knowing the Will of God  
Believing for the Impossible



*“Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying,  
Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”  
Jeremiah 30:2*

# REAL FAITH

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Believing for the Impossible

*“The author who benefits you is not the one  
who tells you something you did not know before,  
but the one who gives expression to the truth  
that has been struggling for utterance in you.”  
Oswald Chambers*

Shad Williams

SWEA  
2009

## Cover Design

The cover of this book was designed by our daughter, Rachel Busse, but it is not just another one of her creative and clever designs. It actually comes from an experience I had with God early one morning in the summer of 1976. One year earlier, God had unmistakably spoken to Sheila and me about going into international evangelism. A year later, however, I was still wrestling with just how to go about it.

During that summer, the Lord began waking me up every morning at 4:30. Every day I would throw on some jeans and a tee shirt, grab my Bible, and go down to a park near our house to walk and pray. This went on for weeks, and one morning as I was praying out loud I uttered these words, "Lord, I guess there is just no other way for us to do this; I guess it has to be by faith." As soon as the word "faith" came out of my mouth the heel of my shoe caught on something in the grass. When I looked down, I saw a large piece of concrete and in it was written the word *FAITH*. I could not believe my eyes. I knelt down and ran my hand across the word to make sure I was seeing what I thought I was. Right then and there, while I was kneeling, I said, "Lord, we don't need to discuss this any longer. My question is answered for good. We are going to do this and we are going to do it by faith." As I stood to my feet, I knew in my heart that I had embarked upon a new journey, the journey of faith. I also sensed that I was about to take some higher-level classes in the school of faith. I was right. I have never graduated from Faith University and never will, but I have taken many challenging and interesting courses. Much of what I have learned so far is contained in the pages of this book.

Ten years later my friend, Dr. Philip Eyster, was supervising the production of a video for our ten-year ministry anniversary. As part of the video I shared with him the story of what happened in the park that day. He went to the park to see if the concrete was still there and sure enough it was. He outlined the letters in white and took a picture of it. He used that picture in the video and gave me a framed print of it, which has hung on my office wall ever since. When it came time to design a cover for this book, there was no question as to what it should look like. It had to be THAT picture that Phil took in the park long ago. The word "real" was fabricated by my talented daughter, but the word "faith" appears exactly as it is in that photo taken long ago. As we walk through life, stumbling is usually not considered to be a good thing. But as I discovered that day in the park, when we stumble across real faith it can be the greatest moment in our life. May it be so for you, my dear brother or sister in Christ, may it be so for you.

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This book is dedicated to:

My pastor – Rev. Don J. Milam  
(1910 – 1995)

Brother Don was the man God used to introduce Sheila and me to Jesus and to help us through the difficult beginning stages of our Christian life. He was our constant source of encouragement and spiritual guidance until his death. He correctly viewed our life and ministry as an extension of his own. Because of Brother Don's relentless pursuit and determination to see us saved, Sheila and I are in the Kingdom of God, and because of his example to us of what it truly means to live for Christ, we are now being used of God to help expand it.

My friend – Rev. Dr. W. Wayne Allen  
(1939 – 2005)

Brother Wayne was the man God used to help propel us along in the life of faith. He was one of the most outstanding examples in my life of what it means to believe God for the impossible. He was the living embodiment of the verse of Scripture he so often quoted, Matthew 19:26, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Brother Wayne believed in our ministry as much as any person we have ever known and enthusiastically encouraged us to push forward by faith.

My Father – Leland S. Williams  
(1920 – 2002)

My Dad was the man God used to provide me with a picture of what it means to be a father. From my earliest memory he was always the man who could do anything and get anything, and he was always ready to do it for me. In my childhood he represented total security and unconditional approval. He not only provided but did so in excess. Because of my Dad the word *father* produces an image in my mind of total love, provision, and acceptance. It is that image transferred into my Christian life that makes it so easy for me to believe that my Heavenly Father can be trusted to do anything and provide everything – and He will do it for ME.



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## *Preface*

This book is written to provide the Christian church and the worldwide Christian mission force with a practical guide as to how to truly live by faith and thus overcome the powers of darkness, enhance their Christian life, and expand the Kingdom of God. The majority of Christians throughout the world live far below their privilege and potential because they are deceived by the lies of the devil and enslaved by the limitations of the visible. So many enter the Christian life by faith and then attempt to live it by sight. The vast majority of the church is unknowingly wandering in the wilderness of unbelief, in search of freedom and power that they will never possess without discovering a life of real Bible faith. This book is intended to help God's children, new Believers and seasoned warriors alike, escape the status quo and the deceptions of satan and enter into the promised land of real, overcoming, life-altering faith.

It is my intent and goal to help my brothers and sisters in Jesus discover the liberating truth that it is absolutely possible to clearly know the will of God and boldly believe Him for the impossible. The content contained in these pages has been arranged in such a way so as to lead the reader from start to finish through the process of actually knowing the will of God and accessing the power and resources of God in relation to specific needs and circumstances in his or her life.

There is a great deal of error and misunderstanding regarding the subject of faith in the modern church. On the one hand are those who attempt to trust God by faith without an adequate understanding of what is required to make that possible. On the other hand are those who reject any idea of believing God for the impossible as an impossibility in itself. The corresponding result is confusion, disillusionment, disappointment, discouragement, and defeat. An extended purpose of this book is to help protect the church, the body of Christ, from misguided and erroneous ideas and to help them find the true, balanced, scriptural life of faith that is available for all Believers.

My wife and I were saved in the summer of 1968 and sensed the call of God upon our life immediately. It did not take long for us to realize that God was not only calling us to the ministry of evangelism but also to a life of faith. As young new Believers we were perfectly willing to cast ourselves upon the Lord and trust Him by faith. We were even enthusiastic about it. All we had, however, was enthusiasm. We were excited about

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trusting God, but we did not have a clue as to how to go about it. We needed an instruction book and there wasn't one. We read the great exploits of faith in the Bible and believed all of them. We read every biography we could get our hands on – Hudson Taylor, George Muller, C.T. Studd – and marveled at their faith. But the question remained, how do we make this work in our lives?

When God called us into this ministry that we have been in now for the past thirty-two years, we embarked upon it by faith, which we were happy to do. But, again, we did not have a clear grasp as to how to go about it, how to live it out practically in our daily life. And I will be the first to admit that in those early years I made a lot of mistakes, mistakes that cost my family unnecessarily, mistakes that slowed the development of the ministry, and mistakes I would not have made if I had had a practical, definitive guide as to how to go about knowing the clear will of God and trusting Him by real, legitimate faith. It would have saved me a lot of time just to have a clear and accurate understanding of what faith really is. My goal in this book is to provide for my brothers and sisters in Jesus the guide and the help that I so desperately needed and did not have.

Someone asked me one day during a seminar on field evangelism in Malawi, Africa, “Brother Shad, where did this material come from that you are teaching us in this seminar?” I told him, “Brother, I spent twenty years making mistakes and eliminating everything that does not work in field evangelism, and what you are getting in this seminar is everything that is left.” I could say the same thing about this book. I have discovered over the past forty years of living by faith, many things that may sound good and look good but are not true and don't work. They are not in this book, but the things that are true and that do work are. They are the component parts of the life of real Bible faith. It is my prayer and desire that this book provide you with a guide that will take you to the summit of “faith mountain” and allow you to look across the landscape of the victorious Christian life that you have suspected to be possible but have not yet fully enjoyed.

NOTE: Even though it is grammatically correct to capitalize all proper names, I have, as a matter of personal conviction, deliberately not capitalized the name “satan” throughout this book unless it appears at the beginning of a sentence.

## *Acknowledgement*



If it were not for the help and encouragement of my wife, Sheila, this book would not exist.

Because of her expertise in so many areas applied to this work, and because of her stubborn refusal to allow me to give up on it, it has reached its completion. I did not realize just what a spiritual battle it would be to put in writing the things God has taught us over the years about living by faith. But it certainly has been, and Sheila

has stood by me and with me in the warfare for more than four years of work on this project.

It is her strength that has sustained me in the most difficult hours. It is her unwavering belief in me that has on so many occasions enabled me to write the next page, the next chapter. It is her vast knowledge of Scripture, her grasp of theology, and her deep understanding of living by faith that has helped me maintain dead-on accuracy from beginning to end. It is her walking with me through more than forty years of life and faith experiences that has provided me a dependable, reliable sounding board. It is her believing prayers with me and for me that have provided me with the supernatural strength and understanding needed to write this book.

To all of this must be added Sheila's great literary skill, her command of the English language, her expert editing ability, and her computer proficiency. This book reads the way it reads because my wife took what I wrote and made it readable. It looks the way it looks because she worked tirelessly to make it attractive, interesting, and appealing. It settles upon your heart as "right" because Sheila made sure that it is.

My wife is the most amazing woman I have ever known, and nothing in my life would be complete without her, including this book. I thank God that because of her, you hold "*Real Faith*" in your hand.

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## *Introduction to the Second Edition*

Dear friend, I rejoice that God has led you to read this book. I pray it will be a blessing and an encouragement to you as you walk with God day by day. I pray it will enhance, deepen, and expand your Christian life and enable you to better minister to others. I assure you the devil does not want you to read it because there are many empowering, liberating, and life-changing truths contained in these pages he does not want you to know. There are two things you can expect from the enemy. To begin with, he will attempt to prevent you from getting started in the first place. Then once you do begin, he will try to stop you before you finish. Therefore, I have a couple of suggestions for you. First, do not put off starting this study. Don't wait until you "have time" or "have no distractions" or "go on vacation." **DO IT NOW.** Then once you have begun, do not stop and start over, as many have told me they have done. Do not begin by "studying" the book. Just read it – all the way through from beginning to end. Don't worry about what you are retaining or what you are missing. Just read it. This will provide you with a panoramic overview of the life of faith. Then once you have read the book in its entirety, go back to the beginning and study it chapter by chapter. Underline, outline, highlight, make notes, and whatever else helps you to retain and apply what you study. Also, do not skip around from place to place. The chapters are arranged in a certain sequence because one builds upon the other.

Chapters 1-12 deal with the fact that living by faith is God's **PLAN** for every Christian. Then in chapters 13-25 we find that real Bible faith exercised in the life of the believer is the **PROCESS** by which God transfers His will from heaven to earth. Finally in chapters 26-31 we discover that real faith is God's **PROGRAM** for the victorious Christian life.

Now let me say one more thing before you begin reading. When I wrote this book, I did so assuming that everyone who reads it would be a born-again child of God. Since publishing it, however, I have discovered that is not always the case. Therefore, if you have any doubt or question whatsoever regarding your relationship to Jesus Christ, I suggest you begin by looking at the appendix in the back of this book entitled "How to Have a Clean Heart." There you will find very simple instructions on how to be sure you are saved. Once that is settled, begin your study in faith and may God bless you as you do.

Chapter 1

# *Getting Started*

## *A New Approach to the Christian Life*

“The Christian experience, from start to finish, is a journey of faith. Through it we come into possession of a new life and through it we walk by this new life. Faith is the life principle of a Christian.”  
*Watchman Nee (1)*

**I**n order for our Christian life to be pleasing to God it must be lived by faith – REAL faith. For most Christians the concept of living in total dependence upon God for everything at all times is a very radical and totally new idea. It is a whole new approach to the Christian life. I have entitled this chapter “Getting Started” in faith, but the truth is, if you are a child of God you have already begun. You took your first step in real faith the moment you invited the Lord Jesus to come into your heart. The impossible became reality by your act of believing upon Jesus Christ to do for you what you could not do for yourself, to transfer you from the domain of hell into the Kingdom of God. You started in faith by making a simple choice to believe in what you could not see or touch. Now you must live in faith by continuing to make that same choice. “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him*” (Colossians 2:6). How did you receive Him? By faith. How do you continue in Him? By faith. In order to live the life that God intends for you to live, the life that you were born by God’s Spirit to live, you must discover how to live by faith. There are many reasons why, but the most important one is that “*Without faith it is impossible to please him...*” (Hebrews 11:6). As children of God, we are endowed by our Heavenly Father with the capacity for faith for the purpose of bringing honor and glory to Him.

Now - let me ask you a question; when you hear the word “faith”, what do you think of? Is it Moses standing at the Red Sea and the waters parting? Is it Joshua marching around the walls of Jericho? Or is it blind Bartimaeus stumbling through the crowd to get to Jesus to be healed? Maybe it is Peter stepping out of the boat and walking to Jesus on the water. Those are certainly remarkable examples of the exercise of faith as related to

special faith events in Bible history. But, as we will learn, God never intended that the demonstration and living out of faith should be confined to the events that took place in the Bible. Faith is a way of life, and we are going to discover that living by faith is the privilege and the responsibility of every person who knows Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We will develop a full definition of faith later on, but to get started, let's make four brief beginning observations.

1. First, faith is the **plan** of God for every Believer. "...as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*" (Romans 1:17).
2. Second, the capacity of faith is **provided** by God and is given to every child of God as a **personal possession**. "...according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).
3. Third, faith is the **power** of the Christian life. "...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).
4. Fourth, God's word makes it very clear that the exercise of faith is required to **please** God. "*But without faith it is impossible to please him...*" (Hebrews 11:6).

### *Learning a New Language*

So we see from the start that faith is essential to the Christian life. You could accurately say that faith **IS** the Christian life. We are going to learn that the subject of faith is vast and takes time to grasp. I know you want to learn as much as you can as fast as you can. That is why you are reading this book. It is best, however, to not get in too much of a hurry. Learning to live by faith takes time, so let it. It is like learning a new language. It may be a struggle at first, but in time an amazing thing happens; you just wake up one day and you are speaking the language. That thing you have struggled so hard to grasp has now grasped you. You will find the same to be true with learning to live by faith. Faith is the language of the Spirit of God, the language that enables us to fully and freely communicate with Him.

I remember my first day in New Testament Greek class. I looked at the first page of that Greek grammar book and thought, "You have to be kidding! There is no way I can ever learn this stuff!" I was right; I couldn't learn it. I had to discover it; I had to absorb it. It had to become part of me. Then one day an amazing thing happened, I opened up the Greek New Testament and could actually read it! It was a miracle! Dear friend, my advice to you is to approach this study in faith the same way. Discover it, absorb it, and allow it to become part of you.

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### *Scaling New Heights*

Embarking upon the study of faith is also somewhat like climbing a mountain. The only way to do it is to start at the bottom and slowly work your way up. Experienced climbers know that it is necessary to stop at base camps along the way in order to get acclimated to the thinning oxygen supply. Well, the one who is making the climb of faith will discover the same thing.

God will take you along for a certain distance and then you will need to stop and get acclimated in your experience. Then you can move on to the next



level. The mountain climber must learn as he goes along to rely on less oxygen than he has been accustomed to. Likewise the faith climber must learn to rely on less of his own resources, his own abilities, his old way of life, and his old way of thinking. Again let me suggest that you not expect to absorb it all by just reading one or two isolated chapters of this book. It won't happen that way. But as you read and absorb, chapter by chapter, the light will begin to dawn and you will begin to see clearly the way of faith. For most it is a new way and requires making adjustments. As reflected in the subtitle of this chapter, we are talking about, what may be for many an entirely new approach to the Christian life. Again, just give it time, and as you pray each chapter back to God you will assuredly begin to "acclimate."

Have you ever wondered why some climbers make it to the top and some don't? At the beginning of the climb everyone has the same goal, the same distance to climb, the same equipment, the same clothing, the same instructions, and the same guide leading them. So what makes the difference in who makes it and who doesn't? Well, of course, sheer strength and stamina play a part, but quite often the key factors are desire, determination, and just plain old refusal to quit. Friends, the faith climb is very much like that. It is not a question of how much faith a person has. Faith is not a force; it is a capacity. Every Believer is endowed by God with the exact same capacity to trust, to believe, and to walk by faith. No Christian has any greater capacity for faith than anyone else; again quoting Romans 12:3 "...according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." It is not a question of having, but of using. It is not faith possessed that conquers, but faith exercised. As we go through this study you will very likely need some of that "plain old refusal to quit." The devil does not want you to discover how to live by faith, because if you do you will become a serious threat to the powers of darkness. Satan is going to try to prevent you

from ever beginning the climb, and if you do start, then he will try to knock you off the mountain with discouragement and confusion. Don't you listen to him. Just follow the instructions of your Guide and keep focused on the peak. I talked to a doctor one day who was going to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. I asked him why he was going to do that. He replied very simply, "I want to." There it was; there was the defining ingredient. Dear Christian, if you master the life of faith it will be for one reason, not because you have to but because you want to.

It is my prayer that this study will ignite in you a desire to learn the language and ascend the heights of faith. Don't get discouraged when you have to rest and review, when you have to stop occasionally at a base camp and catch your breath. Everybody does. As we have said, base camps (resting places) are part of the process. That is why opportunities for rest, reflection and review are provided for you at the close of each chapter. Remember, and I can't say it often enough, learning to live by faith is a process.

### *Clearing the Way for Real Faith*

Speaking of processes, let me share one with you. Our home in Tennessee, which my wife Sheila named "Pilgrim's Rest," was built on a beautiful piece of property that came to us as a tremendous blessing from God. But, there were a few obstacles to overcome before building could begin. First the deed had to be settled, which was made challenging by the fact that the surveyors incorrectly shot the south boundary three hundred feet too far north, putting it right through our kitchen. It was quite an ordeal, but it was all eventually settled, the deed was filed at the courthouse, and we could finally say with confidence that we really owned the property. But then there was another problem; there was no access to the property from the road. We discovered, however, that the property between our land and the road was owned by a wonderful Christian man who was willing to sell us enough of it for a driveway. So now we had a deed to the land and a way to get to it, but there were still two more hurdles to clear. There was not a flat spot on the property large enough to adequately contain the footprint of the house, and the property was completely covered with trees. Sheila always said that she would like to move out of the city and find a place in the country



Faith is unutterable trust  
in God which never dreams  
that He will not stand by us.

*Oswald Chambers (2)*



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with lots of trees. Well, we had trees all right - nothing but trees.

It became apparent from the very beginning that every aspect of this building project was going to be an issue of faith and it would be a while before these pilgrims could rest at Pilgrim's Rest. But, the process did



All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them.

*J. Hudson Taylor (3)*



begin. First, the footing was dug and the concrete poured. Then the blocks were laid and the floor joists were set. Next came the sub-floor and then the walls were framed. Then came the roof rafters, shingles, bricklaying, and so on until the structure was complete and we had moved in. After it was finished I realized that it was a perfect picture

of the development of the faith life. Let me show you.

Before the faith life can be built into a person, God must first secure the deed to the "property." He did that in you and me by paying the highest price possible with the shed blood of His Son. But ownership is not enough, evidenced by the fact that many of God's children are not yet living by faith. In addition to ownership, God, through the Holy Spirit, must be given free access to our life. As we will discuss later on, many people receive Christ as Savior but then go no further. They escape the slavery of Egypt but then become trapped in the "wilderness." They seem to never develop a real, working, productive fellowship with God.

So how does God gain full access to a Christian's life? He does it by means of two things: *de*struction and *con*struction. II Corinthians 5:17 says that in the life of every Believer, "...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Before we began preparing our property for the construction of Pilgrim's Rest, some destruction had to take place. The first time we saw the property was in the fall and it was absolutely beautiful. The issue, however, was not appearance but suitability for building. That required making some changes on the land. The bulldozers, back-hoes, and gravel trucks came in and attacked that place with a vengeance. Trees were cleared to create a driveway and more trees came down to make room for the house. Then deep utility ditches were dug along each side of the drive and huge mounds of dirt were formed on the property along with gigantic piles of logs and brush. Within a couple of days the place looked like a disaster area. In time, however, the ultimate goal was realized. On that land there now sits the envisioned house. It is surrounded by beautiful

landscaping, railed fences, and ornamental trees which take the place of some of the ones cleared away. Now the property is not only more beautiful than it was before, but it is also *occupied*. It all happened because Sheila and I made a decision. We allowed the contractor to do the *de*struction so that he could then do what we really hired him to do - the *con*struction of the desired building. You see, it is not enough for your Christian life to just look good. In order for it to be useful to God, it must be completely occupied by the Holy Spirit. In order for that to happen some changes are going to have to be made. You must be willing for the Contractor of Heaven to remove some things from your life and replace them with Himself, with His plan and purpose, with the one thing that brings glory to Him - the life of real faith. Are you ready to do that?

I suspect that as you consider the task of learning this new language of faith, as you gaze upwards to the highest peak of “Faith Mountain”, and as you consider turning the page to the next chapter of this book, there may very possibly be some questions, doubts, or objections arising in your mind and heart. I would be surprised if that did NOT happen. The very last thing that satan wants for any child of God to discover is that it is possible to live beyond the limitations of the visible. The devil does not want you to know that you have been given the capacity and privilege of believing God for the miraculous and impossible. When Sheila and I first stood down in the woods on our property, it was very hard for us to envision a house standing there. Why? Because we were totally surrounded by trees. All we could see were the hindrances. As you make the effort to embark upon the climb of faith, you may very well encounter some hindrances, some “trees” growing on the property of your Christian life, that need to be cleared away so that God can begin building in you the life of faith.

There is an old expression that says, “You can’t see the forest for the trees.” Very often there is a forest growing on the property of our life that we cannot see through and therefore cannot escape. It is deep and dark and hinders the formation of the life of faith. I call it the “Devil’s Forest.” But how does it get there? The same way all those red oak trees got on our property at Pilgrim’s Rest, they grew from seeds. As we have said already, the moment you were saved, the deed to your life was registered in Heaven and belongs to God. Satan cannot get the property back, but he can scatter seeds on it that quickly grow into trees,



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hindrances that prohibit the building of the life that God intends for every Believer to experience and enjoy. In the next chapter we are going to look at some of these trees. Each one bears its own poisonous fruit and conveys its own deceptive lie. It only takes one to prevent us from ever taking the first step toward a life of faith.

Now before we examine these possible hindrances to faith in your life, let me just tell you that before the first tree came down on our property and before the first yard of dirt was moved, Sheila was already at the paint and wallpaper store picking out colors and patterns. She even had little pieces of furniture-shaped paper cut out to scale and was placing them on the floor plan. Unlike me, she was not really into all that heavy equipment stuff. She had already jumped way ahead to what she called the “fun part.”



Our God specializes in working through normal people who believe in a supernatural God who will do His work through them.

*Dr. Bruce Wilkinson (4)*



Of course, I thought all that stuff involving bulldozers, backhoes, and concrete trucks was the fun part. I guess, however, that’s a “guy thing.” The point is, however, that not one piece of wallpaper could go up and not one roller of paint could be applied until the process had developed far enough

along to make that possible. So it is in learning to walk by faith. I promise you that we will get to the fun part in this process, the part where we are actually seeing God do the impossible. We will speak this faith language. We will stand on top of Faith Mountain and look out across the expanse of God’s spiritual world. But first, we must make sure that all the trees are cleared, and we must begin to lay the foundation.

As I said before, you began in faith the moment you asked Jesus into your heart, but that was only the beginning. That simple initial act of receiving Christ was like standing on the beach and putting your toe in the ocean. There is a vast ocean of experience awaiting you as you move on beyond receiving Jesus to walking in partnership with Him, trusting the Father for the impossible. There is a world awaiting you that is overflowing with wonder and excitement. It is filled with the blessings of God. Listen to the words of Paul in I Corinthians 2:9, “*But as it is written [Isaiah 64:4], Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*”

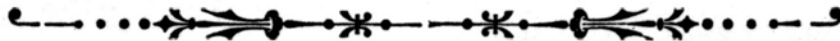


## *Summary of Truth*

- ❖ Our first step in real God-faith is believing on Jesus Christ for salvation.
- ❖ Without faith it is impossible to please God.
- ❖ Learning to live by faith is the privilege and responsibility of every child of God.
- ❖ Faith is the language of God and must be learned in order to communicate with Him.
- ❖ Becoming acclimated to the faith life is a process that takes time.
- ❖ Every Christian is endowed by God with the exact same capacity for faith, for the purpose of bringing glory to Him.
- ❖ The faith life IS the Christian life.
- ❖ If we learn to live by faith it will be because we want to, not because we have to.
- ❖ It is not enough for our life to belong to God; it must also be occupied by Him.
- ❖ In order for faith to develop in our life, changes must be made. We must trust God to do destruction in order for Him to do construction.
- ❖ As we embark upon the climb of faith we will surely encounter opposition from satan.
- ❖ It is God's will for us to live by faith.

NOW LET'S TAKE A MOMENT AND PRAY TOGETHER:

DEAR FATHER, I HAVE UNDERTAKEN THIS STUDY BECAUSE I DESIRE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT LIVING BY REAL FAITH. I BELIEVE YOU HAVE LED ME INTO IT AND I ASK YOU TO HELP ME CONTINUE IN IT. I ADMIT TO YOU THAT THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH IS NOT FAMILIAR TO ME, BUT I AM WILLING TO LEARN. LORD, MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WANT TO LIVE A LIFE THAT IS PLEASING TO YOU, THAT HONORS YOU AND THAT BRINGS GLORY TO YOU. LORD I ASK YOU TO DO WHATEVER DESTRUCTION IS NECESSARY IN MY LIFE IN ORDER TO MAKE WAY FOR YOUR CONSTRUCTION. MAKE MY LIFE A SUITABLE GROUND FOR THE BUILDING OF A LIFE OF REAL FAITH THAT HONORS YOU. THANK YOU, LORD JESUS, FOR SAVING ME AND INDWELLING ME BY YOUR SPIRIT. TEACH ME TO LIVE BY FAITH. I THANK YOU, AND I LOVE YOU, LORD JESUS. IN YOUR NAME I PRAY. AMEN.



# *Hindrances*

## *Resisting the Lies of the Enemy*

“Faith is the heroic effort of your life, you fling yourself in reckless confidence on God. The real meaning of eternal life is a life that can face anything it has to face without wavering.

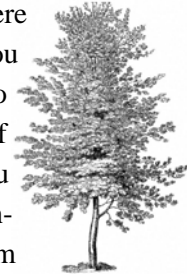
If we take this view, life becomes one great romance, a glorious opportunity for seeing marvelous things all the time.”

*Oswald Chambers (1)*

Satan’s aim for every Christian is a life lived apart from the supernatural intervention of God. Previously we made the observation from Scripture that without faith it is impossible to please God and that living by faith is not only the privilege but also the responsibility of every child of God. When God’s Word says, “...*The just [saved] shall live by faith*” (Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38, Habakkuk 2:4), He means every Christian, not just a select few. Having that settled, we also concluded that if we do learn how to live by faith it will ultimately be for one reason, because we *want* to. Knowing that we *can* and that we *should* will never be enough; there must be a desire that produces a choice. Now we could reasonably ask this question; if a Christian knows that it is not possible to please God without living by faith, and he has the God-given capacity to do so, and there is a wonderful new world of experience waiting for him if he does, then why would he not have the desire and make the choice? There are several possible reasons which can all be grouped under one heading, satan’s deception. Remember, his ultimate goal for every Christian is a life that is lived out apart from the intervention of God. Why? Because a life lived without the intervention of God produces no glory to God.

Later on we will discuss some things that we will label “enemies of faith.” These are things that oppose real faith once it has actually begun in a Christian’s life. But here we are going to deal with some hindrances that satan uses to prevent Believers from ever getting started in the faith life to begin with. They are like trees growing on the property of our life, property that God owns and wants to fully occupy for His own purpose and glory. These trees form the “devil’s forest” that I mentioned previously. I know

that deep within your heart there is a desire to trust God and a longing to see Him work supernaturally through your life. If that were not so you would not be reading this book. So why have you not started before now? Perhaps you have fallen victim to satan's deception. Are you being hindered by things of which you are not even aware? If you discover that you are, then take heart. All you have to do to remove the hindrances to faith in your life is to know they exist, claim your freedom in Christ, and declare that you are going on with God. Now, let's look at some possible "trees" that may be hindering your beginning in faith.



### *1. IGNORANCE of the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "You are saved, but there is no need to go any further."*

*Result - Form of godliness with no power.*

There are multitudes in the modern church who do not live by faith simply because they do not know about it. They do not know that the possibility of the faith life even exists, and they have gone no further because their eyes have been blinded to the fact that there is any further to go. It is easy to be satisfied with where you are if you don't know that there is anything better. That is the case with many Christians, because the principles of faith and the truths of the faith life are not taught or preached in their churches. Also, they have never heard testimonies of God's miraculous intervention or His supernatural provision, and they have never had an opportunity to read the biographies of the ordinary men and women in Christian history who lived extraordinary lives of faith. There have been many great books written over the years chronicling the wonderful exploits of faith in the lives of those who have dared to believe God, but satan has kept them virtually hidden from the Christian mainstream. He does not want God's church at large to know just how practical and productive it is to trust in the Living God. If that news ever gets out, the kingdom of darkness is in trouble. Dear Christian, one of satan's most effective ways of hindering you from beginning in faith is to just keep its truths hidden from you.

### *2. INCORRECTNESS regarding the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "Faith is praying until you receive what you desire."*

*Result - False concept of the faith life.*

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We are not going to spend much time on this topic because it will be covered in detail later. Suffice it to say that there are many misconceptions about faith, and there is a lot of incorrect teaching. If Satan cannot keep the truth of the faith life hidden from you, then he will try to distort it. A very effective ploy of the devil in robbing the church of a dynamic legitimate faith walk is to place an out of balance emphasis on my hopes and desires in connection with trusting God. Real faith is based upon the will of God, not my will. It is for the expansion of HIS Kingdom, not mine. Many times well meaning Christians try to live by what they believe to be faith, but their faith is misplaced or misdirected. Therefore, it produces nothing and ends in disappointment and defeat. Well, dear reader, as you continue in this study you will discover real faith, and I promise you will not be disappointed.

### 3. *INVOLVEMENT without the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "The important thing is to be busy working for God."*

*Result - Fleshly activity that does not glorify God.*

The very first instruction that most new Christians receive is that they need to hurry up and get involved and get busy for the Lord. So, before long, we are all just like little "Energizer Bunnies"; we are going and going, attending and attending, doing and doing, serving and serving. We are beating our little drums and making a lot of noise, but in actuality we are accomplishing little for the glory of God. Why? Because, so much of what we are doing is being accomplished out of our own energy and resources. We are led by our own intellect and feeling rather than by the Spirit of God. Before we realize what has happened, we have gotten caught up in doing rather than being. We are not told that we are to be anything; we are just supposed to show up and do things. Our Christian life has become based entirely upon behavior rather than believing. Sadly, many churches measure success by the same measuring stick that the world uses; attendance, income, programs, and buildings. Unfortunately, these things often testify to man's achievement rather than God's faithfulness. Millions of Christians across the world are never taught that the most important thing in their life is their personal relationship with God and learning to trust Him by faith.

So is it not a good thing to be involved in work for God? Yes, of course it is, and we should be, but only if our involvement and our activity is initiated by God and carried out by faith in accordance with His will through

the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. That is the only way it brings glory to God. Anything else is just fleshly religious activity. The only Christian work done for God that brings glory to God is that which is done by God through the Believer.

We must learn that the secret to the Christian life is not our working for God, but it is God working through us. “*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). Are you so busy in “service” to the Lord that you do not have time to wait upon Him, to know His will, and then act according to what He tells you? If so, then it is very likely you are being hindered from faith. Ask yourself, “Why am I doing all that I am doing? Is it a result of God telling me in my spirit to do it? Or, am I just responding to the requests and expectations of men, the needs I see before me, and my own desire to do something for God?” In I Corinthians 3:12, Paul warns us that there are two kinds of work for God. He calls one “*gold, silver, precious stones*” (work that will last), and the other he calls “*wood, hay, stubble*” (that which will not last). In verse 13 we are told “*Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.*” Only the life of faith produces work that lasts. Ask yourself this question, “Am I living a life of trusting God to execute HIS will through me, or am I just busy?” Involvement is good as long as it is according to God’s will and does not hinder you from a life of real faith.

#### 4. *INDOCTRINATION against the truth of faith.*

*Satan’s lie: “God does not speak to you in your heart.”*

*Result - Failure to recognize the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit.*

Many children of God have been indoctrinated against the truth of faith by listening to misguided teaching that is set forth in an effort to counteract extremes and false doctrine concerning faith. Some would have us believe that God, by His Spirit, does not make His specific will known to individual Believers. If that were true then real faith would be impossible because faith is simply acting upon the received will of God. It is persuasion of fact (God’s will) followed by corresponding action (believing). Some Christians have been led to believe that they cannot hear from God personally and directly. In other words, the Holy Spirit speaking the will of God in our hearts (the inner man, Ephesians 3:16) is unnecessary, in fact impossible, and the written Word of God is all there is. They

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have been taught that we are supposed to just read the Bible and apply it as best we can to our situation, without the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit, and then do what we think is right. Not only does this leave the Christian on his own to determine the course of his life, it places him exactly where satan wants him to be. This narrow view of God's interaction in our life has been adopted by many in reaction to another equally erroneous position. The opposite extreme is that whatever I think God has said to me or that I feel good and positive about is OK, even if it contradicts God's written word. This view places the Christian in extreme danger of hearing a lie from the devil and believing it because it sounds good. So you see, one erroneous extreme fosters overreaction by another causing division, discord, and polarization in the Body of Christ. In the end, the only one who wins is satan because he has deceived both sides. The truth is that both are wrong and do not live by real faith, because real faith requires knowing the will of God first and acting upon it. The Holy Spirit will reveal the will of God to your inner man, and it will **never** contradict the written Word of God. This is the balanced life of faith. Have you been hindered from real faith by one wrong teaching or another? The truth lies between the two points, and you are going to discover it as you continue this study.

##### *5. INTELLECTUALISM instead of the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "We must always do what makes the most sense."*

*Result - Focus upon logic and reason rather than trusting God.*

Intellectualism is the enthronement of reason over the truth of faith. How many times have you heard some well-meaning church leader stand up and say, "Yes we need to pray, but we must also use good business-sense?" Or you may have heard some one say "We really don't have to pray about that, it's a no-brainer. It just makes sense." Or what about this one, "Yes we do need to trust God, but we also need to be practical and use good common-sense. God did give us a brain, you know." Yes, God did give us a brain, but He also gave us a spirit. And, as we will observe in depth later on, it is the spirit of man that He communicates with and reveals His will to, not the mind or emotions. If you are living your Christian life within the confines of merely what you can reason, think or figure out, then you are stopping short of where God wants you to go and are living a very limited life.

Some Christians tend to value great learning over child-like faith in a loving Heavenly Father. They sometimes look upon those who choose to

trust God by simple faith as immature, inferior, or lacking in intelligence. If you have been guilty of harboring that kind of attitude, or if you have fallen victim to it, I would encourage you to read the biographies of the men and women who have made the greatest impact on the world for Jesus Christ. You will find that many of them did not hold high degrees and most of them did not always abide by “good common-sense.” In fact many, at first, were called foolish by their learned peers, who later had to recant in the face of all God did through their lives. In I Corinthians 1:20 Paul asked a probing question, “*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer [learned one] of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*” Then in verse 27 he tells us, “*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*” Dear child of God, do not be afraid to be numbered among those who would be called foolish for believing that God still works miracles and performs the impossible. According to the Apostle Paul, it is not a bad group to be in. In fact, that is just the very group God is looking for. It is this group that ultimately makes it to the top of Faith Mountain.

When Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was about to depart for his first trip to China at age twenty-one, he shared with an elderly minister what he was about to do. When the elder brother asked how he intended to support himself, Hudson Taylor told him that he was going by faith, trusting God to supply all his needs. The man said, “Some day you will be older and wiser and you will see that that won’t work.” After forty years of trusting God by faith, never asking any man for anything, and being used of God to place hundreds of missionaries in China, Mr. Taylor remembered what the man had said. Then he said, “He was partly right, I have grown older, but I am no wiser because I still believe that I can trust God by simple faith to meet all my needs.”

So are we saying that we should not use our intellect? Are we saying we should not study and learn and use our brain? No, not at all. What we ARE saying, however, is that reason and intellectualism should not be allowed to take the place of simply trusting God with child-like faith. Our intellect is not at odds with faith. God gave us our mind to use for serving Him and for relating to the physical world we live in. It is not our intellect that opposes faith; it is intellectualism - the use of intellect to the exclusion of trusting God. In referring to His followers, Jesus repeatedly used the word “children.” In I John the author used the expression “little children”

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nine times in referring to followers of Christ. Then in Ephesians 5:1 we find Paul instructing the church to “*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*” The message from Scripture is clear. God wants us to trust Him as a child trusts his father – by faith, not by “figuring.” If you are willing to humble yourself, become like a child, and learn to trust God by simple faith, this study is going to show you how.

#### *6. INTIMIDATION by the truth of faith.*

*Satan’s lie: “Faith will work for others, but not for you.”*

*Result – Fear of becoming a disappointment to yourself and to God.*

Most people are afraid of three basic things – the unknown, rejection, and failure. Some Christians are afraid of living by faith because they don’t know anything about it. It is simply unknown territory to them. Others, such as those in the indoctrinated group or the common-sense crowd, may be afraid of being thought of as strange or foolish. But then there are some Christians who experience another type of fear – the fear of failure. They may be part of a Christian fellowship that actually embraces the truth of the faith life and would readily support their efforts to live by faith, but they are still afraid to try it for themselves. They have seen it “work” for others and have heard and read encouraging testimonies regarding the validity of simply trusting God, but there is a hesitancy in making the attempt themselves. Why? Because the devil has convinced them that it won’t “work” for them and they are going to end up looking foolish. Satan tells them that it is all just too hard and they will never get it right. Of course that is a lie. God has called and enabled every child of His to live by faith, but there are those who don’t because they are afraid they will fail and God will be disappointed in them. I promise you that you cannot fail at faith, because God, by His indwelling Spirit, has equipped you for it. You have absolutely nothing to lose in trusting God by faith. He will respond to you with nothing but love and encouragement for making even the feeblest attempt at faith. Look again at that crowd gathered in Hebrews eleven. They were just as ordinary as you and me, and they did not all succeed the first time out. But they did eventually, and they all ended up in the “Hall of Faith.” If Satan has stopped you with fear, then right now stand up and resist that fear on the ground of the cross of Jesus. Say out loud, “I will trust God by faith!” As you continue in this study you will discover just how to make that statement come true.

7. *INDIFFERENCE towards the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "We should be content to just accept whatever God sends."*

*Result - Fatalistic view of God's will and plan for our life.*

To say, "I'll just take whatever God sends" may sound good, but in reality it is not good, because it is not faith. Real faith is knowing the will of God and then trusting Him to perform it. Statements like the one above are only made by complacent Christians. They live clean, moral, doctrinally correct lives and are well thought of in their churches. On one end of the spectrum are those whose good Christian lives form a neat and attractive package, and many are well supplied with all they want and need. These Christians (and often their churches) have all the money, talent, and resources to do whatever they desire to do. So why change anything? As comfortable as the status quo is, it must be right. At the other end of the spectrum are those who think it is holy and righteous to barely get by. They believe that God is somehow pleased by their willingness to do without and their acceptance of whatever happens as "from the Lord." At both ends of this spectrum, though, God receives no glory. Your Heavenly Father does not want you to live a passive life of "just taking what comes." He wants to reveal His will, His plan, and His purpose to you and work through you in His eternal enterprises. He wants to draw you into the aggressive, conquering, dynamic life of faith. He wants to use you in the building of His kingdom. If you have gone through your Christian life thus far with a "take it or leave it" attitude concerning faith, then ask God to forgive you and to help you embrace the life He so wants to give you. God does not want you to live a self-satisfied or self-sacrificed life; He wants you to live a sanctified life, which means a life that continues in the faith that led you to Jesus in the first place.

8. *INDECISION about the truth of faith.*

*Satan's lie: "Yes you should enter the life of faith, but do it later."*

*Result - Forfeited life of faith.*

The sooner you make the choice to live the life of faith, the sooner you begin living a life that brings glory and honor to God. Every day you postpone your decision is another day of opportunity lost in establishing a fresh and present testimony to the faithfulness of God. Why wait another hour in making your decision to enter the only life that is truly pleasing to God, a life that makes room for His supernatural intervention? Why wait any longer

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to enter a life that will bring you more joy than you have ever imagined? Make the choice, do it now! Do not forfeit the extraordinary life that you were born to possess. Do not be deterred from a life that depends on God alone and operates by His supernatural intervention. From the very beginning, satan's goal was to create in man a spirit of independence from God, an attitude of self-reliance and an absence of faith. Oswald Chambers reminds us, "Every element of self-reliance must be slain by the power of God. Complete weakness and dependence will always be the occasion for the Spirit of God to manifest His power" (2).

### *Timberrrrr!!!*

Now, I ask you to go back and review satan's most often used lies and allow the Holy Spirit to show you if you have fallen victim to any of them.

If you have, then take a stand against the lies of the devil. Go to your knees in prayer and ask God to clear those lies away in order to make room for faith. As you do, you will hear the trees crashing in the devil's forest. Yes, the trees are coming down. As you continue in this



study you are going to learn who you are in Christ. You are going to discover what you have in Christ. You are going to learn to walk in Christ. And you are going to learn to live by the faith of Christ. You are going to discover how to fight the "good fight of faith."



## *Summary of Truth*

- ❖ Satan puts hindrances in the lives of Christians to prevent them from discovering the joy and freedom of trusting God for the miraculous and the impossible. The hindrances are:
  - ♦ IGNORANCE of the truth of faith
  - ♦ INCORRECTNESS regarding the truth of faith
  - ♦ INVOLVEMENT without the truth of faith
  - ♦ INDOCTRINATION against the truth of faith
  - ♦ INTELLECTUALISM instead of the truth of faith
  - ♦ INTIMIDATION by the truth of faith
  - ♦ INDIFFERENCE towards the truth of faith
  - ♦ INDECISION about the truth of faith
- ❖ The result of believing satan's lies is a powerless, fruitless life that brings no honor and no glory to God.
- ❖ The hindrances can be removed by making the simple choice to believe that God has given every Christian the power and privilege of living by faith.
- ❖ I have made that choice, and through this study I am going to discover how to know the will of God and trust Him for the impossible.

### NOW LET'S TAKE A MOMENT AND PRAY TOGETHER:

DEAR FATHER, I THANK YOU AGAIN FOR SAVING ME AND I ASK YOU TO CREATE A BURNING DESIRE IN ME TO LIVE BY SIMPLE FAITH IN YOU. REVEAL TO ME BY YOUR SPIRIT ALL THAT HAS BEEN HIDDEN FROM ME BY BELIEVING SATAN'S LIES. DELIVER ME FROM ALL FLESHLY ACTIVITY. TEACH ME THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY WORKING FOR YOU AND YOUR WORKING THROUGH ME. HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MY LIFE, AND PROTECT ME FROM FALSE TEACHINGS CONCERNING FAITH. LORD, TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE THE CHOICE OF FAITH RATHER THAN RELYING SOLELY ON REASON AND COMMON SENSE. DELIVER ME FROM THE FEAR OF FAILURE. GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO STEP OUT AND TRUST YOU WITH CHILD-LIKE FAITH. HELP ME TO NEVER AGAIN JUST TAKE THINGS AS THEY COME BUT TO BOLDLY BELIEVE YOU FOR THE MIRACULOUS AND IMPOSSIBLE. AND LORD, HELP ME TO START RIGHT NOW. I RENOUNCE AND REFUSE ALL LIES FROM THE DEVIL, AND I CHOOSE TO RECEIVE FROM YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO REVEAL TO ME THROUGH THIS STUDY IN FAITH. LORD, I LOVE YOU AND I THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF TRUSTING YOU. IN YOUR POWERFUL NAME I PRAY. AMEN.

