

# *The Spirit of Faith*

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Mike Miller

Straight Paths Bible Church

Galatians 3:2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

2 Corinthians 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

- I. Faith is the beginning of the spiritual birth and the spiritual life.
  - A. We believe and then we receive the Spirit of God.
  - B. Many believe the notion that we cannot believe without the Spirit of God making us believe.
    - 1. In other words, God gives us faith, which is to believe Him.
    - 2. This cannot be true because if it is, then God is not just because He does not give faith to everyone.
    - 3. Also, we have the plain declaration of the Scripture that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- C. The way it works is that God has given the world his written Word for many thousands of years now, and if we are willing to believe what He says, and that He said it, He will give us of his Spirit.
  - 1. Then part of the fruit of the Spirit is faith.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- 2. First, there is the Word of God, then there is faith.
- 3. It is weak faith, it is struggling faith, it is unsure faith, but it is faith.

Mark 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

- 4. This is the kind of faith that opens the door of our spirit and soul and mind and heart for the Holy Spirit of God to come in and make his abode with us.
  - D. After this the Holy Spirit of God DOES increase our faith as we trust and learn of Him through his Word and the experiences of life as we walk by faith and not by sight.
- II. The way life is arranged for us here on this earth we generally have plenty of time for our faith to grow by the time we really have to lean upon it.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

- A. The older we get the more we must trust God and lean upon the promises of his Word.
- B. When we are young and the world is before us, and our strength is full, and the years ahead look long, we can pretty much make our own way.
  - 1. If something does not work we can start over.
  - 2. If we lose something we can try for it again.
  - 3. We have time and we have strength and so faith is tested in different ways, that are usually not as fiery as the trials of old age.
- C. We better take heed to the admonition of the Preacher in Ecclesiastes 12:1 and pay attention to God's working in our life while we are young.
  - 1. Because He is preparing us to have a faith that can stand the trials of old age.
  - 2. These "light afflictions" which are but for a moment are working something in us for the future.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

- 3. They are simply the prelude to the grand finale that is coming in the later days of our lives.

- III. Old age is the time when our faith is as mature as it is ever going to be in this life.
  - A. The harvest comes in and it is revealed for all to see whether our faith is real or not.
  - B. We may spend a lifetime telling others that we believe God and we trust Him in everything.
  - C. We may rehearse often to others all the blessings and miracles we have experienced in our life.
  - D. However, beware that all of this, and much more, can be done with a kind of faith in God that is only rooted in this earthly life.

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

- E. The kind of faith we will need in our last days is the kind of faith that has turned loose of this world, this life, and all that is attached to it.
- F. This kind of faith looks to Christ alone and to eternity and has fully embraced the fact that all here is temporal and fading and impossible to hold on to.
- G. This kind of faith has replaced all the desires of this world with the hope of what God has prepared for those that love him for eternity.
- H. This kind of faith does not cling, but relaxes its grip on everything and everyone in this world, and does it with joy because of the hope this kind of faith gives to the heart.
- I. Faith in its mature stage here in this life causes us to relinquish any rights of our own, or selfish desires which cause pain, or trouble, or loss to our loved ones.
- J. Faith in this stage also does not demand anything of God, but is totally submitted to his Will in all things, accepting whatever his hand gives or takes, with joy.
- K. What a calamity, and what a shame, when a person is at the end of the journey and their faith is immature or proves to be the kind that only works in this life only.

1. In other words, being found to suppose that faith is believing God will do what you want in things and people pertaining to this world, if you insist long enough and loud enough, or if you can get enough people to side with you to petition God.
  2. When faith becomes the means you try to use to force God to let you have what you want.
- L. Faith is basically, “Not my will, but thine be done.”
1. This is the way faith is born in our heart in the beginning.
  2. We know we believe when we are really OK with what God does, whether we like or not, or whether we understand it or not.
  3. So by the time it has had a lifetime of growth this principle should be the strongest manifestation of our faith.
- M. The state of the soul that possesses this kind of mature faith is one of peace, assurance, quietness, and rest.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

- N. To be in any other state of mind, heart, or spirit is to be striving against God.

Isaiah 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

1. It is God who gives life and takes it – that is his right and his call, not ours.
2. Whatever God takes from us or gives to us is always done with Divine Wisdom and is the best for us in view of eternity and the whole picture of everything.
3. If we believe God and trust Him how can we resist his hand?

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

- O. If we truly trust Him “while the evil days come not” then we will find Him sufficient when those evil days come.

Isaiah 46:4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

- P. Do not disappoint those who are following behind you when you get old by having a faltering faith.
1. Prepare for it while you are young by walking by faith in God.
  2. Make it your habit to deal with the disappointments, losses, hardships, and grief of life by casting those burdens upon the Lord.
  3. Learn to realize in a very practical way that “„all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28