

## ☞ **Powerful Faith**

**Review: Faith** is something we receive as a gift from God, but then it **can be applied and multiplied** to become even stronger. **It's the same kind of faith the original disciples had.**

**Faith is Established in a Person** - Our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you want abundant peace, trust that God knows best.

**Faith is Escorted with Power** - His power is more than enough for everything we need. His power comes as we know him more and more.

**Faith is Enhanced with Promises** - God promises Peace, Provision, Power, and more. He always keeps his promises.

**Faith is Expressed with Participation** - his promises inspire our participation in his plan. Faith grows as we know him more. Study his word to get to know him more. Study his word to build your faith in his promises. Partner with God and grow in this precious faith.

## ☞ **Matthew 14:25-32**

Powerful Faith: I think of trusting God in spite of dreadful circumstances; I think of healings and miracles; I think of things that cannot be explained away by a skeptic. I think of prayers being answered in phenomenal ways. The Bible teaches that you really don't need a lot of faith for things to happen, but clearly there are different kinds of faith. There's natural faith, saving faith, and healing faith. The Bible talks about Little faith, Lacking faith, Great faith, and others. Primarily, when I think of Powerful Faith, I mean the kind of faith that actually sees results. When Peter walked on water, the disciples actually saw the results of his faith. Now, before the story is over, Peter gets a bad rap because he got wet. But the other disciples were still in the boat. Only Peter experienced this phenomenal event firsthand.

## ☞ **Powerful Faith Starts with a Dictum**

Dictum = a formal pronouncement from an authoritative source. It's **when the Lord clearly says something to you.**

v. 27 Jesus said, "don't be afraid" ...

v. 29 "Come" ...

In Matthew 8, a centurion came to Jesus, asking him to heal his servant. The centurion understood authority and asked Jesus to "just say the word, and my servant will be healed." He understood that if the Lord said it, that settled it. Jesus called that "great faith."

Powerful faith is all about trusting what the Lord says. So, we read the Bible and stand on the word of God. His promises are true and they never fail. But there's more to this "dictum" that I'm talking about here...

## ☞ **Romans 10:17**

**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.** NKJV

☞ This “word of God” here is **the “Rhema” word**, which fundamentally means the spoken word. Now, that doesn’t mean that you get more faith by quoting scripture, although that doesn’t hurt. The reference is to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need. So, this includes the bible, which we should read and keep in our hearts and minds. Then at the proper time, the Holy Spirit can highlight a scripture and apply it to us in a precise moment and place.

Peter didn’t just willy-nilly get out of the boat to walk on water. It wasn’t “the Lord said all things are possible, so I’m going to just try this walking on water thing.” He said, “Lord, tell me to come to you on the water.” And it was when Jesus gave the authoritative word, “come,” that Powerful Faith started. So, powerful faith is not just a matter of believing ☞ that God can do something, **it’s a matter of knowing what God is saying and doing in a particular situation at a particular time.**

So, then, the issue is one of being able to hear his voice... How to hear his voice?

1 Kings 19... it was a gentle whisper

☞ **Psalm 46: 10... be still and know...**

*People seem to be afraid of silence. They do anything to fill their lives with noise and avoid the emptiness. A person will step into their car, start the engine, and the radio will immediately come on filling the car with sound. Some people turn on the TV first thing in the morning and leave it on all day long. And then there are people who walk or run in town, and they’ve got ear buds listening to something. There’s music and all kinds of noise that bombards us everywhere we go. At department stores; At malls; In restaurants; At the grocery; Even in elevators. People seem to feel the need to fill every waking moment with noise. It’s like they can’t stand to be around silence. But God says "Be still and know that I am God." What can that mean to us and how can we go about doing it?*

Let go; relax – take a break from trying to fix everything and just listen to God

Jesus withdrew to lonely places – alone time is good for focusing on God

Be quiet – God speaks in a still, small voice; God whispers; shut out all other noise

*Great men in the bible were trained in the school of silence... Moses was hidden away forty years in the loneliness of sheep pastures, and again forty days on Mt. Sinai, and when he came down his face shone. Ezekiel, went by the way of the river alone. Isaiah saw the King in His beauty when no one was with him. Daniel was accustomed to go into the quiet of his chamber three times a day. Paul spent three lonely years in Arabia. John went to Patmos before he could write the Book of Revelation. It seems they needed that **alone** ☞ **time with God** before they could do what he called them to do. Be still.*

You can learn to know God's voice. 1 Samuel 3... young Samuel learned to recognize God's voice. There are some that are gifted with prophecy and hear the voice of God more often and more clearly than most, but anyone can learn to recognize God's voice.

*The story is told that Joan of Arc was mocked with, "She says she hears God's voice; why, I don't hear His voice!" Joan replied, "Don't you wish you did?"*

John 10:2-4

The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep **listen to his voice**. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

☞ Take time to listen. **Read your bible**, not just to get through your daily reading, but to hear and recognize God's voice.

*There are many counterfeit voices out there... The more we know the original, real voice, the better we can tell it apart from all the other voices.*

As we are regularly in the word, God can and will speak to us. You'll be amazed at how the portion you just happen to be reading on a certain day will apply to something you're going through at the time. That's God; he can do that.

### ☞ **Powerful Faith is Strengthened by Dependency**

v. 29... Peter actually walked on water. As far as we know, there were only two people who ever did that – Jesus and Peter. That was powerful! In that moment, the impossible became possible.

Matthew 17:20

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

Luke 1:37

nothing is impossible with God.

☞ Here is an important key: **the impossible is possible with God**. Peter didn't walk on the water all by himself. He was with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

☞ **God's power is most perfectly displayed in our weakness.** It's when we give ourselves in full dependency to him that the powerful, phenomenal works of God are demonstrated. I think this is one of the reasons we hear about more miraculous things happening in third world countries as opposed to here. Those people often have absolutely no place else to turn in their time of need. They are fully dependent on God, and that's when God's power comes into play.

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

☞ **Without Him I could do nothing;** Without Him I'd surely fail... Powerful faith is strengthened by dependency.

### ☞ **Powerful Faith is Stifled by Distraction**

v. 30... Peter saw the wind and was afraid. He lost his focus. He was doing fine when he was focused on the Lord, but when he got distracted he began to sink.

### ☞ **Hebrews 12:2**

**Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,** the author and perfecter of our faith,

Jesus perfects or finishes our faith. We are dependent upon him. Therefore, we must keep our focus on him or our faith will be stifled. We see this focus demonstrated in the Scriptures...

In Matthew 9, the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years was undistracted and ☞ undeterred by the large crowd pressing in against Jesus. She **persisted** and found a way to get close enough to touch his robe and she was healed.

In Mark 10, Blind Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by and began to shout for the Lord to show him mercy. Many around him rebuked him and told him to shut up. But he was undistracted and undeterred and shouted even more. Jesus then called him over and said, "your faith has healed you," and immediately he received his sight.

Don't be distracted; don't be deterred from the word you've received from the Lord. When ☞ you've received a word from the Lord and your faith is stirred, you have to **stay focused**. Don't let the enemy or the things of the world distract you.

*A former police officer tells of the tactics of roving bands of thieves: "They enter the store as a group. One or two separate themselves from the group, and the others start a loud commotion in another section of the store. This grabs the attention of the clerks and customers. As all eyes are turned to the disturbance, the accomplices fill their pockets with merchandise and cash, leaving before anyone suspects. "Hours--sometimes even days--later, the victimized merchant realizes things are missing and calls the police. Too*

late." How often this effective strategy is used by the Evil One! We are seduced into paying attention to the distractions, while evil agents ransack our lives.

Keep your eyes on the Lord. Keep your mind and heart focused on him.

*There is a story involving Yogi Berra, the well-known catcher for the New York Yankees, and Hank Aaron, who at that time was the chief power hitter for the Milwaukee Braves. The teams were playing in the World Series, and as usual Yogi was keeping up his ceaseless chatter, intended to pep up his teammates on the one hand, and distract the Milwaukee batters on the other. As Aaron came to the plate, Yogi tried to distract him by saying, "Henry, you're holding the bat wrong. You're supposed to hold it so you can read the trademark." Aaron didn't say anything, but when the next pitch came he hit it into the left-field bleachers. After rounding the bases and tagging up at home plate, Aaron looked at Yogi Berra and said, "I didn't come up here to read."*

Powerful Faith starts with a Dictum. We need to learn to hear and recognize the Lord's voice. When we do, that's when powerful faith becomes reality.

Powerful Faith is strengthened by Dependency. It's not just a matter of believing something is possible; it's a matter of joining with God to do those things. In our own strength and abilities, we are weak. But with God, we are strong. Depend on him.

Powerful Faith is stifled by Distraction. When God stirs our faith, the enemy comes in right away to stifle it. We must keep the eyes of our hearts and minds focused on the Lord.

So, here we are again. Faith to walk on water is powerful, but really not that complex. It starts with a simple concept: hear and recognize God's voice. So, **read your bible, pray, ☞listen.**

And once you seem to get the hang of it, don't think you've mastered anything, you still need to make sure you're depending on God. So, **keep on reading your bible; keep on ☞praying; keep on listening.**

And be aware: as you set your heart to hear God and have powerful faith, the enemy will come against you and you will need to stay focused. So, **keep on reading your bible; keep ☞on praying; keep on listening.**