

Waxing Faith

Review:

☞ **Walking by Faith...**

Trust the Seer; Listen Closely; Obey... Faith doesn't depend on feelings but rather on God's word; Faith isn't in a hurry but will wait on God; Faith isn't intimidated by the size of the situation because it knows the size of God.

☞ **Weighing Faith...**

Faith is Certain; Confident; and Convinced... Doubt, disbelief, denying your conscience, and dereliction of duty can sabotage faith. There's great faith and little faith, but the good news is that we can have growing faith...

☞ **Today: Waxing Faith**

Wax = verb

1 to polish

2 to increase in size, strength, or intensity

A lot of people talk about faith in terms of something they're missing.

– "I wish I had more faith."

– "If I had a stronger faith."

– "I guess some people have it, and then some don't."

But faith is no different from any other attribute or skill we'd like to cultivate. We can all move forward on our faith journey if that's what we want. But, of course, it's going to take some effort.

☞ **Faith is a gift from God, but it can grow!**

Babies are adorable and we love them. We enjoy the early years, but there is an expectation of growth and maturity. If your baby isn't growing, if your toddler isn't maturing, you know there's something wrong. And the longer there is no sign of growth, the more concerning it becomes. Likewise, faith is meant to grow. It takes faith to believe in Jesus and come to salvation, but that is like being a newborn. It's great and congratulations are in order, but now there ought to be growth. If you're not growing as a believer there is something wrong!

2 Corinthians 10:15-16 says that faith can continue to grow

2 Thessalonians 1:3 talks about faith growing more and more

Mark 9:20-24 (*father of the demonized boy*)

"Everything is possible for him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

☞ **Faith can be pursued**

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee the evil desires of youth, and *pursue* righteousness, *faith*, love and peace...

How do you pursue something? Keep it in your sights. Focus on it. Get your eyes off of distractions. Go wherever it leads you, hopefully getting closer to it as you go.

☞ **Action keeps faith alive**

James 2:17
faith by itself, if it is *not accompanied by action* , is dead.

Back to the baby analogy... babies, at first don't have the strength or coordination to walk, but they learn to roll over; then they learn to crawl, and finally they start taking some steps until they are walking and eventually running. All of that time before they actually walk, they are gradually, through smaller actions, developing the strength and coordination to walk. With faith, do what you know to do, no matter how small, and you will grow.

--Billy Graham... *Our faith grows by expression. If we want to keep our faith, we must share it. We must act.*

Some Christians are so afraid of failure that they become reserved, overly cautious, and uninvolved in life. They follow a policy of guarded living, holding back time, talents, and treasure from God's service. Their motto is: To keep from failing -- don't try! On the other hand, those who are willing to make mistakes and risk failure are the ones who ultimately achieve great things. Instead of being filled with fear, they go forward in faith. Problems are challenges. While they may not all be solved, these courageous people would rather live with that reality than have a clean record of no failures and no accomplishments. Benjamin Franklin said one time, "The man who does things makes many mistakes, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all -- doing nothing."

What are some actions we should put with our faith? Prayer; telling the Good News; obedience to God's word.

☞ **God's Word increases faith**

Romans 10:17
faith comes from *hearing* the message, and the message is heard through the *word* of Christ.

Hearing the message = *rhema word*, which is when the Holy Spirit especially highlights something in your heart. Faith grows as we learn to hear the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that man doesn't live by bread alone, but by the word of God. Our faith needs to be fed. How do we feed our faith?

Get the scripture in us

Pray and listen for the Holy Spirit

It really comes down to the basics: Word, Prayer, Fellowship

The basics are not too simple to keep on practicing. It's when we try to complicate things that we get off track. The more I study about what really matters in the Christian walk, the more I see that the basics are where it's really at. Vince Lombardi... "this is a football."

He who feeds his faith will starve his doubts to death.

Reading the Bible will feed your faith. It's not about just getting through so many verses every day. It's about getting to know God more.

--A B Simpson... The larger the God we know, the larger will be our faith. The secret of power in our lives is to know God and expect great things from him.

☞ Prayer increases faith

Jude 20

dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and *pray in the Holy Spirit.*

--Oswald Chambers... Whenever faith is starved in your soul, it is because you are not in contact with Jesus; get in contact with him, and lack of faith will go in two seconds.

☞ People can encourage faith

1 Thessalonians 3:2

We sent Timothy... to strengthen and *encourage you in your faith,*

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and *supply what is lacking in your faith.*

Faith can grow; faith can be pursued; action keeps faith alive; God's word increases faith; prayer increases faith; other people can encourage your faith. Lord, increase our faith!

☞ We can add to our faith

2 Peter 1:5-9

☞ For this very reason, make every effort to **add** to your faith **goodness**; and to goodness, **knowledge**; ⁶ and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, **godliness**; ⁷ and to godliness, **mutual affection**; and to mutual affection, **love**. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

☞ Hebrews 11... "The Hall of Fame for Faith"

The ancients were commended for their faith. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and many more were all commended for their faith even though none of them fully received what had been promised. They were still living by faith when they died. They each had a different story, but God applauded their faith.

So, what was common in their faith?

- Not always great exploits
- Clearly not perfection
- Not always signs and wonders (note the prophets are barely mentioned)
- Not even unwavering belief (Abraham and Hagar, Moses questioned God)
- Not even receiving the promise (cf. Verse 13, 39)

So, let's look at the people mentioned here...

- Enoch walked with God
- Noah walked with God and did everything God commanded him
- Abraham left his homeland as God had instructed him
- Abraham believed the Lord and it was credited as righteousness
- Abraham offered Isaac at God's command (cf. Verse 19)
- Isaac called on the name of the Lord
- Jacob said, "the Lord will be my God"
- Moses did as God commanded
- David said, "I come in the name of the Lord"

☞ ***They all accepted God's authority and acknowledged God's ability.***

Have faith! Scripture says that we walk by faith, not by sight. Whatever your circumstance, God is bigger and is able to handle it. So, put your hope and trust in Him! When we seek him first, the rest will fall into place.

Hebrews 12:2

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

☞ Remember God's promises and keep on believing! **God has made good promises to us...**

☞ **Pardon**

Romans 8:1... because we are in Christ we are no longer condemned

1 John 1:9... when we confess our sins, God forgives us

James 4:7... when we resist the devil, he has to flee

☞ **Provision**

John 10:10... when we follow Christ he gives us an abundant life

Philippians 4:19... he will meet all our needs

Romans 8:28... in every situation God is working for our good

☞ Peace

Philippians 4:6-7... when we pray and express gratitude, he gives us peace

2 Corinthians 3:18... when we think on God's glory, he transforms us to be like Christ

Luke 11:9-13... when we ask, seek, and knock, he will give us the Holy Spirit

☞ Power

James 5:14-15... when we ask the leaders of the Church for prayer we will be healed

John 14:12... because we believe in Christ we will do what he did

John 14:13... because Jesus has gone to the Father, he will do whatever we ask in his name

These are impressive promises and God keeps his promises! But some of his promises are contingent on our faith. The promise is that Jesus saves, but we must believe and come to him in faith.

Here's where I'm at right now... I'm very confident in his pardon – I know he saves and forgives. And I expect and experience his provision – I trust him to meet my needs and he always does. But sometimes I struggle with peace – I don't always feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and at times I experience anxiety and worry. And I feel a lack of power to do all the stuff he did – I don't always see healings when I pray. Nonetheless, God has promised all of these things. So I say, Lord, increase our faith.

☞ Want more faith? **Request more** from God. Fill your mind with the Word of God and **read your bible; respond to what you already know; rely on friends** to encourage you; hang in there and **remain steadfast!** God will come through! God is good all the time, and all the time God is good! Lord, increase our faith!