

## HOW TO GROW IN FAITH By Sam Fife

This study is given for those who at the time they enter into a faith battle perhaps do not quite have enough faith to win the victory right away. As they learn there scriptural the teachings on how to increase their faith day by day, they can hasten victory in the particular faith battle that they are in.

Our scripture text is found in Luke 17:

5- And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. [6]And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. [7] But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? [8] And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? [9] Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. [10] So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

There are certain divine principles that are revealed to us in scripture which are principles through which we can increase our faith daily. We are going to talk about five of them in this message

### RIGHT ATTITUDE

The first one has to do with our attitude. Our attitude with which we go about seeking an increase in faith, this is the foundation upon which we must build.

Too many people do not have great faith because of their wrong attitude. You will notice in our scripture text that the apostles came to Jesus and said, " Lord, increase our faith."

They had recognized their need for more faith. This is one of the most important steps as far as attitude is concerned in order to grow in faith. We must recognize that we do not have all we need and that we do need more

You see, when the apostles met Jesus, they thought they had about as much Faith as any other man, all that was necessary. They had no desire for an increase. But when they walked with Jesus, they saw what He did, through prayer. The blind eye were opened, the deaf ears, were unstopped, the lame walked. They suddenly began to realize that they needed to pray with more faith. They had a change of attitude and so they began to desire more faith.

Then on their second step they made a mistake. The same mistake that most people make today. These apostles came to Jesus and said, "Lord, you increase our faith. We do not want to have to do anything. We do not want you to do anything in us. We just want you to give us more faith." This is the way most Christians feel today. "Lord, YOU give us more faith." They want God to hand them more faith, and therefore, more power on a silver platter so that they can have more blessings. They want to come to Jesus but they do not want to do anything themselves. They just want to say, "Jesus, you give me more faith, Lord, you increase my faith. Lord, you do it all". This was the attitude of the apostles and, this is the attitude of most Christians. It is something that must be dealt with severely, in order for us to grow in faith. And Jesus dealt with this attitude severely. He answered them with a parable

He said "Which one of you who has a servant, when he comes home from the field after plowing all day, tired, will say to him, You have done enough for one day. You do not have to work anymore. Sit down and rest. I'll gird myself and feed you." Jesus said, "No, you do not say that to him. On the contrary, you say 'You still have not done enough, your day's work is not finished. There is more yet for you to do. Gird yourself and let me sit down, and you feed me supper.' " Jesus said to his disciples, "Even so if you have even more faith when you have done all that is commanded you, still say, I am an unprofitable servant."

What Jesus was saying is if you want more faith, do not take this attitude that you have done enough, that you need not do anymore. Jesus was saying, these who would have great faith are those who will take the attitude, will always have the attitude, "I am still an unprofitable servant. I need to become more profitable for my God." That person, Jesus says, will grow in faith. This is very true.

Most of us when we have kept a certain little set of moral rules take the attitude, "Well, I have done enough." We swell up and puff up in pride. We take the attitude we are very profitable servants of God. Then when we do not have great faith and see the power of God in our lives, we fail to recognize that it is because we are yet unprofitable servants. We think there is something wrong with God or with His Word.

In order to grow in faith, we need to deal with this attitude of spiritual laziness that most have. This is the attitude that says, "Well, I'm a good Christian. I'm a profitable servant. Surely God ought to do this for me if He is going to do anything for anybody." "We need to deal with this attitude that says, "Lord, you increase our faith," then wanting God to do something for us, not wanting Him to work anything in us. This will never produce great faith. We must come to God with the attitude of recognition that we need Him to work in us, to build faith, and we must seek God more. We must pray more. We must commune more with God. As we do these things, we will grow in faith. No one who comes to God with the attitude in which the apostle came, ("Lord, give me more faith, I don't want you to work anything in me, just hand it to me on a silver platter.") will grow in faith. But let us rather see our need to seek God more, to pray more, to read God's Word more, to commune more with God. Let us always have that attitude, for it is that person, Jesus says, who will grow in faith.

### FEED UPON THE WORD OF GOD

When we have dealt with the wrong attitude and turned ourselves to the right attitude concerning this matter, there are certain principles that are revealed in the scriptures which can help us grow in faith.

The first one is found in Romans 10:17. "So then faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the Word of God." We grow in faith by feeding upon the Word of God. Whether it be by hearing it while it is being preached by someone else, whether it be by reading it ourselves, whether it be by discussing it with others, makes no difference. However, the Word of God enters into our hearts, it becomes food for our soul and for our spirit. And we grow strong as a result of it.

Jesus said to Satan during the great temptation in the wilderness, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth out of the mouth of God." Here Jesus was saying that man can not have life by the material bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth out of the mouth of God. Jesus was quoting to Satan a verse from Deuteronomy 8:2 in the Old Testament. God was speaking through Moses to the children of Israel in the wilderness and said, "I humbled you and suffered you to hunger, and tested you, that I might make you to know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh forth from the mouth of God."

Bread as it was used by Moses and by Jesus was symbolic of everything that is material. God was saying that man must come to know that life does not come by the material bread, the material things alone. Man also must have the Word of God in order to live and have life. This is because man is not just a material physical being. Man is also a spiritual being. Material bread can suffice for the physical part of man's being. But a man must also have spiritual bread, the Word of God, in order for the spiritual part of man's being, man's spirit, to be strong in faith.

Through the eating of physical bread, man can grow stronger physically, and his body can grow stronger. But he must also feed upon the spiritual bread in order to be strong spiritually or strong in faith. The two parts of man's nature must be satisfied, the two needs must be met. The physical bread cannot meet the needs of the spirit, only the spiritual bread can do that.

We know what would happen if we stopped eating physical bread. Our physical body would become so weak it would not be able to stand. If you do not eat your dinner tonight, your physical body would be much weaker than it would have been if you had eaten it. If you miss your breakfast the next morning, it will be much weaker. If you go on this way, your physical body become so weak it could not stand.

Even so, every spiritual meal a Christian misses, causes him to grow weaker spiritually. This is why so many are so spiritually weak and so weak in faith.

They have not fed their spirits on the Word of God. We can only be spiritually strong if we are fed on the spiritual food, the Word of God. Only then can we have life, peace, joy, happiness, faith and power.

It is a sad commentary that every Christian eats 3 meals a day because he knows that he must do so in order to keep his body strong physically, but they eat only one spiritual meal a week when they go to church on Sunday morning

Many Christians do not even get that. No wonder they are soon spiritually weak. No wonder they do not have faith. No wonder they get sick and cannot get healed. It is because they do not hear, read and feed upon the Word of God.

If you would be strong in faith, eat 3 spiritual meals a day. Read your Bible 3 times everyday. It does not matter if you do not understand it all. The Spirit of God will make it food for your soul. Hear as many sermons as possible preached by those who are anointed of God and called to feed God's people. Go to church as many times as you can when the Word of God is being ministered so that you can be fed. Read as much good faith literature as possible, coming from the Word of God. In doing so, you will be feeding your spirit on the Bread of Life and your faith will automatically increase as a result of it. If you pour positive truth from God's Word and from good literature written by anointed servants of God who speak and preach positive truths into your hearts, and your subconscious, faith will automatically grow so that you will begin to see the power of God in your life. It is an absolute, scientific principle that if you don't hear the Word of God or read it, if you don't feed your spirit on the Word of God, you will be spiritually weak, comparable to the person who ceases to eat physical food to the point where their physical bodies drop over and are not longer able to stand.

### ASSOCIATE WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

A third principle that is of extreme value in growing in faith is to be particular concerning our associations. If we are seeking to grow in faith, and all or the majority of our associations are with people who have no faith, who do not believe in the Lord Jesus, who do not believe God's Word, who do not talk faith, whose conversation is always worldly, it will be twice, yea, ten times as hard for us to grow in faith as it will be if we associate only with those who have, know and talk faith, who believe the truth, who are positive in their attitude toward God, toward His Word, toward the power that is in the name of Jesus.

The Bible says, "No man liveth unto himself." It is impossible for us to live unto ourselves. It is impossible for us to keep other people from affecting us either positively or negatively. We as human beings in our associations with one another, without ever trying, will affect one another by lifting one another or dragging one another down. We will either be lifted up or drug down negatively.

"No man liveth unto himself."

We are affected by our associations with others, by their conversation, by their actions whether we like it or not, whether we want to be or not. We will be affected unless we put forth an effort to see that we are affected positively.

Otherwise, we will certainly be affected negatively, and our faith will be dragged down.

Let me give you a little illustration. The wife wakes up early in the morning feeling full of joy, but then the husband comes to the breakfast table and sticks his face out from behind the newspaper and looks sour upon the whole world. Immediately she is drug down in her spirit. He has affected her negatively. He doesn't have to say a word, he just has to be there. Unless she is prepared to resist his negative attitude, to recognize it, and turn herself away from it, it will affect her negatively and drag her down.

As a minister, often I have seen the church congregation come in on Sunday morning. Many people will be filled with joy, faith, and peace with God. But then four or five people come in whom the devil has been deceiving, and a husband and a wife had been arguing. Their faces would be all sour and so would their attitude. Before you know it, the spiritual atmosphere in the whole congregation would be drug down to the point where every one felt it and every body is affected.

Let me repeat: In our associations, we will either be lifted up in faith or be drug down in faith. Therefore, when we are seeking to grow in faith, we should separate ourselves when possible from all people who are negative in their attitude toward God and separate ourselves unto those who are positive in their attitude toward God. If we do, we will increase in faith.

If we have not become strong enough ourselves to associate with those negative-minded people yet, separate ourselves in the spirit so that their negativism does not affect us as some of us who are stronger Christians can do, then we should try to separate ourselves from them physically when possible. We should try to have no associations with them whatsoever. This is very important particularly for someone in a faith battle to receive healing or to win a victory in faith.

### ASSOCIATE WITH POSITIVE THINGS

If we are seeking to grow in faith, we should be careful of our associations with our so-called pleasures and amusements. So few people know that reading magazines, or having an unhealthy interest in the daily newspaper and most certainly television are adverse negative forces in the world that can drag our faith down and keep us from growing in faith.

Most of what is presented in the newspapers is negativism. Most of what is presented on television is negativism. Most of what is presented in most magazines of our world today is negative thoughts and ideas. We pick up the newspaper and read of wars, murders and strife. There is continual strife between individuals, nations, politicians. There is nothing but negativism, and more negativism. So it presents to our subconsciousness nothing but the idea that the world is in a hopeless condition and that there is nothing that even God or anyone else can do about it. It is a drag upon our faith. When we subject ourselves to this day after day, it will definitely hinder greatly our growth in faith. If we shut out those things, if we allow only those that are positive to enter into our subconsciousness, only the literature that is positive, if we can even separate ourselves from reading the daily paper, from the great amount of negativism that it contains, we will increase in faith. If we do not do these things we will not be able to increase in faith.

Dear Christian friends, all the devil wants from you is YOUR TIME. He does not particularly care whether he has you engrossed in deep sin or not. He does not particularly care whether you spend your time in the bar room or not. He does not even particularly care whether you engage in adultery, murder, thievery, etc. if he can just get your time, doing seemingly harmless things which are not positive, which are not faith building, which are not feeding your spirit (reading negative magazines, watching television day after day, wasting your time in things that do not edify or build you up spiritually) he does not care if you ever commit terrible sin or not. He has you exactly where he wants you. He can make you sick and keep you sick. He can make you suffer and keep your body suffering. He can rob you of all faith let alone from growing in faith.

If you want to grow in faith, you must learn to redeem your time. You must learn to spend more time in those things and those activities which are positive, which build you up spiritually. You must separate yourself from those negative activities which tear down.

Idle conversation with friends is one of the devil's greatest weapons to rob Christians of their power and to keep them from growing in faith. Jesus said in His Word that we will give an account of every idle word. He did not mean to imply that someday, way out in the future in some far off heaven, God will say, you spoke so many idle words, give an account of it."

Jesus meant that every hour that could be spent in positive activities which build faith in us and therefore build the power of God in our life we will have to give an account for. Every one of these idle words through suffering by lack of faith, through lack of power, through pain and sickness, through all those things which we suffer here in the earth as a result of having no faith and no power with God.

So if we would have great faith, we must pour into our consciousness, only that which is positive and shut out all that is negative. A wise man once said, "I consider my mind a store house, and if I put in it that only which is good, then when I need that which is good I can go to it and draw out only that which is good." Indeed this is a wise man.

### EXERCISE THAT WHICH YOU HAVE

The next and last great principle we'll consider on how to grow in faith is the divine law of using what you have, and it will bring more. This law is expressed to us in many ways in the scriptures.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:29, "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The more we have and the more we use, the more it will bring to us. Invest what you have, and it will bring you more.

There is a divine law revealed to us in nature. A great key to truth is given to us in Romans 1:20. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." The invisible truths of God have been before us since the foundation of the world being seen in things that are visible. Here the Bible tells us that the hidden things of God, the truths of God have always been visible before us since the world began. They are visible in things that are made, in things that we call nature.

God in His wisdom before the world was, foreknowing all things, made visible things of nature symbols of the great spiritual truths of God. This is why the Bible uses water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and a serpent a symbol of the devil and a seed for the Word of God. This is not because the Spirit who inspired and authored the scriptures simply decided to use these as symbols, but because the Spirit of God who knows and searches the deep things of God knew that God made natural laws symbols of spiritual laws. God made all visible things symbolic of spiritual truths. This is why Jesus was always drawing upon nature to teach truth. He did this not because He just wanted to use these things of nature as parables or illustrations. He knew the principles in nature were divine, irrevocable principles which reveal divine, irrevocable spiritual laws.

There is one principle in the natural physical realm which reveals a great spiritual law. This is the principle of exercise. The more we exercise our physical muscles, the stronger they get. The less we use them, the weaker they become. We all know this.

Let anyone of us lay down in bed and not move for three weeks Our physical muscles would become so weak that we would not be able to stand at the end of that time. This is because we did not use them, and they have grown weak. On the other hand, those young men who use the barbell and lifting weights continually exercising their physical muscles day by day, grow stronger physically. Their physical muscles grow stronger and stronger. It is a divine principle in the realm of the spiritual. The more we exercise our spiritual senses, the more we use what we have, the stronger they become. Use what you have, and you will receive more. The less we exercise our spiritual senses (those senses by which we believe) the weaker they become.

This is why so many Christians in the world today are so weak spiritually. They have not exercised their spiritual senses. They have not gotten in the battle for God. This is one of the greatest ways to get spiritual exercise. These Christians have not read the Word, have not prayed, have not communed with God. They have become so weak through plain lack of exercise that they have no faith, no strength, and no power.

The Bible makes It clear that spiritual exercise is very profitable. The apostle Paul wrote to his young son in the faith Timothy, "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that is now, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." (1 Tim. 4:7-9)"

In the book of Hebrews the 5th chapter, the last verse says 'But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'

So it is absolute divine principle that if we start using the faith that we have it will grow stronger. It makes no difference how weak a person has become in the physical. If he starts exercising his muscles, they will grow stronger. As we pointed out earlier, we can lay on a bed three weeks and not use our physical muscles. They will become so weak that we can not move. But, as soon as we rise up and start exercising, no matter how weak they have become, they will begin to grow stronger. Even so with our spiritual senses, no matter how weak they have become, the day that we start to use them and exercise them, they will grow stronger. The more we use the faith that we have, the stronger it will get.

Some time ago a man came to me with a serious need for healing. At the point where he came to me, he belonged to a church that did not believe God heals today. They did not preach or emphasize healing through faith. Therefore, he did not have the faith he needed to be healed. He had a disc that had dissolved in his back. His doctor said there was no way to replace it. He was in tremendous pain continually. The doctor told him he would have to learn to live with it.

I took him to the Bible and showed him that God's law of faith was sufficient to replace the disc in his back, and give him a new one. Knowing that he did not have the required amount of faith to perform this miracle, I challenged him. I said, "If you will kneel by your bedside one hour every day or night whenever you have time, just kneel there believing that because you are kneeling there believing, God will heal your back. Do this until the healing comes. I will guarantee and stake my life that the healing will come. You do not have to say a word, just kneel there believing that you have received it. Start with the faith that you have right now. Kneel there one hour every day believing by faith that because you are kneeling there and believing, God will give you a new disc in your back, and do it until it comes. I will guarantee you, it will come."

You see, I was working upon God's divine law. I know that this man did not have the required amount of faith for the healing at this time. But, I knew that if he exercised his spiritual senses one hour every day and if he took the faith that he did have and began to use it, exercising his power to believe one hour every day, his power would increase, and he would reach the required amount of faith needed for healing. Then the healing would come.

It is God's divine law, and it cannot be broken. Exercise your spiritual senses, and they will grow. There is no person who is so sick that he cannot be healed through faith. There is none anywhere so crippled that their healing cannot come. There is no affliction so serious it cannot be healed. There is no person who does not have enough faith at any point to begin their faith battle, and use the faith that they have. If they do, the more they use it the more their faith will increase until healing comes.

Romans 12:3 says, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith".

Every one has a measure of faith. If he takes what he has and begins using it daily (let me speak very plainly to you, dear friend) no matter how afflicted you are, no matter how handicapped you are, no matter if you sit in a wheelchair and cannot stand, if you will spend one hour every day believing that because you are believing, God will heal you, and that God is healing you, that the work is done, then every hour that you spend exercising your spiritual ability to believe this way, your faith will increase day by day, hour by hour until the healing comes. Remember to follow the other principles that we have revealed here: **THE RIGHT ATTITUDE, FEED UPON GOD'S WORD, associate yourself with POSITIVE PEOPLE AND POSITIVE THINGS.** Especially if you do these things you shall be healed, in Jesus name. Amen.