

# Faith in Perspective

by Michael Hall

Faith is a natural law of God, like gravity is a natural law of the physical world. Through the process of revelation, men can learn to “make faith work for them” by understanding its nature, and the principles that govern its operation. Observation also plays a part in comprehending faith, even as gravity is understood, first by observation, and then by probing and hypothesizing, experimenting and testing.

A successful life of faith is a matter of understanding the principles and laws of faith, and applying those principles by conforming the life to meet the demands of those laws. Of particular importance is the governing of the tongue since the act of speaking faith is the core of its successful operation in a person’s life. The walk of faith would appear to be the pinnacle of the Christian experience because the results of its operation are dramatic, life changing, and soul satisfying.

It is significant that Jesus rewarded faith, in dramatic ways, in people who had no other evidence of Godly character than the choice to put their faith in Him. Each needed Him to give them what they desperately needed, and could obtain in no other way. Witness the stories of the woman with the issue of blood, blind Bartameus, and the Centurion with the dying servant. Jesus pointed out their faith as the trigger that brought the reward of that which they were seeking. Obviously, in the mind of God, faith is important and necessary. It is, after all, the basis of our salvation and entrance into the kingdom.

There are two prominent vehicles by which the revelation of faith has been transmitted to the church and indeed the world. They are teaching and motivational preaching. Great faith teachers in our world today, Father Hagen, Kenneth Copland, Norvell Hayes, and others, have delved deep into the understanding of the laws of faith, and successfully taught it to masses of people in a reproducible context. Those who persist long enough in pursuit of an understanding of these teachings, and who practice them until they are polished and exclusive, enjoy the fruits of its operation in health, finances, emotional satisfaction, and peace.

It should be noted, however, that the world can pursue a limited understanding of the natural laws of faith, and see dramatic positive results also. Even without knowing God at all, by the application of the laws of faith, they can achieve many of the same benefits (results) that many Christians pursue and call the blessing of God.

Witness the teaching of popular author, Suze Orman. She appeared on Oprah Winfry’s television program and taught a group of people with financial problems the principals in her best selling book, “Nine Steps to Financial Freedom.” By teaching people to: respect their money, understand that it has intrinsic power to attract more money, organize the management of their finances, and most importantly, alter the way they thought and **spoke about** their money; she was able to effect dramatic changes in the financial health of those people.

I do not intend to diminish the importance of faith in any way. However, I feel it important for us not to confuse God's blessing and the results of a natural spiritual law. It is vital to view faith in a correct perspective. I have said that the life of faith would appear to be the pinnacle of the Christian experience. And, while I grant that the practice of faith is a vital foundation for the Christian life, it is only that, a part of the foundation. Faith is one of the vital foundation stones in the structure of a life that is God's intimate desire for all of His children. It is a necessary component of a deeper revelation of His person that leads us toward the true pinnacle of the Christian experience.

Faith is the portal to spiritual life. however, it is not, and should not be viewed as, the goal of the gospel. It is the mechanism by which the gospel is initiated in the life of a human being. It is also an important component of the sustenance and preservation of the very life of a believer. For it is no secret that the believer lives in an environment that is hostile toward him or her.

No, faith is important. But, I wish to stress, it is the beginning, not the end. It is not faith, but Jesus himself, who is our source of life. Faith is the method of delivery He has chosen for filling us with His life. If we do not keep this understanding in perspective, we will be sidetracked from the pursuit of those things which will lead us into the deeper knowledge of His will for our lives. We will, perhaps, miss altogether the experiences that God reserves for those who hunger for the true pinnacle of His life in us; the expression of His love. This love, expressed through us, and accompanied by the intimate acquaintance with the fullness of His Glory, will result in the habitation of His manifested presence in our lives.

I do not believe that preaching and teaching are the vehicles by which God desires to transmit these deeper experiences to us. It is, rather, by a direct experience of His person and His love that we will move into the realms of His true Glory. For, as I've stated, love, not faith, is the pinnacle of the Christian life. God uses the demonstration gifts of the Spirit, the ministry of Prophecy, and the practice of Worship, to bring His people into direct contact with Himself. For as we behold Him, face to face, and experience His Glory in a personal way, we are transformed into His image.

While I do not advocate neglecting the teaching, preaching and speaking of faith, I do believe that we must allow those practices to occupy the correct proportion of emphasis in the public and private conduct of our Christian lives. Let us therefore pursue in greater measure those things that produce direct contact with the Spirit of the living Christ. Let us pursue them in our individual devotions and in our public meetings. For, ultimately we must dedicate the finite resources of time that we are allowed to those activities that prove the most fruitful in the development of the experience of His love, and manifested Glory, in our midst.