



God's Resources for Life and Healing

Part 6B: Faith

In our last issue we talked about faith being measured by:

- The degree of transformation it brings in our lives
- Our willingness to live in obedience to God even when the consequences are overwhelming
- Our ability to live in peace under all circumstances because of our assurance of God's unfailing presence and love
- The extent to which we are unhindered by the lack of results in regard to that for which we are believing
- Our willingness to give sacrificially to those in need, knowing that God will supply our needs.

Faith is also demonstrated in the way that we handle hardships and are able to see a greater purpose in them. Jesus is our model in this. For the joy of bringing God's highest creation and the objects of His love back into union and fellowship with Himself, He endured the hostility of men against Him and the shame, agony, and enormous spiritual assault of the Cross (Heb. 12:2-3).

In our case, trials are often allowed by God to test and to grow our faith, which in itself has great value and "preciousness" to Him (1 Peter 1:6-9) but also benefits us greatly as well. Without this, we would remain stunted in our spiritual maturity and unable to experience the full reality of the life that God has designed for us and promised to us in His Word, including things of a supernatural nature that go far beyond what we could even think or imagine (1 Cor. 2:9). Abraham became the highly esteemed patriarch of the entire nation of Israel but only after God tested his faith in a severe way by asking him to sacrifice his only child, the child of God's own promise to him (Gen. 22:1-18; Heb. 11:17-19). Even Jesus was tested in a 40-day wilderness experience with the devil before He began His powerful earthly ministry (Mat. 4:1-11).

Seen in this way, our trials can perhaps be viewed as a rite of passage into God's higher calling for our lives. This is why James says that we can actually have joy in our trials, knowing that God's hand is working to prepare us for greater things (James 1:2-4).

Faith that has been tested and matured also produces the inner courage we need to surmount our human fears, as it did for Moses' family when they defied pharaoh's edict and placed him in the Nile River (Ex. 2:1-10; Heb. 11:23). It also gives us the strength of character (Rom. 5:3-4) we need to resist the pleasures of sin in order to pursue God's greater purpose in our lives, as it did for Moses, who when he had grown up chose to disregard his stature in Egypt to fulfill God's calling on him in regard to the entire Israelite nation. Eventually, he became the instrument through which major miracles occurred to meet the needs of this body of people moving towards their promised land, including stopping the flow of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to cross on dry land and bringing water from a rock (Ex. 14:21-22; Num. 20:11; Heb. 11:24-29).

This mature level of faith also helps us to maintain our focus on the Kingdom of God and our promised inheritance and to let that steadfastly guide our lives in spite of our earthly circumstances. Believing in that which we cannot see, we persevere to the prize of the upward calling of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14; Col. 3:1-2; Heb. 11:8-22). Then one day, as we reach our final destination and at last stand face to face with our risen Lord, our tested and proven faith will somehow intensify the degree of praise and honor and glory that we are able to present Him (1 Peter 1:6-7). What a day that will be!