

“Faith”

By General Pastor Peter F. Paine
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Question: Who here has faith?

Question: Do you have *enough* faith?

Question: What would be different if you had more faith?

Today we are going to look at what the Scriptures say about faith. I've got to increase my faith. You need more faith, too. Do you remember the people praying for Peter to be released from prison (Acts 12:1-17), and then, when it happened, he went to the house, and they said, "What are you doing here?" That's like praying for a healing, but planning a funeral. Did you ever pray for a job when you weren't expecting a job? Did you ever pray for a better attitude while writing a book about having a bad attitude?

Matthew 17:14-21 ...I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him....

Have you seen the movie [Courageous](#)? I'm just going to tell you about the opening scene. If you were thinking about going to see it, and then decide that I've ruined it for you, really, this is just the opening scene; there's a lot more to the movie. A guy is gassing up his pick-up truck at a gas station, and it's one of those big, crew-cab trucks. After he finishes getting the gas, he starts the truck, and he notices that the windshield is dirty. So, he gets back out of the truck and grabs the squeegee to clean the windshield, and somebody else runs up and jumps in the truck and starts to drive off. He runs, and manages to get up on the running board of the truck, holding on with one hand, and trying to stop the car-jacker with the other. Meanwhile the driver is veering all over the road, trying to knock the owner off. Finally, the owner manages to force the truck into a ditch. By this time, the police are there and they arrest the one guy, and tell the owner of the truck, "You know, that was a foolish thing to do. This truck isn't worth that." The owner says, "The truck wasn't my concern." And he folds the driver's seat forward, and in the back seat is a car-seat with an infant strapped into it.

Now, going back to the story in Matthew, this man has a lunatic son, and he brings him to the disciples, but they weren't able to help him. Jesus returns, and the man tells Jesus his problem, and Jesus heals the son. Good story, right? unless you're one of the disciples. So, in verse 19, they ask Jesus (they didn't ask in front of everybody; they weren't stupid). In verse 20, He says, "Because of your unbelief." Now, is He telling them that they don't have *any* faith? Of course not, they were with Him. They just didn't have enough faith.

You've got belief; you don't have enough. I need more belief; you need more faith. Jesus said if you have faith as great as a mustard seed. You know, mustard seeds are small, but they're strong. But if you have faith as great as a mustard seed, you can move molehills. No, that's not what it says; it says you can move mountains. Anybody have any mountains they need to have moved?

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith, it is impossible to please Him...

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Let's say that you needed money. Let's say you need a hundred dollars, so you call up someone that you trust and that trusts you. So they tell you that the check is in the mail. Better yet, they went and bought a money order, so that you don't have to wait for the check to clear. Even better, they went to Western Union and wired you the money. Now, when they tell you that they have wired you the money, and they give you the reference number, do act like you're expecting the money, or do you act like you've already got the money? You would go ahead and tell the mechanic to start work on the car, or whatever it was that you needed the money for, wouldn't you? Some of you don't have enough faith to believe that you have something until you actually get it.

A few years ago Pastor Lantis had an interesting experience. A Muslim man came to him, and asked him to pray for his father. The doctors had done all they could do for him. Pastor Lantis said, before I do that, let's set a few ground rules here. I want you to promise me that, when I pray for your father, and your father gets better, that you will then give Jesus the glory, because I'm not going to pray to Allah. The man agreed, Pastor Lantis prayed, the man's father did get better; the doctors said they couldn't explain it, and this man said, "I can. Jesus healed him." And the man's brother was startled.

Some of you would pray for Peter to be released from prison, and then say, "I hope they've got good food in there."

I know a man who's got the best fishing boat you could buy, and all the best rods and reels, and he has never caught a fish; not one. He's never put his boat in the water. Some of you haven't put your boat in the water in a long time.

Romans 8:18 ...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory...

Romans 8:28 ...all things work together for good...

Don't you hate that when something's not right, and you really need help with something, and all anybody will do is quote Romans 8:28 to you? Sometimes as Christians, we don't know how to use Scripture very well. That's a scripture you should use while you're looking in the mirror: "I can't wait to see how God is going to make good come out of *this* situation."

Romans 8:35-39 ...For I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth...

How did Paul become persuaded? because of all the things he'd been through.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I know a guy that, when people ask "Why," he asks, "Why not?" "I was in a terrible car accident; why did this have to happen to me?" "Why not you? Cars are in accidents all the time; why should you be exempt? Did you buy insurance? Well?"

Anybody here want a lunatic son? Yeah, my dad didn't either.

What are some ways to build your faith? Study to show thyself approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). Pray and fast (Matthew 17:21). Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only (James 1:22). Rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4). Say not, there is a lion in the streets (Proverbs 26:13). Keep yourself holy. Check on each other. Fellowship. Pray. Lean not unto thine own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). Look to the Lord. Recount your blessings.

What some faith destroyers? doubt, fear, living in sin, not praying, pride, slothfulness.

Some of you never get what you want, because you don't want what you have. Choose to be thankful for what you have.

I've made some mistakes, but I haven't quit. You haven't quit either; that's why you're here. Is your faith growing? I have a challenge for you: When you leave here today, ask the Lord to examine you and tell you if you have enough faith.

About 25 years ago, I hit a dry spot in my spiritual walk. Prayer seemed fruitless; just routine. It felt like my prayers weren't getting out of the room. The good news is, if you're going through a valley, then you're going *through*. But, I prayed about this, and prayed, and prayed, and then as I was reading James 1:8 (a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways) it was like a spiritual highlighter. God was telling me that was my problem. So now I'm arguing with God. "I'm not double minded." And I listed off all of the things that I was doing for God. But it was like when Jesus told Martha, "One thing is needful." (Luke 10:41-42) God told me to stop letting things distract me, and to keep my focus on Him.

In Matthew 17, the disciples hit a wall in their ministry that day. God didn't quit answering prayers.

Are you ready to leave and ask God, "Increase my faith?"