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A Stimulant To Prayer.

A FAITH STIMULANT

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Mark 11:22 - 24

INTRODUCTION:

There are volumes which have been written on faith. And the subject still is a mystery to thousands of good people.

I hope to be able to help show you where the majority of Christians fail, in attaining the things they pray for. Generally when we pray for things and fail to obtain it, we are accused by others as having no faith. But this may not be true. For we may have some faith.

I. There may be the (possession without the benefit) from it.

We must remember that a man may possess faith and he may pray. But he may fail to get the benefit from it.

Let me illustrate this - suppose you went downtown shopping. You go to pay for the goods and you feel for your money but you fail to find it in your haste. Well, you conclude, I left it at home or that you have lost it. So you leave the goods at the store and go on home. Well, you take another search, and you search through your pockets and there you find it on the inside of your vest. Now, you were in possession of it all the while. When you had to leave the store. But you did not derive any benefit from it.

It is like the man who had a gold mine but he did not know it and he was raising cabbage on top of it for years. So it is with a man's faith. He may not get benefit from it.

II. There are (two kinds of faith).

First, (cold storage) faith. It is inactive. It is a dormant faith. The

person can tell you the time and the place when he was saved. They also trust in Jesus to keep them from day to day. They also believe in the coming of the Lord and hope to be prepared to meet him.

Second, the active, aggressive faith. Now this is the kind that explores. Makes new discoveries in the realm of grace. This is a person who prays for new things, prays for others, prays for themselves.

III. The (key) -- exercise faith in God.

V124 Now you must act like you have what you prayed for. Have the faith of God - but in the reading in the 24th verse of this chapter, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye will receive them and ye shall have them.

So then I tell you, whenever you pray and ask for anything, have faith that it has been granted you, and you will get it. After praying, you act as though you have that.

You will notice that in the Old Testament and the New, that we are taught to ask like you received what you pray for, and ye shall have it.

Perhaps some illustrations from the Bible will help us.

→ Joshua 3:15 - Israel came to Jordan to cross - the Lord told Joshua to let the priest walk right forward, when they come to Jordan, as if it was not there. And in so doing, they acted like they believed. And as they that bear the ark were come into Jordan and the feet of the priest that bear the ark were dipped in the brime of the water, that the waters were come down from above, stood and rose up upon and heaped very far from the city of Adam. And they passed right over. And crossed the river.

Second, Elijah. He went to the widow and asked her for some food. She only had a hand full of meal and a little oil. And she was getting ready to eat it and die. The Prophet told her to make me a cake first, and bring it unto me. For thus saith the Lord, God of Israel. The barrel of meal shall not waste. Neither shall the cruse of oil fail until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth. And she went in and acted as though she had already received the new installment of meal and oil. And in so doing, made it real.

V.23 This is the long hidden (secret) of success. Exercise faith in God. Act as though you have received. All things are possible to him that believeth. Nothing is impossible to him that believeth. Whosoever shall say to this mountain, get up and throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt at all in his heart, but has faith that what he says shall take place - shall have it. Mark 11:23.

Third, Elijah, went up into the mountain. I Kings 18:45-46 Pray for rain. He prayed. It began to thunder and lightning. The servant saw a cloud the size of a man's hand. The old man of God ceased praying. And begin to run for shelter to get out of the rain. He began to act like he believed, that his prayer was answered. And God saw how perfect and persistent his faith was. And he sent the rain and the rain caught the old Prophet before he reached the shelter. What a picture of active faith. Using the promise as through it was for sure.

Now you might do the same things with a Traveler's Check. You have \$10 in a check. You know it is good, you know it's real. But to prove your conscience, you go down and you act like you believe what the bank says. By attempting to spend it without the least doubt. After you have complied with the promise, we find that it is so. And the same thing is true about whatsoever ye will ask in my name. We must ask on the promise, as a man acts on the promise of the bank's word.

That this certificate is good. It is a matter of exercising faith.

Fourth, Mark 3:1-7. The illustration of the man with a withered hand. The man was in the synagogue. He was unable to use it. Jesus did not say to him, your hand is healed. Nor did he say to the man, your hand will be healed. But Jesus said to him, stretch forth thine hand. In other words, do with your hand what you would if it was healed. Act like it is healed. And in so doing, he found it healed. Now there is a clear case of active faith.

Fifth, Luke 17:11-18. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He met ten lepers that lifted up their voices - have mercy on us. He told them, go show yourselves to the priest. Now this was the (thing) they would (not) dare to do, unless they were clean and unless they had been healed. But the lepers believed Jesus healed them - they acted like it, and they believed it. And they started by showing themselves to the priest. As they went, they were healed. They were cleansed. Now the Bible is full of such wonderful illustrations.

IV. Be sure of the foundation of faith. There must be a foundation of faith and trust, confidence in God for the one who tries to trust God without being on the proper ground would be foolish. That's why we have many misguided, some dead, and spiritless professors of religion, who claim some sort of faith. But they have never received the witness of faith in God.

The foundation is first obeying and walking up to all the revealed (will) of God.

Second, cleared before the bar of conscience.

Third, the desired thing is parallel with the (will) of God as far as you know.

I devote just a minute to the question how are we to know, that a thing is God's will. How do we know that we are following God's rules.

I think there are two or three tests.

First is the desired thing strictly for (God's Glory). Is this thing I am praying for, this thing I have faith in, this objective in my life - strictly for God's Glory.

Second will it help to (qualify you) to live a holy life in this world? And spend eternity in a sinless Heaven. This second test will also help determine God's will. Is this thing I pray for, this thing I have faith in, this experience I want - is this going to cause me to live a holy life and prepare for a sinless eternity.

Third will it tend to lift up (fallen humanity) and bring them to the Saviour? This experience, this thing I pray for, this thing of faith I have for my life, will this help fallen sinful men and women. And will it bring them to Jesus Christ. Will it amaze them. Will it drive them away, or will it win them. If it will stand these tests, it is perfectly safe to conclude that it is the will of God. Now if it will not stand these tests, then throw it overboard.

V. Some (things that hinder) people from exercising faith in God.

First looking back. We look back at our past failures because we have tried to trust for healing or for pardon, or purity. Some years ago, some months, and we feel we have failed. And we are afraid to try again.

I fear many efforts will turn out like the little (boy's dog) He tried to hold him in a fence corner to prevent frightening a man riding a horse. After the horse

was quieted down, the driver said, that's a nice dog you have there. He looks like a pointer. Yes sir, answered the lad, he looks like one but he ain't. He's a disappointer.

Now friend, that is not God's way. He wants you to make (stepping stones) of past failures, to mount the hill of God. Never mind the past failures, forget them. Press on to the mark of the prize of the high calling.

-2- Second, we (look at the circumstances). How many wonderful people fail right here. Truly we are like Simon Peter. He began to look around at the waves on the water and the circumstances, and he began to sink.

We consider false brethren, the opposition we have, our personal weaknesses, and sometimes deserters, but God wants us to keep our eyes on him and in so doing - we will not realize who is deserving, who is going back on God - the man and the woman who looks up is sure and certain to conquer.

-3- Third, we (think of the "if's", the "buts" and the "maybe's") Indications of doubts - therefore we should not let them take place in our lives. It reminds me of a man who was traveling on the stage coach. He purchased a first class ticket. But to his surprise and disappointment, that the first, second, and third class passengers all occupied the same coach. They journeyed on for miles. But finally they reached a steep mountain. Too steep for the team, the (driver) jumped down, opened the side door and shouted, (first class) passengers sit still. (Second class) passengers get out and walk. And (third class) passengers, get out and push. Now we have altogether too many first class passengers in the church today. This business of being in the church, and when the church reaches a steep grade - they will not help the preacher to push. And of course the second class passengers are no better because they just walk along and look. But those who get out and push really do the work.

You may have heard the story of the boy who got in the buggy to ride with the farmer. They rode on for several miles. And the boy meanwhile kept his eyes on the front wheels until he became so cross eyed the farmer had to back up 8 miles to uncross his eyes. Now some of you are looking cross-eyed at the church. I want to back you up far enough today to enable you to realize the real value of the church in this country and in your home.

VI. What are (some helps) in exercising faith in God.

1- First, serve God as a visible God. This is why Jesus spoke with such authority. He recognized the presence of the Father.

Moses endured as seeing him that is invisible.

Think what confidence and courage a child goes forth on a dark night. If it sees his father or his mother by his side. What an inspiration to faith. And also to courage. If we could always realize God is here.

Elisha realized this. The enemy surrounded the city, to take him. He saw between him and the enemy and him the horses, the chariots of fire, for God protected him. If we live as ever seeing God, it would serve against our light talk about the church. Remember Jesus is ever present.

2- Second, we serve a God of circumstances. There is no place out of the way or too insignificant for God to condescend and help you out. That is provided that you are not committing sin and you are calling on him to help.

God is always at hand to help and he can remedy this at any hour, night or day.

Remember Peter in jail on that last night - God sent help just in time.

The Hebrew boys and the firey furnace - God did not help until they needed him. However, he was on time. God is always on time when a man ought to be saved.

When a man needs to be saved, God is ready to do it.

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Third, you must venture out in faith. Now this will never fail. We must trust the Lord. We must exercise this faith.

Now in conclusion, let me suggest some important things that you might do to exercise your faith. First, without it, it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. That says we must first believe and second, we must exercise our belief, in Him, by trusting him, and what he says he will do.

Second, we are saved by faith. Mark 16:16. Rom. 5:1.

Third, we are sanctified by faith. As we confess our uncleanness and we break with it, we receive the witness of God's spirit at work in our lives.

Fourth, we live by faith. Gal. 1:20.

Fifth, we stand by faith. 2 Cor. 1:24.

Sixth, we walk by faith. 2 Cor. 5:7.

Seventh, we overcome by faith. I John 5:4. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Eighth, by faith we obtain the crown. Rev. 2:10. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. We need to exercise faith in God and act like we believe it.

There are so many illustrations that we might use to help you in this matter

Wesley spent much time in prayer. He thought prayer to be more his business than anything else.

✓ John Fletcher stained the walls of his room by his tears and his prayers. Sometimes praying all night.

Luther, I cannot get along without spending 3 hours daily in prayer.

Bishop Ken, he was with God before the clock struck 3 every morning.

✓ An old Scottish preacher said, I ought not to give up the old habit of prayer before going to bed. Or when I wake up in the night.

Robert McCheyne would often spend from 4 to 6 hours praying sometime during the day.

✓ John Welks prayed so much he kept a spread to cover himself as he prayed at night. His wife would complain when she'd find him lying on the ground weeping - he would reply, oh woman, I have the souls of 3,000 to answer for. And I know not how it is with many of them.

✓ Payson wore the hardwood boards into grooves where his knees pressed so often and so long.

Brainerd - I love to be alone in my cottage, where I can spend time in prayer.

✓ William Bramwell, famous Methodist, noted for his wonderful success in preaching and the marvelous answers to his prayers, for hours at a time he would pray. He almost lived on his knees. He went over his circuits like a flame of fire.

✓ Judson, that missionary Baptist, said this. Arrange my affairs if possible so that you can leisurely devote two or three hours every day to devotional exercise. The act of secret prayer and communion. Further, he said, set aside 7 times a day to withdraw from business and your company. Let the hours of 9, 12, 3, 6, and 9 at night be hours of prayer. Make all practical sacrifice to maintain it. Consider that your time is short and that business or company or nothing else should allow you to be robbed of your God.

Now we say, simply, this is impossible. These are fantastic directions. But Judson impressed an empire for Christ. God's kingdom was imperishable as he went to the heart of Burma. He was successful as one of the very few men - impressing the world for Christ. He did not leave his tracks in the sand but in the granite. Therefore, the things we have been speaking of - the stimulant to faith must be this hot bed of prayer. It must not be a dull habit. Or looked upon as a light thing. But it must be a must with us. In the words of Jesus, (have faith in God.)

*You - Know about Jesus - Never made it public your desire to follow -
Have Faith in God - Believe He will save & Trust him Now*

*You - Have Expressed some faith but not active - Active Today -
Act Again -*

You - Have Faith - Church Member Some other Place - Join us - Make This your Church home -

Word of Warning - Faith must be acted upon -
Faith Demands a decision - action -
Invitation will be your way to respond -