

Building a Biblical Faith
Lesson 1 - Build Your Faith in God
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Introduction: The foundation of the Christian life is our faith.

A. What is faith?

1. πίστις pistis 1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it ..1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust ...2a) the character of one who can be relied on. - Thayer's Lexicon.
2. Faith is based upon an unseen God. **(1 Pt 1:8-9; Heb 11:27)**
3. We have faith when we have examined God's truth and then are willing to commit our lives in trust to an unseen God! **(Rom 10:17; Eph 1:13)**

B. We can build a faith on a strong foundation or a weak one. **(Mt 7:24-27)**

1. We need to learn an old computer formula: GI=GO.
2. What kind of material and effort are we willing to put into a Biblical faith? **(Jude 20-21)**
3. With this foundation we can overcome the world! **(1 Jn 5:3-5)**

I. There are different kinds of faith

A. The bible reveals there is but one faith that saves. **(Eph 4:4-6)**

B. There are many substitutes that men trust in.

1. Most men prefer to trust in themselves while acting like they serve God. **(Jn 5:38-44)**
2. Satan's goal is to make you think you are serving God while in fact you are serving him!

Class Discussion:

1. Make a list of things that men trust in rather than trusting in God. **(1 Tim 6:17; Jn 12:42-43; 2 Pt 2:18-20)**
2. How would you answer the one who accuses you of trusting in Baptism rather than in God? (Col 2:11-13)
3. What is the greatest temptation we face in substituting a biblical faith for a man centered one? **(2 Cor 10:12,17-18)**
4. Do we have faith in the Church of Christ?

II. We have faith in a God who is able.

A. When we begin to know and trust the true God we cannot imagine the power that He would bring into our lives. **(Eph 3:20-21)**

1. The key is not God but our faith. God will always be faithful. **(Mt 21:21-22)**
2. God is described as faithful, able and just. Why? So that we might believe, obey and be blessed.

B. What does our God tell us He is able to do?

1. To accomplish His will without the proud. (Mt 3:8-9)

a. God will not help the proud! **(1 Pt 5:5-6)**

“God will inevitably appear to disappoint the man who is attempting to use him as a convenience, a prop, or a comfort for his own plans. God has never been known to disappoint the man who is sincerely wanting to cooperate with his own purposes.”

- J. B. Phillips

b. We need to be careful not to let our experience as “members of the church” cause us to be blind to our sins and make us think that God serves us.

c. How can men be leaders and then justify obvious wrongs? **(Jn 18:28)**

2. To deliver us from temptation that overwhelms. (Heb 2:17-18)

a. We need to see the real danger we face from Satan. **(Lk 22:31; Mt 6:13)**

b. The overconfident think they have no need. Here is where Satan wins.

c. God’s very nature is emphasized in this promise. **(1 Cor 10:12-13)**

d. If we do not know the struggle and threat of sin then we may not be trying at all.

3. To forgive us when we repent and turn to Him. (Psa 51:7-12)

a. God is faithful to forgive us!

b. We are baptized into Christ with faith in His operation. **(Col 2:11-13)**

c. We repent and confess our sins for forgiveness of a God who is faithful. **(1 Jn 1:7-9)**

d. Have you ever doubted the forgiveness of a man? (Ex. Joseph’s brothers)

e. We need the assurance that God gives us in His word. HE is able!

4. To increase our faith and make us stronger. (Jude 24-25)

a. Do you remember what it was like when you first became a Christian?

b. Please remember this warning to those who see as men do. **(Rom 14:4)**

c. Let us be tools in this great work! **(Rom 15:1)**

d. We each should go through a process from being weak and vulnerable to being strong and knowledgeable. **(Acts 20:32; Rom 16:25-27)**

e. The test of this growth will be seen in action. **(2 Cor 9:8)**

5. To bring us to an eternal place with Him. (2 Tim 1:12)

a. We ultimately are looking to be raised from the dead to be with Christ. **(Phil 3:21)**

b. We cannot know how to live until we know how to die.

Class Discussion:

1. What keeps us from seeing and trusting in the power of God? **(Rom 12:1-2)**

2. What do men do when they doubt the faithfulness and power of God?

3. How do we show that we really believe in God? **(Phil 4:6-7; Lk 18:1,8)**

III. We build a faith that wants the pleasure of the Lord.

A. Jesus purposed to do “the pleasure of the Lord.” (Isa 53:10)

1. If I am a servant of God this should be the prime motivation of my life! **(Gal 1:10)**

2. The spirit of making man the center of life has invaded the church with the trendy philosophies of "felt-needs," "paradigm shifts", and each to find his own "truths."
3. Some have developed "faith in faith." That is if someone has "convictions" then everything else is alright. We should not discuss differences!
4. What do these philosophies leave out? God!

"Success exposes a man to the pressure of people and thus tempts him to hold on to his gains by means of fleshly methods and practices, and to let himself be ruled wholly by the dictatorial demands of incessant expansion. Success can go to my head, and will unless I remember that it is God who accomplishes the work, that He can continue to do so without my help, and that He will be able to make out with other means whenever He cuts me down to size." - Spurgeon

B. The "Pleasure of the Lord" shows His absolute authority.

1. God wants each of us to know that we are absolutely dependent upon "His pleasure." (**Isa 46:9-11**)
2. Both Israel and Babylon learned this lesson. (**Isa 44:28; 48:14**)
3. The only issue in my life is where I find myself in the "Pleasure of the Lord."

C. The "Pleasure of the Lord" reveals the character of God.

1. God has revealed in "pleasure" in "uprightness." (**1 Chron 29:17**)
2. God has no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked. (**Ezk 18:23-24, 31-32**)
3. God did in his "pleasure" provide a plan for all men to be saved. (**Eph 1:5-9**)

Class Discussion:

1. If we are seeking "the pleasure of the Lord" then what will be our attitude towards Bible authority? (**Jn 12:48; Rev 22:18-19**)
2. What are some views that men have concerning the mission of the church? Who is in view: men or God? (**Gal 1:10**)
3. Can you give book, chapter and verse for the things you believe? If not, why not? (**Col 3:17**)

IV. As our faith matures we become increasingly aware of the presence of God.

A. Men of God were blessed by God's presence.

1. How did Moses have the courage to confront Pharaoh? (**Ex 3:12**)
2. How did Joshua have the courage to take the promised land? (**Josh 1:5; 3:7**)
3. How was David able to face Goliath? (**1 Sam 17:37**)

B. Consider the fruits of God's presence in your life.

1. It allows me to keep a real perspective on life. (**Psa 73:15-16, 27-28; 2 Cor 4:17-18**)
 - a. Some of the greatest joys you can have comes in the midst of uncertainty about worldly things. God will never let us down! (**Heb 13:5-6**)
 - b. When we get caught up in the temporary things of life we often forget God.
2. It gives me peace. (**Jn 14:27; 16:30-33**)

"Be with me, Lord, no other gift or blessing,

Thou couldst bestow could with this one compare;
A constant sense of Thy a abiding presence,
Wher-e'er I am to feel that Thou art near."

-T. O. Chisolm

3. It causes my heart to overflow in worship. (**Psa 95:1-3; 100:2**)
 - a. Why do we lose many of our young? In some cases we have never taught them an awareness of the presence of God. Is your God real?
 - b. Can you place yourself before God even though you are surrounded by a multitude of people?
4. It causes me to be separate from the world. (**2 Cor 6:16-18**)
5. It gives me courage to face adversity. (**Ps 16:9-11; 17:1-3**)
 - a. Moses begged for God's presence! (**Ex 33:14-17**)

"The secret of true obedience is the clear and close personal relationship to God. All our attempts after full obedience will be failures until we get access to his abiding fellowship. It is God's holy presence consciously abiding with us that keeps us from disobeying Him. I must consciously include the Lord in every thought, activity, and conversation until the habit is established." -- Andrew Murray

- b. Often it is adversity that causes us to have an even greater awareness of God's presence. In these times we receive a great blessing. (**Rom 5:3-5**)

Romans 5:3 through Romans 5:5 (NKJV) ³And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

"I feel that repeated afflictions come, not as lightning on the scathed tree, blasting it yet more and more, but as the strokes of the sculptor on the marble block, forming, it into the image of beauty and loveliness. Let but the Divine Presence be felt, and no lot is hard. Let me but see his hand, and no event is unwelcome."

Class Discussion:

1. What is necessary for true repentance? (**2 Cor 7:9-10**)

2 Corinthians 7:9 through 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV) ⁹Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2. Why do some men not like to have God in their knowledge? (**Rom 1:28**)

Romans 1:28 (NKJV) ²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

3. What will the knowledge of God's presence bring into our lives?

Two Church Want to Grow
Bill Hall

Two churches want to grow, but their attitudes toward growth differ greatly.

The first church looks upon growth as its primary purpose. Goals are placed before the membership: "We want to double our membership within the next three years," for instance. Success (or failure) is judged almost entirely on the basis of that congregation's numerical growth.

The second church looks upon the saving of souls as its primary purpose and any growth in membership is just a natural result of that primary purpose. Members of the second church are infused with the value of immortal souls rather than a sense of congregational pride.

Members of **the first church** become eager to get people to the water. Baptism is the point at which people are added to the membership list; consequently, it's going to take so many baptisms to keep pace with their goal of doubling their membership. They must not only get them to the water, they must get them there within the time period that has been arbitrarily set by their leaders.

Members of **the second church** are far more eager to get people to repent. Their concern is for additions to the Lord's body rather than additions to a membership list. Their approach is to bring sinners to a consciousness of their sin and the consequences of remaining in sin. If they can do this in one study, great! But if considerable time is required to uproot false concepts and to plant the true seed of the gospel, they patiently accept this. Their only sense of urgency grows out of the uncertainty of life and its duration. But they know that shortcuts are not the answer; that baptism without repentance is worthless; and that once people are brought to true repentance, having been properly taught, baptism for the remission of sins will follow. So they wait with longsuffering until the gospel brings about its desired effect in the hearts of those whom they are teaching.

Members of **the first church** will be tempted to use questionable tactics in their approach to people. The old methods and approaches don't seem to be effective any more. New and more positive approaches must be found. So the members of the first church make their appeal to the pride of people. They persuade them of their self-worth; they build their self-image; they tell them how valuable they would be to the congregation.

"We need you," they tell their prospects. They might also extol the virtues of the congregation, persuading their prospects of the value of being a part of such a vibrant, growing group of people. So, people "become members," and they conform to the rules that are placed before them for acceptance within the group, but there may have been little grief over sin; in fact, they might even still believe they were Christians before they "became members."

The members of **the second church** recognize that the gospel never makes its appeal to the pride of people. They bring people to see their spiritual bankruptcy; that they have "nothing to pay"; that their true worth is not to be found in self, but in Christ; that they must humble themselves and look to Christ for their exaltation; that they are sinners in desperate need of salvation; that their only hope is to be found in Christ.

They would bring them to say, in the words of Mrs. C.H. Morris:

*Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an offering to Jesus my King,*

Only my sinful, now contrite heart; Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.

The first church may become compromising in its teaching. Its elders intend to maintain doctrinal soundness, but there is the pressure to produce, to maintain the growth rate set before the congregation. When doctrinal soundness becomes an obstacle to that purpose, the elders may succumb to the pressures and ease up on its teaching. **The second church** faces no such pressure, for in its concern for the spiritual wellbeing of people, there is desire for truth on every subject vital to salvation.

The emphasis of **the first church** is organizational and institutional; the emphasis of the second is spiritual and heavenly.

We commend **the second church** to our readers. Serious problems can result when churches see growth as their primary purpose. If goals are to be set-and goals can serve a good purpose-let them focus on the number to be taught rather than the number to be baptized. If new approaches are needed, let them be conceived only if they are compatible with God's wisdom in efforts to reach others, let all determine to know nothing "except Jesus Christ *and Him crucified*. When churches thus become really serious about saving souls, God will give the increase and growth will take care of itself.