

Faith, Trust and Confidence

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Do you trust in God? Are you confident in His word? Do you have complete and total faith that God is there, that He hears you and that He is actively involved in your life? Do you truly rely on Him? Do you go to God confidently, in faith, when you pray? Can you leave your concerns, worries and fears with God, secure in the knowledge that all things will be worked out according to His will? Do you really, truly believe that God will answer your prayers?

Human beings are naturally skeptical. We want to be able to see and to touch and to physically examine something, before we make up our minds whether to believe, or not. It is not natural, or comfortable for us to trust in something, just on faith alone. Our society and the world around us, is very cynical and skeptical of anything and anyone that cannot be seen, proven, or explained. Scientists spend a large amount of their time developing theories and explanations for those things which are not understood.

A while back, I viewed a cable program on the miracles of the Exodus. The entire program was centered around, trying to scientifically prove what really happened during the events that occurred, as Israel left Egypt. While the theories were interesting, it just illustrated once again that man is skeptical and will go to great lengths to try and provide an explanation for what he does not understand. Man just cannot accept that there is an all powerful, sovereign God; that is not bound by physical laws as we are. God created and set in motion, all that we know and understand. He can modify, or change anything that is here, at any time. God can easily part the waters of a sea, or turn the waters of a river to blood, or even stop time itself as He did when Joshua and the children of Israel fought against the Amorites.

If you really stop and think about it, Moses was actually a great skeptic himself. Maybe it was the result of being reared in, and living in Egypt with all of their false Gods, but at any rate, he doubted God when he first came into contact with Him. Moses also feared Pharaoh more than he feared God. Moses was not excited at all, at the prospect of going before Pharaoh on God's behalf.

Exodus 3:11

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Right from the start Moses doubted and he tried to shirk the job that God had given him to do. Moses came up with excuse after excuse, for why he could not go before Pharaoh and represent God, or speak to the children of Israel. Moses doubted and deep down he was afraid to go back to Egypt and do the things that God had given him to do. Having lived there for the first forty years of his life, he knew very well what it mean to defy Pharaoh.

Exodus 4:1-7

1 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" **2** So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." **3** And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. **4** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), **5** "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." **6** Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. **7** And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.

God had to show Moses in a physical, visible way, through His power, that He was who He said He was. Moses had to see and experience with his senses to begin to believe in God's power. Only then did Moses slowly begin to have faith, trust and confidence in God. It did not happen all at once and Moses would go on to doubt again, even after experiencing the power of God first hand.

In contrast, there was another man who had faith, trust and confidence in God from the very beginning of their relationship. That man was Abram, who had a childlike faith and trust in God. When God spoke to Abram and told him to do something, Abram did not argue, he did not whine, he did not come up with excuse after excuse; he simply went about doing whatever God required of him without complaining, or questioning.

Genesis 12:1

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.

Genesis 12:4

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

So here is Abram, 75 years old. Well set in his ways and settled in the land where he lived. He had all his belongings, his herds, his family (who had probably lived there for generations), he was comfortable and it was all that he had ever known, yet when God told him to go, it simply says that he departed. No questioning, no doubting, no asking for a sign, no complaining...Abram just left.

Later Abram, who was now renamed Abraham by God, for his faith and trust, faces the supreme trial and challenge of his entire life. Abraham was to face a test that would prove beyond any shadow of doubt, whether he had complete faith, trust and confidence in God, or not. God gave Abraham explicit instructions and told him to take his beloved son Isaac, the son that Abraham dearly loved, up to the mountain for a sacrifice.

Genesis 22:2

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Can you imagine the gut wrenching turmoil that Abraham must have been in? Yes, he loved God, revered Him and trusted Him completely in faith, but here the God he loves, is also asking him to sacrifice his son, whom he also loves dearly. It is hard to even put yourself into that position and try to imagine the emotion and thoughts that he felt. Step after step, moving ever closer to the place God had told him to go and his heart getting heavier and heavier with each step. Then, finally they reach their destination and he knows what he must now do. How must Isaac have felt, when he realized what was to take place...

Abraham bound his son, placed him upon the altar that he had built and prepared to slay him as God had asked. What thoughts went through Abraham's mind as he prepared to offer his son on the altar? What was Isaac thinking as he lay there helplessly bound watching his father? Abraham raised the knife...he was intent on what he had to do and it was at the last instant as he prepared to strike...that God stopped him! What relief must have washed over him, yet he had been prepared and committed himself, to completely follow through with whatever God required of him.

Genesis 22:9

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

I cannot think of a test more difficult than this one. I am sure, that any parent would rather have their own life threatened, than one of their children and especially by their own hand. It is no wonder Abraham is called the father of the faithful. What would any one of us have done in that same situation? Would we have trusted...would we have had the faith...would we have had confidence in God, even though He had asked us to carry out this deed?

Absolute, complete and total faith, trust and confidence in God, is essential for every one of us. Whatever we do in our lives must be done in faith, trust and confidence in our Father. As we approach the end of this age and the events leading up to that one great event, we had better be as Abraham in our relationship with God, if we are to make it through. There will be no room for doubt, or indecision.

It has taken me quite a while to get to this point. It is only in the last couple of years that I have truly learned that God is completely in control. We are powerless in and of ourselves. That is a hard lesson for mankind to learn, we always want to think that we have some control over our lives. To a certain degree we do, we make daily decisions that affect our lives and those of our families, but we are really not in control at all. It is only God, that has true control and it is to him that we must turn daily for what we need.

There are events that have occurred in my life, since I have come into a relationship with God, that have given me a deep, sincere trust, faith and confidence in God. There are situations that we all face in life, that cause us to realize in a very real way, that we are not in control. We have a semblance of control, we believe that we are in control, but in times when you are completely helpless and powerless to do anything on your own, you will come to realize that it is only God who truly has the power to control and change a situation.

Have you ever had an immediate answer to prayer? I have several times, the first time occurred early on in my relationship with God. My wife experienced difficulty giving birth to our first son. We had been at the hospital since early that morning. Finally, late into the evening, she began to labor. But, complications set in. Every time she began to bear down, the baby's heart rate dwindled and then stopped...it was frightening and the look on the faces of everyone on the delivery team showed their concern and worry.

The specialist that was on call was summoned to assess the situation. While he was enroute, several more times the baby's heart rate got dangerously low, or stopped altogether for several seconds. The decision was made by the team to do a caesarean delivery. The room instantly became a mad panic of people rushing about all over the place. We were using a natural childbirth method, so my wife was not on any medication. I was told that I would be unable to accompany my wife into the operating room, because they would have to fully anesthetize her, since she was not on any pain medication.

I will never forget the look on my wife's face as I stood there holding her hand, while they slipped an oxygen mask over her face. Things were happening so fast that she was terrified. I was moved to one side as they were doing some preparation work. I realized at that instant that this situation was completely out of our control and that there was only one way that we were going to get through this. I became acutely aware at that second, that God was the only one in control and that He was the only one that could change this situation and the outcome.

I quietly moved to the corner of the room, bowed my head and began to pray. I poured my heart out to God, throwing myself on His mercy as tears began to well up in my eyes. Oh yes, I fully realized then who was in control and it sure was not me! It is only the **creator, the everlasting, eternal God** that has the rule and control over what happens on this earth and in our lives! I prayed earnestly, beseeching God and it was only then for the first time that I realized what it means to completely surrender your life to God.

As I finished my prayer, the specialist arrived within seconds. He quickly did a cursory examination of my wife and announced that he could find nothing wrong and that they should proceed with delivering the baby normally! God, in all his mercy and love, had answered my prayer ***immediately!!*** As I stood there in awe and wonder at what I was witnessing, I saw my beautiful son for the first time. As he was born, I could clearly see why there had been such a problem. The umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck twice and then passed underneath his right arm.

The very life was being squeezed out of him, every time there was a contraction and he had a blue pallor to his complexion when he was delivered. There was still a very real concern, due to the stress he had been under during delivery, and they had a special neonatal team there that whisked him over to a table in the room and began going over him. There was a tense time of several minutes as I was comforting my wife and silently praying. It seemed like an eternity until we heard the words: "It's ok, he's fine."

Oh how I praised God for that! That was some years ago now and I still look upon him as our miracle child. He has had several other close calls too, but God has been there in every single situation. God is the only one that you can count on. God is the only one that will always be there, any time of day, or night. Whatever the situation you are facing, no matter how dark the future looks, no matter how dire the circumstances you can absolutely trust and have faith in God to be there and to hear you when call out to him!

However, we have to remember, our prayers are not always answered the way we want them to be. Sometimes God's will is not our will, and we have to accept that without losing our faith, trust and confidence. We have to trust and have faith that God knows best, even if we are unable to understand at the time. We do not have the mind of God, we do not know what He has in store for us at any given time and we cannot know exactly what His will is for us in our lives. We all go through trials and different situations and they are never the same.

Several years ago, I received a phone call early in the morning. At the job I had at that time, I was on a 24-hour call rotation and I assumed it was someone calling about a problem at work. When I answered the phone, it was my sister. She told me that something had happened to our Dad, that he had fallen, and they had called 911 and EMS was on the way. There were no further details and she had to go. My parents lived right behind my sister's house at the time. I waited for a while with still no word, so I called back and found out that they had gone to the hospital.

When my wife and I arrived, we found the rest of my family there. I found out at that time that my Dad had suffered a heart attack. They still did not have all of the details and were awaiting a report from the doctors. I led the family in prayer right there in the small private waiting room. While we were waiting I was able to go in and see my Dad for a few minutes in the ICU. I could see immediately that the situation was very dire. After an hour, or so, we had a conference with the cardiologist and to our dismay learned that Dad had suffered a pretty severe heart attack and the prognosis was not good at all. They were still waiting for some of the tests to come back, but it looked like there was severe damage to the heart muscle.

I was crushed...not my Dad, he had always been there. I had just seen him a week, or so earlier. I called for an elder and had my Dad anointed and prayed for, there at the hospital. Brethren from our church congregation were asked to pray about the situation. I spent a lot of time in prayer over the next week. I was hardly able to think, or function. God was my constant strength and source of comfort. All of the tests that came back pointed to the same conclusion, the hope for recovery was very slim, yet still we held out hope and I knew God could heal my Dad completely if it was His will. I continued to pray fervently, but after a week had gone by there was no change and my Dad was still on life support.

We finally had to make one of the most difficult decisions that any family can ever be faced with. We decided together to remove my Dad from life support and he died very shortly thereafter. I later found out that my Dad had actually died there at home that morning. When the EMT's arrived, they had resuscitated him and brought him back, but only physically, for all intents and purposes he had already died there.

It took me a while to come to terms with why God had not answered my prayers and why my Dad was allowed to die, but with God's help I got through it. I still never doubted God for an instant; it just took a while to understand. It is important when things do not go our way, or when our prayers are not answered in the way that we think they should be, that we do not get bitter, or angry. Above all, we must remain faithful, God will comfort, help and guide in times of need. I had to try and look for the positive out of everything that had happened.

My Dad did not suffer, he had no pain. He had been experiencing some physical difficulties when I first saw him at the hospital and those went away after he was anointed. Though he never regained consciousness, he was resting comfortably. So, God was merciful and He did hear our prayers. They just were not answered in the way that we wished, but God's will was done. That is the important thing to remember...it is not our will, but God's will that we must always ask for and accept.

King David lost a young son. When his son first became sick, David fasted and humbled himself before God and pleaded for the child's life.

2 Samuel 12:15-18

15 And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. 16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

¹⁸ Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

While there was a chance that God would change his mind and spare the child, David never gave up praying for him. David had faith, he had trust and he had confidence that God would hear his prayer and spare his child. Yet, when his prayer was not answered, David did not lose faith, or get angry and bitter towards God.

2 Samuel 12:19-23

¹⁹ When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." ²⁰ So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate.

²¹ Then his servants said to him, "What *is* this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." ²² And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell *whether* the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

When we pray for each other, or when we are asked to pray about a certain situation, it is important that we always pray with the same faith, trust and confidence in God that we have in our own lives. We should pray for others as if we were praying for ourselves and their situations, as our own situations. It is the prayer of faith, the effective fervent prayer that God hears and that God responds to.

James 5:13-16

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

When our oldest son was just a toddler, he was involved in an accident that could have easily taken his life. My wife and I, along with a group from our church, were helping my wife's Mom move into a new house. I was driving the moving van, making trips back and forth to the storage facility to the house. I had already made a couple of trips and was on another. As I pulled up in front of the house, my wife's Mom and the Pastor's wife met me at the truck. I was told that there had been an accident...my wife had backed the van over our son.

My wife had left to get pizzas for everyone while I was gone with the truck. She had left our son behind at the house. Somehow he had gotten from the house out to the garage. When my wife returned from getting the pizzas, he recognized the van and started down the driveway to meet her.

She had turned around and was backing the van up the driveway, because the pizzas were in the back. Due to the fact that she was backing into the driveway, she never saw our son behind her. I cannot even begin to relate the feelings and emotions that washed over me as I was given the news. My wife had panicked and instead of calling emergency services, she had rushed our son to the hospital herself. It was one of the times in my life that I have felt completely and totally helpless.

As I was being driven to the hospital, it was very hard to keep my thoughts and emotions in check and I had to pray for strength. I was in agony. Finally we arrived at the hospital and I found my wife waiting outside the imaging room, where our son was being given a CT scan. We both broke down and wept upon seeing each other. She thought I was going to be furious with her, but never, at any time, did I place the blame on her for what had happened. After the CT scan, he was moved back to the emergency ward for further examination. At that time we were able to have him anointed and prayed for.

After a thorough examination, the staff could find nothing wrong with him other than a couple of bumps and scrapes. We had to stay overnight so that they could observe him and he was actually released to go home the following afternoon! God was very merciful and protected our son from harm. It was only after we were back home and able to sit down and go back over the events that we realized what a miracle God had performed for us. As my wife was backing into the driveway, she had felt a little bump and stopped immediately. As she went around to the back of the van to investigate, she found our son underneath the van. But...he was facedown! How did he end up facedown underneath the van? If she had bumped into him as he was running down to meet the van, he should have been lying on his back face up!

I know how he ended up facedown under the van, God protected him! There is no doubt of that. He was lying so close to the rear tire of the van, that it actually made a mark along the side of his arm. I shudder to even think how close he came to being killed. God protected him and our prayers were answered, because there were no injuries, or lasting effects from the accident, other than a chipped front tooth.

My youngest son also had an accident that could have proved fatal, when he was about 2 ½ years old. I was working out in the garage one evening and my wife came out to tell me that supper was ready. She had been in the garage for less than a minute, when we heard a horrible crash from inside the house. I leaped past my wife and ran into the house and found a scene that I will never forget in the living room. It looked like a miniature tornado had gone through that room.

The oak entertainment center was tipped forward and there were things flung and strewn all over the living room. I was in shock and trying to figure out what had happened when I began to hear my son crying...the sound was coming from underneath all the rubble! I could not even see him for the pile of items that had been in and on the entertainment center. I began to grab things and throw them out of the way. As I started to uncover him I could see the reason he was crying, the television had slid partially out of the entertainment center and his heel was pinned to the floor by it.

Miraculously, he had fallen partially under the coffee table and the entertainment center had fallen forward, coming to rest on the coffee table. The table had kept the entertainment center from falling flat onto the floor. Had the table not been there, he would have been crushed under the weight of the entertainment center. I was able to deduce that he had started to climb up the front of the entertainment center and pulled it over on himself when it became imbalanced. He should have fallen flat onto his back, yet when I uncovered him he was lying on his stomach.

My son was spared from serious harm; the only injury he received was a fat lip and a couple of very small cuts that were just superficial, barely more than scrapes. How did he come to be lying on his stomach...how did he end up partially under the table precisely where the entertainment center was resting? How was it that he was not crushed? God in his limitless mercy, love and compassion spared him. We dropped to our knees and thanked God right there.

God is real, God is there and He is involved in our lives and is available to us anytime we seek Him. Never, ever neglect to renew your relationship with God. Go to Him often; seek Him out, talk to Him. God longs for a close, intimate relationship with each and every one of us. He is always there, He always hears and we can have complete faith, trust and confidence in that! Never doubt that God is there!

Hebrews 11:5-6

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *"and was not found, because God had taken him"*; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

God is very pleased with and loves those who seek Him, who want a relationship with Him, who want Him involved in every aspect of their lives. Even though we have not seen God, we do not have to wonder, or worry if He is there and watching over us. He will never leave us, or forsake us and we can be confident that he exists and that He is very real!

John 20:29

²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The more we come to have that complete and total, faith, confidence and trust in God, the more we come to be at peace with ourselves and our lives. We come to realize that God really is in control and we really can rely on Him to guide us and have faith that wherever He guides and whatever situation we find ourselves placed in, He is right there with us every step of the way. We cannot always understand why and how different situations turn out, or even how come we are placed into a difficult spot, but we can always rely on God.

Matthew 6:31

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

God knows everything that we need, even before we ask. How many blessings does God provide for us, each and every day, that we do not even know about? God cares about us, God loves us and He will provide for us. Be steadfast, immovable, rooted in a firm foundation...have complete and unwavering faith, trust and confidence in God!

(All scriptural references cited from the New King James Edition of the Holy Bible)