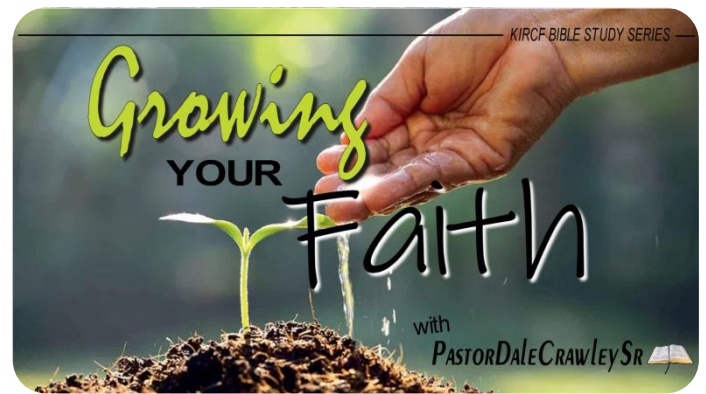


## 2- HOW TO GROW YOUR FAITH

***“Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”***

– Matthew 6:30 (NKJV)



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***When it comes to the subject of faith, is it only a matter of having it or not having it?***

No, the Bible makes it clear that there are degrees of faith. Jesus described some people of His day as having little faith and others as having great faith. (cp. Matthew 8:10, 16:18, Luke 7:9, Mark 4:40)

So it's good to ask ourselves: How much faith do we currently have? And how dedicated are we to increasing our faith? We need to have growing faith. None of us has enough of it!

### **Growing Faith Means Growing Belief That God Knows Best**

In fact, Jesus' prayer gives us a perfect example to follow. His example qualifies the words that we read in Mark 11. In Jesus' prayer, He said, ***“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*** (Matthew 26:39)

Jesus made His request, then He left it in God the Father's hands to do what His Father knew was best. In a similar way, Christians are free to ask anything of God. At the same time, we understand that in order to receive that request, it must be a part of God's wise, loving and perfect will for our lives.

And if it's not according to God's will, we shouldn't want our request anyway. Consider this helpful thought: ***“God does not just give us what we want. He gives us everything we would want if we knew everything He knows”*** (Stacey Padrick, “Living With Unfulfilled Longings,” Discipleship Journal).

- **Faith involves believing that God knows best. That's essential.**

### **How To Grow In Faith: 3 Things God Tells Us To Do**

It's comforting to know that if we just do the things God tells us to do, our faith will grow. We don't have to figure this out for ourselves ... we just need to do what God tells us to do! Let's look at three basic but profound biblical ways to grow in faith:

## 1. Ask God for more faith.

We very much need for God to give us Jesus Christ's own faith, through the power of God's Spirit. We should regularly be asking for that faith. We shouldn't just assume that He'll automatically give us more faith if we're not asking for it. (Luke 11:9-13, Matthew 7:11, 18:19, Mark 11:24, John 14:13-14)

God is watching to see just how much we want to increase our faith. He wants to see how important it is to us. So we need to ask for faith.

## 2. Focus on obeying God.

James 2:14 tells us, *"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"*

It's comforting to know that if we just do the things God tells us to do, our faith will grow. We don't have to figure this out for ourselves; we just need to do what God tells us to do! This is not saying that we earn our salvation. Eternal life is a gift, not something that we can earn. But God does expect to see "works" in our lives. What are "works"? They involve obeying and living by every word of God.

In verses 15-16, James supports his statement with a practical example. *"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"*

What good is that? *"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"* (verse 17). Faith without obedience is a counterfeit. ***In God's eyes, it's a mockery of true, living faith.***

So God tells us that it's not possible to have faith, unless we're keeping His law and living His way of life. *"But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works"* (verse 18).

In other words, James is saying, "You can't show me real faith without works because there is no such thing!" **Our faith is tested in countless ways every day. That's how we grow in faith.**

## 3. Put God's Word into your mind.

A key verse is found in Romans 10:17: ***"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."***

**If we're not constantly putting the Bible into our minds, we're not going to have much faith or grow in faith! It's as simple as that.**

**We read more about Abraham in Hebrews 11.** *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents”* (verses 8-9).

**What's the point? Abraham obeyed God because he believed he would receive the promises God had made.** That's why people obey. They believe and act on what God says because they know that if they do, they will receive whatever God has promised.

*“For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (verse 10). Abraham heard the truth from God—the truth about this future city—and believed God. This resulted in his obedience.

**The more we look at physical circumstances, the less likely it is that we will have faith. The more we look into God's Word, the more we will grow in faith.**

When we do that, we're not going to doubt. When we're studying the Bible and thinking deeply about what we've read, then it becomes a very real part of our lives.

And because we're filled with God's Word, we will have growing faith. We'll step out and do what God says, which will then increase our faith. (And it will increase our blessings as well!)

***But if we get away from God's Word—if we don't study the Bible daily—then it fades from us.*** It becomes insignificant in our thinking. Now God is not as real to us as He should be. Now His promises are not as real to us as they should be. That's just the way we humans are. We forget.

**The more familiar we are with God's Word—and the more familiar we are with what He has done and will do—the more faith we can have.** That's because we will know exactly what He says.

If we're not familiar with what He's done, how are we going to call on God for those particular promises? How are we going to believe that God will keep those promises?

**Applying all three of these principles is essential in learning how to grow in faith.**