

## **Troubled Faith in a Crisis**

### **13 days devotional to shift your faith**

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#### **Day 1: The Relevance of Faith**

##### **Romans 1:17 (NIV)**

*“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*

Faith is one of the most effective features of a Christian’s progress because this is how a Christian’s life will line up with what we are expecting from God. The bible tells us in Hebrews 11:1 that Faith is a substance that we own that will function as a catalyst to bring anything in our lives to pass. Jesus also teaches about having faith as a mustard seed. This mustard seed faith, I believe, is the minimum requirement that a believer should have and not the actual faith that we should have. At a certain point in a believer’s life, we have to move past just the mustard seed faith.

For any believer to experience God’s unlimited power, we must have faith. If we go to God who can do everything for us and we pray but doesn’t believe that He can do it, then why did we go to Him at first? If we go to pray, we must first believe that He can do everything that we will ask. Why? Because our faith will bring everything to pass. Faith is relevant to break pass boundaries and limitations and to unlock realms of power. Unlocking and releasing your faith will allow everything to be in alignment.

## Day 2: Monitoring my Faith

### Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

One definition of monitoring is “observe and check the progress or quality of (something) over a while; keep under systematic review. As said before, that we must possess some level of faith, it is our civic duty to monitor the faith that we have. As a beginner, you may have 10% of faith, but as we grow in our spiritual lives and get deeper into the things of God, we have to monitor our faith. Here are five principles to use: monitor your faith. 1. Do a self-evaluation- see where you are spiritual and how effective your prayer life is. 2. How often do you pray, and how long do you pray for? 3. Do you read the word of God regularly and meditate on His word? 4. Feed your spirit with more Godly inspirations that will benefit you spiritually 5. Keep your focus and continue praying and believing daily.

Remember that God is never tired of hearing from you, so pray and lift your faith. Ask God to help you increase your faith as it is key to seeing massive results in your life. If you monitor your faith, you will grow as your faith is increased. You will expect more out of nothing. You will overcome fear and doubt as you monitor your faith.

Monitoring your faith is not just ensuring that your faith is increased, but it is a phase where you ensure that your faith doesn't bounce back or fluctuate. It is not a trial, but the actual step to bring about something. We each have a measure of faith and it must be exercised well. When we believe and something happens, we ensure that for a tougher situation we do not lose the grip of faith. When faith is monitored, there will be no room for fear.

### **Day 3: Living by Faith**

#### **Matthew 17:20 (NIV)**

He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

In a world that is filled with so much worry, dilemmas, chaos and issues, our faith can become so troubled that it brings doubt. The aim is not to become so focused on our troubles, but to know that God is mighty and sovereign and that He can take care of us. When you think your faith is troubled, the first thing to do is look to God and pray a prayer that God will open up your spirit, why? Because a troubled faith means that you doubt in the power of God. Doubt will make our faith bounded. To fully live a life manifested by faith, we must fix our attention on Jesus. Romans 1:17 tells us that “The Just Shall Live by Faith” is important because we cannot see what the next second of our life holds, but we know who holds our lives. It is therefore notable that we surrender to Jesus and put our trust in Him. Trust, surrender, submit, and live. Lift your faith in God and live in God. Even when nothing looks possible and nothing makes sense, let your faith be your guide.

### **Day 4: FAITH AS A SHIELD**

We read in Ephesians 6:16, *“In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”*

A Roman Soldier’s shield typically measured two-and-a-half feet wide and four feet long. In the battle, the soldier could crouch down and hide behind it when being targeted by arrows. At times, these soldiers would link their shields together so that the entire army could hide behind they threw whatever at them—arrows, javelins, or anything else meant to annihilate them.

So, when does a Christian need to take up his shield? We've been given this answer before, "*So that you will be able to resist in the evil day*" (Ephesians 6: 13). But when exactly is the evil day?

The evil day is the day that all hell breaks loose in your life. It is when your finances are dilapidated; it is when your health is deteriorating, the reality of divorce, it is when you are an emotional wreck and the passion for life is lost. It is when a friend betrays you, overcome by an addiction, and you are baptized in depression.

It is on this day—the evil day that you especially need to be covered; you need a shield. On this day you are more susceptible to the daunting arrows of the evil one (the devil).

The shield of faith enables the believer to live a life of victory in an atmosphere that has the potential to bring harm. It's time to take up your shield and navigate your way forward.

### **Day 5: SO, WHAT IS FAITH?**

The shield of Faith can also be called the shield that is faith because the shield is faith itself.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the "author and perfecter of faith." We read in Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" First John 5: 4 says, "*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—**our faith.***"

From these verses we learn some very important truths. First, we see that Jesus embodies all of faith, from its creation to its perfection. The simple, most direct definition I can give you for faith is that **faith is acting as if God is telling the**

**truth.** Another way of saying it is that faith is acting as if something is so even when it appears not to be so, in order that it might be so simply because God said so. Faith is directly tied to an action done in response to a revealed truth. This brings us back to truth again (Ephesians 6: 14). It's no surprise that the belt of truth was the first piece of armor listed because it interconnects many other pieces with truth. If you don't know the truth, or if you don't act on the truth, the shield of faith is impotent. In order to have faith, you must know and respond to truth. Truth is fundamentally God's viewpoint on a matter.

Over the years, I have heard several people who showed no outward connection to God's truth talk about faith, and yet they still wondered why faith didn't seem to work for them. Maybe you know people like that. They go through life thinking, "Well, if I can just get a little more faith, then what I am trying to do or get will happen." But even a sizeable amount of faith -if we do not tie it to the truth, cannot accomplish anything. Faith is only as valuable as the thing to which we tie it. For example, if we tie faith to your feeling -that is, if you have only as much faith as you feel, that faith will be empty faith. You might feel entirely filled with faith but take no action in response to that faith because you're not believing in what you say you feel.

A person can feel very faith filled but has absolutely no faith. Likewise, a person can feel faith-less but be filled with faith. That person may take a step of faith—or do an action in faith—simply because he or she believes that what God says is true. Faith is never based on how much faith you feel. Faith is always based on your feet—**what you do in response to what you believe.** Faith is acting on the truth, whether I feel the truth. It's acting on the truth whether or not I like the truth. It's also acting on the truth, whether or not I agree with the truth. Simply put, faith is a function of the mind that shows up in the feet. I challenge you today to put legs to your faith.

## Day 6: TRUSTING GOD'S WORD

### Luke 5: 1-11

One of my favorite biblical illustrations of faith carried out regardless of emotions is found in the book of Luke. Jesus was teaching a group that had gathered to listen to Him near the lake of Gennesaret. Because the crowd started pressing in closer to Him, He called out to the owners of a couple of nearby boats. Borrowing their boats, Jesus continued to teach the crowd a short distance away from the shore.

When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, *“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”* Simon answered and said, *“Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing”* (Luke 5:4-5). I’ve been fishing all my life, as far back as I can remember. In fact, these boats are part of the Zebedee Corporation. And beyond that, just so you’re clear, we’ve been fishing all night. The fishes aren’t biting, and if they’re not biting at night, they will not be biting during the day. Throwing our nets down for a catch at this time of day is not only ridiculous, it’s a waste of time and energy. To which Jesus responds, *“Just cast the net on the other side. Do what I say.”*

Simon doesn’t feel as if Jesus’ command makes any sense. Simon’s expertise in fishing—his perspective—fuels his feeling that this makes little sense. Howbeit, Peter does what Jesus instructs. He puts down his nets just because Jesus said to. If you’re familiar with this story, you know what happened next. Peter and the other fishermen got the biggest catch of their lives. *“When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets broke; so, they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink”* (verses 6-7).

What Peter and the other fishermen discovered on that day, and what you and I can discover through their experience, is the principle of faith. Faith means

acting on what God says despite what you know, your background, your experience, or even your education. Faith is a recognition of your own finiteness in relation to God's infiniteness. One of the greatest hindrances to living a life of faith is that many of us simply know too much. We have our Master's degrees in our various subjects, but we cannot know what the Master of all subjects has to say. If we were half as educated in the Word as we are in the world, we would be further along in living a life of victory.

Let's commit ourselves to delighting in God's word and trusting in what His word says despite.

### **Day 7: FAITH THE POINT OF ACCESS**

#### **Romans 5:1- 2**

I want to point out that faith does not make God move. All faith does is access what God has already done. If you think that faith makes God move, you are going to be searching for a way to get more faith. However, as a Christian, you already have all the faith you're ever going to need to access anything God is going to do for you. Jesus said that faith the size of a mustard seed could move a tree or a mountain (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6). " You don't need more faith. You need to know more truth.

This is because faith is the point of access, not the source of power. The power is in what God has already declared and done in grace when He deposited the seed of His divine life within you. As the knowledge and presence of God nourishes that seed, it expands and grows, offering you access to all God has in store for you. All faith is doing is drawing on the grace that God has already put on deposit. So, I want to encourage you to stop looking for more faith. You've got it twisted if you think victory is going to come by somehow getting more faith. Faith accesses the grace that God has already deposited for you. Faith is only as

valuable as the object of that faith. When the object of that faith is God's revealed truth, even the tiniest amount can move mountains.

Often, we believe we need to do good works to access what God has in store for us in His grace. But our works just exhibit our faith. They prove the existence of faith. Faith accesses grace. Works do not access grace because once you attach works to grace, it's no longer grace. Paul reminds us of this in Romans 11:6: *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."* Works exhibit faith, and faith accesses grace (Romans 5:1-2).

They frequently refer Hebrews 11 to as the Hall of Faith. In this chapter we read about men and women who were approved by God because of their faith. The list includes David, Samson, Rahab, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. The principle that's illustrated through their lives is that in every situation, their faith showed up in their feet. None of these individuals simply said that they believed in God or that they believed God would do what He promised. Instead, we read that their actions revealed their responses of faith.

"By faith Abel offered..."

"By faith Noah... prepared..."

"By faith Abraham... obeyed..."

"By faith Isaac blessed..."

"By faith Rahab... welcomed..."

By faith, each one reached down and picked up the shield instead of letting it sit leaning up against a wall.

What would happen to a Roman soldier if he said that he believed his shield would protect him, but he never grabbed it? He would soon be dead. Habakkuk 2:4 says, *"The righteous shall live by his faith."* To live by faith means that faith

becomes our regular way of thinking, doing, and being. Faith becomes more than merely acknowledging that the shield is there and that it's an effective form of protection. Faith means grabbing it and using it to its fullest potential. This is the faith that shows up in the way you walk, move, talk, and decide.

Living by faith means that faith becomes your normative way of life. It's what Paul is referring to when he says, "*Walk by faith*" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Have you ever seen someone who has a distinct way of walking? When they walk towards you, you recognize their walk before you even see their face. The same should be true about believers. We should have a "faith walk" that sets us apart from everyone else.

### **Day 8: CRISIS FAITH**

#### **2 Kings 4:18 - 26**

They often display unusual feats of strength during difficulty. A sudden surge of adrenalin can cause an apparent weakling to do things he didn't think he could do. We do not realize what power works within us until we call it upon to respond. So, it is with our faith.

I'm reminded of Paul's words found in Ephesians 3:20, "*Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*" Many do not know the potential of their faith because they have had nothing to challenge and test it before. Nothing tests your faith like a crisis. The Shunammite woman had a crisis moment in her life. Yet she was perceptive; she built the Prophet a room in their house. She and her husband extended to God's man. In doing this, they made room for God. She received a promise that she would be with child the following year. However, verse 18-20 highlighted that she had a problem; the son that was prophesied grew sick and died. She was not expecting this. It came on her blindside. That's the way problems are. We are rarely prepared for trouble. We are not immune

against trouble. The servant is not greater than the master. Even Jesus had trouble and difficulties.

She followed a procedure, as we see in (vs 21-25). She went to the right place. She put the child on the bed of the man of God by faith. She wasn't satisfied with the servant Gehazi; she needed the man of God. Friends, do not settle for good when there is great. Take your problem to Jesus. Faith produces faith; she bowed herself to the ground according to (verse 37). It is not complete until we have praised Him for all He has done.

Remember, when you face crisis in your life, that God is the master of all your crises. Like the Shunammite woman, take your problem to the Lord in faith and you will find the answer to your needs.

### **Day 9: FAITH IN THE PRESENT TENSE**

#### **HEBREWS 11:1-6**

To some people, faith is something that will be out in the future whenever it is needed, or it is sometimes relegated to the past where it worked for someone else. We must bring faith from the past and out of the future into the present, or it will never work in our lives.

The writer of Hebrews deliberately phrased the text in a positive sense. ***“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.”*** The word substance means, “Something to stand on.” We have a sure foundation called God's Word that gives us confidence for each situation.

We do not have faith in faith, but faith in the Word of God. As we live by faith, we are fulfilling the word that declares: *“Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him”* (Hebrews 10:38).

It is impossible to please God without faith.

## **Day 10: CHOOSING FAITH OVER FEAR**

### **MARK 4: 35-41**

Remember when you were in school, and the teacher gave everyone a pop quiz? The purpose of that quiz was not to ask you questions you didn't know the answers to; rather, it was to test your knowledge of things you should have already known.

So, it is with trusting God. His Word informs us about who He is, how He is, and how He desires to meet us at the point of our need. Consider the story of Jesus and His disciples in Mark 4:35-41. They went out on the sea in a boat when a terrible storm arose with no forecast from the meteorologist. The disciples feared for their lives, and the one whom they claimed to trust was sleeping in the boat. Eventually, He awoke and calmed the storm, and it amazed them.

But why was this a big deal? He had already revealed who He was to them, and still they were afraid. They knew the answers, but when the test was administered, they freaked out. Faith requires action. It means responding actively to the truth you know inside.

Today you may have all kinds of storms blowing and causing all kinds of havoc. But regardless of what storm it is, please remember that the God who loves you can deliver you from it, and He will see you through to calmer seasons.

## **Day 11: FAITH THAT OUTLASTS ANYTHING YOU MAY GO THROUGH**

### **2 Corinthians 1:8**

There is a myth in Christianity that I often hear people say—maybe you have even said it yourself—and that is, “God will not put more on me than I can bear.” Some people even think it's in the Bible. But let me debunk that myth right now

with a look at the life of Paul. *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction... that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life”* (2 Corinthians 1:8).

If you share similar feelings today, you are in good company. Paul was a man who served God, knew God, and pursued His calling at all costs. That right there should show to us that a life of service to our King doesn't guarantee a life without difficulties, sorrow or sacrifice. In fact, the opposite is typically true.

God allows crisis situations in our lives because in them, we discover Him in a way we have never known before. When He wants to move you to a new level of intimacy with Him, He will typically use a crisis. Trust Him, even when things don't seem to make sense, knowing that His presence is powerful enough to turn everything around—suddenly. And when He does, your faith will grow, and God will get greater glory, and it will reveal the knowledge of Him.

## **Day 12: TRUSTING THE PILOT: God has you in His hands**

### **Colossians 3:15**

The story is told of a flight that experienced unusual turbulence, tossing the airplane side to side in a powerful gust of wind. Clouds black as night. Lightning and thunder. Fear and panic baptized the passengers, it was all screams. No one felt safe.

Except for one small child. He sat there preoccupied with his notebook, drawing himself climbing a tree. Looking at him, you never would have imagined he was on a plane in the middle of a turbulence. A passenger nearby noticed him and wondered how he could be so calm. So, she asked the young boy, “Aren't you afraid?” He just looked up from his paper for a moment, smiled, and said, no!!! “Why not?” the lady investigated curiously, with fingers grasping her seat.

“Because my dad is the pilot,” he answered effortlessly, then returned to his drawing.

Sometimes life seems out of control, but knowing who sits at the controls ought to usher in a heart of peace. The word *peace* gets used a lot, but we often misunderstand its real meaning. In the Middle East, peace stands for something more like a truce bringing a temporary reprieve from war. To a young mother, it could stand for that hour when the toddlers take their naps. Peace means different things to different people.

The peace Jesus offers is like no other. His peace produces internal calm amid external chaos. We experience His peace when we trade in our fears of the storm for a healthy fear and reverence of Him. When we shift our gaze from the sea to the Savior, peace ensues.

Paul told us to respond to God’s peace the same way the storm responded to Jesus that night on the Sea of Galilee. “*And let the peace of the Messiah... control your hearts*” (Col. 3:15). The Greek word used for *control* means “to umpire.” We all know what an umpire does. He declares the way things are. Whatever he says it is—a no ball, a foul, an out, or a run—that’s what it is.

Likewise, whatever Jesus says about a matter, that’s what it is. It’s settled. So, when He says, “*Be courageous! I have conquered the world*” (John 16:33). It’s settled, and we should respond with courage.

Relationships may falter, jobs may cease, health may decline, the economy could continue to dip and turn and your world may be falling apart, but you don’t have to fall apart with it. You can’t always control what happens to you or into what storms you may fly, but you have control over how you respond. Responding to Jesus’ presence and power in your life allows you to let go of your fear and replace it with faith in His peace. It doesn’t mean you won’t have problems, but it means your problems won’t have you.

## Day 13: THREE PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

### Mark 5: 25–34

Everything in life has a principle. A principle is a fundamental law upon which we base all else. As there are natural principles, so there are spiritual principles. One principle will not work without the other. These principles interlock and work together to help the believer get to a place of receiving from God. What are these principles?

#### 1. Say It!

- a. The first thing that the woman with the issue of blood did was say it.
  - 1. This is what she said, “If I may but touch the hem of His clothes.”
  - 2. She had to do this for herself. Nobody could speak her faith for her.
- b. This woman received what she confessed.
  - 1. Everything else was confessing her death.
  - 2. Everyone else was making her funeral plans.
  - 3. She confessed her deliverance.
- c. *“You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth.”* (Proverbs 6:2)

#### 2. Do It!

- a. It is not enough to merely “say it”. We move on to this second principle: Do it!

1. The woman with the issue of blood would have died if she had only “said it.”
2. Positive confession alone is nothing more than a practice in futility.
3. James 2:17: Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

This woman knew no theology; but somehow, she had grasped these three principles, and she acted. Notice Mark 5:27: *“When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.”*

Words are meaningless without corresponding actions on our part.

### **3. Receive It!**

- a. “Immediately her bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that it freed her from her suffering.”
- b. First, the woman said it; next she did it; then she received it.
- c. Faith... Many people thronged Jesus, but only one touched Him. There is a difference in the touch of faith that is supported by a need.
- d. For this sick woman it was do or die, Christ or coffin, victim or victor.

She laid the foundation for her victory. What ground work are you laying?