

Building a Biblical Faith
Lesson 5 - Keep Your Faith Active
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Introduction: We face an adversary that never gives up.

A. Satan is ruthless and powerful. **(1 Pt 5:8-9)**

1. As powerful as he is, he cannot be any match for the one whose faith allows the living God to be his protector!
2. One of the things Jesus wanted men to know was that He had overcome the wicked one! **(Jn 12:31-32; 14:30; 16:31-33)**
3. Satan already has the world, now his main focus now is on the church.
(1 Jn 5:18-19)

B. When we see clearly the unseen spiritual battle around us we will remember the value of a Biblical faith!

1. John reminded Christians of all ages what they had overcome. **(1 Jn 2:13-14)**
2. He also reminded them that the battle is never over in this life! **(1 Jn 2:15-17)**
3. What is Satan's battle plan to defeat the faithful Christian? Like Samson before he wants the Christian in overconfidence to discard his strength!

I. A Biblical faith must stay active or we will be lost.

A. How and when was Abraham justified by faith?

1. Abraham was "justified by faith" when he believed God's promises in **Gen. 15:6. (Rom 4:3)**
2. Abraham was "justified by faith" when he offered up his son. **(Jas 2:21-24)**
3. These passages are not telling us when Abraham became a child of God! He was already "justified by faith" before both of these events! **(Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8)**
4. The lesson we learn is that we must keep on having a living faith! When we fail to do that we fail to be "justified by faith!"
5. What kind of faith saves? It is the faith of Abraham! **(Rom 4:11-12)**

B. We must always have a teachable heart!

1. We are all "leaky buckets." If we stop studying then we will drift! **(Heb 2:1-3)**
 - a. Men rarely depart from the Lord overnight. I have heard it said of others: "They have stopped studying". These people are vulnerable.
 - b. What is your attitude when another disagrees with you? This will say much concerning where your heart is at! What would Jesus do?
2. We must have a willingness to hear.
 - a. This is a hard heart that Satan gladly removes the word from! Could you be wrong? How would you know? **(Matt 13:19; 2 Cor 4:3-4)**
 - b. When you refuse to give a fair hearing to another, you show disdain for the truth. **(Prov 18:13)**
 - c. This sense of fairness ought to be applied in dealing with people in all circumstances! Even the pagan Romans would do this! **(Acts 23:35)**
 - d. It is a common effort of Satan to poison the minds of others before they hear the gospel. Sadly this even works with some in the church. **(Acts 17:5)**

3. We must maintain a commitment to principle. (**2 John 1:1-6; 3 John 1:1-4**)
 - a. Some make sincerity an end within itself. It is not. (**Acts 23:1**)
 - b. Too many are taught sincerity is simply following the emotion of the moment. The one consistent thing about emotions is that they will change.
 - c. Far too many "stand" where they do as a result of weighing consequences rather than weighing the truth. Why are you here? (**Jn 16:1-3**)
- C. We must maintain a fervent love for God.
 1. As in marriage so it is with our commitment with the Lord, we must keep our first love! (**Rev 2:4-5**)
 2. How much time do we have? How many issues can we struggle with in a day? It is in these areas that Satan will win over many of us. (**Matt 6:33**)
 3. What is important and what is essential?
 4. Because of my love for God I will be approachable. (**Jas 3:17-18**)

Class Discussion:

1. How and when was Abraham justified by faith?
2. What attitudes will a teachable heart display?
3. Should you let others talk to you even when you see an attitude that is not good? Why or why not?
4. Why do some Christians in time become unteachable?

II. Do not give in to fear.

- A. There are two kinds of fear described in the Bible.
 1. There is a good kind of fear that we call "Reverence for God". We cannot go to heaven without this fear. (**Prov 1:7; Acts 13:16, 26**)
 2. There is a fear that can cause us to not trust God. The lost have this fear. (**Rev 21:8**) **ASV**
 3. What is fear? a. A feeling of agitation and anxiety caused by the presence or imminence of danger. b. A state or condition marked by this feeling: living in fear. c. A feeling of disquiet or apprehension. - American Heritage Dictionary
- B. Sources of fear.
 1. It is based upon ignorance. (**1 John 4:18-19**)
 - a. When we know God and his promises we can see what are the true dangers of life. (**Luke 12:4-5**)
 - b. When we know the presence of God we can face the unknowns of our lives. What did Jesus often tell His disciples and others? (**Mark 5:36; John 14:27**)

"Fear always springs from ignorance." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

 2. It is based upon dwelling on the bad things of the past. (**Phil 3:13-14**)
 - a. When one cannot forget the bad things done to him, he becomes its slave!
 - b. When one will not act because of his past failures, he will always fail.
 3. It can be taught and shared by others.
 - a. What was the great sin of the ten spies Israel sent? (**Num 13:32-14:4**)

- b. Sometimes the "leadership" of the church is like this.
- 4. What is the good kind of fear based upon?
 - a. True knowledge.
 - b. True wisdom based on faith in God and His warnings.

C. The Fruits of Fear

1. It will sell you short. (**Matt 25:25**)

- a. What was this man afraid of? What did he get? "Fear makes come true that which one is afraid of." -- Victor Frankl
- b. We must act and not sit during difficult times.

Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

---- Franklin D. Roosevelt

- c. Without proper leadership and example a church often follows the example of fear. We need to see men of faith!
 - d. Ex. - "Let us avoid any trouble!" Often this means running from our problems and sitting and doing nothing.
2. It will cause you to forsake reason. (**Matt 25:25**)

- a. Fear painted a picture here that blocked reason. If he has laid out all options then he surely would have chosen the right path.
- b. Fear is blinding because it only sees the harm and stops all action.

"No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear." - Edmund Burke

c. Consider the power of this fear. (**Mt 14:26; Matt 28:4; Lk 9:45; 21:26**)

Charlie Brown: "I have a new philosophy. I'm only going to dread one day at a time."

3. It will cause you to strike out based upon your fears.

- a. What was one reason the Jewish leaders killed Jesus? (**John 11:48-50**)
- b. Too many strike out against others without there even being a threat!
- c. How many have said: "Everyone in the church is talking about me!"
- d. Some out of fear will never face their sin. (**1 Tim 5:24**)

D. Develop the right kind of fear. (**Heb 12:28**)

"The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else." - Oswald Chambers

1. Deal with all sin in your life. (**Prov 28:1**)

"Fear is tax that conscience pays to guilt." - George Sewell

2. Do not accept the past ways simply because this is what you have always done!

"We all live in the protection of certain cowardices which we call our principles." - Mark Twain

Class Discussion:

1. What is the root cause of fear?
2. How can the knowledge of God help eliminate fear? (**1 Jn 4:17-19**)
3. Why are many Christians afraid to talk with others about the Lord?
4. How does fear keep us from having leaders in the church?

Risking Much

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings is to risk exposing our true self.
To place your ideas, your dreams, before the crowd is to risk loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
To hope is to risk despair.
To try at all is to risk failure.

But risk we must, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The man, the woman, who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing, is nothing.

III. Refuse to "accept deliverance."

A. Satan will also give us a "way of escape!" (Heb 11:35)

1. We will often be pressured by our own brethren to line up with the world.
2. Some try to intimidate Christians by saying "we will not be able to get enough Christians to fit into a telephone booth if we believe this!" "A man who gives in when he is wrong is wise; a man who gives in when he is right is a coward."

B. We must not join those who do nothing. (1 Cor 15:58)

1. Even though evil is often in the minority, it often wins because of those who refuse to get involved.
2. It is rare where numbers alone determines the outcome!

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." - Edmund Burke

3. The apostles were but a few men, but look at what God did through them. (Acts 17:6).

C. I must be zealous and fervent in the work of the Lord. (Titus 2:11-14; Rev 3:15-17)

1. Too many Christians and too many churches are doing nothing.
2. Some have decided that Christianity is a spectator sport.
 - a. They sit on the sidelines instead of actively participating and working for the good.
 - b. If good wins, they join in the celebration though they did nothing to produce the victory.
 - c. If evil wins, they will complain long and loud though their own apathy helped produce the undesirable result.

Class Discussion:

1. What kind of escape does Satan offer us?
2. Which is better: a zeal without knowledge or a knowledge without zeal?
3. Why are many Christians afraid to become involved in the Lord's work?

Conclusion: Never forget where you have come from! (2 Pt 1:10-12)