



Growing in Faith - Part 2

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you abounds toward each other" (2 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJ).

This is the second of a two-part series on growing in faith. In Teaching Letter 50, I began sharing some things we can do that will increase our faith in God and in His Word. You can find that letter at sonjahuntministries.com on the Teaching Letters page. Two Scripture lists follow Letter 50.

Before I continue, I want to mention why we would want more faith. First, great faith brings glory to God. As I stated in Letter 50, when we give attention to laying a faith foundation for our spiritual house on the solid Rock (Jesus), our house will stand solid and steady when storms beat on it. Thus, secondly, faith helps us to overcome adversity. Fourthly, great faith pleases God.

When we stand strong through a storm because of our faith in God, that's a good witness to all who see it. God receives the glory and praise. If, on the other hand, we give no attention to laying a proper faith foundation for our spiritual house and life's storms bring it crashing down, we do not give a good witness to the world about God's ability to uphold and keep us.

The status of our faith (I'm not referring to faith for salvation, but to overcoming faith.) will be revealed by the storms of life. Though we lose all earthly possessions or earthly supports, if even then "it is well with our soul," as the song says, we are winners, God is glorified and God is pleased. The psalmist wrote that God "has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant" (Psalm 35:27 NKJ). That is true both in the spiritual and in the natural.

Now I will return to some things we can do to grow in faith. In Teaching Letter 50, I mentioned three things: (1) pray for more faith; (2) approach God's Word with an attitude of believing every word; and (3) meditate on Scripture regarding

faith and believing. In this letter I will mention three more.

4. To help our faith to increase, we need to magnify God's greatness. To magnify something is to focus on it to make it larger in our perspective. A magnifying glass doesn't actually make an object larger; however, we see it larger. Our God is great and mighty—there's no doubt about that. However, we often need to *see* Him greater and mightier than we currently do. Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20 NKJ). Paul was magnifying God's greatness for them.

Every now and then we need to pause to think about God's greatness. It matters what we think about who God is, what He has done and what He is able to do. If we have a small perspective of our God, we will have a correspondingly small faith. When we gain a greater understanding of how big and mighty our God is, we can answer with confidence the question: Is God able to help me right now in my "impossible" situations?

Here again, we return to the truth of God's Word as the source for our knowledge about God—His magnitude, His power, His wisdom, His knowledge, His ability and His accomplishments. Other sources may offer varying degrees of truth—or sometimes none at all. Textbooks, TV commentators, teachers, even preachers—if they teach anything other than what Scripture teaches—can weaken our faith. The truth about God's greatness—His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence—is the soil in which we plant and grow great faith.

If you would like to peruse some of what God's Word says about His greatness, I have collected a short list of Scriptures on the subject. To access this list go to the Teaching Letters page on the website at sonjahuntministries.com.

Here are a couple of my favorite Scriptures about God's greatness:

"There is no one like the God of Jesburun, who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!' " (Deuteronomy 33:26, 27 NIV).

"But the Lord is with me as a mighty awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten" (Jeremiah 20:11 NKJ).

5. A fifth way to increase our faith is to lay siege to doubt, fear and unbelief. "Lay siege" is a military term depicting a strategy for attacking and eventually pulling down a stronghold. In a siege, an army completely surrounds a city and uses whatever means available to break through the walls and capture or destroy the city. The army coming against the city is usually committed to remain at the offensive until victory comes, no matter how long it takes.

Doubt, fear and unbelief can be a stronghold of Satan in our lives that will work against our faith. We, however, have weapons of warfare that are "mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 NKJ). We have the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit and is a highly effective weapon with which we can lay siege against any stronghold and eventually defeat it.

Laying siege, however, is not for the faint of heart. A siege can take a while, in some cases years. It requires commitment. Using our spiritual weapons, we can win if we do not give up. And we

have the Holy Spirit to help us. You may access a list of Scriptures on the Teaching Letters page, following Teaching Letter 51 on the website at sonjahuntministries.com. With these and others you may collect, you can lay siege against the stronghold of doubt, fear and unbelief.

6. The final way I will mention to increase our faith is to magnify God's goodness.

Almost without knowing it, doubting God's goodness can creep into our thinking. Daily we are inundated with stories of horrific abuse and other tragedies (if we listen to or read the news). Life can seem filled with pain and suffering that overshadows the goodness of God that likewise is all around us. The question is, which will we magnify?

If we want to keep our sanity and build our faith, we must magnify God's goodness. We must believe in God's goodness. That does not mean we stick our heads in the sand like an ostrich and pretend evil does not exist. No, in the face of evil we remember that "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4 NKJ). And we do as the psalmist directed us: "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 136:1 NKJ). In fact, in 26 verses, the psalmist says 26 times that His mercy endures forever. God's mercy is an aspect of His goodness. Try reading that psalm if you want some practice at magnifying God's goodness!

For those whose personal life experiences have been extremely hurtful, belief in God's goodness will often come slowly. If you are one of those, don't give up. God IS good! And His mercy does indeed endure forever!

God's blessings to you as you grow in your faith! SH

GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

Teaching Letter 51

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