

The Armor of God – Faith – Teaching

(Recap: If someone wasn't there, encourage them to ask someone for notes.)

Really quickly: Last week we talked about peace sandals. It was an intense topic about peace, forgiveness, offense, and strife. I don't want to ask anyone to share personal things. So, I'll just ask if anyone was blessed last week as they made some changes?

These lessons are about bringing you closer to the Lord and helping you to have an effective prayer life. Often times, like remodeling, you have to tear something down to rebuild bigger and better. Be encouraged, because making changes is like growing pains, the process doesn't feel good, but the end result will be well worth it. If you'll let the Lord, His grace is always there to see you through. Don't pull away when you learn that you have to make a change but run to Him. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:6-7 that God corrects those that He loves. The same goes for children. We've all seen children that their parents refuse to correct. Makes you want to take off your shoe for them!! What do we think? You don't care about those kids because they're playing in the street, throwing things, and mouthing off. *Just remember taking correction is the mark of a mature son or daughter.*

This week is a much lighter and exciting topic, **shield of faith**. Next will be the **helmet of salvation**, and lastly, we'll cover hopefully everyone's favorite, **the sword** which is the Word of God. Keep bringing something to take notes with, we still have important information to remember.

Ephesians 6:16 NKJV

above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

There are two types of shields that a Roman soldier might have been using in Paul's day. The first is a Scutum, and it covered the entire body. The second type of shield was called a Parma. It was only about 36" wide and was mainly used by the lowest class level of the army, and also for those mounted on a horse. When the army was advancing in a group, they held their Scutum, body shields, side-by-side, and additional rows of men holding Parmas, circular shields, above their heads protected them against an airstrike of arrows or fiery darts. This was called a testudo (tortoise) formation.

I think the depiction of faith using Roman soldiers' shields is perfect! Is your faith big like the Scutum shield, or is it smaller like the Parma shield? No matter the shields, when we stand together in battle like the testudo (tortoise) formation we become an impenetrable force against the fiery darts of the wicked one.

What is faith? **Hebrews 11:1 NKJV** defines it as

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

Faith is the action of taking the Lord at His Word, believing He's going to perform what He promised in His Word. I'm sure we've all heard faith scriptures many times in church. The bigger problem I notice with people is poisoned faith. That's really what I want to focus on, before we swing back to strong faith.

The Bible is written on a level **every adult can understand**. I'll give you a basic guide, not every scholar will agree with this list, but just to give you an idea of reading difficulty:

3rd grade – New International Reader's Version

3rd grade – New Century Version

4th grade – The Message Bible

5th grade – God's Word Translation

6th grade – New Living Translation

7th grade – New King James Version

8th grade – New International Version

10th grade – English Standard Version

11th grade – New American Standard Bible

12th grade – King James Version

The Holy Spirit inspired men to write on such a simple level so that *all* men, woman, and children through time can understand, educated and uneducated. **We can read, understand, and interpret the Bible for ourselves.** Often times instead of us interpreting the Bible for ourselves, taking the Word literally, we allow others to put their interpretations on top of God's Word or worse yet use their life experiences to interpret the Word for us. When we respect the minister, sometimes we automatically accept their view as Biblical truth without putting it on trial against the Word as we should.

(Give an example of someone who **destroyed their faith** in scripture, and then changed their mind when trouble came. If you need an example, my true story is below.)

Example:

This is a story from a minister that is perfectly fitting for *poisoned faith*.

Years ago I had a friend on a mission to make me believe Paul was blind. He wasn't referring to the light of Christ that shone around him and temporarily made him blind, but the end of Paul's life. He would point to this scripture and that scripture attempting to convince me with his added commentary. I would jab back how he's inventing this story. He told me I was willingly blind to this truth, because I had itching ears and only wanted to hear what made me feel good. I won't discuss this misguided doctrine. All I will share is this conflict did force me study Greek words and look into ancient culture as well which I found clues in the Old Testament. After weeks of this argument with my piles of study notes and him repeating the same unfounded blabber, I let out a very frustrated, "SO WHAT? So what is the point of all this? So what if he was?" After he chuckled in what he believed was my defeat, my friend's poisoned faith oozed out of his mouth, "So if God wouldn't heal Paul, what makes you or anyone else think that God will heal them?" **John 10:10** came to mind, how the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. My friend's faith in healing was absolutely poisoned. His conclusion did not line up with scripture.

What does the Bible say? **Exodus 15:26** "...For I am the Lord who heals you." If you read the Hebrew, it says, "I am Yahweh The Physician." Did time change this? **Malachi 3:6** "For I am the Lord, I do not change..." **Hebrews 13:8** "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." God didn't change. Jesus didn't change. My friend changed his beliefs. When sickness came to his family, his heart was filled with fear for his unsaved father's life. He immediately came to my house asking my healing-believing family for prayer.

I thought that was a good story, because we can see how this minister's friend worked on destroying his faith shield with his fancy apologetics and theories, instead of building up his shield with the simple truth of the Word.

Another way poisoned faith tries to creep into our lives is through, what I call, "**radio comments.**" They're seemingly harmless remarks that I've often heard on Christian radio shows through the years.

"Don't drive faster than your angel can fly." Scientists believe the edge of the universe is about 46 billion light years away in every direction. Angels are ascending and descending from Heaven. They're moving pretty fast! I wouldn't recommend insulting the being assigned to help you. What if your assigned angel has no sense of humor? Uh..oh.. If you accidentally made that radio joke, tell your angel you're sorry, superman has nothin on him!

"Just trust God," is the happy perfect answer to everything on the radio. This is a **huge faith poisoner** in disguise. It's a whole topic of study in itself, but if trust God was the answer to everything, we wouldn't need to study or memorize the Word. We never see anyone dealing with demons by trusting God. We never read faith is built by trust, or that we need to build any trust at all. In the Hebrew language, they used concrete words, things you can touch and feel. The abstract concept of trust came in with the Greek philosophy, and it's not just part of our speech but it's also embedded in our thinking. It's a very interesting study, we'll see if the Holy Spirit leads us into that next. So, in short, it's faith poisoning, because we're not told to sit around and trust, or even to believe and have faith for everything. **Different situations call for different responses.** That's why we

read the life manual, the Bible. We just talked about fruit in the peace sandal study. We can't believe God for fruit. We can't pray for fruit. We can't trust God for fruit. Fruit is grown. *"Just trust God..."* is not the answer for everything.

This one is from women, ***"I'm a princess. If God is King and He's my Father, then I'm a princess."*** No, that's a step down. A princess is a political figurehead with no real power. Sure, she's above the peasants, but that's about it. Unless someone is living in a movie, a princess does what she's told by the king, queen, or prince. Not only is she told what to do, where to go, and how to behave but even worse who to marry. Her life is not her own. Romans 5:17 tells us we're supposed to reign in this life *by* Jesus, who is the King. **We, the church, are the acting body of the King!** (Colossians 1:18) When it comes to your spiritual authority over demonic forces, never take a step down from ***"acting body of the King."*** You represent the King. You have a right to use the name of Jesus, which is signing His name so to speak, and a prince or princess will *never* have that full right.

"God is in control." This is another very popular faith poison. We went over this already in the truth belt, and I mentioned it's often used as scripture to say, *"God is sovereign."* When something bad happens, people try to comfort themselves and others with this saying. God is not in control. If someone believes He's the ringleader behind all the hurt and bad things happening in their life, how can they believe He loves them and wants to help? God is *not* in control, that's the reason we are to pray! *We're asking the Lord with our faith to shift the situation for Heaven to manifest on our behalf.* If someone truly believes God is in control, then **their biggest enemy is God Himself.** They're not fully thinking it through, but if God is in control, then He's the thief, the killer, and destroyer not the devil. Control is the tactic of an enemy, a political leader, or an abuser. The Bible talks about **being free in Christ.** Control and freedom are *opposite* words.

What do we do when we hear faith poison? Paul tells us what to do in **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** NKJV

4For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Any voice in your life that claims to have a different way or different meaning than the Word clearly states, it must be cast down immediately in your mind. I don't mean shout out in a church you're visiting, *"Pastor, I rebuke you!"* No, please don't do that to anyone. In your own heart say, *"No! That's not what the Word says. I do not accept this."* It's so important to do something with bad teaching and bad comments, and not allow those thoughts to linger around. When trials of this life come, those words somehow come to surface immediately and start talking to you. If not those voices, then people will come, *"You know, that happened to my aunt, and she died. There's a pastor that lost his only son too in a horrible car accident and they can't get over it."* And my favorite part after they speak against the Word, *"I'll pray for you!"* No! Please, no!

How do we strengthen our faith shield, especially if we accidentally let it be spray painted by the devil, carved in by an ex-friend, or chunks got knocked off in a fierce battle?

Romans 10:17 NKJV So then **faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Hearing the Word of God is what will repair and build up our faith shield. It's *not* just what you hear in your ear, but when His Word sinks down into your heart faith will come. The Word works! Whatever you're facing in life that you need, find what the Word says on that particular topic and read those scriptures again and again until you feel strong faith come upon you. You don't need to seek a minister, seek the Holy Spirit. First thing to do is check in with the Holy Spirit if you have any fear, doubt, or unbelief. Those are big faith hinderances. Then ask the Holy Spirit if you have any poisoned faith. I know it's difficult to ask for correction, but when you're in a desperate situation like someone is in the hospital or the bank is about to come for someone's house... Please write this down... that's the time to check in with the Holy Spirit, then go back to **2 Corinthians 10:5** and pray, *"I cast down fear, doubt, unbelief, or anything that's exalted itself above the Word in my life, whether I remember it or not."* That's praying according to scripture. **He will reveal it to you, because He loves you, He is on your side and He's for you.** Then you can move on to asking and feeding on faith.

There is a *really* good reason why I encourage everyone to take notes. When something bad happens, you can flip back through your notes on faith and say, “*Here are the scriptures, how to pray, and what to do after I pray. I planted these scripture seeds two months ago.*” If you don’t have a notetaking habit, then you’re left in the hands of Google and YouTube ministers, or waiting on the pastor or friend to help you. **These studies are scripture training sessions on working with the Holy Spirit, and the Word to get your answers from Heaven.** My heart is for everyone to be fully equipped to fight and help others.

Let’s look at some faith scriptures about fear...

Mark 5:21-43 NKJV

³⁵While He (Jesus) was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” ³⁶As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.”

Jesus is telling Jairus, don’t consider the bad news. He wanted Jairus to look at Him *where there is no fear*, love, healing, and answers. We need to **practice putting our focus on the Lord**. Our listening skills need to be practiced regularly just like a football player must practice regularly! When game day comes and they run out on the field, everyone will know if they showed up to practice or not. Doesn’t matter how good that player was in the past season, past season practice won’t help the player in this season! **Not practicing can turn the best of us into a weeping pile on the floor.** When a bad situation arises, the first thing I say is, “*I’ve been praying!*” What am I saying? The Lord saw this coming. The Lord’s got this. There is already an answer waiting for me!

How do we practice putting our focus on the Lord? One easy way is during praise and worship. Focus on the Holy Spirit inside you singing with you. Focus on singing to Jesus or focus on being in throne room at the feet of the Father. *ding* We hear a cellphone text and wonder, “*Is it important?*” Then we have to touch it. Another way to practice focus is reading your Bible, without having your mind wonder off every couple lines. The Words of the Bible are alive, literally living Words, that enter your spirit as you read. (Proverbs 4:22) That’s how faith and why faith comes by hearing, you’re literally building something in your spirit. And lastly, you can practice focus by praying undistracted for 2 mins... or maybe 5! Think about Paul and Silas (Acts 16) in jail, beaten with their backs bleeding. They “*prayed and sang praises.*” How difficult do you think it was for them to focus? Back to the difficulty Jairus must have had being told his daughter is dead, while Jesus told him to focus on something different. *We know* Jesus raised the dead, but *Jairus didn’t know* that. Write this down: **Whatever has our attention, that’s the voice we will hear the loudest, especially in a desperate situation.** For people who love binge watching shows, then that person will feel alone and without direction. For people whose focus is a friend, then that friend’s voice will be above all else. For people who sadly use weed, hard drugs, or alcohol, that’s right where they’ll run. Everyone here showed up for the study, and we know our focus is on Jesus, so thankfully we can’t fully relate, but we do sometimes get distracted, and we can have a mixed mess, “*Let me call my 3 spirit-filled friends I hang out with to pray.*” There are times I start to pray for people, and I just know in my spirit they didn’t pray. How? Because there isn’t a fully peaceful feeling, it feels a little frustrated. I stop and ask them, “*Did you pray?*” “*Well, no... I called you.*” What’s **James 5:13** say?

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

It’s NOT that God doesn’t want you to call a friend, call a praying aunt, or call a pastor; He’s waiting to hear from YOU first. James is trying to tell us how silly it is to run to someone else first. Do you get excited and text a friend, “*I’m happy, shout woowhooo for me!*” No, you shout, “*WOOOP! WOOOP!*” Then call your friend, your family, and then tell the cat to woop-woop with you, right? That’s all James is saying. Write this down: **Make sure God hears from you first.**

Let’s move on to mountain moving faith and how to take your faith to **the mountain moving level, believing that the impossible is possible.**

Hebrews 11:1-2 NKJV

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

Evidence of things not seen. We have to ask ourselves, when will you believe your prayer is answered? *After* you have it? While you're in the *middle* of getting it? *Before* you get it? Most heathens can believe during and after but being bold enough to believe the *before* is what sets our faith apart from the rest.

Mark 11, I recommend reading this whole fig tree passage again and again asking the Holy Spirit to give you a deeper understanding of faith concerning Jesus' teaching. The only way we can understand this is by revelation, because it defies natural human thinking.

²³**For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.** ²⁴**Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

PLEASE DO NOT RUN SCREAMING that I am going to do "*name it and claim it*". No! No!! No!!! No!!!! I have spent countless hours with this scripture. The Lord has given me some revelation knowledge of what Jesus is teaching here. Hold on! It's good, I promise!

Let's talk about name it and claim it, blab it and grab it. I do believe some people have gotten off track and made this teaching weird to the point people want to shut down immediately and run screaming. Let's hose this teaching down with other scriptures and see what's left.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We talked about this already, however much hearing we're doing will determine how much faith we have, unless you're for some strange reason just outright refusing to believe. The second part of this scripture, **hearing by the word of God**, in context is referring to the gospel.

What is this mountain moving faith?

The mountain moving faith, over the top faith, is when you start saying what you believe will come to pass. WHY?? Because **faith comes by hearing**. Jesus is teaching, **say it so your own words can produce strong faith**. This way **you won't be moved by the mountain, but your mountain will be moved by you**. There is nothing weird about this at all. Ask yourself this, why does a coach give his team a pep talk before the game? **Faith comes by hearing**.

I'm not suggesting you stand out in your driveway and say, "*A lambo will appear. A lambo will appear.*" NO! I'd be the first to tell you that you ain't getting it. "*I want a trip to Hawaii. I want a trip to Hawaii. I want a trip to Hawaii.*" Don't, because you won't get it. **What if you want a lambo or a trip to Hawaii?**

First question is, if you want the Lord to give it to you, **are you putting a lambo's worth of tithes and offerings into ministries?** I'm not suggesting you pay for it, but the Bible does say in **Matthew 7:2**

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Are you taking care of God's House so that He *CAN* bless you this way? I know a woman that put her entire paycheck into the church offering. Her husband had a good job, and they tithed off his check and gave offerings too. If they received a free trip to Hawaii, cool! If they received a free car, awesome! Right? If you're not a giver at all, I wouldn't suggest you even believe God for \$10. Why? Because your prayer will fail, and you'll say the scriptures don't work. Secondly, do you qualify for that trip to Hawaii according to scripture?

Psalms 37:4-5

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵**Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.**

Is that trip a selfish request for gain? Do you really love the Lord and take delight in Him and His Word? Did you already commit your way to Him, or were you going to do that for the free trip? **You know the slimy guy**

who dates the rich girl because he wants her to buy him things? Yeah, I want to discourage this behavior, because **you can grieve the Holy Spirit. You can hurt His feelings, it's in Ephesians 4:30.**

I just want to add this, many years ago, a very poor girl prayed and asked God for a trip to Hawaii. Her mother won a trip from a radio station back in the early 90s. She loved God and believed God for it. She said, "*God, we're poor, and we don't get to go anywhere. Can we please win that trip?*" That night, her mother's name was announced in the bar, but being Christians, they didn't go. They found out the next morning and also found out they won \$300 in travelers' checks. I shared that story to say, "**For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged.**" No one knew what was in that poor girl's heart. She said it was a huge turning point in her life at 10, because she realized God is real, He hears, and she doesn't have to spend the rest of her life poor with ripped shoes, and sometimes no food. The righteous prayer of a 10 year old was answered.

Make it a habit to never judge who gets a free trip to Hawaii, a free lambo, or anything else. Our walk with the Lord isn't about material things, but it's about loving and serving God. **Matthew 6:33** says,

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

If someone has made their walk about seeking righteousness and things, it's not our business. We need to keep our focus on Christ and our eyes in our own lane, because when we judge, we bring judgment on ourselves. We're basically saying, "*I'm farther along than you, and your focus isn't on the right spot.*" Well, there are people that are farther along than us, such as the underground church in China, and they can easily say to Americans, "*Your focus is way off.*" When we do that, we unknowingly cause hinderances to our faith. When we don't get our prayers answered because of judgments we forgot about, we can become angry, and things get worse for us.

The ending to that story, about the little girl who asked God for her mom to win the trip, she got back from Hawaii and her teacher was furious because of jealousy. She walked in slammed papers on the desk and humiliated her in front of the whole class about where her family got the money to pay for the trip. She shamed her and mistreated her for the rest of the year. **We should always celebrate when other people get blessed. (Romans 12:15-18)** We don't know if we're insulting the work of the Lord or not. Some people get upset when they *feel* like someone, particularly someone with more money, wasted money on an item. What do they say, "*That money could have been given to the poor.*" How many times have we heard that? Where did we hear that before?

Matthew 26:9

For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.

Judas!! They're quoting Judas. My point with all this is, we are NOT called to monitor other people's spending, choices, and what they're believing God for. If we think about it, there is always someone in the jungle of South America who can say the same thing about us and far worse, "*You don't need two cars. Why do you have 3 pairs of shoes? Why are you throwing food away?*" **Having judgments on your life, as a result of judgments you issued, can stop your faith from working and skew your view of God.** How do you get rid of them? Repent, ask they be removed, turn from your judgmental ways, and ask the Holy Spirit to set a guard over your mouth. If you don't know, ask for judgements you don't know about to be removed, and ask for the guard over your mouth.

Back to mountain moving faith... We were talking about how speaking the Word and what we're believing can build faith. **The blab it and grab it teaching doesn't always encompass multiple scriptures, which causes failure and doctrine fighting at the expense of Jesus' precious teaching.** Let's bring these scriptures into perspective.

Let's say you have an unexpected \$10,000 bill you can't pay. **Here is Mountain Moving Faith in action:**

Believe: The Lord is sending me money for a bill that I can't pay!

Bad thoughts come

Say: Thank you, Father, that you are El Shaddai, the God of more than enough. (Genesis 17:1 the Name used)

Say: Thank you, Father, that I don't have to scrape the bottom of the barrel and starve, because you provided my needs! (Philippians 4:19)

Say: Thank you, Father, that You said in Romans 8:28 that You work all things out.

Say: Thank you, Father, you said in Philippians 4:19 that You shall supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory

Say: Thank you, Father, I am the head and not the tail. I'm on the top and not the bottom (Deuteronomy 28:13)

Say: Thank you, Father, that you told me not to worry, because you're busy working this out. (Philippians 4:6-7)

It's not about chanting into your life free hair extensions, or shiny new rims on your car! **It's releasing God's Word out of your own mouth, for your own ear to hear, so that you create a strong mountain moving faith within your own spirit.** Why speak it out loud? When you voice words, your mind stops thinking. When your head says, *"This is it. I'm going down this time."* Stop in the middle and say out loud, *"The Word says, I'm not going under, I'm going over."* The negative faith poisoning thought has to stop, because your mind can't carry on with opposing thoughts while you're speaking. **That's your big homework this week.** When a thought against the Word rises up, speak out loud and pay attention how it has to stop. If you keep after your thought life with mountain moving faith, things will change. The Word works. Mountain moving faith is a beautiful and strong faith teaching that fanaticism has hijacked.

By the way, those were **real words of someone that did have a \$10,000 credit card bill** out of nowhere because of liver and lung cancer surgeries with insurance, natural medication, and bills stacking up because they couldn't work. They told her she would die. It was 11 years ago; God paid that bill supernaturally in 7 months, she earned money to live on at the same time, and she is alive today! All glory to God. The Word never fails us when we refuse to fear and stick with it.

Our words are power containers! Christians should be taking the use of their words very seriously. Let's see what scripture has to say...

Genesis 1:3: Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Matthew 12:36: But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Matthew 12:36: For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Our words are important, and powerful. One very interesting story about the power of words. I encourage you to read **the story of Balaam in Numbers 22**. Balaam, a man involved in contacting demons, was hired by Balak to curse Israel so he could defeat their army. The Lord warns Balaam, the soothsayer, about going to Balak, but he goes anyway. The part that everyone knows, his donkey sees the angel that is standing in the road about to kill Balaam, the soothsayer, so she tries to save Balaam from death. Balaam can't see the angel and so he beats the donkey. The angel causes the donkey to speak. After the angel warns Balaam, he still goes to see Balak. Instead of cursing Israel, only blessings come out of his mouth. Balaam tells Balak he cannot say anything else except what the Lord gave him to say. Later in the book of Joshua, the Lord says this about Balaam, the soothsayer, **Joshua 24:10**

But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand.

When I considered this scripture after spending time with the Lord about mountain moving faith, I was a bit taken back. According to this scripture, Balaam's words would have had a serious negative impact on Israel that they needed delivered. Take a moment to let that sink in your heart. They needed delivered from curse words. **There is power in our words!** James's teachings agree with this, he talks about people cursing men, that are made in the image of God, with our tongue. If words weren't such important power containers, none of these things would matter, and they would not be in scripture.

Back to our scripture, in **Mark 11:23**, **...believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.**

I'm going to use the world as an example, because sometimes when the world does it, it seems normal. But when we see it in scripture, doctrine rises up and screams NOOOO!!!

Navy Seals, *the elite of the elites*, the special forces of the US Navy. Statistically, they recover from injuries faster, heal better, react better, have less stress, retain large amounts of information, and seem to possess superhuman abilities just to name a few qualities. What's that all about? If you have ever meet one, it doesn't take long to see they have Biblical principles in operation in their life. They're taught that they are winners and made to say it often.

Navy Seal Sayings

It pays to be a winner.

I persevere and thrive in adversity.

In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my team, and accomplish the mission.

Uncompromising integrity is my standard.

I am never out of the fight.

All in, all the time.

It's not what you preach, it's what you tolerate.

Discipline equals freedom.

Instead of letting the situation dictate our decisions, we must dictate the situation.

This last one is a really good.

"We learned that leadership requires belief in the mission and unyielding perseverance to achieve victory, particularly when doubters question whether victory is even possible."

— Jocko Willink, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win*

WOW! They are more positive, filled with overcoming belief, and know there is power in their words than most Christians I know. These positive statements from Navy Seals humble me and stir up my faith in Christ that I need to step it up too. What should we as Christians learn from Jesus' teaching and Navy Seals? **Believing mixed with using our words is a powerful explosive force. Amen!**

Whatever a person has been festering or cultivating in their spirit will be released in their words.

Murphy's Law

"Anything that can go wrong will go wrong."

Sometimes it's extended to,

"Anything that can go wrong will go wrong, and at the worst possible time."

I know many people, Christian included, who live by this "law." In turn, they keep seeing life work this way, keep believing, and keep saying. It's a constant cycle that can only be broken by the true law:

Mark 11:23: ...believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Which means if someone is tired of Murphy's Law, then they need a Bible law to believe and repeat. How about, **"Blessings will come upon me and overtake me."** Deuteronomy 28:2

You might be thinking, "No, this is too out there." We don't have to understand it, we were just told to believe it. Words throughout the Bible carry weight, power and meaning. Let's consider three more **FUTURISTIC** situations before we end for this week.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the **word** of their testimony...

Revelation 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the **mouth** of the dragon, out of the **mouth** of the beast, and out of the **mouth** of the false prophet.

Revelation 19:15 Now out of **His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should strike the nations.

In Revelations 16, the unclean spirits are coming out of the mouth, because they were sent with words. We see Jesus sending forth a sharp sword from His mouth, it's power in His words too.

Words are powerful! Words are important! Jesus taught us that we can use our words to bring our faith up to mountain moving levels to accomplish things that seem impossible to believe. Don't let other people's fanaticism cause you to sweep Jesus' teaching by the wayside.

(Pass out your handout of sayings. There is a short list on the last page, but I suggest making it look nicer and adding more sayings. Mine has more, but don't pass it out because there is a watermark.)
<https://myprayernotebook4life.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/christian-sayings-2.pdf>

These are real Navy Seal saying tweaked with the Bible. Say these Christian-Navy Seal sayings out loud, not quietly, to yourself. I challenge you to see if you can tell a difference!

Before we end this study, I want to go over a very important verse concerning faith.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

The Greek word for **through** is **dia** and can mean **through, on account of, by reason of, for the sake of, or because of**. *Faith works by love* (King James Version), but we can also say, "*Faith works because of love.*"

That means without love, your faith is hindered and will not properly work. One more scripture before we dig deep into this.

Matthew 22:35-40

³⁵Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Simply put, Jesus said that all the law and the prophets hang on the God kind of love. If your faith isn't quenching the fiery darts of the enemy, you're out of the love walk. I know that's a hard saying, but I love you enough to speak the truth in love to help you rather than to stay silent and just cry with you when you're under attack. This is a huge topic, and maybe we'll go in depth on love another time, but if you're taking notes write this down. Over 25 years ago a Bible college professor came up with this Biblical definition of love that can't be beat!

Love is joyfully choosing to take the best action to promote the welfare of others.

Romans 13:8, Paul tells us that we owe people God's love. Any step outside of love is sin. We don't often think of it that way, but that could be why some prayers are hindered. Jesus paid our sin debt that could never ever be paid by us, and all He asked us to do in return. God has to put up with us, and yet we refuse to put up with others. We forget to stop and think that's not fair to Him. Jesus loved us and died for us before we were even born; and we are supposed to be representations and reflections of Him.

The question is how do we walk in love so that our faith works unhindered? The answer, grow in love. It's nothing that you can pray about. Let's look at the Word.

Romans 5:5

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Galatians 5:22-23

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

The God kind of love was already poured out into your heart, and because we see it's a type of fruit, that means you can either cultivate love and grow it, or you can throw dirt on it and bury it. Notice the first fruit

mentioned is love. That's the first fruit, and the first fruit is the most important fruit on a plant. Farmers that save seeds suggest taking seeds from the first fruit because it much less likely to have diseases or pest infestations. If you can't walk in love, you'll have great difficulty with producing other fruits. **Take some time to reflect on Galatians this week and take an assessment of yourself to see how walking in love can help produce kindness, waking in love can help produce joy, walking in love can help produce peace and so on.**

How do we cultivate love or any other fruit for that matter? Put in the Word, remember that scripture is alive and is actually doing something in the spiritual realm as you read, and choose love above all else at any cost. For example (humor to break up the harsh teaching):

When someone cuts you off in traffic or goes slow when you're in a hurry, choose love. Yelling Christian things at people in your vehicle, where *"they can't hear you,"* isn't love. *"Lord, bless this idiot with wisdom."* Or even worse, *"Oh great! This moron has kids! Give them extra wisdom, Oh Lord!"*

Leaving bad Yelp and Google reviews when you get mad isn't walking in love, no matter how true and completely honest the review is. Here are some real restaurant reviews I found in various states: All these places are 4.5 or higher.

2 Stars – I gave this place 2 stars. There was a lot of meat on my burrito, and it was good, but the meat was only on the bottom half of my burrito.

2 Stars – My burger looked like it had been dropped from the Empire State building and flopped onto the concrete below. I will chalk todays visit up to a fluke and will try once more... However I do not hold out much hope... Although tasty, the presentation was horrible.

2 Star – Prices are getting high (this was when the price of everything went up... Biden) and both locations have poor acoustics. The staff is always great. (There is no music. It's a breakfast place in Colorado)

2 Star – I've been coming to this place since it opened and have always been happy with everything from the food, service, and the casually fun environment. However when I walked in today and saw the entire seating area changes, I almost walked out. Gone is the intimate booths. The customer is now subject to what looks like a hospital cafeteria open concept. What a shame because the food and service is excellent.

2 Star – We have eaten here 3 different times: The service is slow (it's a very busy place). The staff does not seem to recycle cans and bottles. The food itself is actually pretty good.

1 Star – I don't know how the food tastes. They close at 8:00 on Saturday. We got there at 7:50. The kitchen closes at 7:45, and the doors were locked. Oh well. I heard they had the best burgers.

When things don't go our way, and we're about to let someone or the world know it, that's when we're supposed to drop our weapons and choose love. In that moment, we need to ask ourselves, **is this matter worth stopping my faith?** In case you're with the lady who didn't like the booths, I'll tell you the answer, absolutely nothing is worth stopping your flow of help from Heaven. If that doesn't encourage you, we can always turn to Paul for emotional support. Imagine telling him why you're out of the love walk, and then see how you feel.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 – Contemporary English for humor's sake

²⁴Five times my own people gave me 39 lashes with a whip. ²⁵Three times the Romans beat me with a big stick, and once my enemies stoned me. I have been shipwrecked three times, and I even had to spend a night and a day in the sea. ²⁶During my many travels, I have been in danger from rivers, robbers, my own people, and foreigners. My life has been in danger in cities, in deserts, at sea, and with people who only pretended to be the Lord's followers.

²⁷I have worked and struggled and spent many sleepless nights. I have gone hungry and thirsty and often had nothing to eat. I have been cold from not having enough clothes to keep me warm. ²⁸Besides everything else, each day I am burdened down, worrying about all the churches.

Paul puts life into perspective! Can you imagine that lady telling Paul how disappointed she is with her tasty burger that looks like it was dropped from the Empire State building?

One last story on loving inside the body of Christ, and then we'll close this study on faith. This is a true story that happened over 20 years ago.

There was a 17-year-old girl that was starting to follow in the footsteps of the family curse from her Cherokee tribe, but this teenager occasionally showed up to church. Her Pentecostal Sunday School teacher noticed this and took her under her wing. One day this teenager went to the county fair, and a Baptist lady stopped her to talk about Jesus. During the course of their conversation, they somehow moved to tongues and the Baptist woman told the teenager that tongues had been done away with. According to the teenager's recount, the Baptist woman didn't know the scriptures, but said that if her husband was there, he would show her. The Baptist woman kept discussing how wrong the young Pentecostal lady was about tongues, gifts, and so on with the usual disagreements. The teenager, with a slight learning disability, went to the Pentecostal lady's house, and in a mocking way told how she was wrong about many things. The Pentecostal lady did her best to explain her view and pointed out the Baptist woman had not given her any scriptures. The teenager was uncertain of which person to believe. Well...sometime later at the county fair, the teenager was stabbed by a crazy young man. He pulled a knife on her. She ran away. The crazy young man followed her yelling, "I'll kill you," and stabbing her. She ran to the booth where the Christian churches had set up. She fell down, and the crazy young man was about to jump on top of her to murder her, when security got him. People rushed around, the police came, and then they forced everyone out of the way for the ambulance to make their way in. A lady from another church saw the teenager being put in the ambulance. She ran over to her calling her name. She found out what hospital they were taking her to. The other Christian lady called the Pentecostal woman, because she knew she loved her and was trying to help her. The Pentecostal woman called the teenager's family and rushed to the hospital. The Baptist woman wasn't there to help and didn't show up to the hospital.

This is one of the saddest stories about fighting inside the body of Christ. This isn't about whose doctrine is right or wrong or about tongues and gifts. According to the Bible, the only thing that can get you sent to hell is not accepting Jesus as Savior, and not having a relationship with Him. Yes, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not a forgivable sin, but that's still not the issue people are fighting about within the body of Christ. Speaking in tongues won't get you sent to hell, any more than not speaking in tongues will get you sent to hell. I've heard people say that believing in a pre-trib rapture will get you sent to hell, mid-trib rapture sent to hell, going to church on Sunday instead of Saturday, believing in gifts, not believing in gifts, and even the ancient Jewish rabbis joined in by saying even reading about Jesus will get you sent to hell. None of that is true.

Do you think if the teenager went up to the Baptist woman and said, *"My Pentecostal Sunday school teacher tells me that God loves me, and I'm more valuable than the names my father calls me. My Pentecostal Sunday school teacher tells me I'm worth more than being used by a boy for my body, and that God has someone special planned for me that loves me. My Pentecostal Sunday school teacher says that I don't deserve to be hit and punched."* Do you think the Baptist woman would have put aside her differences and found common ground with the Pentecostal lady? You think if she knew she'd be stabbed shortly after, by the very person the Pentecostal lady had been repeatedly telling her to stop talking to because he's crazy, the Baptist woman would have continued to drive a wedge between them? What I want you to see is a bird's eye view of the story, **what God saw**. We don't always need to be informed of all the details to have good cause to keep our comments to ourselves. We're not as innocent as we think we are at times. I want you to see this parable from scripture.

Matthew 13:24-30

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

²⁴Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷So the

servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' ²⁹But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."' ' ' "

There are a lot of people in our generation that will be charged by God for gathering up the tares when they need to leave them alone. God knows which tares need to be removed, and which ones will hurt the wheat. **We do not know!** How can you know? Back to the story about the teenager, if she was under the Baptist woman's care, then she was free to correct the Pentecostal lady. That means if someone is not under your care, and you don't plan on being the one to rush to the hospital for them or be that crying shoulder for the long haul, you are most likely not called by God to correct their doctrine. As long as they believe salvation only in Jesus Christ, and have professed salvation, we need to learn they're family in Christ. If they picked up crystals and believe they have healing energy, then that's witchcraft and cause to speak, but interpretations of doctrine corrections must stop if we want widespread revival.

We, as the body of Christ, must stop being offended by other Christians' doctrine. It's our job, those of us who are mature in Christ, to teach others in this generation to love. Remember the **singing revival in 2023 at Asbury University in Kentucky** that broke out on their school campus? It moved to other churches where people were just gathering to worship the Lord. I heard it said that the Catholics didn't know what was going on, the Methodists were surprised, the Baptists were waiting for this, and the Pentecostals thought it was the warmup to revival. God isn't going to make multiple revivals for every denomination to be happy. We must all learn to love past our interpretations of the Word.

Matthew 18:6 Jesus Warns of Offenses

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Faith works by love. We don't always know or understand what we're getting caught up in when we correct strangers or people not in our care. To quote an Independent Fundamental Baptist who was speaking on creation vs evolution in a flag-waving Pentecostal church, "*Why don't we all just stop fighting in the body of Christ and go get some people saved?*" Amen to that! (Dr. Kent Hovind)

Faith works every time when it's rooted in love and unhindered. How do we mature our faith, other than using it?

2 Peter 1:5-8

⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Maturity of our faith is in our hands. We decide how much faith we have and our maturity level.

Next week we will move onto the helmet of salvation. We will be doing a very intense study and going places that you don't expect. Bring something to take notes.

Homework this week!

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any poisoned faith to you might have
2. When a thought against the Word rises up, speak out loud and pay attention how it has to stop.
3. Pick some of the Christian Navy Seal saying, say them out loud to yourself this week. I will ask.
4. Use your shield of faith this week. If you're not being attacked, find something to do for Jesus so you can be attacked. Amen!
5. Be mindful of your love walk and fruits

(Prayer points:

- Father, we thank You for this lesson. Jesus, we give You praise. Holy Spirit, we are so thankful You're here with us to help us on our faith journey.
- Father, we ask You give us all a deeper revelation of how powerful our words can be, and also how we are supposed to be using them.
- Holy Spirit please remind us to choose love above everything else. Please continue to teach us on the subject of love and keep it before our eyes.
- Thank You, Father, for Your written Word. We honor Your Word, and give it first place in our life.
- And as Jesus prayed over Peter, Lord bless us with strength so our faith doesn't fail.
- Surround us with faith, hope, and love.

In Jesus name, Amen)

Christian Sayings

It pays to be a winner.

The only imitations I have are the ones I put on myself and God.

I will never quit. I will not fail.

I train for spiritual war and fight the good fight of faith to win.

I persevere and thrive in adversity, because of the Greater One in me.

I have orders from the Word. I will take charge, be led by The Holy Spirit, and accomplish my mission.

I am never out of the spiritual fight.

All in, all the time. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time!

Instead of letting situations dictate me, I will dictate situations with the Word.

My greatest weapon over stress is being able to choose one thought over another.

I only have 3 choices in faith: give up, give in, or give all I have.

Cowards never start, the weak never finish, and the winners never give up.

I never let my mind tell me to give up, even if my body is beaten down.

I can't quit. I'm not dead.

The key to making it all the way is to keep a positive attitude at all times.