



Disabilities And Faith

Christian people who have disabilities are sometimes accused of "having a lack of faith." This article is about this controversial subject, with a special emphasis on biblical faith. Reprinted from God's Special People magazine Jan. 1989

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The parents of a young boy, “by faith,” throw away the medication their son needs to survive. They claim God's healing, but the boy dies.

A woman, “by faith” decides that God wants to heal her weak eyes. She tosses her glasses into the trash. However, a few weeks later she is buying another pair.

A church, “by faith” enters into tremendous debt to build a large facility and homes for the elderly. The ministry goes bankrupt.

These examples are not fables. They are real experiences of sincere, but misguided Christians. What was wrong? What was missing? Where did they fail? Some would say they just did not have enough faith. But this argument has no biblical basis.

Some would say that the day of miracles is over. I personally do believe that the gifts of the apostles have ended, and certain sign gifts have ceased, but I find no biblical evidence that God has ceased to do the supernatural.

Some would blame God, saying that He let them down, that He failed to come through, even though they had the faith to believe. Jeremiah felt this way at one time .

“O Lord thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived”

Jer 20:7

He was wrong.

Some would doubt the existence of God, saying they went by all the scriptural guidelines, and still nothing happened. Pierre Burton, back in 1965, wrote a book entitled “The Comfortable Pew”. He said, “For months my Sunday School teacher had been impressing me with the power of prayer. 'If you pray hard enough,' they said, 'God will answer you.' One night I prayed very hard for God to give me and my sister two small, self-propelled automobiles. It never occurred to me that when I hurried out of the house the next morning they would not be there. And from this point on I began to be skeptical of everything that was told to me by the adult world in general and by my church in particular.”

The horrible truth is, that false concepts of faith lead to disaster and skepticism.

I.) First, let us see some things that faith is not.

FAITH IS NOT PUTTING GOD IN A
MOLD

What works on one occasion may not work another time. The Jews of old marched around Jericho, and the

walls came tumbling down. The same method would not have worked at Ai. Moses could hit rocks and out came water, but he never wrote a book about "Three Easy Steps of Faith to Get Water From Rocks." Peter paid a tax by a coin found in the mouth of a fish, but it is no lack of faith to pay taxes by earned money, is it? Peter was delivered from prison, but the event is recorded in the same chapter where James is beheaded. Faith cannot be put in methods, or even the experiences of others.

F AITH IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF NO PROBLEMS

Joseph of the Old Testament did right, yet he still went to prison. The women of Malachi chapter two did right, yet their husbands divorced them, breaking the heart of God. Jeremiah lived a life of faith, yet spent 40 years preaching to a people who would not listen. Hebrews 11:35-39 mentions a group of people who lived wonderful lives of faith in God. However, they were tortured, stoned, beaten, destitute, and exiled. Words such as "trouble", "trial", and "tribulation" are common descriptions of the greatest of the saints.

The popular teaching that Christians of faith will never be sick or have financial difficulties is not scriptural, nor was it the message of the Savior or His apostles.

FAITH IS NOT AN EXCUSE TO SIT BACK AND DO NOTHING

Genuine faith is not a leap in the dark, where we simply trust God to do all, while we sit and wait. God is not our slave, who jumps up to work for us when we trust Him to do so. Biblical faith is always evidenced by action (James 2:21-25). Faith without the fruit of works is not really faith at all.

Noah, by faith, built an ark to escape the flood. He did not simply trust God to save him and his family from drowning, but he spent 120 years showing his belief. He built an ark. Abraham lived by faith, and God told him to go to an unknown country. Abraham, the Bible says, took tents along. If you don't know where you are headed, a tent might be a good idea.

A good example of faith is saving faith. I am saved from sin's penalty by faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, not by any works I have done. Yet, the result of that faith is works. Works are the result, not the means of salvation. The same is true with daily faith; we believe, therefore we speak and work and go.

II.) Second, let us see what faith is.

F AITH IS A GIFT OF GOD

If God wants us to do something, He will grant us the faith to do it. We will not have to muster up "faith" through psychology or emotionalism. Faith is a wonderful gift from God.

*"God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
Romans 12:3*

*"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from
God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
Ephesians 6:23*

*"To another faith by the same Spirit" I Corinthians
12:9*

*"It is given in the behalf of Christ... to believe on
Him." Philippians 1:29*

God gave Noah faith to build an ark. He gave the Jews faith to walk through the Red Sea, but the Egyptians drowned in the same location. He gave Gideon faith to conquer the enemy with mere household items. Whatever God leads a person to do, he will grant

the grace and the faith to do it. We must not mistake our own desires and whims for genuine faith.

God gives different faith to different people to do different things.

FAITH IS BUILT ON TRUTH AND EVIDENCE

Real Christianity is truth built on the evidence (Hebrews 11:1). An example of this is the resurrection of our Lord. "To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days" (Acts 1:3).

I am not a Christian in spite of the evidence; I am a Christian because of the evidence. The Bible is an accurate book historically, scientifically, and theologically. And, in any act of true faith, there must be evidence that it is what God wants me to do.

When I wanted to start God's Special People magazine, there was obvious evidence that God was in it. My wife stood by me, our church said "Yes", a computer was provided, the funds came. God graciously provided the thousands of dollars that were needed. He granted the faith; He gave evidence that it was His will.

While the faith and evidence was there concerning

the magazine, I never received such God-given faith or evidence concerning the immediate healing of my own daughter, who had Cerebral Palsy. So I believe her condition was His plan. He gave me the grace and faith to accept this. While others may criticise this, it is obvious that in their own logic they had no faith for her healing either.

Finally,

FAITH IS TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S POWER AND SOVEREIGNTY.

The Scriptures say, "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (I Corinthians 2:5). God can do anything He wants to do. He is all-powerful, omnipotent! With God, all things are possible. I know He can do all things. We should never doubt His ability or power. However, though God can do all things, He does not always choose to do what we think He should. "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Faith is very important in the Christian life. "Without faith," Hebrews 11:6 states, "It is impossible to please Him." "The just shall live by faith" is repeated four times in the Holy Word. But faith misunderstood will lead to disaster, skepticism, guilt and doubt. Faith properly understood will lead to God's peace, hope, and trust even in the midst of the storms of life. §