

7 FUNCTIONS OF GODLY FAITH

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¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. **Hebrews 11:1-3**

BIG IDEA: *Trusting God produces real benefits for every genuine believer.*

INTRODUCTION

True faith is not some fuzzy feeling or some hazy spiritual mumbo jumbo! It is an active attitude that performs and produces real, tangible benefits for every genuine believer. Hebrews 11 sheds brilliant light on this revolutionary subject. Here we just consider seven ways in which authentic faith can function in your and my life.

THE FUNCTIONS:

1. *Faith Provides Your Need From God's Supply.*

The expression “things hoped for” refers to our needs, among other things. This text teaches us that faith is the supernatural link between our needs and our true Source—GOD. There is a difference between. Often we are frustrated because we’ve replaced God with our natural sources. But faith recognizes Yahweh as our Source. Resolve to do that this year.

The Psalmist learned this lesson well (Psalm 23). It’s time we also acclaimed *Yahweh Rohi* as our Shepherd-Provider.

- Because He is my Shepherd, I shall not lack anything!
- Scripture is unequivocal about how God makes me lie down in **green pastures**. Green pastures refer to abundance and freshness. It’s not God’s will for you to live a dry, poor life!
- It’s also clear that God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.
- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life! Faith accepts that with childlike faith.

Faith knows that “my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory” (Phil 4:19).

- The location of God’s “warehouse” is significant: “His riches in glory”.
- It’s important for believers to fully understand the infinite resources in God’s Economy.
- We must not confuse our earthly shortages, inflation and recessions with heaven’s economy. There are no such issues in heaven (see Matthew 6:19-20)!
- Now, FAITH connects us with that limitless realm!

Prosperity is NOT a dirty word! There’s nothing spiritual about poverty. Remember Jesus became poor so that we may become rich and He became a curse so we can be blessed (2 Cor. 8:9). We must trust and believe that God loves to and can supply all our needs. We must declare with the psalmist, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want”!

2. *Faith Propels You To Your Destiny*

The term “things hoped for” [*elpizomenon*] also refers to the future. It relates to your destiny, life purpose or aspirations. It has something to do with your dreams and visions. Now, it takes faith for you to move towards your destiny.

When you study the lives of the likes of Abraham, Joseph and David you will notice that their faith propelled them to their destiny. All that God required of them was their trust. Against all odds, they achieved their destiny.

- Abraham became the father of many nations by faith.
- Joseph became his people’s and the nations’ economic hero by faith. Betrayal couldn’t stop him. Seduction failed. Prison became his platform. Bitterness had no room in his heart.
- David survived the threats of Saul, the vagaries of a fugitive life and a long wait but still achieved his destiny as one of the greatest kings of the United Kingdom of Israel.
- Likewise Hannah achieved her destiny as the mother of one of the greatest judges and prophets Israel ever had by faith. Until she believed, she remained a victim of Penninah’s taunts. When she unleashed her faith, she produced a credible priest-prophet for God’s people and begot four more sons.

Let your faith propel you to your amazing destiny. You are NOT a victim of your background or history. You are not a prisoner of your genealogy.

By faith you can rise above your background, history, mistakes and genealogy.

3. *Faith Provokes Divine Commendation.*

Scripture says ancient saints obtained a good report or testimony in God's sight by faith. Do you have any idea just how precious it is to have God's endorsement? To have divine approval means God is pleased with you. When God is pleased with you, He is favourably disposed to you. You become the object of His blessing and attention.

Having God's commendation also earns you respect and favour with people. When the God-factor is strong upon your life, you are unstoppable. Even your enemies cannot hurt you. You achieve mileage beyond your personal credentials or attributes. Compare what happens when a well-known celebrity endorses some political candidate. Think about the myriad number of votes that can mobilise for such a contender. The spiritual benefits of divine commendation far outweigh anything we know in the natural!

Let the unmistakable presence of God upon your life be your portion! Let divine approval be your heritage everywhere you go! That is what made all the difference in Abel's offering. Let that be your experience as you bring offerings to God. That's what made all the difference in Joseph's life. God's hand of approval upon his life preserved, protected, prospered and promoted him. Let that be your portion too!

2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. Gen. 39:2-4

4. *Faith Precedes Divine Revelation.*

The Word of God here says, "by faith we understand". When I first seriously read this verse I misunderstood the meaning completely! I later realized that the construction did not make sense to a natural mind. We typically want to wrap our heads around a matter first *before* we can believe it. Now, God comes and tells us that actually His kingdom works the other way around! He asserts that it is only when we believe Him that we are enabled to understand certain truths.

Until you believe, dear saint, there are things you will never grasp! For instance, if you seek to understand how spiritual gifts work before receiving them, you'll be waiting till the cows come home. You'll never flow in tongues and the prophetic if you insist on comprehending the mechanics of these spiritual charismata. Rather, you must trust God for the gifts, then you will receive them and then understanding will follow. Will you do that this year?

Compare 1 Corinthians 2:9-10:

9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Do you get this? As you love and trust God, the Spirit reveals things your eyes haven't seen, your ears haven't heard and your heart hasn't conceived. Like Paul, I pray that you may be granted the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God, such that the eyes of your understanding are enlightened and so that you may know the hope of your calling, the heritage of the saints in the light and the exceeding greatness of His power **towards us who believe** (Ephesians 1:15-19).

5. *Faith Profits From The Creator Revelation.*

Our primary text asserts that, *by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3).*

THIS TRUTH'S PRIORITY

It is significant that this chapter declares this action above all other remarkable actions of faith. Why? *The reason is that the belief in creation* (God's will revealed in the existence of the world) *is the necessary foundation for the life of faith in all its manifestations* (Westcott). There are two aspects to this function. First, we have the Author's **Identity (answering the question WHO?)**. Second, we have His **Method (answering the question HOW?)**.

AUTHOR'S IDENTITY

Have you noticed how our society wants to marginalize God? Have you realized the worldly tendency to deny God's authorship of His handiwork? This is reflected in pseudo-science, education, the media and the like. I assure you this is a very deliberate and satanic ploy to undermine our faith at a fundamental level. If the cosmos exists purely by accident, then moral accountability is undermined and assurance of

supernatural intervention is wishful thinking.

Dear friends, **we must not be ambivalent about the origins of creation if we want to experience the power of faith.** Now, in light of all the satanic assault on authentic faith going on, you and I desperately need faith in order to understand that it is God who created, engineered and orchestrated all this.

That God is the Creator of this world is the macro blessing. What a huge blessing it is to know that “He’s got the whole world in His hands”! What a privilege it is to know that our world and the universe are not at the mercy of random chance!

THE CREATOR’S METHOD

Please note that by faith we also understand the **method** God used to create the universe. That method is depicted as the “word of God”. This Logos-Method has THREE senses of meaning:

- The first sense refers to God’s creative decrees–PROCLAMATION. That also has relevant applicability to us today. *What God says is capable of creating new realities in our world.* Like the centurion of old realized, when God says a word our situations change. Just one word from God can turn around our desperate situations! Likewise, we are also capable of creating life or death by our confession (Proverbs 18:21).
- Furthermore, this **method** is a PERSON–Christ, the Logos of God (John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2-3; Colossians 1:16). Christ is the pre-existent Logos, Heir of all things, through whom God made the universe and the one who upholds all things by the word of His power. Now then, what does the presence of Christ in us spell? Among other things, the presence of the Anointed One and His Anointing in us spells unlimited creativity or glory (Col. 1:27)! Christ In You The Hope Of Glory!
- The third sense has to do with the term translated “FRAMED”, *katertisthai* (perfect passive of *katartizo*) in `Greek. It carries the sense of putting in order, designing, preparing, equipping, furnishing, fashioning, perfecting or restoring. Isn’t wonderful that God did not just create the universe but He designed, ordered and furnished our cosmic habitat? It implies thoughtful, caring and intentional creativity and involvement. Hallelujah!

Do you realize the awesome implications of this revelation? *Many good Christians have not learned how to CASH IN on their knowledge that Yahweh is the legitimate Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos.* Have you? That is what the faith-walk is all about. I’d like you to benefit from your

knowledge of some of these so-called common facts. You must learn to look to Yahweh, your Maker intently and trustfully. You are an heir of all things in Christ. All things will work together for good in your life because the Integrator Supreme is in you. Things will never fall apart in your life even when they threaten to. Christ in you won't let them! See Romans 8:28.

6. *Faith Profits From Creation's Sustenance.*

This function is a consequence of the fifth one above. If we know that God graciously created the world, we can also expect Him to take pride and concern over His handiwork. If we know that God provided the greater blessing, we know that He can also supply the lesser blessings.

This truth is critical to our lifestyles and victory. In the same vein, **Jesus used the argument of creation's dependence on God as a basis for our faith for the supply of our daily needs:**

*25 "Therefore I say to you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? [The Greater-Lesser Argument] 26 **Look** at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [The Lesser-Greater Argument] 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? [The Futility Argument] 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? **Consider** the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [The Eternal Argument] **Matthew 6:25-30***

Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is radically powerful. This teaching consists of comparisons as well as contrasts. It consists of four interrelated logical arguments. All the arguments are based on the Father's relationship with His creation. They show us how base fauna and flora out-believe us! That ought not to be so! God did not just create the world and leave it to its own devices. He sustains the universe by the word of His power. God is personally involved in creation. We must have confidence in God's readiness to answer our prayers, as long as they line up with His will (1 John 5:15).

I urge you to "cash in" on this spiritual principle thus:

- I confess that I shall not worry about my life as Jesus instructed.
- I confess that I am of more value than birds of the air and lilies of the field for which the Father cares personally and lavishly.
- I acknowledge that my heavenly Father loves me and will feed and clothe me, as I trust Him.

7. *Faith Precipitates The Invisible.*

Scripture says in our text, *things that are seen were not made of things that are visible (Hebrews 11:3b)*. Put differently, God did not require physical raw materials to create the physical universe. Remember 11:1b tells us that *faith is the evidence [proof or conviction] of things not seen*. Note:

- Here Scripture denies the eternity of matter.
- Rather God precedes the visible universe (matter).
- God doesn't require physical raw material to create something.
- His word is all that is necessary to create tangible stuff.
- We must not underestimate the power of the prophetic, creative Word of God.
- We must overcome our obsession with the visible reality.
- As long as we have God, the Maker of all things, it is well!
- Illustrations:
 - Isaac planted in a year of drought and reaped a hundredfold (Genesis 26). This year faithful children of God shall harvest a hundredfold whatever the circumstances. I urge you to trust God with your seed. I exhort you to expect massive harvest from God this season. Let the Spirit breathe the favour of God upon your seed and your work this time around.
 - Paul and Silas were supernaturally delivered from prison and witnessed the supremacy of God over the physical reality (Acts 16).
 - Jesus demonstrated the superiority of God over every material situation over and over again: water to wine, fish & bread multiplication, supply of eyes, resurrections (Gospels).

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