Living a Life of Faith - Six Aspects of Faith

I would like to speak to you today about one of the most important areas in our walk with the Lord and that is our Faith, Trust and Confidence in God.

Hebrews 11:6 says:
And without faith it is impossible to please Him for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

Romans 10:17
So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you / that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Luke 18:8 - JESUS said:
“…Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

The theme of the message today is - "LIVING A LIFE OF FAITH"

What is the Definition of Faith?
It means – Belief in / Devotion to / Trust in somebody -or something / Allegiance or loyalty to somebody - or something.

For the Christian Believer – Faith is putting our total trust and confidence in God.

Acronym for F-A-I-T-H:
Feeling
Afraid
I
Trust
Him

In Psalm 56:3 & 4 – The Psalmist said:
“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in YOU.”

“In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? “

That is what Faith is about.
When we are afraid, we put our wholehearted, or total trust in Him.

In Hebrews 11:6 we are told that without faith it is impossible to please Him.
What is the Definition “To Please”? It means to:
• To satisfy, to give pleasure to, to thrill, to make happy, to delight
JESUS' desire and purpose while on this earth was to please His Father - in doing His will.

- Also to finish the work that His Father assigned to Him.

John 4:34
Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

John 6:38-40
For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.
40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 17:4
I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

John 19:30.
So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

John 5:30
I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will / but the will of the Father who sent Me.

The Bible is very clear that it is impossible to please GOD unless we have one thing... and that is - FAITH.

What does it take to please God?
- It is our faith, our confidence, our trust in Him
- Our obedience to His word
- Our pleasing Him rather than please people, knowing that if we please people, we cause offense to God.

In today’s context:
- Offend God means - being "Politically Right" i.e. NOT speaking the Word of God boldly BUT playing it down to keep people happy or diluting the Word of God…
[Remembering - We are called to speak the Word of God in LOVE].

Then to please God:
- WE have to finish His work...
- It is not how well we start that matters to Him - But how well / and strong we FINISH

- AND very important - our relationship with Him.

How do we "Live A Life Of Faith.”?
• Faith is like a multi-faceted diamond.

Similarly there are many different aspects to faith. We'll look at six different aspects of faith of how to live the kind of life that pleases God.

Hebrews Chapter 11 lists out the heroes of faith:
GOD says of them –
• They were men and women of real faith.
• They have set an Example in Faith for us to follow.

Hebrews 6:12
“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate* those who through faith and patience* inherit what has been promised.”

Now, let's look at the 6 aspects that will help us live a life of faith:

1. Faith Is BELIEVING When I Don't SEE It.
2. Faith Is OBEYING When I Don't UNDERSTAND It.
3. Faith Is GIVING When I Don't HAVE all of it.
4. Faith Is PERSISTING When I Don't FEEL Like It.
5. Faith Is THANKING GOD Before I RECEIVE It.
6. Faith Is TRUSTING If I Don'T GET It.

1. Faith Is BELIEVING When I Don't SEE It.
Hebrews 11:1
“Now faith is the assurance [or Essence or Reality] of things hoped for, the conviction [or evidence] of things not seen.”
• I.e. We believe that a miracle that we have prayed for has happened - while we have not seen the evidence of it as yet.
  OR - It is like someone who has a terminal disease having total faith that the sickness is gone while in fact the symptoms are still there.

FAITH means – We cannot see the outcome but we know for certain that we will eventually triumph because we placed our TRUST in GOD.
• JESUS said: “I will never leave you or forsake you” – Hebrews 13:5

Example:
The Shunammite woman's story recorded in 2 Kings 4:8-37:
Her only son died. She put the dead son on Elisha’s bed - the accommodation which she and her husband provided for Elisha. Then she went all the way from Shunem to Mount Carmel to seek GOD’s help through Elisha. On the way to Elisha – when things were not really well for her – when asked by her husband and others – She responded “It is well” – Elisha came to her home and restored the life of the child by praying to the Lord”
Faith is believing when I don’t see it!
In demonstrating FAITH in GOD we are not sure what the future holds but we know the God who holds our future!

Mark 11:24 – Jesus said:
*When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it [past tense] and you will be given what you ask for [present tense].”*

How many of us have ever said… “I'll believe ONLY when I see it?”

Whether you're an architect planning a building,
- or whether you're an artist creating a monument,
- or whether you're an Olympic athlete trying to break a world's record and win Gold,
- or whether you're a scientist trying to send a man to the moon…
You have to believe it before you can see it happen or completed.
- All of those things required faith.

Faith is to believe it's possible in advance long before it will ever be possible.
- That's what the Bible says faith is -- believing when I don't see it.

Faith is going ahead and building a garage in FAITH - when you do not have the exact sum of money as yet to purchase the car you have been praying for!
- Faith is like carrying a bottle of Tartar sauce when you go fishing!

TESTIMONY:
- RJ - Healing of the Cyst

Warner von Braun, the father of the space age, who built the atlas rocket and the Saturn rockets that sent men to the moon, once said,
- "There has never been any significant achievement in human history that was not accompanied by faith."

It all started out that somebody believed it was possible and *believed it in advance.*
You have to believe it before it happens like the Shunammite woman who rushed in faith to GOD’s servant Elisha when her only son died and her *faith was honoured.*
Faith turns dreams and visions into reality.

FAITH is believing before I see it.

2. Faith Is OBEYING When I Don't UNDERSTAND It.

A good example of this is Noah.

Just think of the doubts that Noah might have had.
Can you imagine if GOD came to you one day and said:

- "I'm going to DESTROY the whole world and start all over only with you and your family BUT you have to build an Ark to these specifications to save yourself and your family".....
- An ark - 450 feet long, 45 feet in height, 75 feet wide, using Gopher wood etc., How many of us would have RESERVATIONS about such a plan?
- More so Noah was a very old man - being 600 years old when he completed building the Ark!

Hebrews 11:7 says:
“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

Two important Words stand out. Ie "BY Faith" and "REVERENT FEAR"
- “Reverent fear” is the word for “obedience.”

Faith is obeying when I don't understand it OR when it does not make sense.
Noah would have had all kinds of questions and doubts because it had never happened before.
- The Bible says that, before the flood, it had never rained.

Genesis 2:5
“Before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground.”

Genesis 2:6
The earth was watered by a mist that came up from the ground i.e. like dew in the morning.

When GOD said - "Noah, I want you to build this big boat because it's going to flood."
- "Noah would have said, "LORD - What's a flood?"
- GOD would have responded to Noah - "Flood is when you get a lot of rain."
- And Noah would have said, "LORD, What do you mean "it will rain or What EXACTLY is Rain?"
- GOD may have explained - It's Like when I take a lake and pour it down from the sky on you!"

Would we readily believe such an explanation, if we had never seen it?

But Noah, because he had faith obeyed even though it didn't make sense.

GENESIS 6:22 and 7:5
Thus Noah did; according to all that GOD commanded him so he did.

GENESIS 6:19 & 20
- You shall bring the animals and birds and creeping things - male and female"
- “.....They will come to you”!
When we LISTEN to GOD and When we TRUST GOD and OBEY HIS command...
- Even though we cannot understand all the implications when the task is given - and we may say - "How on earth can I do this"?

God will equip, resource and come alongside and help us to accomplish and finish what He has assigned.

God told Noah:
"I want you to build this boat here in the middle of the desert not near the ocean and I'll bring the water to you."
- Noah obeyed when it didn't make sense.
- Noah obeyed when he didn't understand it.

Because Noah trusted and obeyed…
- He saved himself and his family from the universal flood where all that had breath perished as rain poured down for 40 Days and nights.

Two things happened when rain was poured down from the Heavens:
- On one side the unrighteous and the rebellious perished.
- On the other side, the Ark was lifted high above the waters and the Ark rested on Mount Ararat protecting Noah and his family.

Even though the command given to Noah by God sounded crazy, impractical, unreasonable and could have appeared a joke!

Because one man listened, trusted and obeyed … the boat was lifted high, like our trust and faith in the Lord Jesus will one day lift us up to Heaven when we close our eyes on earth or in the coming rapture!

The second Example of Faith in being obedient when he did not understand it - is a man named Abraham.

Hebrews 11:8
By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.
And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Here's Abraham, 75 years old and he lived in a place in modern day Iraq that is called Ur of the Chaldees. [I.e. some where South of Baghdad]

Just about the time he's ready to retire and perhaps apply for social security pension and retirement benefits…
GOD says:
- Get ready for a long journey
- And for relocation from your house, from family and friends
- And move from the comfort of your home
- And from your plans for Retirement.

In other words – get ready NOT for “Social Security” BUT for – “social in-security”!
God told Abram – I am going to take you and turn you into the father of a brand new nation.
  ❖ I'm sure Abraham had all of his doubts and all kinds of questions.

  - He would have naturally asked - "God, where exactly are we going?"
  - God would have said, "You just step out in Faith and I will lead you step by step to your destiny."
  - Then, Abraham would have asked:
  ❖ "How long is it going to take to get there?" As not only do I like to know but I am sure my wife will need to know for me to convince her to move home and accompany me!

Would you and I want to get involved with such a relocation at such an age and without knowing exactly where I am heading?

  • This is like going blindly to an unknown land!

But because Abraham obeyed and went in Faith when he didn't understand it he became the father of a nation called Israel.

Many people were blessed because Abraham obeyed even when it didn't make sense.
  ❖ Faith often involves taking risks.
  ❖ Some people want a guarantee of success before they obey God.

If we take the 1st step of Obedience then God will guide us to the next step!
  ❖ We have to step out in Faith even if it appears Risky and Costly!

There are times when GOD tells us to do something our response is Lord we will go …

  • But only when I have built adequate superannuation for my retirement OR
    - Only once my children finish their University Education that I’ll go!

GOD says, "That doesn't require any faith.
  • I want you to believe when you don't see it and I want you to obey when you don't understand it."

Testimony:

RJ - Call to Full Time Ministry - Leave your work and Follow ME.
1st Pastor a Church in Sydney – when I had never been to Bible School – But 28 years in the corporate world.
  • I was told “I will not be paid any Salary or allowance until the finances are built up”. Our youngest son was just 3 years!

Then, I was fearful, “How can I preach 52 sermons in the year in Pastoring”? 

But God said:
  - It is time to leave the corporate world and 1st Pastor for a limited time for experience and to encourage discouraged Pastors in the future.
- And after the Pastoral experience to move to Full time Evangelism and God will open doors across the world!
- I had the choice to Obey or Disobey God’s command!
- Praise God, I chose to Obey and we have seen God’s provision and blessings and ALL our needs overly met and the open doors across the world, across denominations over the last 19 years!

Every time God tells us to do something, it's a test.
- It's a test in whom am I going to believe – God or Mammon [i.e. in my wealth and riches] or in Man!

God loves us and our Heavenly Father wants us to enjoy only His very best and to enjoy God’s very best, we have to obey!

Do we remember the time when we were kids and or our parents told us to do something that made no sense at all?
- We thought, "What do my parents know! They're old fashioned! They don't understand that we are in a modern age"

Looking back, can we now see the wisdom of what they were telling us to do?

And… can we see that some of those things they told us to do they were telling us out of love and for our own protection and for our own wellbeing.

How much more should we take seriously what our Heavenly Father asks us to do whether we think it makes sense or not.
- When we ignore what He tells us to do we act foolishly.
- God is our creator and He knows the end from the beginning of our life. Psalm 139:16  Isaiah 46:10

The Bible [BASIC INSTRUTCTION BEFORE LEAVING EARTH] - is the owner's manual or God’s guide book for our life.
If I ignore it who am I going to hurt? - Not God. I'm just going to hurt myself. There are a lot of times it doesn't make sense.

For instance, God says, When people hurt you and abuse you and misuse you, forgive them.
- Does that sound like the right thing to do? No.
- The natural thing is to retaliate or hit back well and truly!

GOD says don't be resentful because resentment always hurts us more than somebody else.
- Just forgive them for your own sake so you can get on with your life.

If we hold on to the hurt and bitterness we are only hurting ourselves.
- It could affect our health.
- It could EVEN lead to heart problems!
If we learn to do whatever God tells us to do even when it seems like nonsense or unreasonable then God blesses our obedience.

If we ignore what GOD asks us to do –
- It is we who will miss out on all the great things and blessings that God has planned for my life
- And we lose our joy as well.
- We will have no fulfillment in what we do.

Matthew 7:21-23
Luke 6:46
- RJ - Arise - Go to Australia - 1992 one of the worst years of Recession - God gives me a job with hardly any work!
- RJ - Arise and go to Perth - I will open the Nations
- RJ - Arise and go to New Zealand for a season - Pacific Islands, Church Plant, Parliament ministry, Marriage for one of our children
So… let’s Remember - Faith is believing when I don't see it, obeying when I don't understand it.

Next, The Bible tells us...
3. Faith Is GIVING When I Don't HAVE all of It.
E.g:
   ❖ The widow that gave it all that Jesus commended versus the others that Jesus observed and commented.

Giving and faith go together.
God sometimes uses finances to test our faith.
Have you ever had to decide between tithing and paying a bill? This is a test!

GOD is saying,
"Who are you going to trust? My promise is to take care of you if you put ME first or yourself?"
Matthew 6:33

In Hebrews 11, amongst the Heroes the first person listed is a man named Abel.
Abel gets listed not because he did something great.
He had no great accomplishment or Achievement to his name.
The only thing he did was he gave a sacrifice that was MORE acceptable to GOD than his brother Cain -
And God listed Abel in the Hall of Fame and Faith.

   - Why? It wasn't how much he gave, it wasn't what he gave, but it was the attitude in which he gave God that mattered.
Hebrews 11:4  
“By faith Abel offered to GOD a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.”

The Bible here is talking about giving a more acceptable sacrifice in faith, God commending this act of giving and it still speaks even though Abel died 1000's of years ago!  
It wasn't what Abel gave that pleased God but how he gave it.  
• It wasn't the amount but the attitude of his heart.

God doesn't care about the amount. He cares about the attitude in which we give.

We need to understand that there are two ways to give:  
❖ We can give by faith or we can give out of fear.  
❖ We can give by reason or we can give by revelation.

First, I can give by reason.  
❖ When I give by reason I look at my bank account and my check stubs and how much I've got and I figure out what can I afford.  
❖ I then give a reasonable amount based on what I can afford.  
❖ That doesn't require any faith.  
❖ An atheist can give by reason.  
❖ We don't have to believe in God for that.

The other way to give is to give by revelation.  
❖ Revelation is when you pray and you ask GOD and you say, "GOD, what do You want me to give? God, how much do You want me to trust You for this time?"

It's giving by faith. That's the kind of giving that GOD is pleased with.  
We can't out give God!  
❖ The more we give – the more He gives back.

Whenever we give in faith – **God always shows up at the right time!**

Some people want to say, "God, You FIRST give to me and then I'll give."  

But that's not faith.  
It's like, "GOD You bring in this big windfall or let me win this lottery and then I'll give some of it back to You or give you some mega dollars!"

2 Corinthians 8:3  
For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord.
A business executive who has been very successful in his finances mentioned to a Pastor:

- "You tell your people that the best time to give is when their business is in the dumps when they're in trouble. Because that's when you need God's help the most."

RJ - 1st Tithe - Saboor Chatoor

**GOD says, "I want to bless your life but you have to trust ME first and give me the FIRSTFRUIT"**

*2 Corinthians 9:6-8*

… whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

7 Each one must give as be has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Faith is giving when I don't have all of it.

Next:

4. Faith Is PERSISTING When I Don't FEEL Like It.

The Word Persisting means –

- Persevering, Continuing, Keeping At It, Sticking It Out, Carrying On
- Be it a Job, Ministry, Marriage, studies or even our devotion time – God expects us to persist even when we DO NOT FEEL LIKE IT!

Canon James Wong pushing me into the deep end to preach at Church of the Resurrection (COR)!

E.g:

Writing of the Book of Testimonies - Took me nearly 4 years –

- Nearly gave up if not for the constant reminder of Rebecca, Tony Ooi, Steve Sandiland.
- Scripture in 2 Corinthians 8: 10 & 11 - Finish what you started a Year ago;

10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago;

11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.

- Persistence brought the book to completion, financed, translated, distributed to over 90 Nations!
- Don't Give up / Don't give in!

Another Example:

When Previn had a stroke at 30 years on 22 August 2012...

- I wanted to cancel 3 months of travel and Ministry Appointments!

Praise God, I Listened, Trusted, Obeyed and WENT.

- Result: Previn back home before I returned home in 2 Weeks ....
And walked without the help of a wheel chair in 2 days!
Faith is persisting when I don't feel like!
When we step out for God -
  - Satan tries to hassle us by throwing his fiery darts at us by bringing discouragements, disappointments and make us look like failures.

On our part, we have to just keep being persistent.
Keep doing the right thing, even when we don't feel like it.

There are times we feel so down that we don't always like being nice to people or even smile at them!

Sometimes we want to be focused just on ourselves, Moody, Grumpy while I want everybody else to be nice to me and place their attention on me!

Sometimes we don't feel like going to Church on Sunday – but have an extended sleep – or watch some sports on TV – or go to the beach – or go Fishing!
  - There are times we do not want to read the Bible or Pray.
  - We only like to go to Church or Read the Bible or Pray or serve in the Church or Go on a Mission trip when we just feel like it!

The Devil is so cunning that he will make sure that we don’t feel to do the things we want to do and set us on a Back-slide and often on a fast track – A Mat slide!
  - How do you get to be an Olympic or professional athlete? Hours and hours of exercising and Disciplined Training.
  - Ask an Olympic athlete, "Do you always feel like exercising 3 or 6 hours a day?" Of course not.
  - Ask a master musician, "Do you always feel like practicing hours a day to be a Professional at your instrument?" Of course not!

How does a super salesman become a super salesman?
He or she continues to make the calls after everybody's gone home because they don't feel like making any more calls and that's how he or she become so successful.

RJ - Medical Rep days - doing late evening calls on Doctors - While other Reps went Home or we're drinking in the Hotels.
E.g: Persistence of Colonel Harland Sanders – Kentucky Fried Chicken.
  - Faith is being persistent.
  - Faith is refusing to give up.
  - Faith is doing the right thing,
  - Even when we are tired,
  - Even when we are moody,
  - Even when we go through disappointments and discouragements.
How do you develop persistence?
The key is: Keep your eyes on God. When you keep your eyes on God, it keeps you persistent.

Some of you today may be at the quitting point. You might feel like you're ready to give up on your marriage. Or perhaps you're ready to give up on school, or Uni, or Bible School because it just seems too hard.

Perhaps you're ready to give up on that career or that dream or that hope of ever getting married, -- or giving up on your health! -- Or may be even quit your ministry because you feel burnt out or drained.

Some of you think your finances are hopeless, "I'm never going to get out of debt!"
And you feel like giving up.

God brought you here today so HE could encourage you in saying this to you:
   - Hang in there!
   - Don't give up.
   - Keep believing when you don't see it,
   - Obeying when you don't understand it,
   - Giving, when you don't have all of it,
   - And keep persisting when you don't feel like it."

Keep your eyes firmly fixed on the Lord.
“Look back and thank GOD,
Look forward and trust GOD,
Look around and serve GOD,
Look within and find GOD.”

Hebrews 10:35-38
So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.
"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.
For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."
Galatians 6:9-10
9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Luke 18:1-8 - Parable of the Persistent widow
1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men.
3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'
"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says.
And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Talking of being persistent:
- Jeremiah said that God's Word is '... like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces' (Jeremiah 23:29).
- Ever wonder how a hammer can hit a rock ninety-nine times, but on the one-hundredth blow it shatters?
That's because all the previous blows kept weakening it.
- Live in God's Word; keep speaking it over your situation and it will work.

There are two other things we need to know about faith to live our life of Faith:

5. Faith Is THANKING GOD Before I RECEIVE It.

Look at JESUS' Prayer before calling Lazarus out of the grave:
John 11:41-46
Then they took away the stone _from the place_ where the dead man was lying.
And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said _this_, that they may believe that You sent Me."
Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"
And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."
Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

2 Chronicles 20:18-23
Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord. Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.
Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."
After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise HIM for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever."
As they began to sing and praise / the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah / and they were defeated.
23 The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

Faith is thanking GOD in advance.

6. Faith Is TRUSTING If I Don't GET It.
Some people try to make God like a vending machine that God automatically will give you anything you want but the fact is it does not happen that way.

GOD is not a vending machine.
- Vending machines will give us things that we don't need and give us what we greed for.
- Vending machines will give us things that are harmful to health that leads us to sin and eventually end in death!

GOD will never give us something that's bad for us.

Does a parent give a child everything the child asks for?
- Of course not.
- Not if the parent is sensible, loving and caring.

Eg: iPhone, iPad, iPod, iPay, Pen knife, Controversial computer games, Unedifying books.

And God is certainly not going to give us everything we ask for. He said, "I will meet all your needs". He doesn't say, "I'll meet all your greeds."
That's a Big difference.

Philippians 4:19
And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

So God is not some kind of vending machine where we put in a prayer and we automatically get everything we want instantly. Some people today teach the idea that if you have enough faith you'll always be well, you'll never have any problems, you'll never be sick, everything will be going great, you will have plenty of money and so on –
- This is called the Prosperity Gospel teaching.

This is not Scriptural teaching!

Paul said –
Philippians 4:11-13
I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.
12 I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.
13 I can do everything through HIM who gives me strength.

God is more interested in my character than He is in my comfort or my wealth.
God is more interested in making me HOLY than in making me happy.
He knows holiness is the way to genuine happiness and miracles. Joshua 3:5 and Numbers 11:18
So God is not going to give me just whatever I ask for but only what will be good for me and will not harm me.

The Bible says that faith is trusting if I don't get it. Here's the truth: GOD hears and answers every prayer we pray.

Daniel 10:12
He doesn't answer always the way we want Him to and according to our time frame.
- In fact, sometimes when we pray, GOD says, “Yes.”
- And sometimes when we pray, GOD says,” No.”
- And sometimes when we pray, GOD says, not yet.
- And sometimes GOD says, "I've got a better idea. I've got something different. I know you're going to like this better."

All four of those are equally valid answers to prayer.

And faith is trusting God even when I don't get the answer I expected or wanted.

Hebrews 11:39-40
And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Living by faith does not exempt Christian’s from problems. Think of the intense Persecution Christians are going through in many parts of the World.

Our Response should be as in Acts 4:29-31 **and trust God to accomplish His will even if the answer does not come the way we think!**

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsamane…
Sometimes we pray for God to remove a problem but instead He keeps the problem there and gives us the strength to go through it.

❖ The result is we emerge stronger.

If God took all the problems out of our way, we end up in self-confidence and don’t see the necessity to exercise Faith in the Lord but put our trust in man.

God wants us to have character and maturity. Therefore He lets us go through some problems instead of removing them and He gives us the ability to handle it.
1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Anybody can trust God and raise both hands in praise to God when things are going really good.

- Anybody can give when they've got extra money.

But real faith is built in the valleys of life. Sometimes its trusting God when I don't get it.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10
To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.
8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.
9 But HE said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.
10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul asked for the removal of a Thorn in his Flesh and the response he received; And his Trust in God even though his 3 time Prayer request was not answered; And the reason given as to why it was not answered…
- To keep him from becoming conceited or arrogant!

In closing:
Which of these aspects do I need to work on?
- Do I need to work on believing when I don't see it?
- Do I need to work on obeying when I don't understand it?
- Do I need to work on giving when I don't have all of it?
- Or persisting when I don't feel like it?
- Start thanking GOD before we receive our answer or miracle.
- Or do I need to continue to trust GOD even if I don't get it.

That's what FAITH is all about.

Some of you say, "I'd really like to grow in faith. I'd like to live a life of faith." - But how do I get about it?

How does GOD build our faith?
Through His word i.e. Through the Bible.

Romans 10:17
So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

So the more we get into reading God’s word the more we are going to grow in faith.
If we don’t ever read the Bible we will not grow much faith.
  • This is the spiritual food that builds the muscle.

The other way that GOD builds our faith is through trials and testing’s.
1 Peter 1:7
So that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

  ❖ God will use difficulties to test our faith.
  ❖ God will use demands on our time to test our faith.
  ❖ God will use dollars, financial giving to test our faith.
  ❖ God will use delays to test our faith.

Some of us here may be going through a tough time right now and you're almost ready to give up.
  • I want to say to you, Hang on!

God will make a way if you will trust Him.
  • “God will make a way where there seems no other way”.
  • He will part the Red Sea!
  • He will level the mountains!
  • He will restore all that the enemy has stolen – if only we live a life of faith.

God bless you in your FAITH progression and may He take you from Faith To Faith.

GOD bless you!