

Armando Rodriguez

The Oracles

Faith

Basic Principles #2

THE ORACLES

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To my wife Teresa and children for their love and support

Preface

The author of the letter provides the reader with a list the six basic principles of the doctrine of Christ. He called them the basic principles of the oracles of God. Historically, an oracle, was known as someone through whom a god would utter hidden knowledge or a divine purpose. Upon close review of these doctrines or basic principles, it will become evident that God was revealing his secrets to those who had embraced Him. The believers to whom this letter was written had fallen short of God's expectation. They had failed to master the knowledge found in the six basic oracles of God. According to the writer, the recipients of this letter should have already grasped these foundational principles. It was not the case. Note the six basic doctrines outlined by the writer to the Hebrews:

- Repentance from Dead Works
- Faith Toward God
- Doctrine of Baptisms
- Laying on of Hands
- Resurrection of the Dead
- Eternal Judgment

The problem we find in this letter is not uncommon. As I visit churches here and abroad, I have found that most believers are unable to express or voice an opinion about the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ which I have listed above. The writer of the letter encourages the reader to move on to perfection, but maybe it would good to pause and review these six teachings before we proceed. It may be that a lack of our understand of the basic doctrines of Christ may cause us to stumble as we move into a higher plan of service to God. As we study these basic principles of the oracles of God, we will discover not only hidden knowledge, but also God's wonderful plan.

This study, we will focus on the second of six doctrines: **“FAITH TOWARD GOD”**

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THE OBJECT OF FAITH

Scripture teaches that Father and Son are always the object of our faith. Our faith is toward God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our faith is directed toward a person, never things. The greater our vision of God, the greater our faith. Paul informs us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. When we hear, receive, believe and practice God's Word, our faith is increased because the Bible is a revelation of God. As our knowledge of God increases, so does our faith in Him.

Our level of faith is determined by our relationship with God. When we view the pages of Scripture, we discover that not all have faith. It is when we first believe that we receive a measure of faith. As we walk with God, our faith may begin as weak faith, but as it abounds and increases, our small faith becomes strong and then great. As we align ourselves with God, we eventually become full of faith or faithful.

Though we may have great faith one day, as our relationship with God weakens, it seems that our faith fades. On various occasions, the disciples were reprimanded for their faltering faith when Jesus said to them, "be not faithless, but believe." When the disciples faced a storm at sea, Jesus said to them, "why are you so fearful? Ye of little faith! Why do you have no faith? Have faith!" It seems that faith often wanes. When Jesus asked a man to believe, the man's response was, "I believe, but help my unbelief." Faith seems to move between two poles. On the one side, there is weak faith and on the other is great faith. As believers, we seem to travel between these two points. Again, I would say that if our vision of God is great, our faith will follow. If our vision of God is weak, our faith will be lacking. It seems that faith is strongest when our relationship with God is thriving. Paul informs us that our faith can grow exceedingly and that God will perfect that which is lacking in our faith. God's desire is that we be full of and rich in faith. Mountain moving faith, faith that believes against the odds and faith that does not stagger is available to all who would align themselves with the God who is its source.

The power of faith is really not determined by the quantity of faith we possess, its power is present because of the object to which it is directed. Jesus said, 'you want to move a mountain? You want to do the impossible? All you need is faith the size of a mustard seed.' It is the object of your faith that gives your faith power, not its quantity.

THE DEFINITION OF FAITH

The writer to the Hebrews defines faith as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not see. The writer informs us that it is not possible to please God unless we understand two things:

- First, if you come to God you must believe that He is
- Second, if you come to God, you must believe He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him

We must believe that God exists as the Source of all. As we come to Him, we must also believe that He is a rewarder. What we need flows from the Source. He rewards us as we seek Him.

Among those things we need is Faith. Faith flows from God as the Source. As we remain in Him, faith will flow out of our relationship with Him.

What does faith look like? There are many example of faith in action in the Scripture. Let's take a look at a few of them.

FAITH IN ACTION

Abel, Enoch, Noah

The writer to the Hebrews provides his readers with mini portraits of faith in action. By faith, Abel was said to offer a more excellent sacrifice than his brother. Through faith, Enoch was translated into heaven by God that he should not see death. Noah, being warned of God, by faith prepared an ark, saved his family from the flood and became heir of righteousness. Abraham, when asked to move away from his country and relatives, obeyed and went not knowing where he went. By faith, he sojourned in a strange country, in tabernacles with his heirs. By faith, Abraham looked for a city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God. By faith, Sara, Abraham's wife, received strength to conceive seed and judged Him faithful who had promised. Abraham, against all hope believed in hope. By faith, Abraham offered up Isaac, his only begotten son. Abraham, by faith, accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. Joseph made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Moses

By faith Moses, was hid three months by his parents who were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith, Moses, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. By faith, he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king. By faith, Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. He kept the Passover, sprinkled the blood lest the destroyer touch their firstborn sons. By faith, he passed through the Red sea as by dry land.

Others

By faith, Israel marched around the walls of Jericho and they fell after they compassed the city seven days. By faith, Rahab, the harlot, escaped death when she received and hid the spies. Others that might be considered are Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel and the prophets.

FAITH TO RECEIVE

Note that faith was always accompanied by action. Faith never stood alone. Faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fires, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness many were made strong, because of faith many waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens and received their dead raised to life again. These are just a few examples of individuals who exercised their faith to the glory of God. Because of their relationship with God, these had the courage to receive the benefits of faith.

FAITH TO ENDURE

As believers, our faith in God not only prepares us to receive, but also empowers us to die if necessary. The following are examples of what believers gladly endured for the divine cause. They were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. They suffered trials of cruel mockings and scourgings. They were in bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted and slain with the sword. They often wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins. They were destitute, afflicted, and tormented. They wandered in deserts, mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. They all obtained a good report through faith, even though they received not the promise. Some died in faith, having not received the promises, but saw them afar off. They were persuaded of, and embraced the promises.

They understood that there was no temptation but such as is common to man. They understood that God was faithful and would not allow them to be tempted above that they were able to bear. They understood that God would make a way that they might be able to bear their trial. Those who suffered understood that the light afflictions of this world were not worthy to be compared with the glory that will follow. They held fast to their faith, followed it and were living examples of living by it. Their faith gave them the power to stand strong and their work of faith will not be forgotten.

THE BENEFITS OF FAITH

As we review Scripture, the evidence confirms that faith also pays many dividends. I have been asked, "what benefit do you receive as a result of exercising faith?" I do not believe that we walk around conscious of our 'faith' or the 'benefits' we are going to receive. We enjoy God. We experience fullness of joy as we live in Him. God Himself is our reward. As a result of our relationship, we are repeatedly blessed or strengthened by Him. What follows are a few examples of some of the benefits we have received.

- **Righteousness** was imputed
- **Justification** was granted
- The **promise** to be an **heir of the world** has come to us
- **Access and peace with God** through Jesus
- **Salvation** has been afforded
- If we believe, we will **see the glory of God**
- We receive **the Holy Spirit** by the hearing of faith

- We **minister the Spirit** by the hearing of faith
- By faith we are **reconciled to God**
- By faith we are **children of Abraham**
- By faith, **we are blessed**
- The **promise of the Spirit** comes to us through faith
- Through faith, we receive **the gift of God**
- Our **hearts are purified** by faith.
- We are **kept by the power of God**
- We **edify** in faith
- The **victory** that overcomes the world is our faith.
- When we believe on him, **we are not ashamed**
- We believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus and are **saved**
- By faith, we **obtain a good report**
- By faith we **understand** the worlds are framed by the word of God
- Seek first the kingdom of God and **all your needs** will be added to you

These are but a few of the benefits we receive as a result of exercising faith.

THE MECHANICS OF FAITH

How does faith work?

The apostles indicate that Jesus was often able to see faith in those who heard him preach and teach. At times, it was visible faith that moved him to exercise power on behalf of those in need. Though the source of faith is God, faith also resides in us to be exercised and used. When Jesus touched the blind man's eyes, he said, according to **your faith** be it unto you. On several occasion he said, "Go your way, **your faith** has made you whole," and "receive your sight, your faith has brought your perfect soundness. The exercise of faith was expected. Faith begins in God, is transferred to us and then must flow through us to others.

Jesus told his disciples, "if you say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea, and not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you ask will come to come to pass, you will have whatever you say."

And again, Jesus declared, "Whatever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive and you will have what you ask." If you **have faith** and not doubt, you will say unto this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea and it will be done.

In both instances above, Jesus expected his disciples to exercise faith and use it to carry out God's will. Jesus told them, pray, believe and receive. If you believe, all things will possible to you. May God help us to learn how to exercise faith in order to allow God's power to flow through us.

How do I increase faith?

We have stated previously that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. According to Paul, our faith increases as we expose ourselves to the content of Scripture. Why is this the case? The Bible is a revelation of God. When we read it, it unveils God's character and attributes. When we meditate upon it, we become familiar with what God's intentions and desires. We discover all his secrets. As our knowledge of Him increases, our relationship intensifies and our faith grows.

OBSTACLES TO FAITH

There are several enemies of faith. Anything that keeps the Word of God from taking root in our lives is an obstacle. Jesus described several ways in which individuals are robbed of the faith-producing benefits of the Word of God. When delivering the parable of the Sower, Jesus taught that the devil uses various tools to render the seed of God's Word ineffective in us. Jesus provided the following examples:

- Enemy charges in and steals the seed of God's Word
- Enemy uses afflictions, tribulations and persecution to diminish the impact of Word
- Enemy chokes the Word by means of the cares of this world
- Enemy chokes the Word by means of the deceitfulness of riches
- Enemy chokes the Word by means of the desire and lust of things.

Other examples of diminished faith are also found in writings of the apostles. The apostles inform us of enemies of faith. Note their counsel as they warn us:

- Do not waver
- Do not Fear
- Do not fail to enter into God's best because of unbelief
- Do not Doubt
- Do not be double-minded
- Do not Worry
- Do not be Ignorant of God's good intentions
- Do not fail to believe the Word of God

Fear, doubt, unbelief, worry, and ignorance are all enemies of faith. When we provide them with room and board in our our heart, our faith is diminished. Why is it so important that we expose ourselves to the content of Scripture? The Word is God's self-revelation. If we want faith to increase, we must allow the Word to do it's effectual work in us.

Note the questions uttered to those who followed Christ.

- Do you have faith?
- Where is your faith?
- Why do you have no faith?
- Why are you fearful? O ye of little faith?
- When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

Again, it seems that those close to Christ were constantly wrestling with the issue of faith. I venture to say that if we can avoid the faith-diminishing strategies used by the enemy, we may be able to become rich and strong in faith. Note the positive teaching of the apostles:

- Ask in faith
- Believe only and you shall be made whole
- Say to the mountain be removed
- Mix the Word with faith
- Expect to receive
- Be single-minded
- Trust that Father knows what you need
- Remember God feeds the birds
- Remember God clothes the fields
- Remember you are more valuable than the birds and flowers
- Believe the Word
- Believe Me

The primary reason for our failure is that we disconnect our 'faith' from its 'source.' Remember, Jesus stated that all you need is faith the size of a mustard seed. **The power of faith is not in the size/quality of our faith; the power is IN ITS SOURCE.** If we keep this in mind, nothing will be impossible to us.

Faith is a shield that quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked on. If we focus our attention on the Source, we will learn to walk by faith, not by sight. If we allow the Word to richly indwell us, we will exercise God's faith and become a channel of His life, power and blessing.

CONCLUSION

The Relevance of the Study

The writer to the Hebrews informs us that 'Faith Toward God' is one of the basic principles of the oracles of God. What truth does this principle teach us about God's plan. If we are to grow, abound and increase in faith, it is necessary for us to expose ourselves to God's holy Word. It is through His Word that God grants us a vision of Himself and infuses us with faith that knows no bounds. To those who believe (have faith) Jesus said, nothing shall be impossible. Again, the power necessary for living is not to be found in the quantity of faith, but in the Source of faith. God can be trusted. Walk with him. Make the focus of your faith God. It is only then that you will experience His best and become a conduit of His power.

OTHER BOOKS AND QUICK READS

BOOKS

The Narratives of Christ (Gospel)
Is God Speaking? (Minor Prophets)
God's Life-Changing Curriculum (An Agent of Change)
Worship (In the New Testament)

QUICK-READS

The Authority of the Believer
Transforming Power
Redeemed from the Curse (Entitled to the Blessing)
Emotional Intelligence (Models: A Brief Review)
Why He Came
The Kingdom (13 Parables)
Divine Transition
Divine Expectation
Unclaimed Wealth
Times of Refreshing
Unlocking God's Diary
The House of James
The Will of God (In James)
The Pure Gospel (Galatians)
Paul's Vision of God (Ephesians)
The Journey
The Oracles: Repentance from Dead Works #1
The Oracles: Faith Toward God #2
The Oracles: Baptisms #3
The Oracles: Laying on of Hands #4
The Oracles: Resurrection of the Dead #5
The Oracles: Eternal Judgement #6

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