

TAKEN BY STORM

VOLUME ONE

*Fighting the Good
Fight of Faith*

RANDALL J. BREWER

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STORM**

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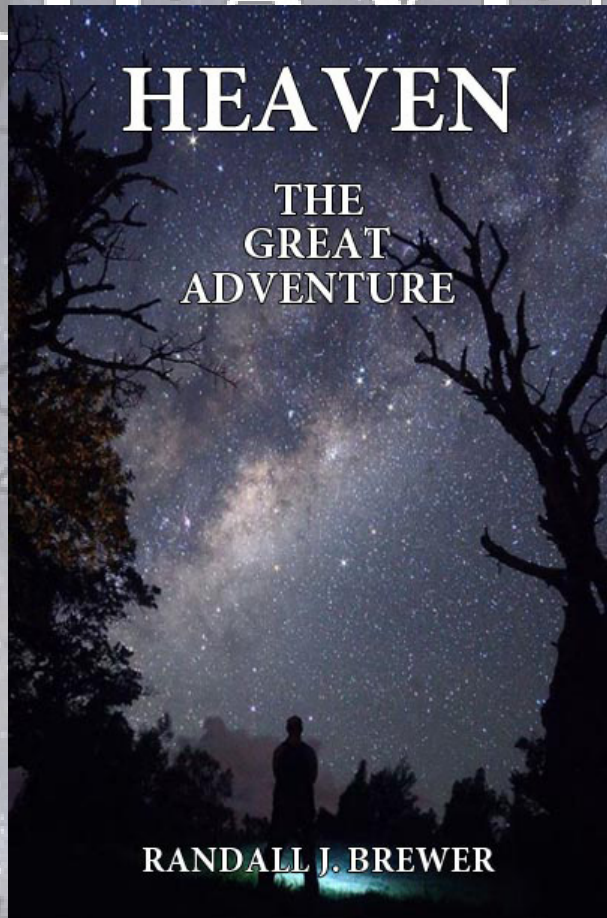
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This book and the complete series of *Taken By Storm* is dedicated to my publisher, Paul Baker, a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

HEAVEN



You've never experienced

an adventure like *Heaven: The Great Adventure*.
What do we wear? What about our hair? What will we
look like? What are we going to be doing for the next
million millennia, and that's just the beginning?

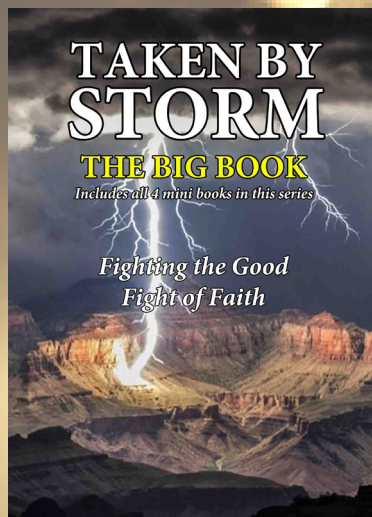
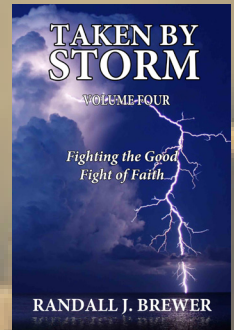
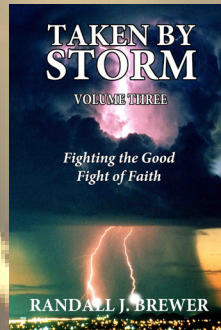
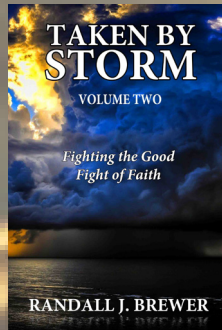
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A dramatic landscape featuring a golden field in the foreground, rolling hills in the middle ground, and a dark, stormy sky with a bright light breaking through the clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

THE

KINGDOM

OF GOD

**suffers violence,
and the violent
take it by storm.**

Matthew 11:12

THAT'S UNBELIEVABLE

How many times have we heard that statement, not to mention the number of times we have said those words ourselves?

“That’s unbelievable.” Most of the time we’ve said that when faced with the truth. When the fact of the matter is staring us in the eye, we will say in amazement, “That’s unbelievable.”

Or how about these, “I can’t believe it,” or “I don’t believe my eyes.” Or the worse one, whichever one above, is spoken when we’ve prayed for something and then we get it.

In this first set of chapters of *Taken By Storm*, Christian author Randall J. Brewer takes us on a discovery of the faith-life of the 21st Century Christian.

Faith is one of the hardest concepts to wrap our heads around, because it has never been properly defined for us; shown us how to obtain faith; nor have we been trained properly on how faith really works.

Don’t you dare put this book down until you have read it through the first time. Then get your pen and paper, and carefully read it again, taking notes you can refer back to again and again.

Randall calls *Taken By Storm* the “faith book series” and for good reason. I can promise you this, if you will meditate on the words you are about to read, you will never envision God the same again.

Paul Baker,

Publisher and Covenant Partner of Randall J. Brewer

INTRODUCTION
TSUNAMI FAITH
by Randall J. Brewer

I recently saw a program about the tsunami that occurred in Japan on March 11, 2011 and I saw some spiritual insight in it.

For the sake of illustration let's pretend that a tsunami is a good thing that represents waves of God's blessings flooding into a believer's life. A tsunami begins with a disruption under the surface of the water.

Likewise, our faith enters the unseen world and disrupts the normal course of life which more times than not is a life of trial and hardship. Power is then released and very little of it is seen in the outside world.

Most of the turbulence in a tsunami is underwater. This program I saw told of some scuba divers who nearly died in the underwater torment while those in the boat on the surface didn't know anything was going on.

Faith also moves in the unseen realm. As the tsunami rushes toward its destination, it's building up power and nobody can see it. Just because we can't yet see the results of our faith, there

is power being unleashed and it's working on our behalf.

On the shoreline where the tsunami is about to hit, a strange occurrence takes place. All the water recedes away from the shoreline much further than the outgoing tide. All that's seen is an ocean of brown, yucky mud. Things appear to be barren, desolate, and downright ugly. This is where doubt tries to enter in. You pray for something good and things seem to get worse. This is when we need to stand strong. It is foolish to think we can receive from God without opposition from the enemy.

But praise God, on the horizon is the white crest line of an incoming wave. It's coming right toward you and before you know it the blessings of God are flooding over you. A tsunami is not some killer 50 ft. wave. No, it's a 10 ft. wave that's several hundred miles long and when it hits, the waves of God's blessings keep coming and coming and coming and coming and coming...

Whew!

1

THE LIFE OF FAITH

“And the just shall live by faith.” Habakkuk 2:4

In the Word, our walk with the Lord is compared to being on a straight and narrow road ^{Matt. 7:13,14}.

Another similar example would be to say that we are traveling down the journey of life on a set of railroad tracks.

- The railroad line is owned and operated by the Heavenly Father.
- The powerful engine pulling the train is the Holy Spirit and,
- Jesus is the conductor.
- This train travels on two railings, one being the railing of love and the other of faith.
- Hope is the wooden railroad ties that hold love and faith together.
- The fruit of patience and long

suffering are the spikes that secure the two railings onto the wooden ties.

- Finally, we are the passengers on the train. We are led by the Lord Jesus Christ and are pulled through life by the Holy Spirit. We travel on love and faith, which are held together by hope.



So many times we overlook the value of hope. We want to be “faith” people and we want to walk by “love.” But how many times do you hear people say they want to be a person of “hope”? Many Christians do not understand what true Biblical hope is and its’ importance to faith and love.

The fulfillment of our heavenly call is also dependent on our knowledge of hope. In Heb. 6:19 hope is called “an anchor of the

soul, both sure and steadfast..." If a person doesn't have an anchor they'll just float off in the direction of the current. This is what it means to "cast off restraint."

Hope is steadfast and sure. It holds you in place and builds in your mind a confident expectancy that comes when you get an inner image of something that hasn't happened yet.

With hope comes joy and peace. Rom. 15:13 says, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

In the same chapter Paul tells us, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

FAITH IS...

Hope builds a picture in your mind based on the promises of God found in His Word. As one continues to concentrate on the mental picture that is formed it begins to grow stronger and become more clear.

Hope takes that image from your mind and puts it in your spirit, and through meditation of what hasn't happened yet, begins to become real to you.

Eventually you'll begin to act and talk like it has already happened. This is called "faith" and before you know it that image will become a reality in your life.

1 Thess. 5:8 tells us, "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." The

And now abide in faith, hope, love, these three...

Message[©] states, "So let's not sleepwalk through life like those others. Let's keep our eyes open and be smart. People sleep at night and get drunk at night. But not us! Since we're creatures of day, let's act like it. Walk out into the daylight sober, dressed up in faith, love, and the hope of salvation."

1 Cor. 13:13a says, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three..." These three spiritual forces work hand-in-hand in the fulfillment of our dreams. Faith works through love ^{Gal. 5:6} and is the substance of things hoped for

The Bible also says that “faith without works is dead” James 2:26. Faith must be used in the fulfillment of our Heavenly call because “without faith it is impossible to please God” Heb. 11:6.

Faith—

- Begins in the spiritual realm of love,
- Passes through the mental realm of hope, and
- Concludes in the physical realm of works.

FAITH EMPOWERS ACTION

Faith is a substance from Heaven that comes and empowers you when you put actions to your hope. There is power in faith that gets charged up and energized by hope. “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” Rom. 5:5.

Understand that hope is the act of believing without the addition of works whereas faith is when you add works to your hope.

Heb. 11:1a says, “Now faith is...” Faith is here “now” while

hope is always linked to the future. A person’s dream is always in the future. Through faith, hope, and love, we are always striving and moving forward to the fulfillment of our dreams and heavenly call. And when our dreams get fulfilled, God will give us another.

God intended for people to be dreamers. He built into each of us the capacity to dream. Hopes and dreams are what motivates the body of Christ to keep moving forward in their walk with the Lord.

“Now” hope does not disappoint.

We should always be content where we are, but never satisfied because satisfaction brings complacency. There should never be enough in the present to make you satisfied. Striving for something better in the future will always place a motivating spirit in the heart of every believer, and this will give them a reason to live.

The desire to do bigger and greater things for God should be the heart cry of Christians everywhere. Eph. 3:20 says, “Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”

The power that works in

us is our faith that gets energized by hope.

Don't ever set your goals too low. Your goals and your hope are always identical. No goals, no hope. Big goals, big hope.

NEVER BE SATISFIED

Never be satisfied where you are. You should always be going forward reaching out to the vision God has given you for the direction of your life. The only thing to make up for is the lack you feel today, because you refuse to become complacent is the power of your hope-energized-faith.

Faith continually needs to be stirred up. It's like a fire where without a steady supply of new fuel it begins to die. The fuel of faith is the Word. We need to daily hear the Word, read the Word, meditate upon the Word, and confess the Word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God ^{Rom. 10:17}.

Also, faith does not stand still. We walk by faith, and faith not used is no faith at all. Since our hopes and dreams are in the future, it is vitally important that we develop in our lives the fruit of patience.

Heb. 6:12 tells us that it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God. Faith and patience always go together ^{1 Thess. 1:4}. If it is impossible to please God without faith, then it is impossible to please Him without patience.

Faith opens the door to God's promises for you, and patience keeps it open until that promise is fulfilled.

When it comes to receiving from God, patience is just as important as faith. Patience supports and sustains faith until the result is manifested. Patience will encourage you to hold steady because it is the *power twin* of faith. Faith is the brains and patience is the muscle. They work together to see to it that the promises of God get fulfilled in your life.

Some people think of patience as something designed to help us suffer in a meek way. After all, another word for patience is "longsuffering" ^{Gal. 5:22}. But according to Heb. 10:35,36 patience will actually put you on the road to success. The Amplified© Bible says, "Do not, therefore, fling away your fearless confidence,

*Faith is the brains
and patience is
the muscle.*

for it carries a great and glorious compensation of reward. For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away (and enjoy to the full) what is promised.” Rom. 12:12 says that we are to be “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer...”

What does it mean to have patience? Simply put, patience is the ability to delay gratification. In Greek, patience means “to be consistently constant or to be the same way all the time regardless of what happens.” Even God is the same yesterday, today, and forever” Heb. 13:8.

A person with patience is one who absolutely *cannot* and *will not* be changed by anyone or anything regardless of the circumstances. Patience is the practice of enduring and it always brings a blessing. James 5:11a says, “Indeed we count them blessed who endure.”

The Message© Bible says, “Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. What a gift life is

to those who stay the course!”

Heb. 6:15 tells us that after Abraham “had patiently endured he obtained the promise.” The farmer waits patiently for the former and latter rain and at the end of the season his dream of a bountiful harvest is fulfilled.

BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE

James 1:4 says, “But let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” For sure, the fulfillment of our God-given dreams is a perfect work, thus the need for patience. All believers have patience. It is a fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:22. Therefore, people who are born-again never run out of patience, they just stop using the patience they have.

Impatience only points out our unwillingness to accept God’s timing. People today simply do not like to wait. This is the age of microwaves and computers, high-speed trains and super-sonic jets. When people want something they want it now. There is nothing that grinds against people’s flesh more than having to wait on something that they desperately need or want.

*Patience...is a fruit
of the Spirit.*

God, on the other hand, is not concerned with time. 2 Peter 3:8 says, “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” In other words, God is not in a hurry.

In the Garden of Eden God told Satan, “...her Seed will bruise your head” ^{Gen. 3:15}. It took four thousand years for that to happen. God is not concerned with time and neither should we.

Heb. 12 :1b says “...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Stop competing with time. Focusing on time will only take your attention away from the faith you have for the fulfillment of your dream. Give patience the opportunity to have its perfect work. Micah 7:7 says, “Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me.”

KEEP BUSY

As you wait for the fulfillment of your dream and heavenly call, keep busy with the works that accompany faith. Eccl. 5:3 says, “For a dream comes through

much activity.” We all know that when we are keeping busy and having fun that time seems to go by rather quickly. Therefore, those who are **impatient** are more than likely slacking off on the works that should always accompany faith.

The problem is that many people are sitting around waiting for God to do something while God is waiting around for them to do something.

We must all understand that

in the fulfillment of our dreams there is a part we play and there is a part God plays. God will not do your part for you

and neither will He let you do His part. And, more times than not, you must do your part first.

This is clearly illustrated in Josh. 18:2,3, “But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?’” The people who belonged to these seven tribes were probably an impatient and lazy group of people. They were sitting around

*I will wait for
the God of
my salvation.*

waiting for God to bring the land He had already given to them and place it in their laps.

Before the fulfillment of their dream could become a reality they had to first do something. They had to *go out and take* possession of the land. Works of obedience always accompany faith. These people could not take any new ground standing still.

Once encouraged by Joshua to put works to their faith, they did what they were told and not long after the land was theirs ^{Josh. 18:4-10}.

Consider what the writer of Hebrews says about father Abraham. “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” ^{Heb. 11:8}.

Faith is when you do something about what you believe. If you have a small garage and you’re believing for a Cadillac, then you better build yourself a new and bigger garage.

Faith is better seen than heard. A living faith is a working faith. James 2:18 says, “But

someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

Once you start dreaming from the Word of God, start acting on those dreams and your faith will bring them to pass.

*Faith is when
you do something
about what
you believe.*

2 THE AUTHENTICITY OF FAITH

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.” 2Cor 13:5a

The apostle Paul knew that his days on planet earth were quickly drawing to a close, and one day he sat down and penned his final epistle to his young associate, Timothy.

Timothy became a convert of Paul when the apostle was in Lystra on his first missionary journey. He later was ordained to the ministry and served as a devoted companion and assistant to Paul in several of his travels.

He often dealt with frequent infirmities, was timid and youthful, but still he was a gifted teacher who was trustworthy and diligent.

During Paul's third missionary journey, Timothy labored with him in Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth. Paul later left him in Ephesus to supervise the work there and to become the

pastor of the church that gathered within its borders.

This was not an easy assignment for the young man, and when Paul wrote his two final letters to him, he sought to exhort and encourage Timothy in his efforts to solidify the Ephesian church. Paul wrote to challenge Timothy to fulfill the task before him and to combat false teachings with sound doctrine. What Paul had learned so thoroughly himself he was now passing on as he endeavored to show Timothy how to develop a leadership style that would be a benefit to him and the local church.

Pauls' final letter before his death is really a combat manual for spiritual warfare, and as he was about to relinquish his heavy burdens, the godly apostle labored to chal-



lenge and strengthen his faithful friend.

After much prayer and careful pondering, the apostle Paul sat down to pen his final words and as the anointing flowed through his fingertips he began to write,

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am convinced is in you also” ² Tim. 1:1-5.

UNDERSTANDING FAITH

It was no accident that at the beginning of his final epistle, that the foremost thought in the mind of Paul was the genuine faith of his young protege. The Message© Bible translation calls

it “your honest faith - and what a rich faith it is.” It stands to reason that if there is a true, genuine faith then there must also be a pretend faith, a faith that is false and does not bring into manifestation that which one is believing for.

It is the responsibility of all believers to thoroughly study the subject of faith, and find out for themselves if they truly are walking in faith. This is what Paul told the Corinthian church to do in 2 Cor. 13:5a, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.” The Message© Bible states, “Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don’t drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourself regular checkups.”

As divine truths radiate off the pages of God’s Word, it will be revealed that the major difference between a true faith and a false faith is that, a genuine faith always gets results. There are no faith failures, and a true faith gets results every time. If your faith fails then it wasn’t a true, genuine faith. The Bible teaches us that an authentic faith is a “hearing” faith. Faith does not exist unless there is a message to be heard and believed. Paul told the church in Rome,

*A genuine faith
always gets results.*

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” Rom. 10:16,17. The Message© Bible says, “before you trust, you have to listen.” The message to be believed, comes by the Word of God and is sent by the command of God. It is His Word, sent by His direction, and if heard attentively, a genuine faith will be produced.

REAL VS. FAILED FAITH

There are different ways to hear from God. The Holy Bible is God’s voice speaking to you in written form. Too many people, unfortunately, teach that this is the only way to hear from God, without mentioning how to hear God’s voice *inside* of you.

Many answers to the trials we face are not found in scripture, but only come as we become more sensitive to God’s still, small voice spoken in our heart. David always inquired of the Lord, and when by faith he obeyed the Lord’s command, the victory was won. Even Jesus said He only did and spoke what He was told by the Father

and this is why He had great faith.

Your faith will never rise above your ability to hear from God. Begin to be still before Him and listen to the voice of God and become more sensitive to the leading of His Spirit directing you what to have faith for.

Faith failures happen when people step out of the realm of hearing from God and attempt to believe for something at their own discretion. They go to the funeral home and try to raise their grandmother from the dead when God didn’t tell them to. Their ignorance will cause the things of God to appear foolish and will bring confusion and reproach to those who witness their ill-advised behavior. A mockery is made unto God, and later less effort will be made by those who are not saved to draw close unto God for themselves.

Miracles start with hearing from God, and a person desirous to have a genuine faith should never believe for things on their own. Real faith is not based on need or desire but on the solid foundation of hearing from God. Once you know you’ve heard

Your faith will never rise above your ability to hear from God.

from Him, you can then be bold and have the confident expectation that you will see the results you were believing for.

TRUSTING THE GOD YOU KNOW

The result of hearing from God is that you will know God, and when you know God you will experience God. Never trust a person you don't know.

When Paul mentioned the faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother, he was saying it's important who you associate with. He even wrote in 1 Cor. 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." You become like the people you hang around, so spend quality time with those who will feed you the Word of God and help you come to know Him in a more deep, personal way.

Faith comes as a result of knowing Him and is not based on what you heard about Him. Abraham knew that a genuine faith is a "knowing" faith and for this reason he staggered not at the promise of God. He knew God in such a personal way that he was called the friend of God and this is why he was "fully convinced that what

He had promised He was also able to perform" ^{Rom. 4:21}.

Having a genuine faith is so important that God even made the stipulation that it's impossible to please Him without it ^{Heb. 11:6}.

So vital is the need for faith that God has even given Himself a name that reveals to us the value of this dynamic, spiritual force. In Heb. 3:1 Jesus is called "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." An authentic faith, a "speaking faith," and when we confess out loud what we believe, it becomes the responsibility of our High Priest to bring

it to pass.

A person with an unfeigned faith is an artist who creates manifested realities with the power of his words. David boldly told Goliath that God would deliver him into his hands and moments later the giant lay dead.

Not long before this happened Goliath also made a confession, but his faith was not in God, but in himself. Paul once said "I know whom I believed" ^{2 Tim. 1:12} and this solidifies the fact that a *speaking faith* is based on how well you know God.

Faith comes as a result of knowing God.

David was a man after God's own heart whereas the god of the prideful giant was himself. The winner revealed to all who the one, true God really was.

Ps. 116:10a says, "I believed, therefore I spoke." One of the greatest miracles recorded in scripture happened because a man believed and therefore spoke. Joshua and his army were fighting a battle and night time was fast approaching. More daylight was needed and we read in Josh. 10:12,13...

"Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies."

Pay close attention to what is said in vs. 14, "And there had been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

Faith is precious ^{2 Peter 1:1} and when you're in faith you can say what God will do. What Joshua

said came to pass because the Lord heeded his voice. Joshua believed it, he said it, and God did it. This is how a true, genuine faith operates. Everybody has the ability to believe and people should always be creating something with their words.

Always strive to keep your mouth connected to your heart, because in order for faith to work you have to believe what you hear yourself say. Still, a lot of people think they have faith, when in reality they don't.

Pride always wants to impress.

FAILURE EQUALS UNBELIEF

Faith failures happen when people say things they don't really believe. Some people make a lot of noise to cover up for the faith that isn't there, and this is when pride and arrogance enter in.

Pride always wants to impress, and for this reason some people foolishly try to raise the dead or believe for large sums of money before the sun goes down. Desire and want, mixed with confessing an abundance of empty words, is no sign that a person is walking in faith. Big talk is not a sign of big faith, and the sooner these people put a muzzle over their mouths ^{Ps. 39:1} the better off

they'll be.

A person should never say they're believing for something without knowing what they're basing their faith on. You must hear from God! If faith isn't there, then you must hear, and hear, and hear some more.

OUR WITNESS: THE HOLY SPIRIT

To help us know that we've actually heard from God, we've been given a Helper and Comforter to indwell us, the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:6a states, "And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth." Once you believe in your heart and faith comes, the Spirit will bear witness with your spirit ^{Rom. 8:16} that faith is there. You'll have a divine confirmation down on the inside of you that you've actually heard from God, thus giving you a solid foundation on which to base your faith. This will prevent you from making vain confessions that is void of the power needed to bring to pass that which you say.

Always strive to be led by the witness of the Holy Spirit, for this is where your confidence comes from. There is somebody

on the inside of you besides yourself, and He is forever ready to lead you and guide you as you travel down the path of life.

1 John 5:9a says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." Look for the witness down on the inside of you and don't act until you know it's there. A supernatural "knowing" will rise up inside of you and you'll "know that you know" you are doing the right thing. The witness is not a voice, so don't go off and start listening for voices. It's a "knowing", and with it comes a divine assurance that tells you you're in the perfect will of God.

Always strive to be led by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, don't ignore the lack of a witness. Many times you can be led by what God doesn't say, as much as by what He does say. If you don't have a witness to raise grandma from the dead, then by all means don't do it. The Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit is a sure way to prevent faith failures from happening in your life.

Just as there is natural and spiritual hearing, so also is there natural and spiritual seeing. Peter wrote in 2 Cor. 4:18, "while we do

not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” The things that are seen is the unbiblical condition we are currently in, and that which is not seen is the rich fulfillment of what we are believing for.

THE “SEEING” FAITH

As one continues to examine themselves, they will find that a genuine faith is a “seeing” faith. Walking in faith will give you the supernatural vision to look at things that are not seen, and this is a major key to fighting the good fight of faith.

Faith comes by hearing and when you hear it you will see it. A spiritual artist is somebody who used their words so well that they are able to paint pictures that can be seen with the eyes of faith.

God is one such artist. We read in Ps. 89:19a, “Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one...” God speaks in visions because He wants His people to see what they’re believing for. God told Abraham to look at the stars

in the sky and the sand on the seashore and so shall his descendants be.

God painted a picture for Abraham because he couldn’t receive it by faith until he first saw it.

Another time God told Abraham to look to the north, south, east, and west and all that he saw God would give him.

Faith and vision go together, and this is why Jesus spoke in parables when He taught the people.

He said in Matt. 13:13, “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear,

nor do they understand.” The people could not see or understand until Jesus painted a picture for them.

Prov. 29:18a says, “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint...” Without a vision people run wild and perish, and this is why you have to see in the spirit what you’re believing for.

This will cause your vision to become real to you and will give your faith the foundation it needs to stand on. David saw the giant

*God speaks in visions,
because He wants
you to see what you’re
believing for.*

beheaded, and Joseph had his two God-given dreams telling him he would one day be in a position of authority.

In the New Testament the woman with the issue of blood had a vision that if she touched the hem of Jesus' garment, she would be healed. Her vision became the blueprint of what she wanted and her faith produced for her what she saw in the spirit.

Likewise, you can have the assurance that God has committed Himself to respond to your faith in the same way. You can have bold confidence that what you see in the spirit you can have in the natural.

CATCH THE VISION

The reason it is so important to verbalize where you see your vision taking you is found in 2 Cor. 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory..."

What Paul is telling us is that, you become what you behold. If you want victory in your life, then you must have a vision

of victory down on the inside of you. You must see yourself being more than a conqueror in Christ.

Don't base tomorrow on what you see today. Instead, look with spirit eyes into the unseen realm and speak out what you see. When you see your future filled with the blessings of God, the bad things you see happening today won't matter anymore. You don't look at what is seen, but at those things that are unseen.

Before you build a house you need a blueprint and a plan, and this is what your vision is. Your faith will do what

Your faith will do what your vision has programmed it to do.

your vision has programmed it to do. Your faith will produce what you see. and this is what it means that you become what you behold. You will never rise above your vision, and as your faith increases, so also will the size of your vision.

One person who understood this was Jacob. For fourteen long years he had worked for his deceitful uncle Laban and the time came when Jacob was ready to return to his homeland. But first he wanted to be compensated for his many years of toil and hard work.

Given the choice to name

his wages, Jacob asked for all the speckled and spotted goats and sheep, as well as all the brown lambs. Thinking only the pure white and unblemished livestock was worth anything financially, Laban heartily agreed. Unbeknownst to him, Jacob had a vision that would cause him to surpass all the wealth of his rich uncle. And along with that blueprint was a genuine faith that would bring to pass the plan he had down in his heart.

WORK THE VISION

Habakkuk 2:2 tells us to “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets that he may run who reads it.” The Hebrew word for “tablets” is ‘billboards,’ and this Jacob must have had on his mind as we read in Gen. 30:37-39,

“Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink.

So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.”

Jacob put up a series of spotted billboards, and an image was planted in both the mind of Jacob and the minds of the animals. And it was this image, this *faith imagination*, that caused Jacob’s faith to grow and eventually the flock became what they beheld. A herd of spotted livestock was produced causing Jacob to become very prosperous and this allowed

him to return to his homeland.

Down in the hearts of all believers should be a God-given vision

for which we are continually striving to fulfill. The Lord is forever faithful to reveal to each of us His specific plan and purpose for our individual lives. When He does, it then becomes our responsibility to develop in our hearts a strong, genuine faith that has the power to defeat the enemy and cause our vision to come to pass.

God gave Joshua a vision of victory over every obstacle and enemy, and he was told to keep the Word in his mouth and meditate on it day and night (Josh. 1:1-8). This is the key to success, for

*Joshua had a vision
of victory over every
obstacle and enemy.*

it reveals how to have a faith that is authentic. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 5:7, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

The Message© Bible says, “It’s what we trust in but don’t yet see that keeps us going.” This is how the good fight of faith is fought and won. You trust in God and always keep going forward.

Joshua had a genuine faith that caused him to never give up and it brought him victory over all his enemies. His life proves that there are no faith failures when one has a faith that is true and genuine.

3

THE PURSUIT OF FAITH

*“Let us pursue the knowledge
of the Lord.”* Hosea 6:3a

Paul taught Timothy many valuable things in the two letters he wrote to his young and faithful friend just prior to his own death.

Knowing the abundance of trials and persecutions that he himself had been through, Paul encouraged Timothy with these now famous words found in 1 Tim. 6:12,

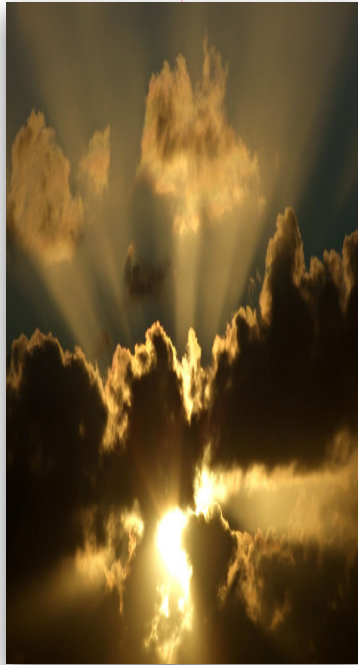
“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

The Message© Bible says it like this, “Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses.”

An abundance of books and teachings have been written on the subject of this verse, and Christians everywhere should take heed to these important words from the great apostle Paul. However, equally important are the words in the verse written just prior to this one.

To prepare Timothy to fight the good fight of faith, Paul listed the many sinful trappings he would one day encounter and then wrote in 1 Tim. 6:11, “But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”

The Message© Bible says, “But you, Timothy, man of God: run for your life from all this. Pursue a righteous life - a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courte-



sy. Run hard and fast in the faith.”

A similar verse is written to Timothy in Paul’s second letter to his young protégé. “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” ^{2 Tim. 2:22}.

How does one aim at *and* pursue faith?

A PURE HEART

First, you must have a pure heart which comes as a result of pursuing righteousness and godliness.

1 Peter 3:11,12 says, “Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

The Message© Bible puts it this way, “Whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up with good, here’s what you do: Say nothing evil or hurtful; Snub evil and cultivate good; run after peace for all you’re worth. God looks on all this with approval, listening and responding well to what He’s asked; But He turns His

back on those who do evil things.”

It is a given truth that those who tolerate sin in their lives will not be successful in their walk of faith. Num. 15:30 ^{AMP} says, “But the person who does anything wrong willfully and openly shall be cut off from among the people that the atonement made for them may not include him.”

This verse precedes a story where God commanded a man to be stoned to death, because he picked up a few sticks to build a fire on the Sabbath day. God hates sin - any sin, whether big or small - and so should we.

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

Sin separates, destroys, and is the author of death. Paul continually told Timothy to flee the youthful lusts and sinful snares of this world. 1 John 2:15 instructs us, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

A holy and just God cannot be expected to perform His Word ^{Jer. 1:12} for those where sin runs rampant in their lives. Ps.66:18 confirms this, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” A blind man healed by Jesus testified, “Now we know that God

does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him” ^{John 9:31}.

Consider Prov. 15:29, “The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.” Our God is a just God, but He is also a merciful God. A price that we could not pay had to be ransomed for sin, and for that purpose the Heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son into the world. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” ^{2 Cor. 5:21}.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

Called “the great exchange,” Jesus became what we were, so that we might become what He is. Because of what Jesus did, we can consider ourselves to be “dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” ^{Rom. 6:11,12}.

Although the penalty for sin has been paid for nearly two thousand years, the temptation and opportunity to sin still exists.

So what must one do? The same thing Paul told Timothy to do. Flee from sin! 2 Tim. 2:19b says, “Let everyone who names the Name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Paul told the Roman church to “...hate what is evil (loathe all ungodliness, turn in horror from wickedness), but hold fast to that which is good” ^{Rom. 12:9b AMP}.

When was the last time you turned in horror from sin and wickedness? Prov. 28:13 says, “He who covers his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

Jesus became what we were, so that we might become what He is.

God said through the prophet Isaiah, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil” ^{Is. 1:16}. We are told to flee and forsake all sin because in reality we are the ones responsible for the sin we do and not the devil.

James 1:14 ^{AMP} says, “But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions).” To prevent this from happening, James goes on to tell us, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will

draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts you double minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up”

James 4:7,8,10

Did you notice that when you flee from sin, the devil will flee from you? On the other hand, when you draw near to God, He will draw near to you. Both God and the devil will respond to whatever you choose to do.

HOW TO BE SPIRITUALLY CLEAN

One draws near to God by drawing near to his Word, and it is His Word that will make your heart pure. Ps. 12:6 tells us, “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Ps. 119:9 also says, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word.”

Paul told the Ephesian church that we are cleansed and made pure by “the washing of water by the Word” ^{Eph. 5:26}. Jesus Himself said, “**You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you**” ^{John 15:3}.

Wrong thoughts, words, and actions will keep you from God’s Word, but God’s Word will keep you from having wrong thoughts, words, and actions.

Ps. 119:11 says, “Your Word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you.” If you will make a quality decision to make the Word of God the “apple of your eye” and the desire of your heart, then the darkness of sin and its fleshly desires will flee from the

presence of the light of God’s Word that is within you.

Once the cancer of sin has been dealt with, we must also develop the proper motive for the pursuit of faith. There is a divine calling on the life of each born-again believer, and faith is to be used for the fulfillment of that call. Performing and completing the will of God for our lives should be our top priority and the driving force that propels us forward in life.

Paul wrote in Col. 4:17, “And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” He told Timothy, “Do

We are cleansed and made pure by the Word of God.

not neglect the gift which is in you, that special inward endowment which was directly imparted to you by the Holy Spirit...”

¹ Tim. 4:14a AMP

Notice what Paul says next, “Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties, throw yourself wholly into them (your ministry)...” ¹ Tim. 4:15a AMP.

It will not take long to realize that those things which God calls us to do will be impossible to accomplish by mere human effort. Walls and barriers will arise before us in an effort to block our forward motion. But through each wall there is a door - the door of faith.

It is of paramount importance that we understand that faith is not some “get rich” formula that we selfishly use for our own personal advancement. Instead, it is a tool to be used to bring forth into our lives those things which are necessary for the fulfillment and completion of that which God called us to do.

SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE

Col. 3:2 ^{AMP} instructs us to

“set your minds and keep them set on what is above - the higher things - not on the things that are on the earth.” Worldly and fleshly lusts will not bring you true contentment or satisfaction, and that is why we must only seek those things with which we can serve God.

The fourth chapter of James speaks of a lust people have for worldly things and of setting too high a value on worldly pleasures and friendships. James 4:3 ^{AMP} says, “Or you do ask God for them and yet fail to receive because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is, when you get what you desire, to spend it in sensual pleasures.”

These people ask God to give them success in their undertakings, not that they can glorify their Heavenly Father and do good with what they have, but that they may consume it upon their own selfish lusts. They pray for a raise at work, not so they can help support a foreign missionary, but so they can buy a new set of golf clubs. God cannot and will not bless such selfish motives. Prov. 15:27a says, “He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house.”

Faith is a tool to be used in every Christian's life.

The matter of our prayer of faith must be agreeable with the declared will of God, and we are not to petition Him for things with wrong intentions brought about by a covetous heart.

God is not against us having and enjoying the luxuries of life, as long as He has first place in our hearts. This is why He said, “You shall have no other gods before Me” ^{Ex. 20:3}. Jesus said, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you**” ^{Matt. 6:33}.

When we put God and the advancement of His glorious kingdom first, then all the blessings of the Lord will be ours to richly enjoy. Paul said in 1 Tim. 6:17 ^{NIV}, “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, Who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

When our hope is in God and not money, then Prov. 10:22 can be applied to our lives, “The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.”

DELIGHT IN THE LORD

David said in Ps. 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” What God will do when our delight is in Him is bless us with enough money to support that foreign missionary, with plenty left over to buy that set of golf clubs. What a loving and generous Heavenly Father we have! He is indeed a “rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” ^{Heb. 11:6b}.

John 1:16 ^{NIV} tells us, “From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another.” God’s will is always what’s best for His children, and the believer who is in continual fellowship with the Heavenly Father, will not ask anything contrary to His will. It is with this attitude of giving God first place in our lives that we can begin the pursuit of faith.

One does not go from “a measure of faith” ^{Rom. 12:3} to “great faith” ^{Matt. 8:10}, simply because they are a born-again believer.

Once faith is planted in your heart at the new birth, it must be pursued in order to grow.

*Don't be arrogant
nor put your hope
in wealth.*

The word “pursue” means ‘to follow in order to overtake; capture.’ You must crave the increase of your faith with everything that is inside you, *because you will never possess what you’re not willing to pursue.*

Ps. 119:10 says, “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh let me not wander from Your commandments.”

To pursue faith means to do whatever it takes to get the Word of God into your heart and back out your mouth. We are instructed in James 1:21 to receive the “implanted Word.” Accomplishing this will take more than a simple glancing at or casual reading of a verse or two from time to time. It will take diligent effort to read, study, and meditate upon the Word on a consistent, daily basis.

MEDITATING DAILY

To do this we must develop within ourselves the attitude of the prophet Jeremiah who said, “Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart”

Jer. 15:16a

Compare this with Ezek.

3:1-3, “Moreover He said to me, ‘Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly and fill your stomach with the scroll that I give you.’ So I ate it, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.”

Heb. 6:5 speaks of those who “have tasted the good Word of God.” The more of God’s Word you put into your “belly” the more your seed of faith will be watered thus causing it to grow.

Feeding on the Word of God will bring joy to your heart as you put your trust in the Heavenly Father to bring the manifestation of all His promises into your life.

Trusting God will bring you as much, if not more, joy and blessed fulfillment as you would get receiving from Him. There is an unsurpassed joy that comes on the journey of faith. This is a lesson David richly learned as evidenced in the words of Ps. 34:8, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.”

Your Words were found and I ate them.

Prov. 2:1,4,5 says, “My son, if you will receive my words, and treasure my command within you, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasure; then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

You will never experience an increase to your faith until you develop a strong passion for God’s Word. The word “passion” is defined as ‘intense, extreme, ardent affection for, strong desire, fanaticism.’

The reason so many Christians are not enjoying God’s best is simply because they have not become a fanatic for the uncompromised Word of God. This is so vital because “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” Rom. 10:17.

A PASSION FOR GOD’S WORD

Luke 10:38-42 tells the story about a young woman who had a “passion” for God’s Word. These verses tell about a time of refreshing Jesus spent in Bethany at the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. This was not a home where Jesus was treated as a stranger but rather as a member

of the family.

It seems that Martha was the owner of the house, and being the older sister was the dominate figure as well. While Martha busied herself with the distracting details of serving her guests, Mary instead chose to sit at the feet of Jesus in the recognized posture of a disciple, and listened to every precious word that her Lord had to say.

She had a “passion” for the Word and her actions depict the attitude of an eager learner, not wanting one morsel of truth spoken from the lips of Jesus to slip past her.

Trouble and worry always go together.

Troubled by her sister’s reluctance to help with the serving, Martha was filled with an inward anxiety, thus causing an outward response. Without thinking, she boldly and bluntly confronted Jesus and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘**Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.**”

Notice that worry and trouble always go together, and that you can never worry about just one thing. It was not Martha’s ser-

vice that Jesus rebuked.

Her preoccupation with the preparation of an elaborate meal for Jesus and His disciples was a praise-worthy desire born out of a deep regard for her honored guest. Jesus' rebuke was her over preoccupation with the material side of her duties, which caused her to have anxiety and a nervous distraction, which eventually led to her jealous outburst of temper.

Jesus continued, “**But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part which will not be taken from her.**” The lesson that is being taught here is that to be occupied “with” Jesus is more important than being occupied “for” Him. To devote oneself to the Word of God is more important than to be busy for Him. Jesus said that one good thing was needed. Not two. Not three. One!! And that good thing is to receive His Word and to treasure them in the deepest caverns of your heart.

WORKING THE FAITH MUSCLES

Nobody has more faith than another. We all have the same amount of faith the same way; we all have the same number of muscles as a body-builder. Faith has

no limits but, like the body-builder with his muscles, it too must be developed.

Great faith is developed faith and what you do with the measure of faith you receive at the new birth will determine its ability and activity in your life.

We are given by Peter a divine order in which to pursue and develop great faith. He tells us in 2 Peter 1:5, “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge.”

Great faith is developed faith.

Virtue, or moral excellence, must be added to your measure of faith. This means that when you get born-again, you must with all diligence make a conscious effort to get rid of all habitual sin from your life.

At the same time and with the same diligence, you must also strive to obtain a thorough knowledge of Gods' Word. This is so vitally important and necessary because we need knowledge of the Word so our faith will know what to believe and confess. For example, how will we know that we can believe for healing and divine health unless we first know that “by His stripes you were healed”

1 Peter 2:24?

It is a sad but undeniable truth that the majority of believers in the body of Christ today are not living in the fullness of all that God has for them, because of a lack of knowledge pertaining to His Word. God said through the prophet Hosea, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” Hos. 4:6. Notice that this verse does not say that a lack of knowledge will cause you to have a little inconvenience in life. No, it says you will be destroyed!

A lack of knowledge is more than simply the result of neglect, but in the eyes of God is considered to be a criminal action. This is true, because when you reject the knowledge of the Word, you are in fact rejecting God.

We need to seriously think about these words from the book of Isaiah, “Therefore my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself and opened its mouth beyond measure” Is. 5:13,14a. This is what it means to be destroyed for a lack of knowledge.

This only happens because

most people are not willing to make the same sacrifices to increase their knowledge of God’s Word, as the body-builder makes to develop and increase the size of his muscles.

HIDDEN TREASURES

Jesus once told a parable about a man who had a fanatical passion for the Word of God and was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. He said, “**the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for the joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field**”

Matt. 13:44. This verse reveals the diligence it takes to get the Word planted within you. Because the Word and the joy it brings was first place in this man’s life, he went and sold all he had in order to obtain it.

Nothing should come between you and the time you spend in the Word. Notice also that the treasure is buried in the field. People who do not study the Word but only skim over it maybe once a week are only looking at the surface of the field. The richest mines are often in grounds that appear most barren.

The lack of knowledge [of God] is considered a criminal action.

Prov. 15:28a says, “The heart of the righteous studies how to answer...” The word “study” means,

- To apply the mind in acquiring knowledge,
- To examine and search into,
- To memorize,
- To follow a regular course of instruction.

Interestingly, the Greek word for “study” means ‘to make an effort, to labor.’ Know for certain that time and effort will be required in order to obtain the true riches that are buried in God’s Word. Don’t just read the Word, study it!

Prov. 4:20-22 says, “My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them and health to all their flesh.”

SEEK AND FIND

Notice that the words of God are life to those who “find” them. You find the words of God by seeking them out in a consistent and diligent study of the holy scriptures.

Ps. 119:2 tells us, “Blessed

are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!” God gave His all to us in the person of Jesus Christ and it is now our responsibility, our obligation, and our privilege to give our all to Him.

We cannot seek God halfheartedly and expect to receive in return all the blessings that He has prepared for us. No, the verse says to seek Him with our “whole” heart, and when we diligently do that, we will develop within ourselves a deep, fanatical passion for God’s Word. Great faith will come when we can say with conviction the words of Ps.

119:127, “Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold.”

Deut. 11:18 gives us these important instructions, “Therefore you shall lay up these Words of Mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” For this to happen we must not only read and study the Words of God, but we must also learn to meditate on them.

Ps. 119:15,16 says, “I will meditate on Your precepts and

*We must seek Him
with our “whole”
heart.*

contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your Word.”

Ps. 1:2 also says, “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” The word “meditate” means ‘to ponder by talking to oneself.’ God told Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night...” Josh. 1:8a

Meditation is a spiritual exercise and it means ‘to speak in a low tone with compressed lips, to murmur.’ If you say something often enough it will get planted down in your heart and as a result your faith will grow.

As you go through the normal routines of the day begin to quote the Word over and over again to yourself. Say out loud, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...” This is what it means to meditate on Gods’ Word.

BUILD, INCREASE, RECEIVE

Meditation, therefore, will build your faith and will increase

your ability to receive. Jesus said in Mark 4:23,24, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to him who hears, more will be given.”

To develop great faith you must learn to listen, because hearing the Word governs receiving from God. Remember, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” Rom. 10:17.

Hearing the Word governs receiving from God.

Listening to yourself speak God’s Word produces knowledge and knowledge produces faith. Therefore, the reward you receive will always be in direct proportion to the amount of time you spend hearing yourself speak God’s Word. It’s that simple.

For those who find studying the Word of God a burden, the first thing they should do is read all of Ps. 119. This is the longest chapter in the Bible and rightfully it should be because in it the author does nothing but give praise to the holy scriptures and the value they have in one’s life.

Consider for example these verses:

“My soul clings to the dust; Re-
vive me according to Your Word”

Ps. 119:25

“My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your Word” v. 28.

“Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it” v. 35.

“And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love” v. 47.

“I thought about my ways and turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments” vv. 59, 60.

“Teach me good judgment and knowledge for I believe Your commandments” v. 66.

“Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in heaven” v. 89.

“I will never forget Your precepts for by them You have given me life” v. 93.

“I have more understanding than all my teachers for Your testimonies are my meditation” v. 99.

“You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your Word” v. 114.

“Your testimonies are wonderful; Therefore my soul keeps them” v. 129.

“Direct my steps by Your Word

and let no iniquity have dominion over me” v. 133.

“Your Word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it” v. 140.

“I rejoice at Your Word as one who finds great treasure” v. 162.

And finally, “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” v. 165.

To be led by the Word of God is the only guarantee we'll ever have for a victorious and prosperous life.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

The writer of Ps. 119 got hold of this message when he penned these words, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” v. 105 and “The entrance of Your Words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple” v. 130.

HUNGER & THIRST FOR THE WORD

The pursuit of faith is a result of having a hunger and thirst for the Word of God. Prov. 4:5,6 says, “Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her and she will preserve you; Love her and she will keep

you.”

Ps. 63:1 describes a thirst David had for God when he was in the wilderness of Judah. “Oh God, You are my God; Early will I seek you; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” He goes on to say, “When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches”

Ps. 63:6

Ps. 119:148 says, “My eyes are awake through the night watches that I may meditate on Your Word.”

Verse 97 reveals the attitude of the heart which we should all strive to obtain, “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”

How often should we study and meditate on God’s Word?
Early in the day!
Late in the evening!
In the middle of the night!
All day long!

*“My eyes are awake...
that I may meditate
on Your Word.”*

4

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

*"I believed and therefore I spoke,
we also believe and therefore speak.*

2 Cor 4:13

By far, faith is the most important subject in all of scripture. It is a Spiritual force given to us by God when we were born-again ^{Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8}. We are saved by faith and we are to live by faith ^{Rom.1:17}.

The Christian life is a walk of faith and Gal. 6:10 says that all believers "are of the household of faith."

Faith is a journey and not a destination. It is a lifestyle that began in eternity past and will continue through the age in which we now live and into the eternal future.

The Greek word for faith is "pistas" and it means to have 'a firm persuasion or a conviction based on hearing.' Faith is the conviction of the reality of things not seen and is the title-deed to all the promises of

God recorded in His Word ^{Heb. 11:1}. Faith calls those things that be not as though they were ^{Rom. 4:17}, and continues to call them *until they are*.

Faith is a knowing that you know- that you know, and says "it is finished" before it sees the natural manifestation.

What many Christians do not know is that they do not need a lot of faith to move the hand of God. Jesus said nothing would be impossible to the person who had mountain-moving faith the size of a mustard seed ^{Matt. 17:20}.

Since God is a Spirit and we are a spirit, we can be assured that the fullness of God's faith is available to every believer, because God lives in us. The secret to getting our faith to work is not in the quantity of our faith but in



learning how to release the faith we already have.

Jesus said in Mark 11:22 to “**Have faith in God**” or, as many teachers have taught, “**have the faith of God.**”

THE GOD-KIND OF FAITH

To see how the God-kind of faith works it is best to go back to the book of beginnings where it all began. Gen. 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And how did God perform this miraculous display of power? By faith!

Heb. 11:3 says, “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.”

Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 all begin with the same three words, “Then God said...” By faith God created the heavens and the earth by speaking words. God puts a high emphasis on words because they are the most important and most powerful things on this planet. This is true because people will believe whatever they hear themselves say. For example, God told Abram that one day his

descendents would outnumber the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore ^{Gen. 22:17}. To build up the faith of this old man, God changed his name to Abraham which means “father of many nations.” Each time he spoke his new name, Abraham was openly declaring that he was the father of many nations. What he was doing was speaking the Word of God. He continued to do this until finally his faith was built up and Isaac, the son of promise, was born.

In another story, the Angel of the Lord called Gideon a “mighty man of valor” as he was threshing wheat in a winepress while hiding from the enemy of the people of Israel, the Midianites ^{Judges 6:11,12}. As a result of this confession of faith, Gideon later went on to defeat the Midianite army with only three hundred faithful men, and his name is now in the Hebrews 11 “Hall of Fame” of faith ^{Heb. 11:32}.

There is power in words spoken. Faith-filled words will overcome the law of sin and death ^{Rom. 8:2}. At the time of creation, the words God spoke gave the guidelines through which His faith went to work. Jesus was teaching us in Mark 11:22 to release our faith

People will believe whatever they hear themselves say.

the same way God releases His faith. He went on to say in vs. 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 come to pass, he will have whatever he says.” In other words, faith always has something to say.

THE POWER OF SPEECH

When the creation of the heavens and the earth was completed, God next created man in His own image and gave him the job of having dominion over all the earth Gen. 1:26-

28. Since God rules the universe with words, so also did Adam use words to rule and have dominion over that which was entrusted to him.

Adam did not have to hoe a garden or use hay to get a horse to come to him. All he had to do was speak to them. Adam patterned himself after God, and until the time of the fall, used words to perform the calling on his life. Rom. 5:14 says that Adam was “a type of Him who was to come.” Jesus is called “the second Adam” 1 Cor. 15:45, and He also ruled with words.

When tempted in the wilderness by Satan, Jesus used the words “It is written...” Matt. 4:4,7,10 and did what the original Adam could have done in the same situation. Jesus understood the power of words and in John 1: 1,14 He is even called “the Word.”

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke words into people, storms, sicknesses, fish, a tree, and even into the dead. Jesus always prayed and spoke the end result. Jesus used words to release

His faith and so also must we. Eph. 5:1 AMP says, “Therefore be imitators of God - copy Him and follow His example - as well-beloved children imitate their father.”

In order to function in the God-kind of faith we must first come to understand the importance of the words we speak. Jesus said in Matt. 12:37 AMP, “For by words you will be justified and acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned and sentenced.”

The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. A person can choose their own destiny by the words they speak out of their mouth.

*God created man
in His own image...
giving him dominion
over the earth.*

Prov. 18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” When Christ walked the earth He was constantly measuring the faith of those around Him Matt. 14:31; 15:28. He did so by listening to the words they spoke. He did it then and He is doing it today.

WORDS KEEP NO SECRETS

Words are containers of faith. They paint pictures of faith. They paint pictures the same way an artist uses paint to express what’s on the inside of him. Words can locate where a person stands by the way they speak.

Matt. 12:34b says, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” We are artists with words. We have an image inside us and we turn it into reality by the words we speak. This being so, it only stands to reason that the words a born-again believer should commit to hearing themselves speak is the Word of God.

The good fight of faith is a fight fought with words. Paul told Timothy to “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and confessed the good confession in

the presence of many witnesses” ¹ Tim. 6:12. Christianity is a confession and Christ Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of what we confess Heb. 3:1. Our confessions rule us, and our faith and lives are measured by the words we speak. To make a confession means to declare openly by way of speaking freely, such confession being the result and effect of deep conviction of facts.

For the born-again Christian, confession was made unto salvation Rom. 10:9,10, and the same principle is used throughout our walk of faith. Salvation did not come to the repentant sinner until after confession was made. There is no such thing as salvation without confession which, for the believer, is making their words agree and line up with the Word of God.

A person’s faith will never grow beyond their confession, which is the affirmation of something they believe. Confession means “to say the same as.” Faith’s confessions create realities, and what we confess determines who we are and openly declares what or who we have faith in.

A daily confession of what the Heavenly Father means to us,

*Confession means
“to say the same as.”*

what Jesus is doing for us now at the right hand of God the Father, and what the mighty Holy Spirit is doing in us, will build a solid, positive faith life. Jesus once told His murmuring disciples, “The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life” ^{John 6:63b}.

THE FATHER: THE AUTHORITY

And what words did Jesus speak? He tells us in John 12:49,50, “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father Who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Jesus had great faith because He only spoke the words of the Father. He told Satan, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God” ^{Matt. 4:4}. Just as Jesus always put the Words of His Father in His mouth, we must also do the same.

Is. 59:21 says, “As for Me,’ says the Lord, ‘this is My covenant with them; My Spirit who is upon you, and My Words which I have

put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the descendant’s descendants,’ says the Lord, ‘from this time and forevermore.”

There is spirit-life in every Word of God and, when we speak His Words, spiritual life and the God-kind of faith, is directed to and birthed within our own spirit. This is how we follow Paul’s instructions to “lay hold on eternal life” ^{1 Tim. 6:12}. Rom. 10:17 says, “So then, faith comes by hearing, and

You cannot hear something that is not spoken.

hearing by the Word of God.” You cannot hear something that is not spoken, and the child of God must realize that they will have more faith in what they hear themselves say, than in what they hear someone else say.

James 1:22 instructs us to “be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” This verse implies that you cannot “do” the Word unless you first “hear” the Word. And how does one “hear” the Word? By listening to the words they hear themselves speak. God wants you to hear yourself speak His Word. “For faith comes by hearing...” Rom. 10:8 tells us that the “right-

teousness of faith” v.6 speaks these words, “The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we preach).” Faith always has something to say.

Notice also that the Word is in your mouth before it gets in your heart. It is in your mouth so that you can confess it continually until it gets down into your heart. This is what it means to make a “good confession” (1 Tim. 6:12).

FROM THE MOUTH TO THE HEART

Having great faith is a simple concept. You put the Word of God in your mouth and confess it until it gets into your heart. Ps. 45:1 says, “My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” This verse tells us that when we speak, we are writing on the tablets of our heart. Once the Word of God is in our heart, we turn right around and speak it out our mouths.

We confess what God’s Word says to produce faith in our hearts and then we speak faith-filled words out of the abundance of our heart to affect the situa-

tions of life that are round about us. When words are spoken from your heart, you will always get results.

Faith is a continuous cycle of speaking the Word into your heart and speaking it out again. Word in, Word out. When you speak out your mouth, you are making a withdrawal from what’s in your heart.

Always remember that a person is only committed to what they confess.

“My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

If, therefore, you desire to live a life that is totally pleasing to God by getting your faith to work all the

time, you must maintain a constant confession that is in line with the Word of God.

HAVE FAITH IN FAITH

Another important aspect in walking by faith is that you reach a point in your walk with the Lord where you develop *faith in your faith*. First and foremost you are to have faith in God, and because you do you can believe your faith will work just like He said it would. In order to do this you have to practice believing what you say and learn to have

faith in the words you hear yourself speak. Train yourself to believe what you say. A good example of this is found in the story of David and Goliath.

While standing in the presence of King Saul David spoke these faith-filled words, “The Lord, Who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine” (1 Sam. 17:37a).

Upon receiving the approval of the king to go fight, David drew near to the giant Goliath and boldly proclaimed these words, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the Name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you” 1 Sam. 17: 45,46a.

Moments later the champion of the Philistine army lay dead just as David had proclaimed. Every person acts on what they believe in their heart, and David won a great victory for the people of Israel because he had *faith in the faith* that was in his innermost

being. Faith is not moved by what it sees, and David knew that you do not ignore the negative circumstances that confront you. Instead, you change them by the power of God’s spoken Word and not your own ability.

Num. 14:28 says, “Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you.’” God will do exactly as you say! This is why David confessed the outcome of the confrontation and then told Goliath “the battle is the Lord’s” 1 Sam. 17:47.

Indeed, there is power in the spoken Word of God

when you have faith in your faith. A similar example is found in the story of the three Hebrew children who refused to fall down and worship a golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon Dan. 3. These three faithful servants of the Most High knew it was better to obey God rather than man Acts 5:29.

When told by the king that they would face the penalty of being thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace they replied, “If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace,

Train yourself to believe what you say.

and He will deliver us from your hand, O king” Dan. 3:17.

Like David, the three Hebrew children confessed the outcome of the trial they were now facing. With bold confidence they proclaimed, “Our God will deliver us!”

STAND YOUR GROUND

A vital lesson to learn is, once your faith confession is spoken, let it remain said. Heb. 10:35 says, “Therefore do not cast away your confidence which has great reward.” Hold fast to the confession of your faith Heb. 4:14. When you have done this, like Timothy, you will have made a “good confession” and all the promises of God to you will be “Yes” and “Amen” 1 Cor. 1:20.

Jesus spoke to the fig tree and then went on His way without giving it a second thought. This is what it means to have *faith in your faith*.

David and the three Hebrew children did this but, sad to say, an erroneous teaching is often taught concerning what these three men of faith said next. “But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will

we worship the gold image which you have set up” Dan. 3:18.

It is wrongfully taught that these three men said that if God does not save them, let it be known that they still will not commit idolatry. This is not what this verse is saying. Confessing that God may possibly not save them is called “doubt” and for sure would have brought about their death.

James 1:6,7 says, “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.”

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting..”

What these men were saying is “if or if not you throw us into the furnace, neither will we serve the golden image.” They did not consider for one moment that their God might not save them.

Words can work for you or against you, and the proof of what was said is in the outcome of the situation. Dan. 3:25 tells us what happened when King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, “Look! I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

The Hebrew word for “walking” in this verse means to ‘run, march, and twirl.’ What the king saw was a victory celebration going on, because the faith spoken by the three Hebrew children remained said, and as a result brought about their miraculous deliverance.

Their faith “quenched the violence of fire” ^{Heb. 11:34}, because they knew in their heart when all was said and done, that they would come out victorious. They did not doubt, and because they stood firm in their faith, they were instantly promoted by the king in the province of Babylon. This all happened because they had *faith in their faith* and, if we will do the same, we also will live a victorious life.

LOCATE YOUR FAITH

The quickest way to locate your faith is to listen to yourself talk. If you will diligently do this you may be surprised at the things that come out of your mouth. If wrong things are said, if anything that comes out of your mouth is contrary to the Word of God, then you will be “snared by the words of your mouth” ^{Prov. 6:2}.

Prov. 18:7 says, “A fool’s

mouth is his destruction and his lips are the snare of his soul.” Remember, God will do exactly as you say and this is why we have to make sure that only faith-filled words proceed out of our mouth. A tongue that speaks doubt and fear “is a fire, a world of iniquity. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” ^{James 3:6a,8b}. Until the habit of making a good confession over your daily encounters becomes a manifested reality, until you are able to “call those things that be not as though they were,”

“I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue.” -David

it is a good thing to develop in your life the vocabulary of silence. David said, “I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle...” ^{Ps. 39:1}.

The story of a man who did not put a muzzle over his mouth is found in Luke 1:5-23. The time for the birth of the Messiah drew near and to prepare the people for His arrival, a forerunner first had to be born. The father of this forerunner was a priest named Zacharias, whose wife Elizabeth, was a descendant of Aaron. One day, as Zacharias was burning incense in the temple of the Lord, the archangel Gabriel appeared to him and announced that his bar-

ren wife would give birth to a son who was to be called John.

MORE GOOD NEWS

The angel foretold that the child would be great in the sight of the Lord, and would be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. The child would bring joy and gladness to his parents and many would rejoice at his birth.

Later called by Jesus as the greatest person up until that time to be born among women, besides Himself ^{Matt. 11:11}, there was a special calling on the life of this soon-to-be-born child, who later came to be known as John the Baptist. "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" ^{Luke 1:16,17}.

The response of Zacharias to this great revelation proved that Prov. 21:23 had not yet found a special place in his heart, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles." Zacharias and his wife had been praying for a child ^{Luke 1:13}, but in-

stead of being filled with joy and gladness at the news presented to him, the old priest instead spoke doubt and unbelief. "And Zacharias said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.'"

Because he was not "swift to hear" and "slow to speak" ^{James 1:19}, the angel Gabriel was forced to respond in this way, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to

Faith, doubt and unbelief always have something to say.

you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Zacharias had to be stopped from speaking doubt and unbelief, because his words had the power to interfere with God's redemption plan for man.

Faith always has something to say, but so also does doubt and unbelief. That is why we should pray out loud the words of Ps. 141:3, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips."

In contrast to what hap-

pened to Zacharias, six months later Gabriel appeared to the virgin Mary and announced that she would be the person through whom the Son of God would make His entrance into the world. And what was Mary's response?

"Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her." What a powerful proclamation of faith! "Let it be to me according to your word." If we would confess that over all the promises of God, then there would be no limit as to what we could accomplish for the kingdom of God.

Not long after this angelic visitation Mary went to the home of her sister Elizabeth, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and heard these words spoken over her, "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

It was the faith of this young virgin "who believed" that brought Jesus into the world, and it is easy to understand why Zacharias had to be silenced. There is no better example in all of scripture of the working of faith and in the im-

portance of one's words than in the story of Mary and Zacharias. Both heard the Word of the Lord. One doubted and spoke unbelief, while the other believed and as a result of her "good confession," conceived within her womb the living Son of God!

It is also interesting to note the last words spoken by Gabriel to Mary before he departed, "For with God nothing will be impossible" ^{Luke 1:37}. Believing that, is the secret to all of life.

*"For with God
nothing will be
impossible."*

Randall J. Brewer has been faithfully serving the Lord since the day he first bowed his knees before Him in the summer of 1974.

Since that time Randall has stepped through every door that the Lord has opened for him and over time he has been involved with a children's ministry, a teenage street ministry, and has led a Christian singles ministry. He has been involved with an outreach to those in prison and many inmates have been blessed as the result of his efforts.

Randall has also managed a church bookstore, has been the substitute host of a three hour Christian radio program, and has taught Bible classes at church and hosted many home cell groups.

Recently the Lord had him write the eye opening story "Heaven: The Great Adventure" with the promise that it would open doors all over the world, giving those who read the message the incentive to grow closer and stronger in their own personal walk with the Lord. Since the completion of this book, Randall's work has been translated into several languages, and invitations have come in to teach all over the world.



Randall and his beautiful wife Anne Marie have been bonded together by one God, with one love, for one purpose. They know firsthand the trials and pain that come with having a sincere desire to serve the Lord.

The result of going through many harsh battles is that the Lord has anointed them to lift up and exhort those who are also serving the Lord and going through similar circumstances.

Their mission in life is to encourage all believers to rise up in the midst of their adversity and become all they were meant to be in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Their heartfelt prayer is that once you read this book, your life will never be the same.