

Faith

Putting God first is the essence of worship and the primary mark of the Christian. It begins with meeting with God every morning and giving Him your undivided attention.

It is a battle for many.

It is a battle you cannot afford to lose.

There will probably be failures on your part, but you must not give up. Victory comes to those who never, never, never give up. Everyone who has fought to carve out and defend a regular, meaningful time with the Savior has tasted defeat on numerous occasions; but they simply would not stop until the victory was secured.

Why is this battle so hard? Why does this thirty to sixty minute space play such a determinative role in how your life will go? It is harder to carve out than time at the gym or balancing your checkbook because everything in your world resists God. Strange, I know, but this is the result of the curse. Why would any of us resist spending time with God when it is He who loves us and gives us comfort, grace, strength, acceptance, wisdom, power, etc.?

Most Christians have tried to succeed in life without establishing their day on the basis of putting God first. The consequences speak for themselves; it simply does not work. There really aren't any exceptions. You will never hear a testimony that says, "I never put God first in my day, and yet I experience His presence, His grace, and His power all through my day. No problem." Hmmmm. Why is this? Perhaps it is because the Cross cuts across the human will in order to bring us into the life flow of God. Making room for God first in the day seems to cut right across the human tendency to skip past this and plunge directly into the day. This tendency then launches one into the day, depending upon oneself. Thus the flesh rules the day. We have His word that says, "the flesh profits nothing" and "apart from Me you can do nothing" and again, "the mind set on the flesh is death."

We have such a tendency to forget the powerful truths God has already taught us, and thus we find ourselves trying to cope with life using our default mode: i.e. trusting in ourselves. Hopefully you are experiencing a renewal of freedom as you rediscover the power of going to the Cross with Jesus and counting on Him who lives in you.

Integral to this glorious news of the Cross is your faith and, of course, we have focused some on this already. In fact, you can't discuss the Gospel of the Cross and not talk about your faith. This month however, we want to delve more deeply into your life of faith. Where does it come from? How do you grow in faith? What are the enemies of your faith? Why is your faith so important? What is your part in this life of faith? Why

is your faith so important to God? What happens when you neglect the critical issue of guarding, feeding, and using your faith?

May this be a time of refreshing in which you make the choices that bring more faith, more confidence, and more power flowing through your life!

Faith is worship, for it honors God as God. No wonder there is a fight over whom you will trust!

Lesson 1

Sunday is the first day of your week. God designed it this way in order to help you begin your week by strengthening your faith. If you realize this, then you will be able to intentionally use your faith to worship God with other Believers. As a result, the Spirit will greatly increase your faith.

You receive from God by trusting Him. Since this is a supernatural thing, you will want to pay close attention to your own heart condition and what or whom you are relying upon for the needs of your life.

Perhaps a good way to begin is to take stock of your own soul by asking yourself a few questions: “When I go to Church gatherings on Sunday mornings, do I go actively depending upon Christ or do I simply go? Where is my focus as I get up and do my Sunday morning activities before I come before God with all my Brothers and Sisters?”

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 6:25-34. (*10 minutes*)
In Matthew 6:30, what does Jesus call you?

Why does He call you (and all the rest of us) this?

In this passage, the opposite of faith is

So when you _____, you are not trusting God.
When you are not exercising faith in God, what are you saying about God as your Father?

Looking at Matthew 6:31-33, why would I say that Jesus’ command, “seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness,” is equivalent to saying, “have faith in God to meet all your needs”?

What are the dynamics that cause you to worry?

In order to obey Jesus’ command in Matthew 6:34, you will have to

Scripture Meditation: Read Matthew 6:30 slowly, over and over, letting it settle into your inner man. Chew these words spoken by Jesus and reserved for you. (*5 minutes*)

Journal: After meditating upon Matthew 6:30, write down your thoughts as if you are simply talking to the Lord about what He has spoken to you. In other words, complete the conversation. He has spoken to you; now you speak to Him. (*5 minutes*)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Raise your hands to the Lord and worship Him for who He is!

Tell Him how you trust in His faithfulness and goodness!

Take Jesus' command to you to not worry as a promise that He intends to fulfill in you as you decide to trust Him.

Pray for the gathering of the Disciples (that's what the first Christians were called) so that there might be the corporate release of faith toward the Lord this morning!

Lesson 2

While everyone has faith in something, this is not what the Bible refers to as “faith.” The Biblical meaning of “faith” concerns the ability to trust God, rather than yourself or anything else, for all of the essentials of life both in this world and for the future beyond this world. This is often called “saving faith” or “evangel faith.”

In Romans 1:21, “they did not honor Him as God” means that they did not honor Him with their faith. Instead, they trusted in themselves, and honored themselves above God. The result was the curse of Unbelief, which twisted this world into its current condition. Since then, all men are born into this world without the ability to put their trust in God. They have the ability to trust in other things, which is the nature of idolatry, but they are not born with Biblical faith.

Jesus was not born in our sin. He did have Biblical faith. He lived a life of perfect obedience by faith in His Father, thus breaking the curse of Unbelief for us! He gives saving faith to those whom He chooses. So it is proper for you to treasure your faith (your ability to trust God) as the greatest gift.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 2:8-9 carefully so that you will notice where your faith comes from and why God works this way. (*5 minutes*)
What is the gift of God to you?

Why is it God’s grace that gives you this initial “saving” faith?

If you could give yourself this faith, you would

Therefore, when you exercise the faith he gave you, you are glorifying

_____, whereas when you are moving in Unbelief, you are glorifying

Scripture Study: Read 2 Thessalonians 3:2. (*10 minutes*)

When it says that “not all men have faith,” how does this contradict the all-American notion that all men do have faith and that all they have to do is choose to use it toward God?

If you are troubled by Romans 12:3 in which it says, “God has allotted to each a measure of faith,” please check the context of Romans 12:3-8 and notice that Paul is speaking to the Church of Rome (those who have already been given saving faith). He is merely telling them to not be proud because they have one of the seven abilities, which are all the result of slightly differing faith. One has faith to teach, one to prophesy, one to ...

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Thank God for giving you saving faith so that you could stop trusting yourself and trust Jesus Christ!

Ask Jesus to forgive you for the sin of Unbelief.

Ask the Holy Spirit to quicken and remind you to actively use your faith in Jesus in every situation all during the day.

Pray for the faith of your friends to increase so that God might receive the honor!

Lesson 3

Peter was often called by Jesus a one word (in the Greek), compound epithet, “oh you-of-little-faith”; and he certainly knew what it was to try to follow Jesus with a faith that seemed to come and go. As a result, he understood the value of the faith that had been given to him. He treasured it, and he recognized the same treasured faith in other Christians. Remember all the tests of faith that Peter failed; yet remember what a mighty man of faith he became! The difference in Peter from the Gospels to the book of Acts is remarkable. God is working similar things in you! He is developing your faith.

Jesus well understood the battle that goes on in regard to your faith for He put Peter on notice, warning him that Satan would target his faith. Be sure that you go to school on Peter and let him become your teacher.

Scripture Study: 2 Peter 1:1. The NASV says: “who have received a faith of the same kind as ours” whereas the NIV better translates it: “have received a faith as precious as ours.” The KJV translates it very much like the NIV, “those who have received a like precious faith.” (10 minutes)

Since Peter is writing to Christians, what do you think he means by their having “received a faith”?

What does Peter mean by their having received “a like precious faith”?

So how does your faith compare to Peter’s faith?

Scripture Study: Read Luke 22:31-32. (5 minutes)

What motivates Satan to target your faith?

Why might Satan have the “right” to “demand” that he be allowed to put you through the wringer in order to attack your faith?

What was Jesus’ response to Satan’s demands and strategy?

What is Jesus’ purpose in allowing you to be tested in ways similar to Peter?

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Go to the Cross this morning where you died with Jesus to your Unbelief and where you may receive from Him some of His faith!

Draw from Him all the ability to trust God today in every circumstance.
Now worship Him and give Him all the honor for being God!
Exalt Him. Bow down and give Him your Adoration!

Lesson 4

Are you living in the freedom that the Gospel offers?

Paul said that Christ's purpose was to set us free; but then he began to exhort the Christians to "keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." This is Paul's way of saying that they should continue to live by faith in Christ alone as opposed to trying to produce the ability themselves. Unbelief produces slavery.

Later Paul reminded them that they were called to freedom. Interesting, because this means that they were in some danger of forgetting to live by faith in Christ alone. So he says for them to not "turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." By this he warns them to not go back into Unbelief, which only allows their flesh to take over and ruin the party!

If you want to live in freedom, then you will have to continually live by faith-dependence on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. You will have to continually turn away from your inclination to trust yourself (the flesh).

Scripture Study: Once again study Galatians 5:1-7. (10 minutes)
What does Paul mean here by "freedom"?

How does "a yoke of slavery" relate to your faith?

Galatians 5:4 is probably intended as a warning of the eventual consequences of wanting to justify yourself. When you try to solve life's problems without _____, then you experience some similar effects, which are

In Galatians 5:5, "the hope of righteousness" probably refers to a long list of good things which come to the Believer by the grace of God, such as powerful transformations in your thinking and acting, seeing Christ face to face, becoming fully like Him, etc. But the operation of this grace involves your choosing to live by _____. When you allow Unbelief to dominate your thinking, speaking, and evaluating, then

In Galatians 5:7, Paul's "obeying the truth" means living by Galatians 2:20-21. Explain why.

Scripture Study: Examine Galatians 5:13-24. (10 minutes)

Look at Galatians 5:13-15. When you as a Christian try to make progress and please God in your own ability (Unbelief), you will soon fail. Answer this question: what types of things will begin to trouble your relationships?

Examine Galatians 5:22-23 and realize that all the fruits of the Spirit come into your life as you trust/believe/rely/have faith in Jesus Christ alone. The Spirit works in your life to produce these character qualities which describe God's nature when you

In Galatians 5:16, Paul's "walk by the Spirit" is a synonym for living by _____. If you don't see this clearly, read Galatians 3:5 and I think you will see the connection.

Prayer Time: (10-25 minutes)

Use your faith to realize that Christ is living in you to provide His character so that there is His fruit coming out of your life.

Pray for revelation of this life of faith to spread from you into all those you meet.

Bring every problem you face to the feet of Jesus and commit them all to His authority.

Believe Him to guide you and to use you today to bring honor to the Father.

Lesson 5

Fear constantly tries to trap you into dishonoring God by overriding your faith in Him. Fears abound. What people think about you may be taking a toll on your faith. What you think about yourself may be a constant, nagging fear, which is so common that you hardly recognize it. Then there are the fears in issues of health, finances, guidance questions, broken relationships, safety, the future, career decisions, your family, etc. Each of these fears appear in your life at some time in order to intimidate you with the full intention of establishing a beachhead in your soul. Once a fear has dug in, then Satan will take full advantage of destroying as much of your faith as you will permit.

For this reason, it is very important that you activate your faith by using specific promises from God to take the offensive against the fears that you encounter. You can be certain that various fears will constantly attempt to gain a foothold in you, so you must be alert to the battle for your faith.

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 8:23-27 and Mark 4:35-41. *(10 minutes)*

It's perfectly normal to feel afraid, but what does Jesus expect of you in stressful situations?

In Mark 4:38, the disciples asked a question which describes how we all feel sometimes. Rewrite this question in your own words as it might pertain to your own life.

Examine Mark 4:41. Here is quite another type of fear. How would you describe the difference between this type of fear and the former fear for which they were corrected?

I think you will agree that with the fear they experienced in Mark 4:41, these men would be able to trust Jesus in the middle of a storm.

Scripture Study: Acts 10:2, 22. *(5 minutes)*

In these verses you will see that Cornelius is described as a man who feared God. Can you recognize this fear of God as a synonym for faith?

Whatever you fear tends to be what dominates you. Whatever you fear tends to become your focus and what you consider most important. Therefore, can you see why Satan has such a great interest in your fearing something besides God?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Choose the fear of the Lord.

Render unto the Lord what is His due!

Declare His great promises over every challenge in your life.

Believe God to extend fresh winds of the Spirit, granting the fear of the Lord to all those in your Church.

Lesson 6

The World System operates with the principle of determined Unbelief toward God. Society is built around the principles of self-help and the glory of man, which are the opposites of Christ reliance and the glory of God.

Jesus knows the Father and trusts Him completely. His Kingdom is built around these two things: God's character, and the faith that is justly placed in Him at all times. Jesus sadly marveled at the Unbelief of men, for He knew how truly insane Unbelief was. With such a God, how can one not trust Him fully, no matter what?

Therefore, in all the Gospels you will constantly hear Jesus discussing the issue of faith, for it is the operational principle whereby men honor God and receive from God. Whenever a person has his own glory in mind, he cannot exercise his faith, for the two principles are contradictory. Pride will not allow a man to move in faith; therefore it must die with Christ at the Cross.

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 9:22, 29. (5 minutes)

Jesus obviously was calling attention to every instance in which someone exercised faith as he/she listened to Him. He always linked their _____ to all the miracles that He performed.

In Matthew 9:29, Jesus stated a general principle. Take this truth and rewrite it to fit your life situation.

Scripture Study: Read Luke 18:1-8. (10 minutes)

In Luke 18:1 when Jesus said, "that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart," can you see that the expression, "to lose heart," means to lose faith? So to be discouraged, which involves losing courage, is actually a matter of losing _____.

In Luke 18:8b, Jesus shares His heart cry with us. It probably wasn't intended to be taken as a question but rather it is a cry! Why do you think Jesus cried out like this?

Finish this sentence: "As a follower of Jesus, it is vital that I grow in my faith and consciously pay attention to whether or not I am 'in faith' or not, because

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Honor the Lord by stepping forward to offer yourself as one who lives by faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Disavow negative speaking and uttering Unbelief, which dishonors God.

Read John 14:1 before the Lord; then go into prayer, following the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 7

Faith feeds upon fellowship with God and upon all the words that He has spoken, for they all emanate from His very Being.

Jesus explained to those Jews who were violently opposed to Him that the cause of their hellish condition was that they were not allowing His words to have room inside them. (John 8:37) In a similar fashion, He explained this dynamic in His famous parable in Matthew 13: that busyness and preoccupation effectively shut out His words (His Gospel) and produce the same disastrous results.

A few verses before in John 8:31-32, Jesus carefully taught those who had some faith. If they wished to be living in true freedom, they would need to continue in His word; that His word would so sink into them, that the power of the word would release truth into them. This is another way of explaining how a disciple must give His word priority inside. This is what it means to give the word place or room in a person.

Scripture Study: Read in Matthew 13:18-23 Jesus' illustration of what happens to His seed (word) as it encounters four different heart conditions in us. *(10 minutes)*
Analyze each "soil" in terms of the faith illustrated by that heart condition.

What is the failure of faith in the first three soils?

Scripture Meditation: Read John 6:63 slowly, over and over, until you feel these words sinking down into your inner being. *(5 minutes)*

Scripture Study: Ephesians 5:25-26. *(5 minutes)*
How does Jesus use His words to change your mind?

How does a husband use God's words to help sanctify his wife?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Be the "good soil" this morning by taking Jesus' words deep into your soul.

Now minister your love to Him! Tell Him, sing to Him, or raise your hands, and bless Him in the adoration of worship!

By faith receive His promises into your situations.

Believe God to use you today as an extension of Himself.

Lesson 8

Satan is the author of all Unbelief. He is a liar by nature and his nature was determined when he originated accusations against the Holy and Perfect God. He rose up to stand in judgment of God by contradicting Him and believing lies about Him; thus was born the wickedness of Unbelief. It is the root of all sin, all evil, and all that is wrong with this world.

Jesus, on the other hand, is the author of all true faith in God. The natural man is totally devoid of this faith. Jesus modeled absolute trust at all times in the true holiness of God. For this reason He never sinned, and never failed to obey. Not only is Jesus the source of our faith, He is also the One who perfects our faith; and with our faith He is most concerned. This, of course, is the reason He prays for our faith to not give up during all the various strains and stresses that come to test our faith.

Faith in Christ is what submission is all about, whereas Unbelief is our refusal to trust Him who is perfectly worthy of such trust; thus it is rightly called rebellion.

Scripture Study: Read John 14:9-10 and Hebrews 1:3 in order to see how perfectly Jesus represented the nature of God to us. (*5 minutes*)

How did Jesus represent to us the nature of the Father God?

How did the Father make it clear that He fully approved of Jesus' faith and obedience?

How is Jesus' perfect faith and obedience to the Father changing your life?

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 11–12:4. (*10 minutes*)

Give a quick scan to Hebrews 11 in order to see how it allows you to understand the point of Hebrews 12:1-4.

What is the point that the author is making in Hebrews 12:1-4?

How do you understand that Jesus is the author and the one who perfects your faith?

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Read Hebrews 12:3-4 before the Lord and then pray as you feel prompted.

Ask the Lord to forgive you for the sin of Unbelief.

Acknowledge your faith in the Lord in every area in which you are being tempted.

Declare His goodness and His power over all the works of the enemy to include your own flesh!

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His life right now so that you can glorify Jesus during this day!

Pray for your missionaries.

Lesson 9

No wonder Satan is determined to prove that you do not really trust God, for he is looking for a point of agreement in you so that he can team up with you against God! This is truly an evil and real plot. Make no mistake about it: there is nothing less than this actually going on all the time. He actively tempts you to join him in his accusations against the trustworthiness of God. When you do, you begin to experience the depression and loss, which he enjoys bringing into your life. As the Liar who has come to destroy, rob, and kill, this is his method of operating against you.

Christ died to bring you into living in the freedom of always trusting God, but there is a battle over your willingness to trust Him. It is always a question of your will. Since he gave you saving faith, He now requires that you choose whether or not you will trust Him or yourself. Your flesh is not neutral. Therefore, you must use your faith to bring the Unbelief of your old stubborn will to the Cross where you “reckon,” “count,” or “consider” yourself to have died with Christ to this very sin. As you do this, the power of Unbelief is broken and you are able to move by faith (trusting) in Christ who lives in you.

Scripture Study: Romans 14:23b - “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” (5 minutes)
Rewrite the above sentence in your own words.

Why does God say this?

Realizing that God never condemns you, how does this truth impact your life?

Scripture Memory and Meditation: James 4:7. Oh, this is a verse that Satan would not like for you to have stored in your memory bank! (10 minutes)
What is the connection between submission and faith?

Why is your submission to God’s delegated authority important to your ability to resist Satan?

Since you know about the battle over your faith, how do you think that once you have submitted to God, you then are able to resist the devil?

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

If you have been resisting God’s delegated authority over your life, then clear this up with

the Father right now by confessing and asking for the blood of the Cross to cleanse your soul!

Bring your unbelief to Jesus for His deliverance.

By faith, believe that God does forgive you and sets you free.

Agree with God that you are not only forgiven but that you are also righteous, since He clothed you with the righteousness of Christ!

Lesson 10

As you begin to understand faith as a battle over the honor and glory of God, rather than just as whether or not you get something good, the Spirit of God will embolden you with courage. It isn't about you; it's about the honor and glory of God!

Who will receive the trust? When you answer that question, you will also know to whom the honor is going. Will it be you? Will it be Jesus Christ? It will always be one or the other, for even when you seemingly trust someone else, you are really trusting your own judgment and deciding against God, which plays directly into Satan's strategy.

David ran to meet what he would ordinarily have feared because he was infused with this issue of God's glory. This makes your battles not just about you and how well things will or will not go for you, but translates your difficulties into a war for the honor and glory of God! As you become infused with the passion to honor God, your faith will grow beyond all your previous experience. You will also run toward things that used to instill such fear and dread in you! Isn't this glorious?

Scripture Study: 1 Samuel 17:46-47. *(5 minutes)*

What David said to Goliath might be considered by many Christians to be boasting. When would such talk be boasting and when would it be a true expression of faith?

How boldly do you proclaim who you are "in Christ"?

If faith is saying about yourself the positive things that God has said, how do you think it will seem to God if you begin to say all the promises as though they applied directly to you?

Journaling: What are some of the things that God says about you which would change your faith-life and boldness if you actually took Him at His word and began to declare them openly to the devil and to those things that formerly threatened your life? List some of the Scriptures and things that He says are true about you since you are a new creature in Christ. *(5 minutes)*

Scripture Study: 1 Timothy 6:12. *(5 minutes)*

As you consider Paul's orders to his right hand man Timothy, how does this apply to you in your fight against Unbelief and your fight to bring honor and glory to God?

What does it mean to "take hold of eternal life"?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Thank Jesus for giving you saving faith. Treasure it!

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His life so that you can meet every test today by running to meet challenges instead of dragging your feet and dreading things!

Confess your faith/confidence in Jesus who now lives in you!

Trust Him to release His life through you today.

Lesson 11

Because of the fall of Adam and the curse of Unbelief that spread, bringing death to everyone, there is a constant battle between the curse and the blessing that Jesus Christ brought into this world for us! The curse comes quite naturally. You don't have to do anything special to live under the curse of Unbelief, whereas you do have to be on the alert and willing to defend and use your faith if you are going to live in the blessings of God. Although they are absolutely free to you, Satan fiercely contests them as he tempts you to doubt God and thus come under Satan's influence.

Your faith will be tested every day. In fact, every situation you face asks one question: "What is your testimony about God?"

Complaining will bring your defeat. Instead, you must determine to give God the glory by upholding His promises even as you have to cope with situations that do not look promising at all! These are the very times to pass your test by declaring what God says rather than what your flesh might want to express.

Scripture Study: Read James 1:2-4, 12. (10 minutes)

Well, you are faced with some trouble, and now it is up to you to decide which way you will go. Will you choose to "consider" the situation the way God says or not? Answer that question as you think of the things you face today: "I will choose to consider it _____ as I face _____."

Do you think that you are realizing that you are being tested when you go forth today to meet challenging things?

What is being tested?

When you don't give up but choose to trust God, what then happens to you? (James 1:12)

Why is trusting God called loving God?

Scripture Study: James 1:6-8. (5 minutes)

Do you ever feel like the surf of the sea, which is driven and tossed by the wind?

What causes this feeling?

How should you deal with it?

Prayer Time: (15-30 minutes)

Begin to count it all joy that you are facing certain struggles!

Like David, use your faith to run to the battle so that you can represent God's promises in

difficult situations.

Declare the Greatness and Goodness of God out loud this morning!

Worship Him over every area that might bring fear into you otherwise.

Lesson 12

Why does God allow you to be tested? First, know that God never tempts anyone to sin. (James 1:13) He does, however, bring us into places where we are tested. Jesus tested His Disciples when He asked them to feed the crowds. (John 6:6)

God tests you to change you from one degree of glory to a higher degree, but you have to choose to trust Him (faith) in order to learn what He is teaching you. (Romans 1:17)

He is always the Lord of the test. He never tests you nor allows you to be tested beyond your ability to choose faith and pass with flying colors! (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Every test will involve your choosing to crucify your flesh, and this will change you. Thus every difficult situation you are in is designed carefully by God to glorify Him and, at the same time, to progressively set you free from bondages. This is how He matures you. (Hebrews 4:12)

Scripture Study: Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3. *(10 minutes)*

Why does the Lord want them (and you) to remember the tests that they have taken?

Write down all the reasons God tested them.

Are you viewing your difficulties as tests?

What do you think happens to you when you do not realize that you are taking a test?

And when you fail a test, what do you think happens?

Read this portion over again in order to really absorb it.

Scripture Study: 1 Corinthians 10:13. This is a “must” memory verse! *(5 minutes)*

A test is a temptation because

The way of escape always involves the Cross.

You pass the test when you

You fail the test when you

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Declare God faithful in every situation that He allows you to face!

Make this your life story: always declaring that God is faithful!

Bow down and worship Him this morning.

Choose the Cross by bringing your flesh in the form of your fear, bitterness, anger, or embarrassment, etc., to die with Him who died for you!

Lesson 13

When you find yourself saying, “I wish...” you are facing a test of sorts. You will choose either the confession of faith or the confession of Unbelief. You will move from the “I wish...” stage to outright complaining, or you will recognize the situation that is testing your faith, and trust the sufficiency of God. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

“Grumbling” was one of the sins that kept Israel locked in their Unbelief. (1 Corinthians 10:10) It is a mild, low level of rebellion against God, so it leads to a loss of faith and a loss of joy. If you have the habit of complaining, you should make it a priority to experience the deliverance that comes as you bring your flesh to the Cross every time you are tempted to grumble and grouse. Expressing negativity sows to your flesh and of the flesh you will reap even more than you sowed.

Wisdom comes as you intentionally look at your challenges from God’s point of view, and you can cultivate this habit. First, you have to see the power of living another way and decide that the “faith way” is what you want in your life! Guilt is a poor motivator, but the joy and thrill of living in faith has an attractiveness about it that is very powerful. Perhaps you are tired of wallowing in the habit of negativity and complaining, so now you can determine to go free by bringing your flesh to the Cross every time you are tempted to go into the same old ruts of Unbelief!

Scripture Meditation: Romans 1:16-17. I know you know these verses, but if you will slowly chew these words, the Holy Spirit will feed your spirit man in a way that ministers faith to you. (10 minutes)

The word translated, “salvation,” also means, “deliverance,” so now finish this sentence: “The Gospel is the _____ of God for my _____, but I must exercise my _____.”

To be “righteous” is to have God’s character and sufficiency for a situation. Finish this sentence: “The Gospel offers me the _____ of God in order to make me _____.”

“Some Christians seem to look at their lives as though they are living from problem to problem, but instead I am choosing to meet every situation by _____ God. Therefore I am living from _____ to _____.”

“In fact, my whole life is to be characterized by _____; and I have chosen to cast off my previous habits of _____, which developed because of my _____.”

Scripture Meditation: Matthew 5:6. Having just savored Romans 1:17, and seeing that the Gospel of the Cross is the way to exchange your self-righteousness for the righteousness which Christ earned for you, perhaps now you can see what Jesus is talking about here. (5 minutes)

If you understand that what you really need is God’s righteousness instead of your own, then all you have to do is

So if you really desire His righteousness, then you will always be

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Count your own attempts to be adequate or righteous as dead, and by faith receive the gift of Christ’s righteousness!

Declare the faithfulness of God and the goodness of God over your life!

Repent of saying, "I wish..." and then expressing negativity and Unbelief!
Receive His forgiveness and rejoice in feeling clean!

Lesson 14

Legalism is one of the Christian “bad” words, but every Christian who is serious about following Christ and serving God falls into legalism from time to time. Few understand what legalism is, which makes it even more difficult to recognize this destructive form of Unbelief. Obedience is not legalism. Obedience without trusting God as your Source is legalism.

Those who do not wish to obey God at a particular point may call “obedience” legalism. Therefore they move into the Unbelief of disobedience, which is sin. In fact, Christians talk a lot about “legalism,” but usually they are not clear about what exactly it is. They can’t define it.

Legalism is trying to please God by something that you do; therefore you are not relying only upon Christ and His ability. Instead, you are assuming the role of the Savior yourself. All you can present to God is stuff that you have generated. Of course, this offends God because you have ignored His chosen way, which is to trust in Christ alone for your strength, wisdom, goodness, adequacy, etc.

To decide to not smoke, not to get drunk, not to curse, not to eat certain foods, or not to work on a certain day, etc. is not necessarily legalism, though it can be. It depends upon who and what you are trusting for your standing with God. Paul discusses this issue in 1 Corinthians 8, 9, 10 and in Romans 14, 15. True faith leads to the proper obedience, which is an obedience that springs from trusting God!

Scripture Study: Romans 14:1-23. Now as you read the statement, “whatever is not from faith is sin,” you will see the context which really gets at the heart of legalism. Study this passage, and use your pen to write your insights in the margins. *(15 minutes)*
Does Paul care what the Christians eat or don’t eat?

_____.
You may eat or not eat based upon preference or health, but legalist eating would mean that you are eating a certain way in which to _____ God as opposed to _____.

_____.
In Romans 14:1 Paul speaks about accepting the person who is weak in faith. Who do you think he was talking about?

What is an example of some legalism that you have experienced in your life?

What is an example of some disobedience that you have found in your own life that was based upon the other form of Unbelief, which comes from having wrong ideas of God?

Finish this sentence: “I am in legalism when I _____.”

“I am in license when I give myself permission to _____.”

“The fruit of legalism in my life is _____.”

_____”
“The fruit of license in my life is

_____”
“The fruit of faith in my life is

_____”

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Confess any sins that have become evident, as you have studied these verses.

Receive the cleansing and perfect forgiveness that God is giving you because of Christ.

Worship God in response to His outpouring of love upon your life!

Pray and ask the Spirit to reveal legalism in your life and in the lives of your brothers and sisters!

Lesson 15

Peace with God. This is what you need. This is what is necessary if you are to have a blessed life. This is exactly what Christ's death brings to you: a true and lasting peace with God. This is what the Gospel brings. Those who do not forget the Gospel live in this peace. Are you living in this peace? Does peace with God characterize your routine? If not, then let's change this, for He designed your entire being to depend upon peace as the atmosphere for proper functioning.

After God's Spirit quickened you (regeneration), you became aware of your need for God. You were converted through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21) The result of this was that Christ justified you. He caused you to be declared righteous with His righteousness! Because of that you felt clean, accepted, and joyful.

When you try to make life work without the peace of God, it means that you are violating something in God. You may not be disobeying God through some active sin, but this loss of peace may be coming from something subtler: forgetting your justification. When this happens, you will try to justify yourself. Then you are back on the treadmill of trying to produce what is needed by depending upon yourself.

The peace of God is really peace with God. This comes from your faith that God is accepting you and providing for you only as you trust in the Person of His Son, Jesus. When you lose this peace, you should realize that you are not operating in faith. Bad move, so go back and use your faith. Then you will experience His justification, and that life-giving peace will return.

Scripture Meditation: Romans 5:1. Perhaps as you soak your soul in these words, the Spirit will quicken your inner man once again to the truth that only Christ can justify you. (5 minutes)

Finish this sentence: "God justifies me by

_____."

"When I do not live by faith, I try to

_____."

"When I do not have this peace with God, it is because I

_____."

Scripture Study: Romans 16:20. (5 minutes)

What is necessary for you to defeat Satan?

Read Philippians 4:7. What does this peace do for you?

Scripture Study: Ephesians 6:15. As Paul describes the Roman soldier, he describes peace as the soldier's boots. (5 minutes)

In combat, a soldier without boots or something on his feet would experience

_____.

In the Romans 16:20 passage, God intends to crush Satan beneath your _____.

How important is this peace to your effectiveness in defeating Satan?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Come to the peace this morning by coming to Christ as your only hope of righteousness.

Renounce serving in your own strength.

Submit to God, resist the devil now, and he will flee from you!

Visualize God's peace being like combat boots so that you can go into your day and be used by God!

Lesson 16

There are times when it seems that peace has fled and faith is not to be found. You try to exercise faith, but you know that it simply is not there. What then?

This is frustrating, isn't it? Very. What's the deal? The deal is that something inside you is holding onto something that is not submitted, not yielded to God. This inner bondage to your will is blocking your faith. God, of course, has allowed this situation to expose an area of your will that needs the Cross!

You may be angry. You may be resentful. You may be driven. You may be anxious and fearful. You may be proud and independent. Something is on board and God is saying, "Now is the time to bring this 'something' to the Cross and to count it dead with Christ." In other words, He wants it. Now!

No peace, no faith. The interpretation is: you need to experience "the word of the Cross" which is the power of God.
(1 Corinthians 1:18)

Even prayer won't help. Not if you are refusing to take your "something" to the Cross. Fasting won't help either unless the Spirit uses it to weaken your resistance and thereby lead you to the Cross.

Scripture Meditation: Read Colossians 3:15 slowly several times, letting it sink into your soul. Feel the weight of God's words penetrating your mind and heart. (5 minutes)
The word, "let," means that God has something for you to do. What is it?

The word, "rule," can also be translated as "umpire." How do you understand the peace of Christ to be an umpire for your life?

What does Paul mean by, "to which indeed you were called"?

Scripture Study: Read Philippians 4:4-7 carefully, because several things must be attended to before you get to the supplication part. (5 minutes)
What commands come before the peace part?

"Be anxious for nothing" certainly is a command that takes you to the Cross in repentance and faith.

If you have skipped the Cross, then what happens to your prayer and peace?

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Perhaps you now see that there is something in your will that you need to take to the Cross.
Do this.

While there, soak up His grace which He gives to all who come to His dying place.

By faith, recognize Christ living in you.

Now realize that the Lord is near so you can take things to Him, rather than sin by worrying.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Ask God to forgive you for not believing the things He has said are true about you.

Read some of the things He has said about you before the Lord, as part of affirming your faith in Him!

Pray for your local Church, that fresh revelation would come to all by the Spirit.

Believe with the Lord for the Church, which is His Body, to change the world in this area!

Lesson 18

Your faith could not have originated with you because you were born in sin and Unbelief. One of the things Jesus had to die for was your Unbelief. He earned your deliverance from the tyranny of Unbelief in order to give you some of His faith. Your faith is His gift to you, and it brings life!

Faith brings life. Remember that. Unbelief brings death. Remember that also. Treasure the faith He gave you, for it was the gift of eternal life. Without faith you are in trouble, so it is important for you to guard this precious faith and to nourish it with the words of life that come from the Savior.

When you neglect to feed upon Christ and upon His words, you will begin to feel the effects of weakening faith and loss of joy and confidence. Doubts will eat away and the thrill and excitement of knowing God and following Christ will lessen. Unfortunately when this happens, your desire for spiritual food also lessens and then things go downhill.

Jesus explained that those who had much would receive even more, while those who had little would lose even the little they had. (Matthew 13) The more faith you have the more you value it, so the more you want. On the other hand, the less faith you have, the less you value it and then you have less desire to feed upon Him and His word.

The conclusion: your faith is something given to you to steward for God. How you value it will determine how your life goes. Important stuff.

Scripture Memory and Meditation: Read Ephesians 2:8-10 over slowly, and then practice saying these verses while looking away. Let these words from heaven flow into you. (10 minutes)

What does Paul say is the gift of God?

Why does Paul want you to realize that your faith was a gift and not something you came up with?

If you are to be entirely God's workmanship, why was it important that your faith be a gift?

Where do the good works come in?

Why do you think it was the grace of God, which was the Source of this gift of faith?

In your own words, rewrite Ephesians 2:8-10. (5 minutes)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Praise God for your ability to trust Him!

Pray for your lost friends who have not yet received this gift of faith.

Ask God to make you a steward of this faith.

Pray in faith over your life situations so that God will be honored in these places.

Lesson 19

The culture and society in which you live is the product of Unbelief, not faith. So everywhere you go there is a tremendous drain upon your ability and desire to glorify God by trusting Him.

No wonder Paul spoke about our fight of faith. It really is a fight. It is one which Satan takes seriously; perhaps more seriously than many Christians.

Eventually, the glory of God will cover the earth. The curse will be ended, for the judgment of God will finish the process. Meanwhile, those of faith are here to give God the glory He deserves by refusing all the lies about Him as we trust the Lord at all times. This is how we are the salt and light of the earth. It is our faith which shines in the darkness. It strips Satan of his influence over this realm; thus the battle.

Since it is a war, it is important for us to know our enemy, our weapons, and how to use strategy to make sure that we are staying on the winning side. It's sure more fun that way!

Scripture Meditation: Read 1 Timothy 6:12, once again taking time to ponder the words. Let the Spirit of God breathe them into you and you will find them to be living words that bring life. *(10 minutes)*

In your experience, what is "the good fight of faith"?

Why does Paul begin this command with the active verb, "Fight"?

How do you "take hold of eternal life"?

What is the "good confession"?

What is the importance of your making "the good confession"?

Scripture Study: Read Romans 12:2 with the understanding that "this world" or "this age" refers to the culture which surrounds you, and that it is formulated to bring glory to man rather than to God. *(5 minutes)*

What does the society around you try to do to you?

How does this affect your faith in Jesus?

What does God want you to do?

Why?

Read Romans 12:21. How are you to overcome all that is popular and modeled around you?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Use your faith to give God honor and glory for His eternal Goodness, Power, Majesty, Wisdom, Faithfulness, Mercy, Providence, Love, Kindness, Generosity, Purity, Trustworthiness, Greatness, Truthfulness, and Grace!

Use your faith to fight the right battle by declaring His Promises over the problems that you see in your life!

Ask for His wisdom to take the fight of faith into your schedule today.

Lesson 20

Pride is your enemy. It is pride which desires to be strong, wise, good, smart, and capable of handling life and then feeling that God will be pleased. But pride deceives, for God is pleased by your faith in His Son, Jesus!

Self-dependence is an ugly part of your old nature and it does not wish to have to trust God for things. Instead, your flesh would much rather be the one who succeeds. In fact, self-reliance wants to please you, not God.

Pride does not like being weak, needy, inadequate, or vulnerable, yet these are the very attributes that God chooses to illustrate His grace, His power, and His sufficiency. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Why? Glory belongs to the Lord, not to you. As you live for His glory (just as Jesus did), you will experience great freedom from all the fears that haunt your soul. It will be easy to trust Him rather than yourself. At the root of Unbelief is pride. To be free, you must take it to the Cross every time it rears its head. (Romans 8:13)

Scripture Study: Read John 5:44 in order to gain insight into how Jesus worked. (*5 minutes*)
When you are having trouble with trusting God, what does Jesus suggest is the real difficulty?

When you begin to recognize the subtlety of pride in your life, then _____ (there are lots of ways you might go with this, so just express what's in your own heart).

Scripture Study: Read Romans 1:21-23 and note that "honor" and "glory" are treated as synonyms in this passage. (*5 minutes*)
What, then, is the root of Unbelief?

Why is Unbelief evil?

When you "profess yourself to be wise," you are moving in _____, and you make yourself a _____.

When you seek your own honor (self-reliance/Unbelief) you exchange the honor that God intends for you to have for _____.

Scripture Memory: Commit Romans 3:23 to memory by repeatedly saying it over and over. (*5 minutes*)

Rewrite this verse in your own words by incorporating the word "faith" or "trust" in your explanation of this truth.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Begin this morning by honoring the Lord with thanksgiving and worship!

Ask forgiveness for your pride.

Rejoice in your own weaknesses and inabilities so that you can depend upon Christ alone!

Pray for this revelation to come to all those in your Church!

Lesson 21

The one who is most humble may not appear that way at first because the truly humble have the most faith. You may notice the faith and therefore mistake the confidence as something other than humility. Moses was the meekest man on the earth, yet he was also a bold, courageous leader. If you are to succeed in leading anything or anyone, you too must be humble and full of faith.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding, thus it is proper to equate the fear of the Lord with faith. The fear of the Lord causes you to begin by concerning yourself with what God thinks. This is exactly what faith does: it focuses on God.

Faith always needs an object, for faith in faith is the nonsense of humanism and the New Age philosophy. The object of saving faith is God Himself! Thus the more you know Him, know about Him, and know about His words, the more faith you will have. Faith is simply trusting the One who is God! Faith agrees with God and disagrees with all that is opposed to Him, thus submission is of faith! No wonder Satan flees!

Scripture Study: Read 1 Peter 5:5-11 slowly, using your marking pen to note critical words: e.g. “humble,” “grace,” “proud,” “faith,” “resist,” “glory,” etc. (10 minutes)
If you understand what “grace” is, then you can explain why God gives grace to the humble but not to the proud. Please explain.

What does God plan to do with you when you humble yourself?

Where does faith come in?

Why does God allow you to suffer at times?

When you are suffering, what does God want you to do?

When you are suffering, you can honor the Lord, or dishonor the Lord, based upon your _____.

Reread this passage in 1 Peter 5:5-11 and journal your thoughts and insights to the Lord. (5 minutes)

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

You have complete access to grace this morning, so humble yourself and receive all the help

you need!

Pour out your heart to the Lord this morning. Tell Him all that is on your mind.

Ask Him for the help you need and believe that, because He is whom He is, He will provide!

Bring your needy friends and relatives to the Lord, for He delights to use you to pray them into His loving help!

Lesson 22

Your faith is your lifeline to God and to all His generous help. Your faith is something that the Father is always developing in you. Mature faith has been tested many times and has experienced many failures as well as successes, but through it all the mature person has benefited, learned, and grown. Thus, life is an adventure of faith and God is the architect.

Patience is one of the most powerful fruits of the Spirit and it is a learned character trait. Often your faith must trust God over a period of time, which is most inconvenient and unwelcome, yet it is during these times that God develops this golden attribute called, "patience." We inherit the promises through faith and patience. In the early stages of this journey, Christians often confuse true faith as producing immediate results, whereas it is true faith that endures over the long haul. The mature value patience, while the immature do not. Are you cultivating the character quality of patience? If so, you are moving toward maturity.

God is patient. It is a part of His perfection and His holiness. In His love for you, He is determined to make you like Him. Part of the joy of getting older is the possession of a patience that you did not possess in your youth. Therefore temper tantrums should be becoming a thing of the past as the Spirit prompts you to take your will to the Cross when things are not yet going the way you had wished. You are becoming one who possesses your soul because you have grown in your ability to trust God and be patient. By Him many victories come.

Scripture Study: Read James 5:7 several times, allowing these life-giving words to come into your soul.

(5 minutes)

What does James mean by "until the coming of the Lord" if it doesn't mean the final coming of the Lord, which I do not think it means?

It's very similar in meaning to Philippians 4:5, "the Lord is near." You can afford to be patient, because

Why does James choose to use the farmer and his crops as an illustration for patience?

Journaling: What are some of the areas in your life in which your lack of patience has gotten you into trouble and caused you damage? *(5 minutes)*

Journaling: Where do you think your impatience comes from? How has God provided for you to have victory over it? *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Bring your impatient flesh to the dying place where you consider yourself to have died with Christ.

By faith receive Christ's patience.

Now exercise faith and patience toward God's Character and His Promises for the needs of your life.

Pray for the Spirit of God to be poured out upon your Church!

Lesson 23

A broken relationship in your life can block your growth in faith. A guilty conscience or defilement in your soul can make moving in genuine faith very restricted. God is a God of relationships, and the second greatest command is to love your neighbor as yourself. So an untended relationship with a human can block your fellowship with God.

God has designed it so that you must do all in your power to reconcile with anyone with whom you are separated due to a breach in the relationship. Have you offended or have you been offended? No matter, it is important that you take the initiative to go immediately to do all that you can to be reconciled.

First, be willing to go directly to the person alone. Forgive the person in your heart even before going. Be humble and willing to listen. Hold yourself accountable to obey the commandments of God without making excuses. These are all acts of faith which will defeat Satan and honor God. This is also a part of “coming into the light,” which means that you allow the truth of God to examine your life so that no deception can dwell there. Trusting God means that you realize that He always dwells in the “light” of pure truth, so when you willingly come into the light about what wrong attitudes might be in your own heart or speech, then you are positioned to experience His powerful love and grace.

Scripture Study: Read 1 John 1:7-9 carefully with the intention of living by this creed. (5 minutes)

A test of whether you are walking in the “light” as God is can be seen by your freedom and eagerness to have _____ with someone who has offended you. What happens when you are stubborn and only see the wrong of the other without allowing God to examine your own heart?

Why would you not come into the light?

What causes a person to change and make coming into the light a habit?

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:29-32. (5 minutes)

What things grieve the Holy Spirit?

Why do these things grieve the Holy Spirit?

When you are grieving the Holy Spirit and you need to trust God in a situation, what happens?

If you do not realize what you have done and do not therefore take your flesh to the Cross, what happens to your faith?

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 4:1-3. (5 minutes)

To walk in a manner worthy of your calling takes _____.

What is it about God’s calling upon your life which makes these character qualities so

necessary?

What happens to your faith when there is disunity?

Why does Satan work so hard to produce disunity between people?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Come into the light this morning and confess any sinful deeds or attitudes which are hindering your closeness to others.

By faith draw upon Christ's righteousness, His humility, His patience, His gentleness, etc.

By faith, confess that Christ is living in you and that He is your righteousness.

Pray for those who have hurt you. Speak forgiveness and blessing over their lives.

Lesson 24

Only when you choose faith (and it is a choice you exercise once you have been given it) will the grace of God be tangibly experienced. Why? Grace is His undeserved help; therefore faith looks to God for what you yourself do not have. This is why frustration reveals that you have forgotten the Gospel and that you are not trusting in the Christ who is living in you.

Frustration also indicates that your will is not submitted to God. This in turn means that you are not trusting Him. You may have the proper goal, even one which you received from Him, but frustration means that you have the goal firmly in your grip as opposed to putting your faith in God for how it will all work out. Then the sad part: the grace is not there. You feel alone and it does not go well. But when faith in Christ comes, then grace flows and so does your joy! Almost without noticing it, submission has come into your heart and Satan has to flee. He is defeated every time he encounters Christ in you. This happens as you believe that He is actually living in you.

Your trusting Jesus releases fresh grace, which is why your weakness and inability is the pathway along which grace flows.

Scripture Study: Read Romans 4:16, 20b. (*10 minutes*)
What is Paul's reason for stating that it was by faith?

Why does grace use the promises of God?

Looking at Romans 4:20b, you will see what happens to your faith when you declare, confess, praise, and honor God out loud with your voice! Write your thoughts about how you can grow in faith as you encounter various trials.

Scripture Study: Read Ephesians 2:8. (*5 minutes*)

God's grace operated unilaterally to first give you your faith; but notice that you are always "saved"/ "delivered"/ "helped" by a grace that flows through faith.

So Ephesians 2:8 describes how you were initially saved, but it also gives you a _____ to follow.

If you need grace, then you _____.

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Repent for the times you have allowed yourself to be frustrated without going to the Cross.

Take your desire to control people and situations to the Cross.

Express your confidence in the Lord, and in His timing and His method of working in your life.

Bow in submission to Him and to His will.

Lesson 25

Faith must have God's promises. This is why it is so important for you to memorize critical promises and to use your memory to meditate upon these words spoken directly by God. Faith is merely counting God worthy, capable, and faithful to keep His word.

Without His promises, your faith will be easily shaken and you will quickly give up when tested. How many of His promises are you using in your day-to-day living? It isn't enough to simply know that the promises are there and to believe that they are true. No, it takes a more aggressive action than that, for your society, your flesh, and the devil all oppose your faith every moment of the day. You need to develop the practice of actually using His promises every day to cope with the challenges and obstacles that come your way. In fact, you are to create some challenges of your own, because you are one who is pushing the boundaries of the Kingdom of God aggressively against the darkness which is all around you.

Pick your promises carefully as you head into your day. Choose them the way a hunter chooses his weapons based upon the type of hunt. Become an expert at using the promises of God and you will be one who is mighty in faith!

Scripture Study: Read Romans 4:16-24 underlining the word, "promise"; you will begin to notice this pattern of how grace and faith operate with promises. *(10 minutes)*
The law represents you doing stuff by your own ability: i.e. trusting yourself.
How was Abraham the pattern father of our faith?

How did Abraham cope with all the discouraging things that happened to him?

How did God declare Abraham righteous?

How does God use this same method today to declare you righteous?

Scripture Study: Read Galatians 3:18, 22. *(5 minutes)*

The law here represents salvation by _____, whereas God uses His promise to represent deliverance by _____.

Galatians 3:22 shows you how God uses His commands. They show you what a righteous man does. How then, do you think Scripture shuts you up to faith in Christ?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Think of a promise and then meet with God over His word.

Feast your soul upon God who is Faithful to fulfill His promises in you just as He did for Abraham.

Confess that God is your Father and that you are His son/daughter.

Receive His assignment to go into this day for His purposes.

Lesson 26

The Spirit of God can, by His sovereignty, regenerate a man without him knowing the promises of God; but he must know the promise of God in the Gospel in order for him to be converted and experience justification.

No promises, then no faith toward God, because the whole nature of faith is to believe that what God says about Himself is true and reliable.

You are to mine the promises of God like one who looks for the most valuable things on earth. But, of course, every word out of God's mouth is, in one sense, His promise; for every word of God is spiritual, living, and eternal! Faith merely reckons/counts/considers them to be true and bases all else upon this!

Scripture Study: Read Romans 10:17 first and then back up and read the context which will include

Romans 10:13-17. (*5 minutes*)

In the larger context, what is "the word of Christ" which Paul refers to, that sparks faith?

What happens when you forget "the word of Christ" in the midst of a difficult circumstance?

By reading the context, did you see a different interpretation of Romans 10:17 than you previously had? If so, what is it?

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 4:1-2. (*5 minutes*)

What promise is the author referring to?

What do you think the author means by "His rest"?

Notice that "His rest" is the same as "My rest" or "that rest" in the rest of the chapter.

What have we had preached to us?

Even though you are a Christian, as were these Hebrew Believers, how is it that you may seem to have come short of it?

What is the example of having a promise but not exercising faith?

Scripture Meditation: Read and reread Hebrews 4:1-2, allowing the words to come deep inside, and you will be allowing the power of God's word to do its work in you. (*5 minutes*)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

If you are not living in His rest, turn from your Unbelief and trust in the finished work of Christ. He Himself is your rest.

Cry out to God for this revelation to come to all you know!

Declare His promises over your life and every need you have.

Pray for those you know who are constantly striving and living under a sense of failure and hopelessness.

Lesson 27

Just think, by choosing to live by faith in Jesus, you are pleasing God! Stop and think about that for a moment. What else could you do or accomplish that would top pleasing God? Doesn't this put things into perspective? When you make pleasing God the goal of your life, everything becomes clear and simple. Which is not to say that it is easy; but it is clear and simple and doable.

No doubt you have objectives or goals in your life that involve career, health, and family, but far ahead of these must be your goal of pleasing God. Otherwise every other objective is an idol. The difficulties you face as you determine to live by faith in Jesus are forcing you to make decisions which purify your motives and transform your priorities.

Make it your habit to encourage others to trust God and you will become the beneficiary. In fact, this is God's plan for your own growth in faith and it is His ministry through you to be your brother's keeper. Become a Barnabas, for he was called the son-of-encouragement. What a fantastic ministry! Don't you already know some who are ministering faith to others constantly and don't you always like to be around them? Why? Because they increase your faith in Christ, and thus your joy always gets a boost.

It is God's will for you to become one who intentionally encourages others to constantly trust God by speaking faith to them. You will become one who focuses upon God even when things look discouraging. Because of this, many will be helped even as God will be glorified.

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 3:12-14. (*10 minutes*)
What does the author call an unbelieving heart?

In what sense does your Unbelief cause you to "fall away from God"?

How often does God plan for you to encourage others?

What is His intended purpose in your doing this?

What do you think happens when you disobey this order?

You can be "in Christ" without enjoying the benefits of actually partaking of Him. What must you do to partake of Him?

Can you see that failing to hold fast to their assurance is the same as temporarily forgetting the Gospel?

Scripture Memory: Read Hebrews 11:6 over and over, saying it to yourself. Although you may be very familiar with this verse, now is a good time to store it in your memory bank. (*10 minutes*)

Read Hebrews 11:2. When you live by faith in Jesus, how does it make you feel?

Journaling: Write down your thoughts about your entering into this business of encouraging others, speaking faith, and what happens to you when you forget the Gospel of the Cross. (*5 minutes*)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*
Use the Gospel of the Cross and enter into the glorious liberty of His freedom!
Worship Him for all that He is!
Declare His glories over every problem you face.
Ask for the privilege of sharing the Gospel with others today.

Lesson 28

There is a value to “general faith” which comes from deep-seated convictions about the goodness and trustworthiness of God; but so often you need specialized faith that can only come from having your mind refreshed with the particular promise from God that is appropriate. Specific answers to prayer and miracles only come from the faith that feeds upon what God has promised to do.

You will notice that Jesus always quoted a specific Scripture for every type of situation He was facing. All the Old Testament saints got their ability to trust God during impossible circumstances by having and using a specific promise from God. These are our examples.

Why not become a “Collector of His Promises”? Many collect guns, knives, fountain pens, teapots, figurines, china dishes, coins, flags; why not collect the things which are eternal and which will thrust you into the realm of all the exciting things of God?

Scripture Meditation: Read 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) which says: “No matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God!” (5 minutes)

In order to experience what God the Father has provided for you in Christ, you must _____

Where does God meet you and fulfill His word to you?

Scripture Study: 2 Timothy 1:1. (5 minutes)

From this verse, how do you think Paul handled the promises of God?

If you want to be experiencing the Life of God, you must

Scripture Study: Hebrews 10:23. (5 minutes)

What is God telling you to do in this verse?

Your natural tendency is to

What is God faithful to?

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Exalt the Lord for His faithfulness to you!

Speak His promises back to Him, and thereby glorify Him!

Delight yourself in Him this morning and let Him enjoy you as well.

Pray for the eyes of those around you to be opened to His Kingdom and His faithfulness.

Lesson 29

There are two ways to gather today with your Brothers and Sisters for worship: the Faith way and the casual, take-everything-for-granted way. The Faith way is always active, whereas the other way is passive; and most of the Unbelief you lapse into is of the passive sort. It isn't deliberate or intentional; it's by default. Unbelief is your default mode.

You cannot win a fight, a battle, or a war with anything resembling passivity. Obviously. And you are in a fight.

Therefore, you must consciously think about this thing called "Faith" and intentionally choose to trust in Jesus for everything you need in every phase of your day. This is the "good fight of faith," and it is also "the righteous man shall live by faith," which is described as the normal way for a disciple of Christ. He lived this way.

Since you know that you reap what you sow, it stands to reason that you need to intentionally "sow" to faith by pondering God's promises and tuning in to the Holy Spirit, listening for His voice. This is one of those habits that you need to develop, and it can only happen with intention. Faith is a choice. Unbelief is simply refusing to make the right choice.

Scripture Memory: Review key Scriptures that you have memorized but a good review is needed.

(15 minutes)

Read 1 Timothy 6:12 over and over, refreshing your mind and renewing it with God's way of looking at situations. Say it over and over until it sticks.

Review Romans 1:16-17, for these are foundational verses to build upon.

Once again, memorizing Hebrews 11:6 will renew your passion to please the Lord!

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to root out your passive way of drifting along without consciously choosing faith as the way to face every need.

Repeat 1 Timothy 6:12 before the Lord and then let the Holy Spirit lead you into a prayer time, for He will take you into a personalized prayer journey.

