

FAITH

How do you get faith? You do not go out and acquire faith it is given to you from above. Paul said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV). This is confirmed in Romans with this statement. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." (Romans 12:3 NKJV) Therefore, whatever faith you have came from God.

However, faith is not static or without accountability. Jesus on more than one occasion expressed His concern for the apostle's lack of strong faith. In Matthew 8:26 He asked, "Why are you fearful, Oh you of little faith" before He rebuked the winds and the sea. Again, He asks Peter, "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt" as he started to sink into the sea after walking in faith on the water (Matt. 14:31).

The fact that Jesus holds us accountable for our faith indicates we can do something to increase our faith. The most obvious thing is to be exposed more to the Word of God. "So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17 NKJV) Simply picking up the Bible and reading it on a consistent basis will increase your faith if you are a believer. Beyond that faith is increased by trials, or enduring trials patiently.

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:2-4 NKJV) As you walk in faith, you increase your faith. At least you increase your ability to walk in the faith you have. This is critically important because ". . . without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)

The goal of every believer should be to affirm Paul's declaration as his or her own. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

You would do well to ask yourself if you're living by faith. Truly, this can be difficult at times. The flesh is deceptive, and sometimes what may seem like faith is nothing more than an exercise of pride. Ask, what is the motive for this or that action? If selfish motives are identified, then fall before God and beg Him to cut through that pride. That act of humility is in itself an act of faith. "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV)

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [us], and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [our] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." (Hebrews 12:1-4 NKJV) Walk by faith today. Strive against sin. Amen.