JAMES AREKION



OPERATING IN FAITH

Faith is simple.

This book shows us how we need to work our faith so that we are getting the best of what God has for us in our lives.

God intends for us to live well and enjoy His favour.

But we do need to receive It to enjoy it.

And we receive it by faith.

In this book, you will learn:

What faith Is?

Hindrances to faith.

Higher levels of faith.

JAMES AREKION

James Arekion is an anointed and dynamic teacher of the -Word of God that he communicates in personal and practical way. He begun teaching at the age of 16 and his messages are straight-forward, fundamental, simple and yet effectively encouraging people through life situations -and empowering them to succeed in every area of life.

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All scripture quotations are from The King James Version of the Bible All other quotations are clearly indicated.

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CHAPTER 1

Integrity of God's Word.

"I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for you have magnified Your word above all Your name."

Psalm 138:2 (NKJV)

In order to effectively learn these important lessons of faith, we firstly have to know and understand that the Word of God is actually what it declares itself to be! The Word of God is the will of God and it is God speaking to us today. It is not just a book of the past or one that reveals the future but it is a book of now and teaches about God and His principles. The Word of God is God speaking to us. It is God's inspired message and brings revelation and illumination to us. God is a God of integrity. He has placed his Word above His name. A name is only as good as the word of the person behind that name. A person's name is esteemed when his word is good! Because He has magnified His word above all His name God Himself is subject to His own Word.

As you read, study and meditate in the Word of God, you need to understand the integrity of God and His Word. God and His word are one! If He doesn’t fulfill His Word He ceases to be God. You cannot separate God and His Word. He is not a man that He should lie neither is He the Son of Man that he should change His mind (Num 23:19). God watches over His Word to perform it (Jer 1:12). He is a holy God and His Word is holy and pure.

His Word is powerful. He created everything by His Word. His Word is therefore a creative force. The Word of God not only has principles but it also has His promises. When God gives you a promise in His Word, He will watch over His Word to perform it! When a King speaks it becomes a decree or law, and even the King cannot change what He decreed! So when God speaks, His Words become the laws by which things are governed.

What is integrity? What does integrity of God's Word mean? Integrity means honesty, just, sincere, honorable and reliable. God's word is therefore honest, just, sincere, honorable and reliable because God is righteous. So we can

trust God. We can take God at His Word. Don't try to fit the Word to your beliefs rather fit your beliefs to the Word. Believe it, receive it and walk in the light of it. Many times the Word of God will need to wash over our traditional and religious beliefs. We need to re-learn and re-think in order to believe and speak according to His Word. Be submissive to the Word of God. Follow His Word and know that He is speaking to you by His Word.

In order to develop faith, we need to understand the integrity of God and His Word. The Word is important.

"So then Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Rom 10:17

Faith is a product of the Word. It comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. More importantly faith comes by hearing from God. The heroes of faith in the bible heard directly from God. The more we hear God and His Word, the greater and stronger our faith becomes. We know that God is a God of integrity. We need to believe His Word. As we constantly listen to God and His Word rather than the opinions of people or to our traditional and religious beliefs, we begin to develop faith. Faith that does not originate from the Word of God isn't faith in God at all! What many believers may call faith is often "high expectations based on the wrong information." You can't expect something that is not in the bible.

Faith is the commodity or the mode of exchange between the hands of God to your hands. In the world, money is a legal tender for exchanging goods and products. Legal tender is a medium of payment permitted by law meeting a financial obligation. The term "legal tender" is from Middle English *tendren* which in French is the verb form for *tendre,* meaning *to offer.* The *Latin* root is *tendere* meaning to stretch out, and the sense of *tender* as an *offer* is related to the etymology of the English word extend meaning to hold outward. Each country has its currency. In Mauritius, we use the Rupee. In Europe, they use Euros. The Euro is about forty times stronger than the Mauritian Rupee. Although the Rupee is legal tender in Mauritius, It is not acceptable to purchase products in Europe. In order, to purchase goods, we need to exchange to Euros. Likewise, you need to change your belief system so that you can receive from God. You need to hear and believe His Word.

Now a legal tender coin or notes needs to have two sides in order to trade on the open economy market. On a coin, we refer to the two sides as heads or tails. The obverse of a coin is commonly called *heads* and it often depicts the head of a prominent person whereas the reverse side will probably have an

emblem. The two sides are not the same but both must be intact to be valuable, acceptable and spendable. If one side is defected, it is default and not acceptable. God has established a legal tender in the spiritual market. Just as the two sides of the coin are not the same, so too faith and belief are not the same. Faith and belief are two sides to a coin in the spiritual market. Both are important but they are different.

We all start by believing the Word. It is important that once we gain knowledge of God's will through His word and by the leadership of the Holy Spirit that we believe God. But believing is the starting point. We do not receive because we believe, we receive because we live and walk by faith. **Hebrews 11: 2** said: *"By faith, the elders obtained a good report."* Therefore we need to apply faith.

BUT WHAT IS FAITH?

When I am referring to faith, I am not referring to your religion. Almost every person has a different description and definition of faith. Some states that faith is some kind of "positive thinking." Others believe that one's faith is the equivalent of the church denomination or affiliation they attend. But I want to give you a biblical definition of what faith is:

"Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses],"

Hebrews 11:1 (Amplified)

The bible tells us that faith is the assurance or guarantee of the things we hope for. Therefore faith is acting on what you heard and believe from the Word of God. It is corresponding action to your belief. If you do not act, though what you believe is true, it will not change you or your circumstances. Let me illustrate:

Let's say that we are in a company meeting and one of our co-laborer attending suddenly falls from his chair. We rush over to see if he is ok. We open his collar and make room for him to breathe. Let's say we had a qualified doctor in the office. He consults our friend and he informs us that that this man is very weak due to the lack of food and insists that if this man doesn't eat in the next few hours, he will suffer and die! That's bad news! So we all rush out and bring different food in order to save our friend's life. Within fifteen minutes, we have brought roasted chicken, a fillet steak, fish, chips, roti, beef burgers, noodles, fried rice, sandwiches with water and refreshments all before the eyes of our friend. He is very weak but can speak. So we ask him a vital question: "Do you believe that if you eat this food, you will regain your strength and live." He looks at all of us as if we are stupid and positively nods. But he doesn't eat any of those lovely food. The doctor warns us: "If he doesn't eat within the next hour, we will lose our friend." He is getting worst by the minute. So once again we ask him the all important question: "Do you believe the doctor's report? Do you believe that if you eat this food, you will regain strength and live." Very weakly he answers: "Yes." But **he** doesn't eat anything! More food and refreshments arrives and is laid before him. He has enough to have a feast! But sadly our friend dies! Sad isn't it? Do you understand that our friend died believing something that is true? He died believing something that could have changed his life! What was the

problem? Why did he die? Because he didn't act on what he believed was true! He didn't eat anything!

Many believe that God heals, delivers, performs miracles and that it is His will to prosper us yet they are destroyed because they do not act on what they believe. Believing is right but it will not change your life and circumstances. Believing is only the one side on the coin. The other side is faith. I repeat, believing is the starting point but not where you stop. You need to apply faith. Act on what you believe is true. Four scriptures in the bible, from the Old to the New Testament testifies that the just shall live by faith **(Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11 & Hebl0:38).**

The just are those declared righteous. Based upon our acceptance and confession that Jesus is the Son of God and what He did for us on the cross of Calvary, dying for our sins and giving us his life, we are born again and as a result God the Father declares us righteous. We have been justified by the blood of Jesus **(Rom 5:9).** We are a new creature **(2 Cor 5:17)** and have a new lifestyle, we live by faith in the Word. We hear the word, believe the Word, speak the Word and act on the Word. If you are going to step out in faith in any area of your life, make sure that you have the scriptures to back up your steps. Faith is an action **(3s 2:17).** Faith is the most potent force in the universe. Your faith conferred divinity and gave you access to God. Your faith can cause you to overcome all circumstances in life. When you operate by faith, you are operating in God’s class and His realm **(Mark 9:23).**

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou sha/t confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and sha/t believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou sha/t be saved. For with the heart man beiieveth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Rom 10:8-10

The bible refers to the Word as the Word of faith. The ideal place for the Word is in your mouth and heart. Too many of us have bibles in our bookshelves and in our handbag and that's good but for the Word of God to produce after its own kind, it needs to be sowed in our hearts. Then out of abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks **(Lk 6:45).** Word in equals word out. I want you to notice the connection between mouth and heart. For faith to work it must be in two places: in your heart and in your mouth. Salvation is obtained by the word in your heart and confession by your mouth.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is

the gift of God."

Eph 2:8

Salvation is ours because of what Jesus did. Salvation was offered by grace. Salvation came as a result of the blood **that** Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary. This was a demonstration of God's love to us. Salvation is not only for a group of people. Jesus died for the world. He died for the human race. He died for everybody but not everybody is saved. Not everybody accepts Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Salvation, although is for everybody, is only effective when we believe and confess what the Lord says. In order to receive God's free gift, you have to do something. You receive what God did as a result of your faith. God's grace is for all but you need faith to receive.

Now salvation does not only mean that you will be allowed in heaven. That's your inheritance after death. When we die, we have eternal life because we received Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. But salvation has more benefits. It has more to do with the way you live your life presently. In this gift of salvation, we can live a heavenly life on earth. Salvation is what is available to you when you get born again. The word salvation in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *soteria* which denotes deliverance, preservation and includes healing, peace of mind and protection. These are part of your salvation package and are available to you by faith in God and His infallible Word. Faith for healing, deliverance, safety and victory in our life and future comes the same way we obtain salvation - we hear the word constantly, we believe the word in our heart causing faith to arise, we act with assurance on what we believe by confessing and acting on the word and finally we reap the benefit of the powerful word of God. That word of faith will change our life and destiny. Confession and action are the connections between what we believe and receive.

THE VOICE OF FAITH

"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."

2 Cor 4:13

It's time for a change and a transition in your life. That is possible through the vehicle of faith. The voice of faith is you voicing the Word of God. It's you taking dominion in the name of Jesus by applying the spirit of faith. The spirit of faith is we believe and therefore we speak. Faith is not effective if you only believe; you must confess and add your voice to your belief.

God is a God of faith. Creation exists and consists because of God's Word. His voice is the voice of faith. He called things into existence. His voice built and upholds the universe. What was unseen manifested because of the power of His voice of faith. Therefore God's word is a creative force.

"And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it."

Mark 11: 12-14

"And when even was come, he went out of the city. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."

Mark 11: 19-22

This verse shows the power of the word. Jesus spoke to a fig tree. When he uttered those words, his disciples heard it. Therefore He didn't whisper his intention. He spoke boldly! Yet when he spoke nothing happened that day. That didn't cause Jesus to panic or worry. He got on with the work of the day. Bear in mind that the disciples heard what he said, so they could have challenged Him when nothing happened. It wasn't until the next day that Peter called into remembrance His words when they saw that effectively the fig tree has dried up from the roots. Jesus then makes a remarkable statement: "Have faith in God." In the original text it actually says: "Have the God-kind of faith."

"For verity I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but

shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Mark 11:23

The faith-filled words that spoke the world into creation by the God of the universe have now been made available to mankind. Jesus encourages us to use our faith to speak boldly to our circumstances and hindrances. Once again notice the connection between the heart and the mouth. Jesus declared: "We shall have whatsoever we say."

God operated through the voice of faith for creation of the world **(Gen 1: 1-3, Heb 11:3).** In His earthly ministry, Jesus voiced His faith to calm storms, to bring healing and deliverance, to raise the dead and to operate miracles. You and I have been encouraged to do likewise in the midst of adversity, lack, challenges and storms of life. If you are serious to break the cycle of defeat and lack into your life then it's time for you speak the voice of faith. Faith is our access to the power of God **(Rom 1:16).** We are empowered by faith. Our faith draws the power of God to make an impact on our life. So release your faith today by your prayers, confession and actions. Your challenge is like a mountain, a hindrance, a storm of life. Jesus faced every storm and changed the circumstances by the power of His Word. We are told speak to the mountain **(Mk 11:23)** so have faith and don't doubt. Oftentimes we ask others to pray for us and that is good but at times that mountain must hear the sound of your voice. You need to tell it what to do constantly! You shall have whatsoever YOU say!

CHAPTER 2

Hindrances to faith.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report."

Heb 11:2

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Heb 11:6

So when you pray, confess and act on what you believe, it is called faith. Your faith in God will cause you to obtain a good report. It should be our hearts desire to please God and that is possible through faith **(Heb 11:6).** Our faith will cause "us to overcome the world **(1 Jn 5:4).** We have learnt the power of faith. Faith is a potent-force and will take you from an impotent person into victorious living. However there are some hindrances to our faith. It is important that we know what these hindrances and obstacles are in order to avoid them and allow our faith to grow, flow and to overcome.

My first car that I owned was a total nightmare. I was 25 years old and the car was 30! People would rather take the bus than enter that car as they felt more confident to reach their destination by public transport than in my 30 year old

Peugeot. That car left me stranded many times. One night after teaching at a church I travelled back home in my *batmobile.* As long as we were going downhill, the car ran and raced overtaking even BMWs. But once we had to face uphill, it begun to slow down and many times could not move and smoke would be coming out of its rear!

One day, my old banger was not even running smoothly on flat roads. As I accelerated the car would jerk then run then jerk again and suddenly it stopped. The engine was running but it was a challenge to move. Something was obviously wrong. I took it to the mechanic and he told me that the problem was with the fuel pumps and pipes. It was dirty and was not allowing the flow of fuel to the engine thus causing the car to jolt and stop. It is the same in the arena of faith. There are some things that will cause our faith to jerk and not function properly.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

Gal 5:6

The bible is clear: Faith works by love. Therefore if we are not walking in the love of God our faith will not work. Paul writing to the Corinthians states: "Love never fails" **(1 Cor 13:8).** If you join the power twins of love and faith, then you will never fail and always overcome. As a born-again new creation believer saved by the grace of God, it is our duty to walk in love. The Holy Spirit who dwells inside of us pours the love of God in our hearts. Not walking in the love of God will cause a malfunction in your faith. I have listed some enemies to faith that can cause hindrances and cause us to stagger in life.

UNFORGIVENESS IS A HINDRANCE TO FAITH.

"Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou sha/t forgive him.

And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

Luke 17:1-6

The disciples said to Jesus; "Lord, increase our faith." This request doesn't come after a miracle performed by Jesus. They were present when Jesus fed 5000 men! They saw him raise the dead like Lazarus! They saw Him walk on water and witnessed many other great miracles! Yet, this desperate request to increase their faith was not asked after such great miracles, signs and wonders! This request comes because the subject of the day that Jesus taught was on offense and unforgiveness!

"It is impossible but that offences will come..." "If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou sha/t forgive him."

Jesus is teaching how to deal with a trap called offense and unforgiveness. Jesus states that offenses are sure to come but He is teaching us how to deal with offenses. We are told that we must forgive those that have offended us. This demonstrates that we are walking in obedience and in the love of God.

Offense in Greek means *'Scanda/orl.* Scandalon is a trap, a bait set to trip, to capture and hurt you! Offense and unforgiveness is a trap set by the enemy to hurt and wound you and stop your progress. Wounding is one of the greatest weapon Satan has! Wounds can bring division, separation, exclusion, loneliness, danger...

These wounds are words and deeds that can put a hole in the soul of an individual. It has caused divorce in marriages, separation between parents and

children, the end of friendships and it is the primary reason why many people leave a church!

Offenses and unforgiveness are the primary cause of impotent and ineffective faith and the enemy uses those closest to you to offend and hurt you. Even David went through it:

"For it is not an enemy who reproaches and taunts me— then I might bear it; nor is it one who has hated me who insolently vaunts himself against me— then I might hide from him.

But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend.

We had sweet fellowship together and used to walk to the house of God in company."

Psalms 55: 12-14

► People may get offended by what someone say or said

► People may get offended by what someone did not say.

► People may get offended by what someone does or did.

► People may get offended by what someone doesn't do or did not do.

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Colossians 3:13

Jesus said that we must forgive those who offend us. To forgive means to exhale, to release, to let it go. We need to let go of past hurt and offenses. Forgiveness was an important subject in the ministry of Jesus. He taught parables on forgiveness **(Matt 18:23-35).** When teaching on the subject of prayer, He also mentioned that forgiving in order to be forgiven should be part of our prayer life **(Matt 6: 9-15).** A prayer life with unforgiveness in the heart will not see results!

Jesus warned: *"Take heed to yourselves."* You can't always change the other person but you can change yourself. Watch over yourself! Get your eyes off your offender and get your eyes on yourself. Forgiveness does not deliver the offender but it sets you free!

WHY THE SYCAMINE TREE AND NOT OTHER TREES:

In His lesson on forgiveness in **Luke 17:1-6,** Jesus used as illustration the Sycamine tree. There is a reason why Jesus compared offenses and unforgiveness to the Sycamine tree. Firstly, the Sycamine tree grew in the Middle East and had the deepest root structure. It looked like a fig tree and the fruit looked like figs. It was known as 'the tree of poor people.' The poor people couldn't afford figs so they ate the fruit of the Sycamine but it had a very bitter taste. Sycamine was so durable that it was the preferred wood for building casket.

Unforgiveness and offenses have deep roots. Offenses can also have deep roots and become generational. For example, your father is offended with his brother - your uncle. They don't speak anymore and because of his offense, YOU also don't talk to your uncle and to your cousins! Nothing happened between the cousins, yet there is no relationship because of an old offense that has kept families apart!

Offenses and unforgiveness will make you spiritually poor. It will hinder your spiritual growth. It will stop you from walking in love. Remember that love never fails (1 **Cor 13:8)** and that the Holy Spirit, who is our teacher, comforter **(Jn 14:26)** and source of power **(Acts 1:8)** pours the love of God in our hearts **(Rom 5:5).** Offenses and unforgiveness will take away your joy and slowly kill you spiritually. Like the Sycamine fruit, It will make you bitter. Offenses will keep you in bondage. Unforgiveness have been the stumbling block to many Christians. You could be praying, believing and having faith, tithing and making the right confessions but if you harbor bitterness and walk in unforgiveness you will not receive the promises of God.

According to the words of Jesus, anybody can forgive! You will need faith in order to forgive. All you need is a small amount of faith - the size of a mustard seed! It is time for you to forgive and let go. The truth about forgiveness is that it sets YOU free. You control God's ability to forgive you by how you forgive others. Make a decision today to depend upon the grace of God and forgive those that have hurt, abuse, offended and rejected you. Faith comes by hearing the Word, now apply your faith and **stop** saying "I can’t!"

FEAR IS A HINDRANCE TO FAITH.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

2 Tim 1:7

Faith is a product of the Word of God and is a force that brings positive change in our lives. But for every force and principle God has created and established, there exists a reciprocal and the reverse of faith is fear. It is the antithesis to faith. Fear is a destructive force. Fear will makes things seems worst than what it is whereas faith will make things seems better.

The bible tells us that fear is a spirit and that it is not from God. When we are born again, we receive the Spirit of love, power and sound mind but fear seeks to rob us of our identity in Christ. It is an agent of the devil, a wicked spirit that robs us of love, power and assaults our mind causing confusion and restlessness. Fear is a hindrance to faith.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

John 10:10

One of the ways that the thief steals our joy, hope, faith and blessings and and brings deterioration in our lives is through fear. Fear will seek to dominate your mind and actions. It can cause you to panic and be paralyzed in fright. From the Old to the New Testament, the Bible is filled with God saying: "Fear not." Jesus often said: Do not fear...Do not be afraid." Even when angels appeared, they said: "Do not be afraid."

Fear will prevent us from doing what we believe and know that we should do. It will steal our confidence and makes us feel insecure. I read somewhere that the acronym of FEAR is False Evidence Appearing Real. Fear pushes us to act into a level of negative emotion produce by an evil spirit. Faith comes from God and fear comes from the devil but both needs corresponding action in order to be effective. Every time you want to step out in faith and to boldly say and do what God said, fear will come with the 'What if.[1]

"Fori say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Romans 12:3

This verse declares that we all have faith. It says everyone has been given

the measure of faith. Use your faith to destroy your fear. Your faith will overcome anything that comes against you **(1 Jn. 5:4)** and that includes fear.

SPIRIT OF POWER, LOVE AND SOUND MIND.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..."

Acts 1:8

God has given us the Spirit of power. Power means the ability to obtain results. The power of God is divine ability. That power enables you to defeat all evil spirits including fear! That power is available when we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our helper, counselor and leader. He is omnipotent, the all powerful one and He resides in you **(1 Cor 3:16-17).**

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

1 John 4:18

Remember that God has not given us the spirit of fear but has given us the Spirit of love. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love. He pours the love of God into our hearts **(Rom 5:5).** That love of God is perfect love and the bible says that love cast out fear. Fear has torment whereas love has peace, joy and comfort.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Isa 26:3

Finally, He has given us a sound mind. The battlefield is the mind. This is where the enemy directs his attacks by bombarding our mind with negative suggestions, suspicions, doubts, reasoning and fears. The mind is the director or the forerunner of all actions. Our actions are a direct results of our thoughts. Positive minds produce a positive life and negative thinking produces a negative life. But God has given us a mind that can be fixed upon His Word. A sound mind produce peace and security. We have been given the mind of Christ **(1 Cor 2:16)** so cast out the spirit of fear and thrive in your life.

WORRY AND ANXIETY IS A HINDRANCE TO FAITH.

"Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Matt 6:27-29

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Rom 14:23

We always class lying, adultery, witchcraft and such like as sins and rightly so! However, worry and anxiety are also sins. It is a sin to doubt the integrity and ability of God. Once again bear in mind that God has given us a sound mind. Worry and anxiety affects the mind. In **Matthew 6,** Jesus addresses this issue and He commanded us not to worry and be anxious. Nothing can be added by worry and anxiety. These are a type of fear which is opposite to faith and we have learnt it stems from an evil spirit. Worry and anxiety are tools of Satan. It is a negative mindset, emotions and actions. As believers and disciples of Jesus Christ, we walk by faith and not by sight **(2 Cor 5:7).** Worrying will cause you to put your focus and attention in the wrong direction.

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Phil. 4:6-7

Some people are very funny. They worry when things get bad and when things get good they worry in case it get bad! Did you know that it has been proven that worry and anxiety, when we do it, often leads to high blood pressure and causes maladies such as cancer, strokes and heart ailments of all kinds. We become weak and limited instead of being strong and breaking limitations! Worry is also a mental burden. Anxiety causes us to imagine every possible negative scenario in our mind. Worry and anxiety weight you down and can even cause depression **(Prov 12:25).** We are told to cast our cares to the Lord **(1 Peter 5:6-7).** Thank God that because of His love we can have His peace that keeps our hearts and minds strong and stable. As we pray to the Father in everything, anxiety and worry flees in His presence and we are blessed with peace and joy.

Today, we have a choice, either we walk in faith and experience the peace of God or we choose to worry and be anxious and as a result we lose our hope, peace and joy. Keep looking to the Word and keep walking by faith. Never forget who you are - you are a world overcomer, more than a conqueror and called to be blessed and not stressed.

Chapter 3

High Levels to faith.

"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."

Rom 12:3

In this chapter we will look at the different levels, descriptions and types of faith mentioned in the bible. We all started at the same level and we are responsible to develop and mature our faith. We understood that we obtain salvation by faith. If we are all saved then it is a result of acting on what we heard and believed in line with the Word. If we all obtained salvation through this mean then we will obtain all the promises and blessings of God through the same way and that's by faith. Faith is a product of the word and it will develop, grow and be strengthen by the Word.

When I was going to school, we were graded by percentage for our test. I remember that I would come home with an eighty percent mark and that would please my father. However, when I walked in one day with a one hundred percent mark, he was very proud of me and showed it to my uncles, cousins and neighbours. Dad was evidently more pleased with the highest level of score marks. Likewise today as a father when my daughter brings home her term results I will be more pleased with the highest mark. Bear in mind that faith pleases God **(Heb 11:6).** Remember that God responds to faith and that it the spiritual commodity to receive from Him. I believe that there are three highest level of faith and we need to work on these in order to live the abundant life promised by Jesus.

PRAISE

The first that I want to mention is praise. If we can praise God before we actually obtain results and see the physical evidence then it demonstrates a high level of faith.

To praise means to exalt, magnify and to glorify. Praise is not just singing fast songs! To glorify God means to define God's characteristics. It is an expression of our approval, commendation and admiration to God. God is an awesome God. He is the master of the universe.

Nothing is too difficult for Him. He is the all powerful being. Therefore praise relates to the greatness of God. When we approach God, we come with praise for God inhabits the praises of His people **(Ps 22:3).** When praise goes up, His presence manifests and His power comes down. By faith we believe that as we praise, extol, magnify and glorify Him that He is here. We can praise Him with the words of our mouth.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

Prov 18:21

Speech has enormous implications in our lives. God made us expressive beings, so we are nearly lost without communication. Our tongue, although a small part of our body holds power. The tongues makes reference to the spoken word and it can either produce life or death. This is effective in our spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and financial part of our lives. Our tongues can either be a weapon of mass destruction or construction in our life, family, career, ministry and future.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded

that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Rom 4:17-21

Abraham became persuaded of the promise of God before he saw any natural evidence, that is called faith. He gave glory to God even before seeing his miracle, that is strong faith. Giving glory to God means he praised God for his victory even before anything happened. Bear in mind that we started by understanding the integrity of God and His infallible Word.

Remember that praise relates to the greatness of God. It is a powerful thing when we choose to stand in the face of a difficult situation and storms of life yet boldly declare the greatness of God. As you give glory to God, you are demonstrating that the will and the word of God has more value in your life. You are taking God at His word no matter what!

The Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans that it is those who have strong faith who obtain the promises of God. Strong faith looks to God and His Word and praises and glorifies Him. The opposite is weak faith and it looks at the circumstance and loses hope. Weak faith will cause you to stagger at the promises of God. To glorify God is to live in a way that brings him glory - that's living in the faith zone and taking God at His Word.

THANKSGIVING

Another high level of faith is thanksgiving which is the act of giving thanks even before we see results. Whereas praise has to do with God's character, thanksgiving has to do with His acts and deeds. Thanksgiving relates to the goodness of God. We serve a good God. He is merciful and the mercy of God endures forever. He is gracious, slow to anger and full of compassion **(Ps 103:8, Ps 145:8).**

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Mark 11:24

You must believe when you prayed in faith that God heard and has already answered your prayer. We should thank God that we have what we asked for when we asked Him in prayer. Notice in the words of Jesus as He teaches on prayer that He states you must believe that you receive when you pray and then you shall have. It is a high level of faith that believes that whatever it has asked God for has already been accomplished in the spirit realm and the manifestation is on its way.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Col 3:17

Giving thanks to God demonstrate an attitude of gratitude. Faith starts by thanking God for what He's done and then our heart opens to receive more. Ingratitude blocks blessings. Speak words of thanksgiving out of your mouth from your heart when you pray proves that you believe the Word to be true about God, His integrity, His ability, His character, His love and provision for you.

FORGIVENESS

The third high level of faith we have already discussed but I believe it is vital that we understand the importance of it: It is forgiveness. We have seen that unforgiveness is a hindrance to faith but if we walk in love and forgiveness then we are responding in faith. Furthermore if we willingly offer forgiveness even when people didn't ask then it reveals a high level of faith. That is exactly what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary.

Let me try and paint a picture of that night when Jesus was arrested illegally. It started with a betrayal kiss from a close friend. This friend also revealed Jesus' secret place. Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. As the soldiers moved forward to arrest Jesus, Peter pulled out his sword and literally cut off one of the ears of a servant of one of the priests. Immediately Jesus told Peter to back off and then He picked up the servant's ear from the ground and put it back onto the head of the servant. That same Peter will later deny him three times.

Then the soldiers bound Jesus' arms and hands and marched him back to Jerusalem for trial before the Sanhedrin, during which they condemned him to death. Jesus was then stripped of His garments, mocked, slapped in the face and false accusations were launched against Him. He stayed the night in captivity and was then sent to Pilate and Herod where they questioned Him and mocked Him. He was whipped and a crown of thorns was placed on his head. He became a public shame as He stood in front of a hostile crowd rejecting Him and preferring the murderer called Barabbas. He then had to carry a cross and was nailed on it in front of His mother and many witnesses.

In those hours of His life, Jesus not only suffered physical torment but He also bore emotional pains such as betrayal, denial, rejection, lies, false witnesses and mockeries. Yet one of His last words on the cross of Calvary was: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" **(Lk 23:34).** No one asked for forgiveness but it takes a high level of faith to willingly forgive those that don't deserve. Jesus forewarned us that offense will come and be a trap to ensnare us **(Luke 17:1)** but we are to be like Jesus - To forgive those that have wronged us, even if they do not ask for it!

I want you to understand that **the level of your faith is at the level of your forgiveness.** If you forgive a little, you have little faith. If you forgive a lot, you have lots of faith. If you can willingly forgive then you have great faith! If you

refuse to take offense and fall into the trap of those who have hurt you, lied about you, spoke evil against you, denied you, betrayed and even with their words or action crucified you yet you willingly forgive then you have developed great faith. Great faith sees great miracles and blessings. With that great faith you will see the ultimate power of God working on your behalf.

We are set up by God to be world changers. We are designed to accomplish something that will astonish those around us. We have been predestined for success. Your faith will cause you to overcome. For by it the elders obtained a good report **(Heb 11:2)**

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6