

# How to Increase Our Faith

We all need more faith, most of us desire to increase our faith.

**Mark 9:24** [NIV] *“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”*

I feel we can all relate to this man. He was drawn to Jesus because of being desperate and because of the miracles that Christ had done for others, he also realised that the faith he had needed to be enlarged.

**Luke 17:5** [NIV] *“The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”*

Was it after their failure to help the man with a demon-influenced son that the disciples asked this question?

When we are in the presence of someone of great faith we all feel inadequate.

**Romans 10:9-10** [NIV] *“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**”*

Remember that faith is **not** the product of our intellect, we cannot think faith.

Faith is the result of what drives our life-force, the reason for our living, our heart.

Also the result of a relationship with our Creator.

**James 2:19** [NIV] *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder.”*

Faith is more than believing **in** God.

The devil is **not** an atheist!!

**Romans 1:19** [Amplified Bible] *“For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God Himself has shown it to them.”*

Belief in God can exist by “*natural*” revelation put there by God at the creation of mankind.

In a sense all people believe in God but not all are believers.

*“There is a God-shaped blank in every person.”* Pascal.

*“You have made us for Yourself, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”*

St. Augustine.

## Faith is more than believing about God

We can read The Bible and learn about God.

We can learn about God’s character.

We can learn about God's attributes.

We can know all His promises.

All the above may be true without actually believing God.

## **Faith in God is a total trust in what He says is true**

**Romans 4:20-21** [NIV] *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was **strengthened in his faith** and gave glory to God, **being fully persuaded** that God had power to do what he had promised.”*

The Greek word translated “faith” is “pistis” the primary meaning is “firm persuasion” a conviction based upon hearing.

Faith then in God is:-

Being persuaded of His promises.

Being persuaded of His character.

Being persuaded of His attributes.

All the above without any physical evidence.

**Seeing is not believing** [faith].

## **If we have physical evidence we don't need faith**

**Mark 15:31-32** [NIV] *“In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can't save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, **that we may see and believe.**” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.”*

**To see in order to believe is what unbelievers demand.**

**John 11:14-15** [NIV] *“So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”*

If God lets us see first we cannot have faith.

**John 20:29** [NIV] *“Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**”*

God keeps us from seeing physical evidence so that our faith may develop instead.

If God lets us see physical evidence He has removed the possibility of faith.

**Revelation 1:7** [NIV] *“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.”*

Faith in the second coming of Christ will come to an end, for everyone will see it happen.

**Genesis 15:6** [NIV] *“Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”*

Abram believed what God said, without any physical evidence, sheer faith in God's Word.

Such faith brought Abram credit.

**Romans 4:5** [NIV] *“However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”*

Our faith, total trust in the sacrifices of Jesus covering our sins, of which we have no physical evidence, is to our credit. Some of Christ's righteousness is credited to us.

## **Faith is the only way we can please God**

**Hebrews 11:6** [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

If anyone desires to be endeared to God this is the only way we can accomplish that relationship.

We believe all that God reveals in His Word.

God's integrity and character are founded on Him keeping His Word.

## **The highest affirmation we can ever give another person, including God, is to believe their word, alone**

Such faith in that person shows our trust and brings with it mutual affirmation.

The Word of God is basically two things:

a) **John 1:1, 14** [NIV] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” ... “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

The Word in the person of Jesus Christ.

b) **2 Timothy 3:16** [NIV] *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”*

The Holy Spirit inspired printed word, the Christian Bible.

**Psalms 138:2** [Amplified] *“... for You have exalted above all else Your Name and Your Word and You have magnified Your Word above all Your Name.”*

Why has God exalted His Word about His Name?

God's Name is largely linked to signs and wonders which can be seen.

**Exodus 6:3** [NIV] *“I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.”*

God spoke personally to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., but God was about to make Himself known to all people by signs and wonders.

**Hebrews 6:18** [NIV] *“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”*

It is impossible for God to lie. God's honour and integrity are at stake in Him fulfilling what He has promised.

This means God's Word is far more important to Him than His reputation [what people think or say about Him] or His vindication [proving to people that He is a God who is Love].

**Romans 10:17** [NIV] *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*

**God wants us to believe by hearing rather than seeing.**

When we trust God's Word He is affirmed for what He is in Himself **not** for what we have come to see by His deeds.

## How then do we increase our saving faith?

We do this in two major ways, within, saving faith and achieving faith.

**Hebrews 11:6** [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must **believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**”*

We have in this one verse the two areas of faith.

a) Saving faith – believing God is there for us at all times.

**Genesis 16:13** [King James] *“And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?”*

Hagar in the greatest trial of her life, through the veil of her tears made a profound statement.

Without physical proof she knew by faith that God was there, watching her and loving her.

**Deuteronomy 32:10** [NIV] *“In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the **apple of his eye.**”*

We, as His people, are in God's central vision. He is constantly watching our every thought, word and action.

If we doubt this statement, read all of this song of Moses that covers the history of God's people as a nation and ourselves as individuals.

It tells how God will reconcile us to Himself and proves that He exists and that we are the centre of His attention.

Note also the verses of this chapter that follow after the song. The words of a great man of God who was about to die and leave the people he had served.

**Deuteronomy 32:44-47** [NIV] *“Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, “Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. **They are not just idle words for you, they are your life.** By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”*

## **Satan's initial tactic in his plan to destroy God's people is to make us doubt God's concern and love for us, by doubting God's Word**

**Genesis 3:1** [NIV] *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

After trying to get us to doubt God's Word Satan will try to get us to doubt our standing in God's sight, our justification.

**Genesis 3:4** [NIV] *"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman."*

**Satan will seek to get us to look to ourselves instead of Christ.**

*"If we contemplate ourselves, that is sure damnation."* Calvin.

The time Satan is most likely to make this attack on our faith in God is in a time of tragedy or trial when God seems to be *"looking the other way"*!!

To increase our saving faith read God's promises of salvation and Christ's death on the cross.

**Hebrews 2:9** [NIV] *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."*

We individually are included in the *"everyone"*.

**John 3:16** [NIV] *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

We as part of that world are included in that Love of God.

We do **not** begin to strengthen our faith by trying to prove God's existence through His physical creation but we begin with His Love shown in Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 1:21** [NIV] *"Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God."*

Look to our Saviour and the love He expressed in His life and death. And now this same love is expressed in His present office of our High Priest.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** [NIV] *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

In our time of trial look to Christ, the expression of the God who is love and Satan's doubts will fade away.

**1 John 4:16** [NIV] *"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."*

We can faithfully rely on God. Do not overlook this simple but powerful statement *"God is Love"*.

It does not say “*God loves*”, no it tells us that it is out from this fact that “*God is love*” that all the other attributes come.

Faithfulness, patience, compassion, grace and mercy.

God also out of love shows He is the source of all power and out of love is Sovereign over all He has created.

## How then do we increase our achieving faith?

**Hebrews 11:6** [NIV] “*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*”

There is one assumption in this statement, that we are earnestly seeking God.

This is accomplished in two ways.

a) That when we pray to Him we believe He hears the confessing of our sins and will justify us through the blood of Christ.

**1 John 1:9** [NIV] “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*”

Believe that God will purify us. Justify us. This has to be without physical evidence.

b) Also we will be made Holy. How?

**Romans 4:18-24** [NIV] “*Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, **but was strengthened in his faith** and gave glory to God, **being fully persuaded** that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom **God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.**”*

The righteousness [holiness] of Jesus credited to us as a bonus to our total faith in the sacrifice of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** [NIV] “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*”

God wants us, our whole body, mind [soul] and human spirit, to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit will only be actively working in our body if we are made holy by God’s righteousness being credited to us.

**Leviticus 20:7-8** [NIV] “*Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.*”

We continue to be holy by following the lead of God, the Holy Spirit within the New Covenant.

**John 16:13** [NIV] “*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*”

Holy Spirit will lead us **if** we submit to His will.

**1 Thessalonians 5:19** [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;”*

Do not put out our excitement about God, His Word and way of life.

**John 14:26** [NIV] *“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

Then we will have God’s Word, His Will, brought to mind as we need His guidance in life’s situations.

**Matthew 6:33** [NIV] *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

God has to take first place in our life.

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

We prove this to God by offering our lives to God, willing to sacrifice all in fulfilling His Will.

The Greek word translated “bodies” is “soma” meaning the body as a whole. The complete instrument of life. Our physical bodies, our mind [soul] and the “human” spirit within us [the link we have with God by its union with the Holy Spirit, **Proverbs 20:27**].

**John 14:15-18** [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

This union with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ [the spirit Christ sends to be our Counsellor] is to be in us, “the spirit of truth”.

This union is the only way we can increase our achieving faith.

**John 15:1-5** [NIV] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Nothing we may seek to do for God will come to anything unless it is through this union with Holy Spirit, initiating and empowering the work done in our body.

**John 15:8-13** [NIV] *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

This is exactly what Paul was encouraging the Church at Rome to do.

**John 15:14-16** [NIV] *“You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

We have been called by God to do this at this time.

**Luke 17:5** [NIV] *“The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”*

How did Jesus reply to this request for what we can by the context realise was “*achieving faith*”?

**Luke 17:6** [NIV] *“He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.”*

We start with what little faith we have.

**Luke 17:7-10** [NIV] *“Suppose one of you had a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”*

**We increase our faith when we in faith go beyond what is commanded or expected of us as servants of Jesus Christ.**

**Luke 12:48** [Amplified] *“... for everyone to whom much is given of him shall much be required, ...”*

God has given us through Jesus Christ more than much, our only response can be in faith to surrender our lives to Him.