

COUNTERFEITS OF FAITH

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Faith might move mountains ... but it doesn't move God. We must choose to believe. Often there will be a conflict ... between what God says and what our physical senses may say. Will we decide to agree with God ... or??

Romans 1:15-17

So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, **"The just shall live by faith."**

"The Just (righteous) shall live by faith" ... also in Hab 2:4; Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38.

Do I live by faith ... or live like The World?

2 Corinthians 5:7

For **we walk by faith, not by sight.**

Our five physical senses are important ... but they don't relate to the spiritual world ... they are limited. Faith is our connection to the spiritual world.

Hebrews 11:1

Now **faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Faith is real ... it's not imaginary. It relates to a future event ... a future happening. We might not see it right here and now. We should not rely purely on the things we see. Faith convinces us of things not yet seen.

It is God's nature to be easily entreated. We don't have to try to persuade Him.

Psalms 145:8-9

The Lord is gracious (disposed to be favourable) and full of compassion.

Slow to anger and great in mercy.

The Lord is good to all,

And His tender mercies are over all His works.

His disposition is to show us favour. We are not pushing God with our faith ... we receive from God.

James 1:5-8

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him **ask in faith, with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, (Greek: Diakrino ... of two opinions) unstable in all his ways. (We have to be single minded)

Matthew 14:25-31 A bad example ... Peter.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord,

save me!" (Fear came in and faith went out. He took his focus off Jesus)

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Doubt = distazo ... Dis = twice. Pulled two ways)

WHAT IS NOT FAITH?

Faith is not the same as feeling. Feelings don't matter. God hears you ... whether you feel He does or not. Our feelings don't change the facts. God's Word is true whether we feel good or not. Faith has nothing to do with feeling. Remember: we walk by faith and not by sight. Faith is based on what God's Word says.

Faith is not mere mental assent. This is more of a dangerous one!! Mental assent has no power. It means we agree with scriptures that they are true. We agree with our minds ... the Bible. But it doesn't affect our hearts. We agree with true doctrine ... but too often, there is no corresponding action. They are doctrines that we hold in our head ... but they don't change our life in any way. Mental assent is AN EXAMPLE OF DEAD FAITH!! Not living faith!! There should be corresponding action.

James 2:14-20

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

With real faith ... there has to be CORRESPONDING ACTION!!

James 2:17-18 WEYMOUTH TRANSLATION

So also faith, if it is unaccompanied by obedience, has no life in it--so long as it stands alone. Nay, some one will say, "You have faith, I have actions: prove to me your faith apart from corresponding actions and I will prove mine to you by my actions.

James 1:21-25

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but **a doer of the work,** this one will be blessed in what he does.

It's not enough to agree with The Word ... we have to be **DOERS!!!**
Instead of living faith, perhaps we only have mental assent?? Hardly anyone knows what faith is ... perhaps as many as 99% of people? We are more likely to be conformed to this world and its standards.

Matthew 7:24-27

"Therefore **whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,** I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Just hearing ... falls short of being a doer.

Faith is not hope. Hope is in the future ... out there somewhere. Faith is present tense ... right here and right now!! Faith has substance. Hope has no substance. We have to believe when we pray ... not later.

Matthew 21:20-22

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, **if you have faith and do not doubt**, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also **if you say** to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And **whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.**"

We should be talking to "our conditions"... for things that we want to come to us ... or things we want to go away from us.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, **whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

NB: Believe you receive ... WHEN YOU PRAY!! NOW!!

Mark 11:24 WEYMOUTH TRANSLATION

That is why I tell you, as to whatever you pray and make request for, **if you believe that you have received it it shall be yours.**

Faith is not being presumptuous. That is to be overly bold with no right or permission ... taking something for granted. You have no Word From God to stand on. Maybe based on wishful thinking, our pride, misapplying scripture? God is not obliged to be behind us when we are being foolish.

Here are some examples:

Numbers 14:2-4

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt!

Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." (That was pretty rude to God)

Numbers 14:27-30

"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

Numbers 14:39-45

Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "**Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!**"

And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. **Do not go up**, lest you be defeated by your enemies, **for the Lord is not among you**. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you."

But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. (They didn't now have a Word from God to go up. He was not going to back their stupidity!!) Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

1 Samuel 4:1-10

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, **Israel was defeated by the Philistines**, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies." So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. (These guys believed ... had faith ... because they had The Ark of The Covenant ... but they were wrong ... They were presumptuous) Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp. So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!"

So the Philistines fought, and **Israel was defeated**, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and **there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.** (These men were presumptuous!! They thought they could pressurise God to support them in battle)

Jeremiah 7:1-15

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word

of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!’ “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.’”

“For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

“Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, “We are delivered to do all these abominations’? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the Lord.

“But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works,” says the Lord, “and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.

Bible faith is always based on what God has said. It must be rightly understood.

George Muller: Faith is the assurance that the things which God said in His Word ... are true. And that God will act according to what He has said in His word. This assurance, this reliance on God's Word, this confidence, is FAITH!

Always start and finish with God's Word.