

# Living Faith

---

## Living Faith

what is it?

AUTHOR:- MIKE FORFAR

**Romans 1:16-17** “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'*”

So important is faith for salvation that the Apostle Paul here quotes the Old Testament prophet Habbakuk 2:4 'The Just shall live by faith'. For Paul faith becomes a permanent lifestyle for the Christian which taps into the power of God. When people live by faith it has a real effect on them and for the world. For through faith the righteousness of God is revealed. Faith is necessary for people to live a life pleasing to God.

**Hebrews 11:6** “But 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.”

For those of us who desire to live a life pleasing to God faith is mandatory. But what is faith? Faith is believing God. If God tells me something in His word and I believe it then I have faith.

**Romans 10:17** “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”.

Back in the days before the invention of the printing press bibles were rare and very expensive. The average person who probably couldn't read anyway only heard the word of God when it was preached to him at church. Today the hearing of the word can also be the reading of the word. Here Paul says that if we believe what we hear from the word of God then we have faith. The Christian faith then comprises belief in all the doctrines that are taught in the bible.

**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?

The apostle James adds an important practice to biblical Christianity. He makes the point that the demons believe the word of God as well as many Christians. The real difference between demons and genuine Christians is in putting those beliefs into practice. James is describing Living Faith. A faith that is defined as believing what God tells us and doing what God tells us.

**James 1:21-22** “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”.

A deceived Christian is one who only believes the truth that he hears but does not do those things that the bible tells him to do. This defines two types of Faith. A living faith and a dead faith.

**Living Faith = believing what God tells you + doing what God tells you .**

**Dead Faith = only believing what God tells you**

### Jesus compares living faith with dead faith.

**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, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

## *Living Faith*

---

---

*Now 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, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

A Christian who has a living faith that believes the word and obeys it will survive the days of trial that will come. While a Christian who only believes the word but does not obey will meet with disaster is a big way. The Living Faith that comprises believing the word of God and doing what it says is clearly taught in Hebrews 11. Many examples are given of Old Testament characters who had this living faith.

**Hebrews 11:7** *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith*

Noah was told by God that He was going to destroy the earth with a flood. It had never rained before so Noah trusted God and believed what he was told. He built an ark as he was instructed to do by God. If he had only believed and not done as he was told he would have drowned in the flood with the rest of humanity. But because he both believed and did as he was told this living faith saved him and his family from certain death. Satan wants people to believe that obeying God is a “works trip”. Was Noah on a “works trip” when he built the ark? No. He built the ark because he had faith. He believed and did what God told him.

**Hebrews 11:29** *“By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”*

Israel and Egypt found themselves at the Red Sea. God parted the sea and Israel was told to march through the sea to escape the pursuing Egyptian army. Israel believed what God told them and did what God told them and all were saved. The Egyptian army on the other hand tried to follow. They believed they could do it too. They marched into the parted sea and all were drowned. Israel had faith while the Egyptian army did not have faith. Both Israel and Egypt believed and acted on that belief. The one difference was that Israel was told to go into the sea while Egypt was not. Israel was given the word of God while Egypt was not. With the word of God missing it was not possible for Egypt to have faith. This teaches us a major lesson. We are never to presume to do anything in the Christian life without a clear indication from the word of God.

This leads us to examine a major deception of Satan. In order to bring about our down fall Satan want us to believe what God has not told us.

### **Jesus on the temple tempted to believe what God had not said.**

**Matthew 4:5-7** *“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the son of God, throw Yourself down, For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him , “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”*

Here we have the second temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Satan takes Jesus up to the top of the temple and tempts Him to jump off to test His faith in God's protection. Satan quotes from the bible in order to accomplish his plan. But it is a trick. Satan misquotes the bible. He presents a false doctrine. He misquoted psalm 91:12

Psalm 91:12 *“For He shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.”*

The underlined part is the bit that Satan deliberately left out. According to this verse God's protection is provided to those who walk in God's ways. Tempting God by jumping off a temple to certain death is not walking in God's ways therefore one cannot expect God to intervene. By leaving this part out Satan hoped that Jesus would jump to His death. But Jesus knew the bible and was able to counteract this false teaching with a true quote from scripture.

Satan tried to get Jesus to believe what God had not said and to act on it. ie a counterfeit faith.

### **Old Testament example of King Uzziah**

**2 Chronicles 26:16-23** *“But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD his God to burn incense on the altar of incense. Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. They confronted him and said, ‘It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the*

## *Living Faith*

---

---

*priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God.'*

*Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD'S temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him. King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house – leprous, and excluded from the temple of the LORD.*

Here is an interesting true account of unfaithfulness to the Lord. King Uzziah had faith and was blessed by God and because he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord he became a powerful king. He remained blessed by God provided he faithfully continued to believe and follow God's commands. But he let pride get the better of him. He thought that because he was the king and that God had blessed him greatly that he could do what ever he wished. So he comes to worship God as was his custom only this time he ignores the priests and decides to do their job himself. He had not been given the office of priest and it was contrary to the word of God for him officiate in the temple. He believed what what was contrary to the bible and acted on that belief. This is Satan's counterfeit of faith. When he was confronted by the priests for his unfaithfulness, rather than acknowledge his wrong doing, he became angry at the priests for daring to question him and his authority. Leprosy, a symbol of sin and the greatest curse in the Old Testament, breaks out on his forehead ending all argument. This is the end result of attempting to worship God deliberately contrary to the word of God. Counterfeit faith, Satan deceiving us into believing and doing what God has not said with disastrous consequences. It is vital that we know as much as we can and worship God correctly. God overlooks our unwillful lack of knowledge, the curse was put on Uzziah only after he rejected the word of God as spoken by the priests and he tried to justify his actions.

So it will be with us if we have a counterfeit faith. If we deliberately believe and do contrary to the word of God.

***2 Timothy 4:6-8*** *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, i have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and no to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

At the end of his life Paul was able to say that he had kept the faith. What he meant by this is he had continued to believe the truths that God had told him and also did every thing that God has asked him to do. This was done in spite of all the opposition that he received from evil men both inside and outside of the church.

***1 Timothy 4:1-2*** *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”*

The devil wants Christians to renounce their faith so as to lose their salvation and to discourage others from becoming Christians. One of the methods mentioned here is doctrines of demons. A twisting of the word of God in order to deceive Christians into believing and doing what God has not told them. Satan's most successful deceptions in this area come from within the Christian churches.

***2 Peter 2:1*** *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.”*

Speaking of the false prophets who plagued ancient Israel with their lies the Apostle Peter says that this will also be the lot of the Christian church. False teachers; whether they are ministers, theologians or lay people; will secretly bring in destructive heresies that are designed to lead us away from what God has commanded us. These agents of Satan write and teach false doctrines and have them paraded to the church and the world as though they are truth. Many people become deceived because they accept their ministers explanations of the scriptures without searching the scriptures for themselves. Even some versions of the bible are loaded with heresies in the margins written as bible notes. Thus the word of God and the deceptions of Satan become printed on the same page. And because people read the bible notes instead of the text of the bible itself many are easily deceived.

## *Living Faith*

---

---

It is important that every Christian read and understand the bible for themselves asking God for direction and enlightenment.

**Acts 17:11-12** *“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed and not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men”*

When Paul and Silas went and preached the gospel in the city of Berea they went to a synagogue and found the people open to the truth. They received the truth but they searched the Hebrew scriptures daily to check on the trustworthiness of what Paul was saying. Luke, the author of Acts, commends the Bereans for this as an example for us to follow. It is imperative that we compare what we are taught with the word of God to see if we are being taught the truth or if we are taught falsehoods.

**Hosea 4:6** *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

The knowledge of the truth is considered so important that God says that a lack of knowledge of it is fatal. God's condemnation of ignorance is not given to people who do not understand but His condemnation is reserved for those who do not want to know the truth. There is a big difference between those people who cannot know the truth for whatever reason. Maybe because they have not got access to the bible or because they cannot read or are mentally disabled etc. And those people who have the opportunity to learn but are not interested. Not wanting to know the truth is an evidence of unconversion. It was lack of knowledge of the bible that sent Christianity into the doctrines of Romanism. It was the discovery of the bible by the Protestant reformers that led the way back to biblical Christianity. Without the knowledge of the bible all western Christianity would belong to the church of Rome.

*“The position that it is of no consequence what men believe, is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning, the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the Word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant, found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.”* *The Great Controversy. Pacific Press Publishing Association. p520. (AD 1888).*

*“There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be the followers of Christ.”* *The Spirit of Prophecy vol 4 pp 46-47. Pacific Press Publishing Association. 1884*

*“It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God.”* *The Great Controversy. Pacific Press Publishing Association. p598. (AD 1888).*

**Acts of the Apostles, p 564:** *“Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed... Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads... For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christ-like temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised we may ask; and the promise is, ‘Ye shall receive’”.*

Bible doctrines can be placed into two categories. One category is the knowledge of God and salvation. The other category is knowledge of certain doctrines to enable us to avoid deception by satanic agencies. The table below is a suggestion with some important doctrines in each category.

## *Living Faith*

---

---

<i>Knowledge of God and salvation</i>	<i>Knowledge to avoid deception</i>
The gospel	Rebellion and activity of Satan
The resurrection	Spiritualism
Teachings of Christ	State of the dead
High priestly ministry of Christ	The second advent of Christ
Heavenly sanctuary	The three angels messages (Rev 14:6-12)
Living by the Spirit of God	The antichrist
The law of God	The mark of the beast
Creation	Biblical talking in tongues

### Conclusion.

A living Faith is believing and doing what God has told you .

A dead Faith is only believing what God has told you but not doing it.

Satan's counterfeit of faith is believing and doing what Satan wants you to think that God has told you. This is why those people who say that doctrine is not important are agents of Satan

In living a life of faith it's important that we:

- (1) Know as much of the truth as we can and do what God tells us.
- (2) Pray to God daily in the name of Jesus for the indwelling Holy Spirit
- (3) Flee from temptation
- (4) Exercise our talents for the glory of God.