

Eight Levels of Faith Lesson 3  
Faith that Rises Above

*Heb 11:17-19*

*17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,*

*18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*

*19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

I. Review [**8 Levels of Faith: first 3**]

1. Last week we looked at the first three levels of faith on the spectrum—the three we called, **underwater faith**.
2. The level at the bottom is **no faith**. We read in Deuteronomy 32 of a period when Israel was so greatly blessed by God that they forgot it was God who blessed them. They ended up with no faith.
3. We read in Mark 4 about a time when fear for their lives temporarily put the apostles in a state of no faith.
4. No faith can be summed up by saying it is trusting in self and not God. A condition of fear and no hope. Thinking Jesus doesn't care. Preaching doesn't even help. It is a dangerous place that ends in lake of fire. The hope is that it **can** be a temporary state that you can exit by trusting God.
5. We also studied the second level of faith, **little faith**, and saw two situations that brought little faith: lack of clothing or food (Matthew 6:30, 16:8), or losing focus on Jesus during a crisis (Matthew 14:29).
6. The remedy is to seek Him first, look back to what He has done for you in the past, and look up from the problem because you can still touch Jesus.
7. Finally, we looked at **weak faith**, which is a bad mixture of faith, unbelief, and doubt (Romans 4:19-20, Mark 9:24, 11:23). It struggles to believe in God's promises, it wavers, and it withholds praise.
8. The remedy includes fasting and praising God in advance. In other words, doubt your doubts and believe your beliefs.
9. Tonight we will examine three more levels of faith in greater detail: **Measure of Faith**, **Gift of Faith**, and **Strong Faith**.
10. As you will see tonight, these three are **Faith that Rises Above**.

II. Level 4: Measure of faith

A. You are God's investment

1. [**image: measure of faith**] Not settling for no faith, little faith, or weak faith, the next level on the spectrum, the "measure of faith," is the preferred starting place:  
*Romans 12:3 For I 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.*
2. Since without faith you cannot please God, God gives this measure of faith that initiates a person's salvation experience.
3. Since those first three levels of faith are underwater faith, those levels, particularly the little faith and weak faith levels, are temporary, or pass-through levels.

4. It is necessary to rise above with the measure of faith if you want to become established in your walk with God.
  5. For you cannot survive or thrive if your faith is continuously on life support and you are always deciding if today is the day you will pull the plug and give up.
  6. You need to move away from the frame of mind that says, “I’m just going to quit. I’m giving up. I’m going to walk away.”
  7. As long we give voice to that attitude, it will prevent us from moving forward, growing in God, or helping others for the kingdom.
  8. But that is why God dealt to every man and woman, faith with a “**measure.**” That word comes from the Greek word, “metron,” which identifies an instrument for measuring out a portion—like a measuring cup.
  9. Look at it this way.[slide] **God chose to invest something of Himself into you,** His measure or investment of faith, because He wants it to grow and flourish.
  10. **Once you see yourself as God’s investment, you will quit quitting, and give up giving up, and walk away from walking away.**
- B. Use me
1. The exciting thing about the measure faith, is that those who use it, **WILL rise above** and be used of God in various gifts of the Spirit.
  2. Look at what God intended for those who use the measure of faith God invested in them:  
*Rom 12:4-5*  
*4 For as we have many members in one body*  
[God put me in His body, the church],  
*and all members have not the same office:*  
*5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*  
[I belong with these people].
  3. Those using the measure of faith, have this to expect:  
*Rom 12:6-8* from the NLT  
*6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.*  
*7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*
  4. So allow God’s investment in you of the measure of faith to lead you to minister to others with your gift.
  5. Who, me? A minister? Yes you, a minister. That means, “servant.”
  6. Don’t get tripped up by that word. Our pride might tell us, “I’m nobody’s servant!” But the measure of faith says, “Serve others gladly.”
- C. Don’t boast, every believer has it
1. I find a humorous warning in verse 3, which if we would grasp, it would revolutionize our walk with God, and make us more useful to the kingdom by demonstrating His greatest works through us.  
*Romans 12:3 For I 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.*

2. Paul's main point in Romans 12:3 was to caution some people who **were** proficient in using the gifts, not to think too highly about themselves.
3. Don't think more about yourself than you should—why? Because EVERY believer has received that same measure of faith.
4. Just before Paul lists what we call the nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, he this statement:  
*1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*
5. If you will just use the faith God has already given to you, not with superiority to make others feel they are your servants, but humbly operate with spiritual gifts, you will accomplish profitable works for God right now.

### III. Level 5: Gift of faith

#### A. Definition

1. **[image: gift of faith]** We've moved from no faith, to little faith, to weak faith, the underwater levels, rising up to the measure of faith, the level that God wants us to begin to live in.
2. But then we can rise up even higher from there, as God sees fit, to use us in the **gift of faith**, which we will read about in a moment.
3. If you are willing to rise up above the normal, there is the gift of faith that God gives to individuals for certain situations where there is a need for urgent help in a crisis.
4. First, I'll mention that the **gift of faith** is one of the nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, which we will read in a moment.
5. But remember, everyone who uses the **measure of faith** according to Romans 12, can use gifts of the Spirit, like prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, leading, and giving.
6. Remember, God **expects** every maturing Christian to use some form of spiritual gift according to the grace He gives.
7. But the **gift of faith** is one of those gifts that rises above and pushes your **measure of faith** up to a more powerful and publicly demonstrative level.

#### B. Called for a crisis

1. This level of faith is given when God puts His child into a crisis situation with the expectation that they will act in that crisis as His representative.
2. You become like God's FEMA, or Homeland Security, sent as a first responder into a crisis. **[img: first responders]**
3. Think about what an EMT does at an accident scene.
4. He rushes toward the trouble, not to gaze at the deadly chaos like a curious bystander, but to take immediate rescue actions and provide care and life-saving efforts to the those in trouble.
5. That is like the person to whom God gives the gift of faith. The gift of faith comes like an anointing poured on that individual to fulfil a specific task.
6. Now let's read about the gift of faith:  
*1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-9*  
*4 Now there are diversities of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. ...*  
*8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*  
*9 To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

7. If God distributes the gift of faith to you, your role is to bring heaven down on earth, and perhaps even save lives, but you will definitely be used of God to pull back the death shroud and reveal the glory of God in that dark place.
- C. Person with a gift not a gifted person
1. Let me add that the person used in this gift, or any gift for that matter, should not think of himself too highly either.
  2. If God uses a person with the gift of faith, this does not mean that they are now a “faith healer” so that everyone they touch will receive a notable miracle.
  3. It is not as though they should now walk into hospitals, nursing homes, and graveyards emptying those places of all sickness, disease and death.
  4. Think about it this way, not even Jesus did that. He did not raise every dead person and He did not heal every sick person he passed.
  5. Neither did the disciples of Jesus in the early church. If they had, they would all still be living today.
  6. The gifts, however, including the gift of faith, are used to enforce God’s will in a specific situation, as directed by God, not according to our will or whim. God orchestrates the situation, we just how up and do His work.
- D. Examples
1. Every altar call is a place where the gift of faith can operate. Follow the leading of the Spirit and you may find a **life in crisis** at the altar. Then pray leaning on the flow of faith from the Holy Ghost in you.
  2. Missionary wife Shirley Cole served a fellowship meal to the native Tai ministers at their home. While reaching down to pick something up that had fallen in the grass, her hand was struck and bitten by something.
  3. Hearing her reaction to the bite, someone looked and saw a cobra slithering away from that spot.
  4. She refused to slow down to be medically treated and said she would be alright.
  5. She continued to minister to the people and God gave her the gift of faith to overcome her own imminent death.
  6. Another occasion, a woman came up to Bro. Cole for prayer because she was in great pain. Bro. Cole called for a child to come up and lay hands on the woman to pray. The woman was healed.
- IV. Level 6: Strong in faith
- A. Definition
1. **[slide: strong faith]** So far we have looked at five levels of faith that can be identified from scripture: 1. No faith; 2. Little faith; 3. Weak faith; 4. Measure of faith; 5. Gift of faith; and now the final one we will look at tonight, 6. Strong faith.
  2. As we saw, God imparts the short-term **gift of faith** to manage a crisis, but rising above that is the longer enduring level faith, called **strong faith**.
  3. Rather than for just an episode of great need, this is the kind of faith one can live with. Abraham had faith this level of faith.  
*Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was **strong in faith**, giving glory to God;*

4. So why was Abraham called a person of strong faith? At age 75, God called Abraham out of polytheism, away from a family of idolaters, out of the land of Haran in Mesopotamia, to follow after just one invisible God and into the foreign land of Canaan.

5. God called Abraham to begin a lineage of a people that would become the nation of Hebrew people called Israel, and eventually, Jews.

*Genesis 12:1-3*

*1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*

*2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

*3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

6. If you were 75 years old and God said you were going to be the father of a great nation, you might look about and wonder who He was talking to.

7. Ok, God let me get this straight. Let's start by counting my kids. Umm—zero.

8. Then let's consider my age. I'm 75 years old and my wife is 65 years old, and you want us to start making babies?

9. And you want me to walk 600 miles so I can stake out a land claim in the midst of the warring Canaanite people for my "descendants" to live?

10. Adding another layer of difficulty, God thought they were too young for kids so He waited another 15 years before giving them their first child.

11. The book of Hebrews picks up the story and reveals yet another challenge to **God's promises**:

*Hebrews 11:8, 10, 17-19*

*8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. ...*

*10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ...*

*17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had **received the promises** offered up his only begotten son,*

*18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*

*19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

B. Characteristics of strong faith

1. Abraham demonstrates two things that are characteristic about the level of **strong faith**.

2. First, if you live at this level, God's promises become more than a joke but become a guide that governs each day and each step of your journey.

3. And second, hearing the promises of God leads you to worship. Even before they are fulfilled.

4. When the promises of God are your guide, you don't give up on a promise of God because it sounds insane or impossible, you just take it one step at a time on the path to the promise.

5. Walking in this level of faith usually includes multiple challenges beyond your capability. If you are pursuing the impossible, it has to be God.

6. And walking in this level of faith, will likely include a great test of faith to prove your belief in, and commitment to, the promise.

7. Like when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son on an altar, Abraham was willing to do so, but with the confidence that God was going to raise him from death. He knew God wouldn't kill the promise He had made.
- C. Journey to strong faith
1. Earlier in the process, though, both Abraham and Sarah did laugh at God's promise when they first heard it, but they did move beyond that.
  2. What initially sounded like a joke, become their guiding promise.
  3. And the Bible is really great in that it doesn't hide this great man's many flaws. He was no superhero.
  4. In fact, he was man with notable flaws who battled with doubt, lying, and even gross neglect of his wife's safety because he was afraid for his own safety.
  5. So even a bad husband who is a liar and doubter has hope of rising above to the level of strong faith.
  6. Strong faith is not a one-time anointing for one crisis event. Rather, it is a long-term guidance system based on trust in the One who has promised.
  7. Strong faith brings with it a strength in their relationship with God that is like an ice breaker ship **[image of Russian Nuclear Icebreaker Arktika]** like this one that can break through over 16 feet of ice.
  8. Facing crushing resistance, Strong Faith keeps pressing through.
  9. Strong faith, then, is grasping a promise, not wavering, but trusting and worshiping as you press through hardships, tests, and situations that don't make sense.
- V. Conclusion
1. Tonight we have looked at the three Rise Above levels of faith. **[slide]**
  2. **Level 4 is Measure of Faith** which is the level of faith that God gives to people so they can be saved. But more than that, it allows a new believer to immediately use gifts of faith the Lord gives them.
  3. **Level 5 is the Gift of Faith** that is listed in 1 Corinthians 11 as one of the 9 Spiritual Gifts. God imparts this gift so that a person can manage a crisis or a critical moment allowing God's purposes to turn around what would have been a tragic situation.
  4. And finally we looked at **Level 6, Strong in Faith**. As we saw with Abraham, strong faith pushes the individual through great obstacles and sorrow toward the promises of God, especially when they seem impossible to reach.
  5. But as we saw with the Strong Faith Abraham lived in, these higher levels of faith come through a journey that did not always resemble godly faithfulness.
  6. But that is why we call these, Faith that Rises Above.