

Eight Levels of Faith Lesson 6 - Review and Assessment

[slide] faith spreads by sharing your own.

I. Lesson 1: More Than Expected

1. If God can do greater than we expect, why not start with an expectation of the miraculous?

Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

2. Where will we end up if we start with high expectations? [slide] “God, I believe today you are going to blow my mind with your awesome greatness, doing greater than I expect!”

3. The passage in Isaiah sets up that expectation:

Isaiah 64:1-4

1 Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens [tear apart the sky], that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down [tremble] at thy presence,

2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3 When thou didst terrible things [awesome things] which we looked not for [things we didn't expect], thou camest down, the mountains flowed down [trembled] at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

4. Verse 1: Oh, God, would you just burst from heaven and shake my world!
5. Verse 2: Like fire burns wood and makes water boil, shake my world!
6. Verse 3: Long ago you came down on the mountain, it shook, and you did greater things than we ever expected.
7. Verse 4: For since the world began, no ear has heard, and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him! NLT

II. Eight Levels of Faith Lesson 2: Underwater Faith

1. The Book of Hebrews tells us:

Hebrews 11:6 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.

2. [slide] In this verse we find a basic 2-part definition of what faith is. Faith is:

Believing in God; He is...

Believing that God rewards those who seek Him diligently

3. That is why no faith cannot please God.

*John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that **I am** he, ye shall **die in your sins**.*

A. Level 1: No faith

1. No faith can be a transitory place. Evidence of no faith rises when experiencing extreme situations: either major wealth/success, or life-threatening tragedy or peril.

2. For instance, coming across major success can lead to trusting in self and not God.
*Deuteronomy 32:15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then **he forsook God which made him**, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*
 3. Verse 20 calls them: “a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith.”
 4. Or on the opposite end when suffering great loss, experiencing fear, feelings of no hope, thinking Jesus doesn’t care.
Mark 4:37-38, 40
37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.
38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?
*40 And he said unto them, **Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?***
 5. Further evidence is that preaching doesn’t help.
*Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but **the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it.*
 6. No faith is a dangerous place to be because it ends in lake of fire.
*Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and **unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with **fire and brimstone**: which is the second death.*
 7. Are you at the place of no faith? faith under water? Jesus is on board with you and He isn’t afraid. (Mark 4:37-40)
 8. It can be temporary, you can get out by trusting God.
Ps 56:3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
 9. Exchange that unbelief and fear with trust in the true Provider, the One who calms storms. Then that can lead, at least, to little faith.
- B. Level 2: Little faith
1. Little faith can also be a transitory place. Evidence of little faith is taking too much thought or spending too much time focusing on the trouble during times of suffering lack.
Matt 6:30-31, 33
*30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of **little faith**?*
31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
 2. Jesus’ solution is to “**take no thought**,” or “don’t worry,” in other words, do not focus on the lack. Seek Him first and He will add back what you lack.
 3. Also, look back and remember the time when the loaves and fishes were multiplied, so if He did it before, He can do it again. (Matt 16:8-10)
 4. And look up, not at the storm about you. You can still reach up and touch Jesus before you sink. (Matt 14:29-31)
- C. Level 3: Weak faith

1. Weak faith is similar to unbelief and doubt. And like little faith, it can also be a transitory place.
2. Evidence of weak faith is a struggle to believe God's promises when all the available evidence is stacked against you. Another symptom of weak faith is that it silences your praise and worship.
Romans 4:19-20
*19 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 Sara's womb:*
*20 He **staggered not** at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, **giving glory to God;***
3. Weak faith wavers and therefore does not receive, continuing the cycle of weak faith.
James 1:6-7
6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
4. Admit your unbelief asking for help (Mark 9:24)
5. Fasting helps rise up out of weak faith (Mark 9:29) as does praising God in advance (Rom 4:20). Ask this question: Which is more certain, my problem, or Jesus' promise?

III. Eight Levels of Faith Lesson 3: Faith that Rises Above

A. Level 4: Measure of Faith

1. Remember that the underwater levels of faith are pass-through levels where you never want to remain.
2. We must 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."
3. At this level of faith, you to see yourself as a person God invested in, so you will quit quitting, give up giving up, and walk away from walking away.
4. Measure of Faith is the first level of acceptable faith.
5. This is the level of faith that is necessary to be saved, and the good news is that God makes this level of faith available to all people so they can be saved.
*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.***
6. But the Measure of Faith is more than simply a bare minimum quantity just to get a person saved, it is a quantity of faith that also gives the person access to gifts that God graces them with.
7. Gifts like: prophesy [as in a bold, anointed testimony], serving others, encouraging others, giving, leadership, and kindness. (Romans 12:6-8)
8. There is evidence you have the Measure of Faith if you have repented, been baptized, and been filled with the Holy Ghost, plus, you are using your gifting to help the church and others.

9. If you are saved yet not using your gifts in the church, what are you waiting for? Don't wait for a position or title. Help behind the scenes, but always in subjection to spiritual authority.
- B. Level 5: Gift of Faith
1. This level of faith is listed in 1 Corinthians 11 as one of the 9 Spiritual Gifts.
1 Corinthians 12:4, 9
4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ...
9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
 2. This level is often a transitory level as well, but for a different reason.
 3. God imparts the gift of faith to help a person manage a crisis or a critical moment allowing God's purposes to turn around what would have been a tragic situation.
 4. You may come upon an accident and God pushes you to pray for the injured person to build their faith, and they raise up.
 5. Maybe an emotional crisis erupts, and God imparts the gift of faith to calm the situation.
 6. Maybe a heaven or hell crisis appears at the altar, and God imparts the gift of faith to pull them from hell onto the path to heaven.
- C. Level 6: Strong in Faith.
1. Level 6 is not a transitory level, but is a level where one can live to help maintain an even and level path while walking through life's ups and downs.
Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
 2. Abraham's strong faith pushed him through great obstacles and sorrow toward the promises of God, especially when the promises seemed impossible to reach.
 3. He left the familiar territory of his home country and family to follow God's promise to a land full of unknowns. (Gen 12:1-3)
 4. The evidence was stacked against him, and although God's promises were laughable at the time they were given, he staggered not, meaning he did not waver. He just kept moving ahead toward the promise, like an icebreaker ship.
 5. What is encouraging, is that while Abraham eventually arrived at Strong Faith, at early points on his journey, he did not always demonstrate faithfulness or even godliness.
 6. But that is why we call these last three levels: measure of faith, gift of faith, strong in faith; Faith that Rises Above.
- IV. Eight Levels of Faith Lesson 4: Faith that Builds Bridges
1. In lesson 4, we climbed a step above faith that rises above, to faith that builds bridges: Great faith, and full of faith, because these levels of faith rise to the occasion when there is conflict between people.
 2. This kind of faith does not allow people barriers to stop God's purposes but understands and uses kingdom authority to build a bridge that makes way for a miracle.
- B. Level 7: Great faith

1. In a community where there was strong prejudice between different nationalities, a Roman centurion, the natural enemy of the Jews, stepped graciously over human barriers and made a significant contribution to the building fund of a Jewish synagogue.
 2. He also reached out to Jesus, the rising Jewish rabbi, because he understood that Jesus had authority over sickness. He reached beyond the cultural biases with great faith:
*Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled [was pleased and amazed] at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so **great faith**, no, not in Israel.*
 3. Jesus saw the same kind of demonstration in another non-Jew—a Syrophenician woman.
 4. She started the conversation with a pretentious recognition of their cultural and religious differences, but Jesus led her to demonstrate a purer focus on truth and faith. Which she did, worshipping Jesus, and pressing ahead with her request.
 5. Jesus responded to her persistence:
*Matt 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, **great is thy faith**: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*
 6. Great faith crossed over what would have been difficult barriers between people, even those caused from bias and hurtful words, in order to see God’s miracles and deliverance accomplished.
- C. Level 8: Full of faith
1. With level 7 faith, **great faith**, it helped bridge the divide where national origin bias normally ruled.
 2. Now with level 8 faith, **full of faith** rises above cultural biases within a group, and biases based simply on mistrust.
 3. The first case of **full of faith** we read of, came along when the first church had its first conflict among members, when there was a murmuring between two different cultural groups.
 4. Into the fray stepped Stephen,
*Acts 6:8 And Stephen, **full of faith** and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*
 5. Stephen was full of faith, yet his church job was as a table waiter. **Full faith does its best work without a stage or spotlights.**
 6. He dove right into the problem and humbly served, bridging the people crisis.
 7. And in his death, Stephen bridged another crisis as immigrant Jews from other regions of the world, rose to argue and debate Stephen, and eventually stoned him to death.
Acts 7:58-60
58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.
59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.
60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
 8. That same Saul of Tarsus who witnessed this death had another encounter with a person who was full of faith, Barnabas.

*Acts 11: 24 For he [Barnabas] was a good man, and **full of the Holy Ghost and of faith:** and much people was added unto the Lord.*

9. Barnabas twice helped Saul move ahead in ministry. Barnabas overlooked Saul's murderous reputation, trusting that when he found Jesus, he found a better life.
10. Barnabas' full of faith looked beyond the reputation and helped launched the ministry of the man who would become the great Paul the Apostle.
11. Full of faith demonstrates with thoughtful and compassionate actions to stop murmuring in the church; it exceed the expectations required of the position; remains faithful and forgiving under the threat of death; comes alongside others to minister financially and to encourage; is drawn to young converts to help them be accepted and grow; is not threatened by the success of others.