



So how do we perfect our faith?

Let me start this lesson with an interesting preposition. We receive salvation from our sins when we repent and believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son and He died on the cross for our sins. There is a Scripture that also says,

'The demons believe... and tremble!'

James 2:19



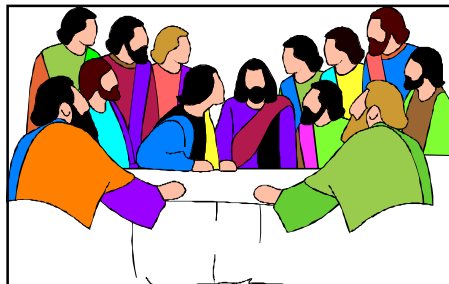
Demons also know that Jesus is God the Son but it does not change the way they are. Genuine heart faith results in obedience and change. There are many people who have heard the gospel and believe in Jesus yet they continue to live their lives in a godless and reckless way.

One day someone cried out to Jesus,

'Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts which nursed you' But Jesus said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"'

Luke 11:27-28

Jesus took it even further when He said that His real family were only those who hear the word of God and do it. This is the fundamental difference between genuine faith and mental assent (mere acknowledgement). Hearing the word of God and doing it!



'What does it profit, my brothers, 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.'

James 2:14-17

The works talked of here are not works that save you but are outward demonstrations of something genuine and inward. You could say that faith, to be genuine, has to work its way out into our everyday behaviour. You could also say that faith is primary and that works flow from our faith to show that it is genuine.

Too many people treat their religion as their underwear...close and personal! The gospel needs to be preached, the poor need assistance, orphans need homes and we need to be led by the Holy Spirit. Genuine faith will always work its way out of the heart into the physical world where it can impact the lives of others.

It is important to distinguish the different elements in God's word, *logos* and *rhema*. Let us first cover *logos*. Logos is the written word of God, Scripture. It is a collection God's words and thoughts and is true for all time and in all places. Jesus said it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one part of God's word to be left unfulfilled. It is the *logos* (God's written word) which we study, memorize, confess

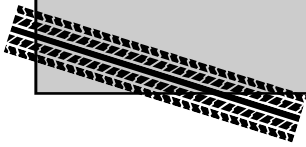
Led By The Spirit

The Bible is primarily a doing book for when we actually do what it says, only then do we see it's real power.

Rhema is the spoken word of God that is in relation to specific instances and situations. It is when God quickens His written word to us as it comes alive in relation to a particular situation.

'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God.'

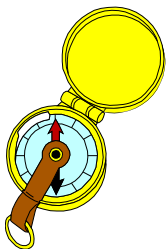
Romans 8:14



The Holy Spirit leads us through rhema, promptings, visions and dreams all in relation to our specific calling and destiny. Rhema can range from an inner knowing to a dramatic encounter where many have claimed to hear an audible voice. When you receive rhema you need to step out in faith and obey its promptings even if it seems irrational for it is God giving you a specific strategy in relation to your destiny.

It is important to note that God never contradicts or goes against the spirit of His written word i.e.

'I feel that God wants me to leave my wife so I can marry another.'



The Holy Spirit leadings and promptings are something that we experience more and more as we obey, wait on Him in His presence and sensitise ourselves to His still, small voice.

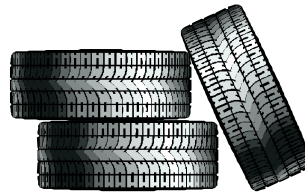
Expect God to speak to you for He promises it in His word for,

'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God''

Matthew 4:4

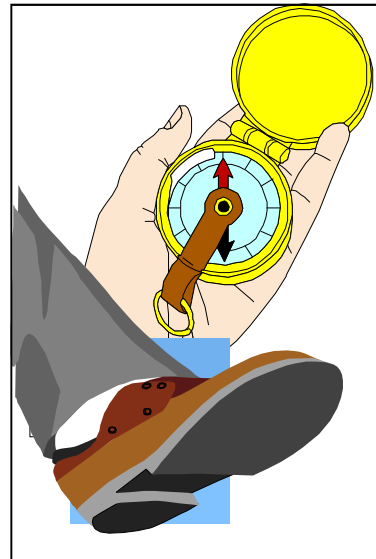
'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.'

Romans 10:17



This is where we put action to the word of the Lord because we need to trust what He says.

There have been many occasions where the Lord has led me in relation to where I was meant to live, where to attend church, who to marry and not to marry! etc.



You need to step out and obey these leadings as obedience to His spoken word often brings His blessings into manifestation. Quite often evangelists, when praying for the sick, say to the person receiving

prayer, *'Do something you couldn't do before!'*

Many times when praying for the sick, Jesus says to the cripple, *'Rise up and walk'* or to the man with the withered hand *'Stretch forth your hand,'* real faith is demonstrated through action.

Absolute Security

The exciting thing about all of this is that we serve and live for God from a position of absolute security.

- He already loves you whether you realise it or not (Romans 5:8);
- He has already blessed you whether you realise it or not (Ephesians 1:3);
- He has a wonderful future mapped out for whether realise it or not (Jeremiah 29:11),
- And He has already met all your needs though the provision of His Son whether you realise it or not (2nd Peter 1:3, 4).

You cannot earn these things! You need to merely know what is already yours and believe and receive! Remember works come from faith, works do not get God's favour because it is something we already have *in Christ*.

Faith is a bit like a muscle that we need to exercise, you start off with smaller weights, you build up your strength to a heavier set of weights and so on. Sometimes people experience failure when they lift weights that are too heavy because they haven't built up sufficient muscular strength. They then have to make the necessary adjustments and scale down their lifting until they are ready however they don't quit but still keep working out. Faith is the same.

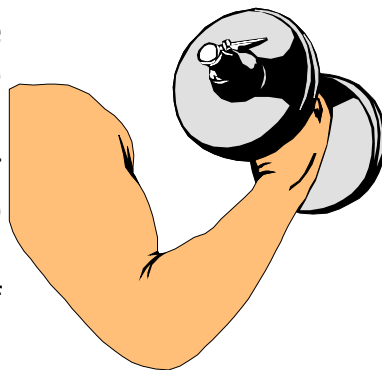


Illustration...

'When Hudson Taylor, the former missionary, first went to China, it was in a sailing vessel. Very close to the shore of cannibal islands the ship was becalmed, and it was slowly drifting shoreward unable to go about and the savages were eagerly anticipating a feast.

The captain came to Mr. Taylor and besought him to pray for the help of God. 'I will', said Taylor, 'provided you set your sails to catch the breeze.' The captain declined to make himself a laughing stock by unfurling in a dead calm. Taylor said, 'I will not pray for the vessel unless you will prepare the sails'. And it was done.

While praying, there was a knock at the door of his room. 'Who is there?' The captain's voice responded, 'Are you still praying for wind?' 'Yes.' 'Well,' said the captain, 'you'd better stop praying, for we have more wind than we can manage.'

For some people it takes all their faith to verbally praise God, for some people it takes all their faith to sow their finances into kingdom work while others have faith to shake cities and nations. We need to exercise it to progress. Use it or lose it. Faith needs to be expressed.



*'The only thing that counts
Is faith expressing itself through love.'*

Galations 5:6

Here are some instances from the Book of Acts where the Holy Spirit has led His followers in a variety of ways. Please read the passage and write down how you think these people received guidance: Acts 8:26; 9:10-12; 10:10,11; 13:2; 16:6,9,10.

Rock or Sand

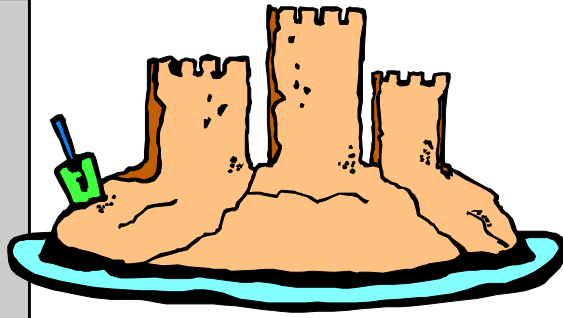
'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

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.

"But everyone who hears these saying 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 windows blew and beat on that house and it fell. And great was its fall."

Matthew 7:24-27



1. What did the two men have in common?

2. What was the difference between these men and how did it affect the outcome?

3. What was Jesus' personal description of the two men and which one do you want to be?

4. What is the fundamental difference between faith and mental assent?

5. What is the essential difference between 'Logos' and 'Rhema'?

6. Name three ways in which you can receive 'rhema'?

7. Give an example of someone needing to put action into their faith.
