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Hebrews 11:1

“Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Again, we need to realize that it is our faith that gives substance to the things we hope for. If we’re going to wait until we get something before we believe that we have it, we’re too late and it won’t work. It is your faith that gives substance to the things you desire or hope for that you do not see yet in the natural.

We see this truth throughout the Bible, both in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. In the Old Testament we have a number of scriptural illustrations that very clearly give us the same biblical principle as found in **Hebrews 11:1**.

For example, when Israel came into Canaan and came up against the city of Jericho, God told the Israelites exactly what to do. But in order to enjoy the victory God had promised, they first had to believe they received God’s Word to them and act in faith upon it. Their act of faith upon God’s Word was their faith in action. They were to march around the walls of Jericho one time a day for six days and on the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times. Then, when musical instruments sounded, they were to shout (**Joshua 6:3-5**).

Notice that the children of Israel shouted or acted on their faith while the walls were still standing. Anyone can shout when the walls are down. It doesn’t take any faith to do that. But their faith gave substance to God’s Word to them. They acted on their faith in His word, and God’s promise became a reality when the walls came down (**Joshua 6:20**).

Faith is Active

We need to realize that is what faith is. *Faith is acting upon God’s Word*. So many people, however, are waiting for answers to prayer to just come to them. For example, when it comes to receiving healing or the infilling of the Holy Ghost, too often people just wait for something to happen with a passive faith instead of an active faith. But, if you are in need of finances for example, and you’re just waiting for something to turn up, nothing will turn up but more bills to pay.

It's like the man that wasn't working and had a wife and five children. He was "just trusting" God for something to turn up. Of course, nothing ever did turn up because he wasn't acting in faith. He had been in a church for a year and the church took care of him and his family. He neglected to put his faith into "action."

God will help you meet your financial obligations but from the natural standpoint, you have a part to play. You can't just stay at home and expect something to come to you. You pray and believe God, but then you must act on your faith by actively looking for a job, and then something will happen.

The same is true from the spiritual standpoint. Too many folks are waiting for something to come to them. It won't come as long as they are just passively waiting for God to do something for them. No, they must get busy and act on God's Word putting their faith into action.

An illustration from the New Testament demonstrates what faith is. Let's look at a passage of Scripture in Luke chapter five.

First, we have the story of the man who was brought by his four friends to Jesus (**Luke 5:18-25**). Jesus was teaching in a house, and they could not get in because of the crowd. The man they brought had been bedridden with palsy. When they saw they couldn't get in through the door they took the man up on the roof and let him down into the room where Jesus was. The scripture says,

Luke 5:20, 24, "And when he [Jesus] SAW their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.... Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house"

Some would ask, "Just whose faith was it that got the man healed?" The bible says, **"When Jesus saw their faith."** That's plural. That includes all of them. It was not only the faith of the four men who brought the man with palsy in, but it also included the faith of the sick man on the bed too!

The man who was bedfast demonstrated that he had faith because how many bedfast people would let someone take them up on top of a house and let them down through the roof??

We also know that the man who was bedfast had faith because when Jesus said to him, **"Rise up,"** he wasn't any better. He was lying there just as helpless as he ever was. Instead of trying to get up, he could have said, "Why Lord, didn't you see them carry me in here? I can't possibly get up. You'll have to heal me first."

But no, when Jesus said **“Rise, take up thy bed and walk,”** the man with the palsy began to move, and when he did, healing was the result. If he had refused to act on the Word of the Master, he would not have received healing; but because he acted on what Jesus said, he received his healing.

Acting on God’s Word Brings Results

There is a real spiritual lesson for us here. When we act on God’s Word, that is faith. When we are in faith, we receive answers to prayer. If we fail to act on God’s Word and just wait for something to come to us first before we **will** believe, we will not receive what we need from God.

There was a woman evangelist that held a service years ago. She was ministering to four people in wheelchairs. After ministering to them she said, “Rise and walk in Jesus’ Name” and they all got up and walked except one.

The one who was left sitting there in a wheelchair said, “I can’t walk.”

The woman evangelist said, “the others couldn’t walk either, but they did.”

The woman in the wheelchair said, “I know they did; but I can’t. I haven’t walked in years. I can’t walk.” The evangelist had to walk away and leave her sitting there.

You see, when the others started to act on the Word that was spoken to them, the results were forthcoming. When you act on what God’s Word says, or on what the Holy Spirit may speak to your heart, then the results are forthcoming because it is faith.

There was a woman in a church where a man pastored who was also in a wheelchair. She had arthritis and the doctor had told her some years earlier that her body would become stationary, and she would not be able to move. He told her she would become bedfast or stay in a wheelchair because her body would become locked in that position. In other words, her body would be locked in either a prone position or in a seated position.

She and her husband were in this man’s church every time there was a service. The pastor could pray for this woman, and she would always get healed for whatever her needs were, but she never asked for prayer for the arthritis. It bothered this pastor because several people with worse diseases received healing when he prayed for them. Some of the members of his church said, “Maybe it’s not God’s will to heal her.” But he knew different because he believed it was always God’s will to heal everyone.

Now this doesn't mean that people that don't get healed don't go to heaven, it just means that they are robbed of a blessing on this side of heaven.

One afternoon this pastor and a small group of church people went to this woman's house to pray for her. The pastor knew exactly what to do. He told everyone, "Move away from her," and he went to the opposite side of the room from her. He then said, "Watch, and don't let anyone touch her. Stay away from her."

Then the pastor pointed his finger at her and said, "Now, Sister, arise and walk in the Name of Jesus Christ."

Everyone there saw something happen. An unseen power lifted her out of that chair, and she just sat up in mid-air away from the chair. She could move her arms, and she reached down for the wheelchair. When she did that, she just fell back into it.

The moment she did that this man spoke by the unction of the Holy Spirit and said, "Sister, you don't have a bit of faith, do you? You don't believe you will ever be healed of this arthritis, do you?"

She spoke up immediately and said, "No, Pastor, I don't. I'll die and go to my grave with it." And she did.

You see, you can't receive from God beyond actual faith. If this woman had cooperated with God and had faith to believe, what do you think would have happened? If she had cooperated, she would have begun to walk; she would have been healed right then.

The Holy Spirit prompts, but you must respond

Too many people think that God's healing power is just going to move on them and make them do something whether they want to do it or not, or whether they cooperate with His power or not. This isn't true. That would make the Holy Spirit an evil spirit. Evil spirits use force, and they try to drive a person. The Holy Spirit urges, prompts, or gives you a gentle push, but then it is up to you to respond. It is up to you as to whether or not to obey.

A man held a meeting and a woman had written a friend to come to the meeting to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This woman came and after being in two of this man's services came forward to receive the Holy Spirit. He laid hands on her and prayed and the Holy Ghost came upon her, but she didn't respond.

He knew exactly what was wrong with her, but sometimes you can't tell people what's wrong because you know they aren't ready to receive what you have to say. He laid hands on her again and the same thing happened. She still didn't respond. He knew it would take some time to get her to see where her trouble was and it was getting late, so he turned the meeting over to the pastor.

After the meeting, the man left to go to the church parsonage and noticed this woman sitting in a car looking disappointed. The man asked the Lord to tell him how to help her. The Lord showed him to share **Acts 2:4** with her. He asked her to read the scripture. She read, ***“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”***

He said to her, “Sister, who does that scripture said did the speaking in tongues?”

She said, “Well, it says the Holy Ghost did.”

He had her read the scripture again and finally after reading it the fourth time she was beginning to catch on. She read it slowly this time.

Astonished, she said, “Why, **they** did the speaking.” Astonished she took the man's bible out of the case to see what version it was, thinking his version might say something different than her bible did. She realized it was the same version as her bible.

She then said, “I always thought that the Holy Ghost did the speaking.” The Lord had already shown the man that this was the case. He then shared several other scriptures with her to show her that this was not an isolated incident. (**Acts 10:44-46.**)

Then suddenly she said, “I see it.”

He said, “That's two witnesses. Let's get three.” He then had her turn to **Acts 19:6**: ***“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and THEY spake with tongues, and prophesied.”***

He then asked her “I want to ask you another question. Did the power of God come on you when I laid hands on you?”

She responded with, “Yes.”

Then he asked her “Was your tongue trying to say something that was not English when that happened.”

She answered, “Why yes, it was all I could do to keep from speaking it.”

He then told her; “**You** needed to cooperate with the Holy Ghost. When the Holy Ghost gives you utterance, **you** must act in faith and speak out that utterance. You are supposed to yield to Him.”

The woman then understood that faith is cooperating with God. As soon as she realized that she had to cooperate with the promptings of the Holy Spirit she immediately began to speak in tongues.

Some think they have to tarry. One man in a church I was at came forward to receive, realizing that he had been waiting and waiting, but not acting on receiving the Holy Spirit. After laying hands on him he was immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between tarrying (waiting) and receiving!

One man told a pastor that he had been seeking the Holy Ghost for 19 years. The pastor told him, “No you haven’t! They that seek shall find!” He told him that if he had truly been seeking, he would have found. (Matthew 7:7.)

So many people hang around the altar. It’s time to quit hanging around the altar and start acting on the Word of God. Faith is acting on God’s Word. Faith is an act; it is taking God at His Word.

A man held a meeting and the Lord instructed him to have everyone that had something wrong in their bodies from the waist down to come forward. There was a man there that had been burned over the lower part of his body and it left him unable to walk. He just scooted his feet along on the floor.

Twelve people came forward for healing, including the man that had been burned. He was the first one in line. The preacher waited until all twelve were together down in front of the church. He then told them what else God had told him to tell them.

The preacher came to the man with the burned feet and asked him, “Can you run?”

It took the man by surprise, and he said, “Oh, my God, no! I can’t even walk, much less run.”

The man holding the meeting told him, “Well the Lord told me to tell you to start running.”

This man didn't give it a second thought. He just turned around and started scooting up the aisle as fast as he could. The third time he came around the aisle, the Spirit of the Lord came on the preacher, and he jumped off the platform. He grabbed him by the hand and ran around the building with him. When they got back to the front he was walking – not scooting – but walking normally! He was perfectly healed!

If the preacher had not been able to get him to act and cooperate with the Holy Ghost, he could not have helped him. Faith, you see, is acting on God's Word, doing whatever He says to do in the Word, or whatever He may say to us to do by the Spirit.

To show you how great a miracle this was, two men showed up the next night for the meeting. They were brothers in their seventies. One of these men wanted to hear the man's testimony that got healed. They were the neighbors to the man that had gotten burned and had gotten healed.

These brothers saw the man that had been burned working in his yard. They thought he must have crawled out there to do the work. But they saw him standing and walking. When they questioned him, he told these brothers what had happened to him, and he invited them to the next service.

Both brothers came to the service, and they saw the miraculous. Because of this they believed in the Lord, and both came forward and received Jesus as their Savior. The miraculous power of God convinced those fellows of the reality of Jesus the Savior and Healer!

One of the other twelve that had come forward in the previous meeting for prayer was a woman. The preacher asked her if she was ready to run. She said, "I can't. I can't."

The preacher told her, "All I know to do is just tell you what the Lord told me, and that was to run."

She turned around and scooted up the aisle a few steps. The preacher told her to turn around. She turned around.

The preacher said, "You didn't want to do that did you? You resented those instructions from the Lord and everything inside you rose up against what He said, didn't it?"

She replied, "It sure did."

The preacher told her "Go sit down. I can't help you."

God can't help folks who won't cooperate with Him. But get this fact. Faith is giving substance to things hoped for. Faith will eventually bring into reality what you have hoped for.

If you believe you will act

A man was given a vision by the Lord concerning his ministry. The Lord spoke to him and said, "IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU WILL ACT."

This also relates to God's Word. If we believe God's Word, we will act as though it is true. Remember, faith is giving substance to the things hoped for. This man given the vision did not act on what the Holy Spirit had said to him. He had no substance in his ministry. Later, he acted on what Jesus said, and his faith gave substance and he received.

People want healing for their bodies, and we go to **Acts 14:8-10** to show them how to get it.

Acts:14:8-10 *"**And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,¹⁰ Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.**"*

Paul perceived that this impotent man had faith to be healed, yet the man was still sitting there crippled until he acted on faith. The real truth is that every believer has faith to be healed.

Someone said, "If sick folks have faith, they are going to be healed."

That is wrong. You can't find anywhere in the bible where it says, "If you just have faith, you'll be healed." But the moment you begin to **act on the faith** that you do have, your faith will work, and you will be healed.

Yes, the devil will contest you every inch of the way. But if you keep acting in faith, you will be healed.

If you can't get people to receive and act upon God's Word, there isn't any way that you or even God can help them.

Suppose you asked me for my bible, and I said, "Here it is." I might hand the bible to you, but if you fell on the floor and begged me to give it to you then people would think you were crazy. They would think, "Why in the world didn't they just take it?"

Spirit things are just as real as material things. God offers you a gift – healing, financing, the Holy Spirit. But, if all you do is fall on the floor and beg God to give it to you, then you will never receive it.

That is unbelief. Faith receives NOW. Remember, *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).”*

Faith is acting on the Word that you have heard. It is **YOU** who must act on the Word, so get ready and act **NOW**.