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SESSION _____

**SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION
SESSION 79 – FAITH PART 18
SIX BIG HINDRANCES TO FAITH**

1 Timothy 6:12

“FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

I want you to notice particularly the first clause of this verse, ***“fight the good fight of faith....”*** The only fight the believer is called upon to fight is the fight of faith. Sometimes I hear folks say that they are going to fight the devil. But I don’t know why they would want to do that because they wouldn’t be a match for him anyway. Besides that, Jesus has already defeated the devil for us. Jesus was our substitute when He defeated Satan, death, hell, and the grave, in his redemptive work!

Then again you may hear people say, “I’m going to fight sin.” Well, I am not. I am going to preach the cure for sin. There is no use fighting sin. I have a cure for it. Jesus is the cure. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (**Hebrews 9:26**).

No, the only fight the believer is called upon to fight is the good fight of faith. And there is a fight to faith, for this text says, ***“FIGHT the good fight of faith...”*** (**1 Timothy 6:12**).

If there is a fight to faith, then there must be enemies or hindrances to faith. If there weren’t any enemies or hindrances to faith, there would not be any fight to it. So, we are going to learn about the six big hindrances to faith.

LACK OF FAITH COMES FROM LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WORD

Romans 10:17

“¹⁷ So, then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Many people confess their lack of faith when actually they don’t lack faith at all. They are only failing to release their faith. A lack of faith is really not their problem. In other words, they have faith; they just aren’t exercising it or releasing it.

The real reason for lack of faith is a lack of knowledge of God's Word, for ***"...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*** (Romans 10:17.) Someone once said, "Yes, that is my problem. I don't know much about the Word, but I need faith." Well, you can't get faith any other way except through the Word!!!

Someone else said, "I am praying God will give me faith." Well, they were wasting their time. They might as well be twiddling their thumbs, or saying, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," because it would do just about as much good as it would by praying for faith.

If you will take the time to feed upon the Word of God yourself and listen to the many ministry gifts that God has set in the church, such as the ministry gift of the teacher, then faith and life will come to your spirit because Jesus said, ***"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*** (John 6:63.)

You can receive revelation knowledge through reading and meditating upon the Word and through hearing the Word being preached.

A lack of knowledge will hinder us and hold us in bondage because we cannot act upon God's Word beyond actual knowledge of God's Word. Faith will grow with an understanding of the Word. If your faith is not growing, then your understanding of the Word is not growing. A lack of knowledge of what God's Word says, a lack of knowledge of our redemptive rights in Christ Jesus, are often the reasons for unbelief.

HINDRANCE NUMBER ONE

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE NEW CREATION

2 Corinthians 5:17

"17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

A lack of understanding of what the new creation is and what it means to be a new creature can hinder the believer's faith life. Many believers do not know that they are new creatures. They think God just forgave them of their sins.

It wouldn't help the sinner a bit in the world if all the sinner received was the forgiveness of sins. He would still go to hell, for he would still be a child of the devil. No, the sinner must be

born again. He has to become a new creature in Christ Jesus. He must receive a new nature – God’s nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Therefore, we as believers are not just forgiven sinners. We are not poor, staggering, sinning, barely-getting-along church members. We are not living down at the end of the block on Barely-Getting-Along Street next to Grumble Alley! That is not who we are!

We are new creatures, created by God in Christ Jesus, with the very life and nature of God, sons of God, and heirs of God – joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:17.)

Many people do not know they have eternal life. They think of themselves only as being saved from sin. But John writes in his first epistle, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that you have ETERNAL life...”* (1 John 5:13.) When you know what you have and who you are in Christ, it makes all the difference in the world.

ONE MAN’S TESTIMONY OF BEING A NEW CREATION

A young man of 15 was bedridden for two years until he received salvation and healing. He had read 2 Corinthians 5:17 that said, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”* For a few years after he was saved and healed, he attended his denomination. He knew that he was a new creature.

He would go to school and told everyone that he was a new creature in Christ Jesus. He never mingled with those of the world because he “was a new creature.” He wasn’t afraid of being criticized or talked about. Criticism never bothered him. He just kept testifying to his schoolmates, his teachers, the principal, the school superintendent and to everyone he came in contact with that he was a new creature in Christ.

Right after he was healed, he ran into a friend of his, a good pal before he had become bedfast. They started talking and his friend brought up some of the things that they had done before he was bedfast. This young man, now a new creature, had been good at picking locks and he and this friend had done that, and candy was stolen. When his friend brought it up, the young man just sat with a look on his face of “what are you talking about?” He remembered what he had done, but he wasn’t that person anymore. He was a new creature.

At one point in their conversation his friend said, “What’s the matter with you? You act as if you don’t even know what I am talking about.” He pointed to a building that they had gone in

and gotten candy. His friend was laughing about what they had done, but the young man just sat there.

The young man finally said to the friend, “The boy who was with you that night is dead.”

His friend said, “You didn’t die! I see you sitting right here.”

The young man said, “I wasn’t talking about physical death.” He told him he was looking at what happened on the inside and told him about the new man on the inside. He told him the real person he was looking at had become a new creature in Christ Jesus. He quoted **2 Corinthians 5:17** to him. He told him he looked the same on the outside but the man responsible for that stealing had become a new creature and hadn’t stolen anything since.

The young man’s friend knew that the young man had been a liar in the past, so the young man told his friend that the new creature that he was had not been telling lies and didn’t plan on ever telling lies again. He told him that he was a new creature in Christ Jesus and was born again.

The young man’s friend looked at him as though he was crazy and walked away from him and kept peeking back at him. He must have thought there was definitely something wrong with this young man, yet there wasn’t anything wrong. He was a new creature in Christ.

HINDRANCE NUMBER TWO

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF OUR PLACE IN CHRIST

The second hindrance to faith is a lack of understanding of our place in Christ and of Christ’s place in our lives. We should go through the New Testament, particularly the epistles and although they were written to individual churches and people, we must realize they were not just for specific people or churches, but also for us. We should write down entire phrases that tell us who we are in Christ and what we have in Christ; because what we write down, we seem to remember better.

You will find expressions in the epistles such as, “in Christ,” “in whom,” and “in Him.” Expressions such as these occur 133-134 times in the New Testament.

An example is found in 1 John 4:4 where it says, ***“...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”*** Another one is in **Colossians 1:13**, which says, ***“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”***

“Who” refers to God, the Father. If you go through the New Testament and confess, “This is who I am. This is what I have,” you will find life will be different for you.

A pastor asked a preacher to hold a meeting at his church and teach these precepts to his congregants. One woman that had been to bible college and was the Christian education director at the church where this meeting was being held, did what the visiting preacher had taught. She started finding these scriptures and then began speaking the scriptures over herself.

She later told the pastor that she felt like she had been “born again, again.” She was walking in the light of what she had possessed as a believer all along, but now she was acting on it and walking in that light.

Your faith will be hindered if you do not know the “who” and the “in” of who you are in Christ.

HINDRANCE NUMBER THREE

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The third hindrance to faith is a lack of understanding of righteousness – what it is and what it gives to the believer. A lack of understanding of righteousness holds more people in bondage than anything else.

God imputed righteousness to those in the Old Testament whose sins had been “covered” by the blood of bulls and goats. In the New Testament **2 Corinthians 5:21** says, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin and by that new birth and we have become a righteous new creature.

God did not make any unrighteous new creatures. We are recreated by God in Christ Jesus. He made us righteous new creatures in Christ. We are now sons and daughters of God who stand before God as though we had never sinned. We can stand in His presence without any sense of embarrassment, guilt, or condemnation. We can come boldly to the throne of grace because of Jesus’ righteousness in us.

When we were born again, our sins were remitted (put away) because our past life stopped existing. God said that He would not remember our transgressions (**Isaiah 43:25**). Since God doesn’t remember them, why should we???

You may have sinned since you were born again and may be weak in some areas, but the good news is **1 John 1:9** says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

When a believer sins, he feels guilty, and he has a sense of unrighteousness. He feels embarrassed and spiritually inferior to come into God’s presence. But God does two things for the believer who may have sinned.

First, when the believer confesses his sins, the Lord forgives him.

Second, the Bible says that God also cleanses us from all unrighteousness. “Unrighteousness” is the word righteous with the prefix “un” on the front of it. Unrighteousness simply means not righteous or non-righteous. According to **1 John 1:9** the believer is cleansed from non-righteousness; therefore, he is made righteous again because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin!

When you begin to see, this often people get healed. Many times, the reason folks are not able to receive healing is that they have been under condemnation and have thought God was mad at them. They fail to understand that they are the righteousness of God in Christ (**2 Cor. 5:21**).

AS GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS, RECEIVE THE BOUNTIFUL FULLNESS OF GOD

A great man of faith called Smith Wigglesworth told of a time in England when a minister who was eighty years of age asked Wigglesworth if he would come and pray for him because he wanted to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Wigglesworth went to him, and they read the scriptures and began to pray.

Wigglesworth said that he had never heard a more beautiful prayer than the one he heard this man pray. But Wigglesworth told the man that God wasn’t interested in beautiful prayers. God is interested in faith. As they prayed the elderly minister said, “God make me holy.”

The elderly gentleman thought that before he could receive the Holy Ghost that he had to be made holy. Wigglesworth then told the man to get up off his knees and explained to him that he was holy already because he was a believer, and that the blood of Jesus had cleansed him from all sin.

As Wigglesworth told him this, the elderly minister began to speak in tongues. He did not have to do anything else in addition to being born again in order to be filled with the Spirit.

When we know that we are the righteousness of God in Christ, then we step out of the narrow place of failure and weakness in which we have lived, into the boundless fullness of God

HINDRANCE NUMBER FOUR:

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING OUR RIGHT TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS

The fourth hindrance to faith is a lack of understanding of our privilege and right to use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This lack of understanding will hold us in bondage and will give us a sense of weakness. When we come to understand what the Name of Jesus will do, we can take our rightful position of authority over Satan and enjoy victory.

Most believers understand that the Name of Jesus can be used in prayer because of what Jesus said in **John 16:23 and 24**

John 16:23-24

***“²³...Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father **IN MY NAME**, he will give it you.
²⁴ Hitherto have ye asked nothing **IN MY NAME**: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”***

I also suggest that the Name of Jesus can be used everywhere that the Word indicates it can. Jesus Himself said that in the verses we just quoted in John.

Jesus also said something else about the use of His name in **Mark chapter 16**.

Mark 16:15-18

“15 ...Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 and these signs shall follow them that believe; **IN MY NAME** shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

These signs follow those who believe the gospel. These signs aren't just for the early church or just for the apostles. These signs are not just for preachers, but they are for all believers.

Believers can cast out devils in Jesus' Name. This is you and me!

Also, I do not believe Jesus is just referring in **Mark 16:17** to casting devils out of someone who is demon possessed. I believe He is referring to the fact that every believer has authority over demons and evil spirits in the Name of Jesus.

Verse 18 says that in Jesus' Name believers will speak with new tongues. In his Name believers shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover and become well.

The bible says another way to receive healing is to call for the elders of the church (**James 5:14-15**). But what if you are off somewhere where you can't get in contact with the elders? You see, you need to learn how to appropriate healing for yourself, for it legally belongs to you in your redemption.

I am thoroughly convinced that we ought to leave the pastor free to take care of the spiritual babies in a church who do not know how to act on the Word for themselves. But the older Christians should learn to appropriate healing for themselves. If you cannot appropriate healing for yourself, then by all means, send for help.

I believe we should learn to use the name of Jesus. We should know that His Name has authority on the earth today and that His Name belongs to us.

HINDRANCE NUMBER FIVE

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ACTING ON THE WORD

The fifth hindrance to faith is a lack of understanding about acting upon the Word. We should stop trying to make God's Word work and start acting on the Word. The bible says in **Proverbs 3:5**, ***"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."*** All that is necessary for you to do in any situation is ask, "What has God said?" or "What does God's Word have to say about this?" If we know that the word is true and if we act as though it is true, it becomes a reality in our lives.

Many people ask why they do not get their healing. They say they know the scriptures quoted on healing. They begin to quote **Matthew 8:17** which says, ***"...Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."*** Another scripture often quoted is from **1 Peter 2:24**, which says, ***"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."***

ACT LIKE THE WORD IS TRUE!

The answer to their question is “Have you ever acted like those verses of scripture were true?” Often it startles them.

Here is the testimony of A.B. Simpson who just acted like the Word is true and received his healing. His testimony was in a Christian magazine.

“At the age of forty-six, Dr. A.B. Simpson, who was a Presbyterian Minister at the time and later founded the Christian Missionary Alliance denomination was told he was dying of a heart condition and only given about six months to live.

Dr. Simpson said he had heard many testimonies of healing even in his own church. He took a short leave of absence and went up to his farm where he could spend a lot of time studying the word of God.

At the end of two weeks, Dr. Simpson took a piece of paper and a pencil and wrote, ‘After searching the Word of God for two weeks, I am convinced the Bible teaches that divine healing is for us today. And I, this day, accept Jesus Christ as my healer and declare that I am now healed from heart trouble and that I am well. And I promise God to use this new-found strength and life and energy entirely for His purpose and to further the gospel. I promise God I will share this truth of healing with others and will help them.’

After that time Simpson went to a luncheon where he was to be the speaker. All that came to him to speak about was the one word out of **Matthew 8:17**, “Himself.” So, Dr. Simpson opened his bible and read the entire verse and told the audience he wanted to focus his attention on that word “Himself.” Then he gave them his testimony about how he had been searching healing in the bible and had come to the conclusion that Jesus was still the healer today.

After the luncheon, he was invited to go mountain climbing by the men that had come to the luncheon. The thought immediately came to him that he would not be able to because of his heart condition. But then he remembered he had declared his healing, so he accepted the invitation and went. Up to this point, he had not really seen or felt his healing, but had just accepted it and declared it by faith.

All the way up the mountain, every time he got his mind off the word of God, he would begin to feel the symptoms of his heart condition. But he overcame these feelings

because as he claimed the Word again for his healing, all the symptoms would go away. He fought this battle all the way up the mountain. But when he got up the mountain, he walked about victorious without any symptoms!

Dr Simpson was seventy years old when he wrote that testimony and said he never had any more symptoms whatsoever after that mountain-climbing experience.”

P.C. Nelson said that more people lose their healing over a counterattack more than anything else. For an example, an assistant chaplain during the Korean War said the United States took one mountain over there in battle fourteen different times and lost it. Actually, they lost it thirteen times and the fourteenth time, they kept it.

It is the same way with faith. Real faith holds on to the blessings of God. Real faith is the child of the knowledge of the Word. Dr Simpson acted on the Word and got real faith from it. Instead of trying to believe, HE JUST ACTED UPON THE WORD. He acted like the word is true!

HINDRANCE NUMBER SIX

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT HOLDING FAST TO OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

The sixth hindrance to faith is a lack of understanding that we are to hold fast to our confession of faith. In **Hebrews 10:23** it says, *“...let us hold fast our profession [confession].”* Our faith keeps pace with our confession.

Hebrews 10:23

“23 Let us HOLD FAST the PROFESSION [confession] OF OUR FAITH without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)”

Romans 10:10

“For with the HEART man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth CONFESSION is made unto salvation.”

Mark 11:23

“23... that whosoever shall SAY unto this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea;’ and shall not doubt in his HEART but shall believe that those things which he SAITH shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he SAITH.”

A preacher was ministering in a church and a young Full Gospel youth minister came to him and told him that he and his wife were told it was impossible for them to have children. They asked the preacher to pray for them. They talked and the wife was encouraged to start saying that they would have a child instead of they would like to have a child.

Twelve months later the visiting preacher received a letter that they had a baby girl. All this couple needed to do was act on the word.

Faith is measured by our confession. Our usefulness in the Lord is measured by our confession. Sooner or later, we become what we confess.

There is a confession of our hearts and a confession of our lips and when these two come into harmony, we become mighty in our prayer lives.

There is a scriptural law that you must learn that comes from the words of Jesus in **Mark 11:23**; ***“...he shall have whatsoever he saith.”***

The scriptural law is this: Our confessions rule us. In other words, you are what you say. We see an example of this in **Mark 5:28, 34**

Mark 5:28; 34

“28 For she SAID, if I may touch but his clothes, I SHALL BE WHOLE...” 34 And he [Jesus] said unto her, “Daughter, THY FAITH hath made thee WHOLE; go in peace and be whole of thy plague.”

What she said was her faith speaking, and it came to pass!

We have discussed six big hindrances to our faith. By recognizing these six hindrances to our faith and by renewing our minds with the Word of God, we will cause our faith to grow. Every believer can see the promises of God come to pass in their life if they will take the time to meditate on who they are in Christ and what they have in Christ and act like God’s word is true!