

The Weaver!

My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me.

I cannot choose the colors He worketh steadily.

Oft times he weaveth sorrow; and I in foolish pride,
forget he sees the upper and I the under-side.

Shall God unfold the canvas and explain the reason why, not 'til the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly.

The dark threads are as needful in the weaver's skillful hand, as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

He knows, He loves, He cares; nothing this truth can dim. He gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Author: Corrie Ten Boom

How Do We Grow Our Faith?

People tell us that the most important attribute or bases to be a Christian is **we must have faith!** They are quick to quote *Hebrews 11:6 NLT* which says, “**And it is impossible to please God without faith...**” Too often people want to quote only the first half of this verse, but we should complete the thought that God intended us to hear. “**...Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.**” We all want the opportunity to receive His rewards, but we struggle with our faith, so we feel like “I am not pleasing God, so why should He reward me.” Do not get me wrong, that our focus should be on the rewards, no life will always be based on our relationship with our Father in heaven, but we often identify some of God’s love through the rewards that come.

God’s Word speaks of the rewards in *James 1:17 NLT* which says, “Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.”

We are told from the pulpit, “**we need more faith**” but the question is, how does our faith grow or evolve? How do I reach a deeper faith in God, in my life? *Hebrews 11:1 NLT* says, “Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.” In this verse we learn that **faith is the action of HOPE**. So, our misunderstanding has been that our faith stands alone on its own merits, like it is the foundational block we build our lives with. However, *Hebrews 11:1* says our faith is built on the **foundation of our hope**, who our God is and the reason He made us.

Lots of people say they have faith, but they hold their fingers crossed behind their back hoping it might work out the way they want. That is not faith, no, it is a form of gambling, like rolling the dice hoping it comes up right. *James 1:5-6 NLT* says, “If you need wisdom, ask **our generous God**, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. **But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.**” David experienced this same challenge, we call **fear**, but he had learned how to overcome it. Samuel recorded in *1 Samuel 30:6 MSG*, “**And suddenly David was in even worse trouble.** There was talk among the men, bitter over the loss of their families, of **stoning him. David**

strengthened himself with trust in his God.” But he did not stop with just encouraging himself, the next verse shows **he went directly to God for direction to overcome the challenge.** 1 Samuel 30:7 says, “He ordered Abiathar the priest, son of Ahimelech, ‘Bring me the Ephod so I can consult God.’” One of the biggest struggles we have, is we encourage ourselves, but we forget to run back to God and His Word for direction on how to overcome the challenge.

Our faith is often **hindered by the fear** that if our miracle does not happen the way we think we need it to, then our lives will be destroyed. **Fear will always be the enemy of our hope. Fear creates doubt** and the feeling that there is no hope. Fear and doubt put us in check to where we feel like we cannot move in any direction except the wrong direction. The longer we stay stagnant allows our fear and doubts to become much stronger than us.

That is why so many people fail in their faith and give up. Let us look at our lives using the analogy of our Hope as being a tree with roots and the roots of the **tree of Hope** produce our faith. We know the roots send nourishment up into the tree so it can grow tall and strong while swaying in the wind. The roots also grow deeper into the **rich soil**, so it has more nourishment for our **tree of hope**, which gives us extra strength, so our faith stands firm through the storms of life. Matthew 13:1-9 talks about four kinds of soil where our **tree of Hope** can be planted. The first was the seed that fell on **top of the path** so the seed cannot grow roots to feed the tree, so it never started growing. The second, is where the seed fell on **shallow ground** and the roots were not protected so the withered and died. The third seed **fell among the thorns** and was choked out and died. But the fourth was where the seed got planted in the **rich soil**, so the tree could flourish, growing tall and strong. **The rich soil is the Word of God. Your faith will always be easy prey for Satan without God’s Word.** All the roots need to grow down into the rich soil, the Word of God, for each of us to live a life of faith.

The roots of our **tree of Hope** that produces our faith are:

- **Knowing God is real and exists.**
- **Realizing God is a loving God and cares about each of us.**
- **How we see ourselves overcoming our failures and challenges with God's help.**
- **The sum of our experiences with God.**
- **How we can trust God.**
- **The Peace of God.**

The first root makes us decide whether we believe God is real and exists.

Scripture made it clear earlier in this article in the second half of Hebrews 11:6b that said, "...**Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists** and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." There is nothing to hope for until you identify **God is real**, like it says in *Isaiah 45:5 NLT*, "I am the Lord; there is no other God..." Also in *Isiah 43:10-11 NLT* it expounds on this fact when it says, "'But you are my witnesses, O Israel!' says the Lord. 'You are my servant. **You have been chosen to know me, believe in me**, and understand that **I alone am God**. There is no other God—there never has been, and there never will be. I, yes I, am the Lord, and there is no other Savior...'" All hope is based on the fact you realize that God is not only real, but He's also alive and wants to be in each of our lives every day, every breath.

The catch here is that once we believe in God then we are faced with the fact that if God is the only God, which He is, then we also have to accept that the Bible, His Word, is also authentic and we have to see the whole Bible as absolute truth as it says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT "**All Scripture is inspired by God** and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." This truth is also seen in Numbers 23:19 NLT which says, "God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?" The reason this whole universe is here is because God wanted a place, He could create people and share His love with them and take care of them.

Here is a good comparison so you can tell if the Word is alive for you. Many might think the purpose for the Bible was just to record all the events that have happened since God chose to create the universe, but that thinking is far from the truth. Genesis chapter 1, 2 is the beginning of a love story that began and will never end, it will continue beyond Jesus' return, for all eternity. When we can see that as the whole truth, then the Word of God has become alive for you. God's Word is a love story of how He has remained faithful to what He started in the beginning.

The First Root: Without the knowledge that **God is real and exists**, you might as well go home and give up. God is real and He is wanting to be closer to each of us to prove that truth.

The Second root requires us to realize God is a loving God and cares about each of us. Without love all that is left is fear of everything. 1 John 4:7 NLT reminds us, "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for **love comes from God.** **Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.**" We are not speaking of the love the world calls love, but the deep pure love of God He wants each of us to experience. Pure love will not have any condemnation, hate, bitterness, resentment, and any other attributes of Satan's. Pure love only sees another person and loves them right where they are in life, that is what is called unconditional love. Then in verse 16 John continues with, "**We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.**" So, the definition of who and what God is, can be expressed by saying, **He is a real being/person who is love or, God is the manifestation of LOVE!** He, God was love before time began.

Love generates good, so they go hand in hand as seen in *Jeremiah 29:11 NLT* which says, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are **plans for good** and not for disaster, **to give you a future and a hope.**" This may seem simple, but the truth is, most of us come to God through trials, challenges and failures that causes us to put up walls between ourselves and God. That barrier makes us think we do not deserve God's forgiveness which hinders us from putting our roots deep in the **rich soil**, the **Word of God** and believe everything it says. Often, we judge God's love based on whether something good, bad, or horrific happens in our lives. When it is bad or horrific, we do not think God loves us. How could God allow this to happen to us? Do those words sound familiar to

each of us? God's love never changes, but we change like the waves blown on the sea. Our enemy is Satan, and he wants you to always blame God for what happens.

Once we know and understand the difference between good vs evil or right from wrong makes us fully aware that we are sinful people. God realized our failures and because He is LOVE He sent His Son to pay our price. God's love brought the answer to our sin in Romans 5:8-11 NLT which says, "But **God showed his great love for us** by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ** had made us friends of God." You might ask why God's love and forgiveness is so important? Until each of us accept the continuous love and forgiveness God is pouring out, we will not believe we deserve or expect a loving God to care about us, blocking our spiritual roots from growing into a deep relationship with God. The deeper our relationship grows into God the more we see how sinful we truly are and how much we needed Jesus to cover our sins. Paul, who wrote sixty percent of the New Testament, expressed this feeling in 1 Timothy 1:15 NLT "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and **I am the worst of them all.**" To get this root deep into the rich soil, we must decide to see ourselves from God's perspective. He sees us through Jesus Christ, so we are forgiven and in right standing with God.

The Second Root: Without understanding that **God is the manifestation of love** we will never believe He is a good God and genuinely cares about us. **You will never experience the goodness of God until you can feel the forgiveness of God!**

The third root is determined by how we see ourselves overcoming our failures and challenges with God's help. The first step in overcoming any failure or challenge is realizing we can win with God's help. Luke 1:37 NLT says, "For nothing is impossible with God." When we realize that **we need God for all our battles** we have made the most important decision for the battle. I am not saying the battle is over because we still must walk through the battle but now, we are fighting with God on our side, and we are not alone. That is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

Paul speaking, “We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. **We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure**, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, **we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God**, who raises the dead. And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. **We have placed our confidence in him**, and he will continue to rescue us.”

Jesus records the reason for our confidence in John 17:14-15 NLT which says, “I have given them your **Word**. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.**” Failures and challenges will always be a part of the Christian life, but it does not mean that we must fight our battles on our own. Our goal is to not allow our failures and challenges to slow us down from following God’s plan for our lives. The catch is, as we walk through our failures and challenges to victory, we need to take time to see what God is teaching us. That may happen as we walk along the path or after we have gotten out on the other side of the battle to victory.

James 1:2-4 NIV expresses that growth when he wrote, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” So, the next time you must face any failure or challenge remember what God said to each of us in Isaiah 41:13 NLT, “For I hold you by your right hand -I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.”

The Third Root: We must accept the truth that God is a good God and cares about each of us and add the fact that **we can overcome every failure or challenge with God’s help and His promise to be there**. With that understanding we can see the light at the end of the tunnel and know **God will help us reach the victory**. That enables us to get a **glimmer of the trust that is strengthening the roots of the tree of Hope**.

The **Fourth root** is **the sum of our experiences with God**. How can we hope for something unless we have experienced life with God since we met Him as God, our Father, Lord, Redeemer, Discipliner, Provider and Savior? Just like a child

knows they are hungry, but they do not know how to feed themselves until someone teaches them. So, our experiences become teaching tools that play a significant role in how we grow and mature, helping us develop in our faith. This process is how we determine what we think and feel about God.

Often, we blame God for our failures when we start out but as we get to know our Father, we learn He is the one who is trying to help us overcome our bad decisions or attacks from Satan. Our loving Father would never be the cause of our pain on purpose.

Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." Based on this Scripture, we would think we are supposed to forget the past but that is not what God is saying. **We need to let go of all our failures and disappointments** of the past because God is making a new path for each of us as we walk our journey of life with Him. David wrote in *Psalms 103:12 NLT* "He (God) has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west."

However, we are **not** told to forget all of God's goodness or all he has done for us as seen in 1 Chronicles 16: 8-13 NLT which says, "Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness. Let the whole world know what he has done. Sing to him; yes, sing his praises. Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds. Exult in his holy name; rejoice, you who worship the Lord. Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him. Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given; you children of his servant Israel, you descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones."

Remembering all God has done for each of us helps our faith grow and trust God more. It is like driving a car, we have a large windshield in front to see where we are going but we are given a small rear-view mirror to see where we have come from. What I am saying is each of us need to stay focused on the road signs given by God for direction for our future. On the other hand, seeing where we came from, meaning every time God brought us through our challenges and failures, which strengthens our faith, helps us feel confident when the new road signs give us direction, so we can reach our next junction point of God's plan for our lives, in spite of the challenges that suddenly appear in our path. This is the process of our

faith growing in God or how we learn to trust God no matter what happens along our path of life.

The Fourth Root: Processing all that has gone on in our lives, has one purpose and that is to **prove to each of us how faithful God is every moment of our lives**. Our interpretation of that picture develops our belief of who our God is and what role we allow Him to be in our lives.

The **fifth root is How we can trust God**. Faith is always based on something we hope for as seen in Hebrews 11:1. The hidden piece that makes our faith work is **trust**. Lots of people say they have faith, but they hold their fingers crossed behind their back hoping, but not sure, it might work out the way they want. That kind of hope is not based on real trust and assurances. That is not trust, no, it is a form of gambling like rolling the dice hoping it comes up right. You would call that faith empty and dead or fake. *James records in chapter 2:17 NLT, "So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless."* We often consider the meaning of this passage that we must reach out to others and serve them. But in this setting our part in "good deeds" is **TRUST**, and with trust there is no end to the possibilities of what we can accomplish. When we do not trust God, the only person we are really fooling is ourselves. Real trust happens when we know in our hearts that our God is the complete answer for everything that comes our way in life.

All of us start off trusting God to some degree but because we still have doubts, we come close to God and then other times we pull back a little. Our problem is we still want to be in control. Once we figure out that we need God every breath, we change our approach based on our experiences with God and that helps us build a deeper trust in God. So instead of trying to drive ourselves we get on **God's train of life for the whole ride**. The challenge for each of us is that the train (our life journey) takes us where it chooses is best for our lives. We must surrender our very being and purpose for our lives to the conductor of the train, that is God. The unique fact about **trains** is they chose sometimes to go over or under or around and even sometimes through the challenges of life. Sometimes, we will go through long dark tunnels, but **Trust is the light by which we see in the dark times**. We do not have to see where we are going to know that we are safe and secure on our journey. No matter how long the tunnel is, **through the eyes of**

trust, we will always see the light at the end of the tunnel. That light is our God guiding us through each part of the track. **This is what TRUST looks like!** Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1 ESV, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Our Lord Jesus Christ got on **God’s train of life for Him**, and it took Him all the way through the Cross. But Jesus kept His focus on the purpose God intended for His life, which is what we must do for our lives. Getting on **God’s train of life** (God’s chosen purpose and plan for each of us) **brings a new peace** helping us discover the very purpose God made each of us.

The Fifth Root: When we learn to completely **TRUST God** in every area of our lives, with everything, we will find that **TRUST evolves into PEACE.**

The **sixth root** is **peace**. One of our difficulties as humans is we try to make sense of every experience we encounter so we can process it as if we wanted “**peace**” to be tangible. In some ways peace is tangible as seen in the writing of David. Psalm 23:1-6 NKJV **is the full expression of peace**. You will notice each segment of the passage has to happen before the next segment is possible. So, this Psalm shows how David walked through his progression of deeper relationship with God, helping him build a greater faith in his hope that God is all he needs to live by. For this growth to happen in David’s life, he had to find his quiet place to spend time with God, then his trust grew and strengthen him. Let us begin and watch how all this evolves into David becoming “a man after God’s heart” (1 Samuel 13: 14; Acts 134:22).

“**The Lord is my Shepard; I shall not want**” vs 1, tells us David understood that there is only one God and that brought a calmness in his spirit knowing he was safe and secure, in God’s arms. “**He makes me to lie down in green pastures...**” vs 2a, meaning David knew he would always prosper no matter what tried to break him, God would provide. “**...He leads me beside the still waters.**” Vs 2b, means God would bring David to a restful place with no stress or worry. Do you have that place yet? When we seek God, this is the place He is always trying to lead us, by His Spirit. Did you know that Sheep never eat unless it is calm and peaceful. David saw his life this way as he experienced God’s presence.

“**He restores my soul...**” Vs 3a shows us once we reach that peaceful place, God can repair, encourage, and inspire each of us for the next experience we are coming to. That is why it is important for us to continually hunger for those times

with God. **“...He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”** Vs 3b, shows us that once God has “repaired, encouraged, and inspired us we are ready to hear where and what God wants us to do next. God’s direction always comes during our quiet time with God. David could not have reached this point unless those segments had happened to get him to where he could hear God clearly.

Now the Psalm changes from working on repairing and strengthening David, to sending him out and facing life’s challenges. **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”** David had to face the lion and bear, which prepared him to face nations, traitors, and his family, and see victory. Each of us experiences these different levels of challenges in our lives every day. We often try to jump into battle to quickly instead of going to God so He can tell us how to approach the challenges in our life. Elijah did this several times in 2 Kings, when he gave direction on how the King of Israel should attack to have the edge to win the battle. With this understanding we can face all our challenges because we know, as seen in Romans 8:37 NIV **“...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”**. Notice you do not see any fear in David’s words because he kept his peace whether he was in his quiet place or in the middle of the battle because he knew that God was with him, and he was safe.

We see a growing faith in David because he has experienced God helping him win the battle, so he says, **“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...”** vs 5a. David not only sees the victory in the battle, but now he sees the blessings because he followed God’s directions. Deuteronomy 20:4 ESV says, **“For the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.”** The term “more than a conqueror” can only mean that someone else won the victory and gave it to us, as seen in 1 Corinthians 15:57 ESV which says, **“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

But David remains humble, not proudful regarding his victory, in the next segment of Scripture. Writing with the understanding of a Shepherd, he writes, **“...you anoint my head with oil...”** vs 5b, which most of us would think means we are being anointed to be the king or ruler. In this case the real meaning has a different

purpose. David put oil on the heads of the sheep to protect them from flies and other insects from getting on their head and ears. All the different insects that landed on the sheep's head would driving them crazy and cause them to bang their heads on things to stop the pain and torment. In the same way God is covering us with His Spirit, to keep us from allowing thoughts of how great we are because of our victories, which could make us think we are invincible. This mindset could cause us to go off on our own and pick battles that we will lose because God is not in it. We should always be confident when we face battles but remember God is the one who wins the battles for us, so we only fight the battles God shows us we are ready for.

David closes his Psalm with three declarations of God's blessings. "...**My cup runs over.**" Vs5b meaning God has given David blessings on top of blessings. We all want to think about getting a million dollars, but David was not speaking of all the money. No, he was speaking about feeling safe and secure. He knew no matter what would come in life, he knew he could handle it with God's help. You hear that clearly in the next segment, "**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...**" vs 6a. David had figured out the formula to live a safe and peaceful life. In the last declaration he makes a statement that says David would trust and follow God the rest of this life and throughout eternity. "...**And I will dwell in the house for the Lord forever.**" vs 6b David's peace was complete because he belonged to God and that is the only place he wanted to be. That is why David is called, "**a man after God's heart.**" The purpose of life is to be with God our Father in every moment of this life and the life here after.

The **Sixth root**: A deep relationship with God is the only way to have real peace. Once you get there, you will never want to leave. Remember you can still walk in peace even when you are in the battle. That position is the best way to win in the battles of life.

Let's restate the six different roots of our **tree of Hope** that produces our faith:

- **Knowing God is real and exists.**
- **Realizing God is a loving God and cares about each of us.**
- **How we see ourselves overcoming our failures and challenges with God's help.**
- **The sum of our experiences with God.**

- **How we can trust God.**
- **The Peace of God.**

I believe that now you can see how important each of these are in helping our faith grow, just like David's growth seen in Psalm 23. The growth of our faith requires all six elements in helping us to build a deeper relationship with God. **The hidden secret is that our faith is the nourishment that goes up the Tree of Hope** that makes it strong and secure. So, the next time you are facing a battle remember the difference between Adam and David. Adam learned how to hide from God, but David learned how to run to God as fast as possible. God will always be there for each of us waiting to help us!

So, once we develop our strong faith through a deep relationship and trust with our Father in heaven what do we do with it? Let us relate our faith as the light from the light house. A person can have all the lights on around them or be in the bright sunshine outside and still be in the deepest darkness moments of life's challenges. In the dark or night times of life, a person never sees the light house building, all they see is the bright light shining out from the light house, to give them direction to reach a safe place. In the same way when our faith is shining bright that person do not see us as who we are but the light within us leads them to God our Father. Shine your light bright so others can find their way to God.

I close with God's promises that will help each of our faiths to grow more every day. Hebrews 6:13-20 NLT says, "For example, there was **God's promise** to Abraham. Since there was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name, saying: 'I will certainly bless you and I will multiply your descendants beyond number. Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised. Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. So, God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary (for a deeper relationship with God). Jesus has already gone in there for

us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.” May God draw you closer and closer as you walk with Him.

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