

# Session 10

Growing as a Christ Follower - Faith and The 5 C's

# Faith

## *Building a Strong Faith*

As you have already learned, faith is the key to the Kingdom of God. The word faith is defined as ‘belief that is not based on proof.’ In God’s Kingdom we can no longer rely on our five senses, we must believe in the truths found in God’s Word.

Faith is like a muscle; the more we use it, the stronger it becomes. Just imagine how strong Moses’ faith must have been after he witnessed the plagues of Egypt, and how strong his faith was by the time he reached The Red Sea! The more we seek and obey God, the more He rewards us with stronger faith. The stronger our faith becomes, the more dependent we become on God. This bond with the Father is the healthiest relationship that we will ever have. It is a magnificent and divine connection.

As we trust in God for truth and direction, we grow as Christ Followers. We will begin to understand what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. We pray that you will come to understand how much God loves you, how devoted He is to you, and begin to understand God’s plan for your life.

Read the following verses.

Hebrews 11:6. What will please God?

Ephesians 3:18. What specifically does Paul want us to understand?

2 Corinthians 5:20. Along with being a child of God, what other assignment do we have?

## *Walking in Faith*

We previously read that being a Christ Follower does not exempt us from the storms of life. However, faith will guide us peacefully through these storms. By believing God’s promises more than we believe our circumstances, we can ‘walk on water,’ even though the storms are raging around us. Remember, as long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, He never even noticed the storm around him. But when he focused on the storm, he began to sink.

*“‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.*

*<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’*

*<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’” Matthew 14:29-31*

Peace, like faith, is one of the many Christ-like characteristics that we receive at salvation. We can experience this divine trait, through faith, when life becomes difficult. But, like everything else in God’s Kingdom, the key to peace, joy, hope, love, and grace, is faith!

Read 1 Samuel 17:40-50 to see how the size of our God always trumps the size of our storms. Even though our ‘five smooth stones’ may look puny compared to the ‘Goliath’ you are facing, remember, God is with you in every battle! When David faced Goliath, he did not talk about how dangerous Goliath was, he talked about how great God is.

Read the following verses.

1 Samuel 17:45. What sentence did David speak to Goliath, and how did it influence his victory?

Galatians 5:22-23. List the fruits of the Spirit.

### **Praying in Faith**

We have the awesome privilege of talking to the Creator of the universe. Amazing isn't it? So, it just makes sense that we combine this divine privilege with our faith. Philippians 4:6 tells us *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* This means that instead of worrying, we should ask God for help regarding our issue, then in faith thank Him for answering our prayer. Much like Paul did for Philemon when he said, *“I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers.”* Paul was thanking God for Philemon as he prayed for his friend.

Effective prayers in faith can include God's Word. A perfect example of this is Jesus in the wilderness when He was tempted by Satan. Matthew 4 tells us that Jesus refused Satan's every offer of fame and fortune with, *“It is written...”* Those three words sent Satan packing!

*“It is written...”*

This shows us how powerful the Word of God really is. When we begin our prayer with *“God, you said...”*, the spiritual world moves. For example, *“God, you said that You would supply all my needs according to your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I thank You for supplying every need I have in Jesus' Name.”* This type of prayer includes thanksgiving, the Word and faith.

Praying out loud can also be faith-building. Remember, Satan cannot read your mind. Only God is omniscient (all-knowing). According to God's Word, when we pray out loud Satan is put on notice and our faith becomes stronger. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

*“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* Romans 10:17 (ESV)

### **Philippians 4:6**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

### **John 8:44**

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

### **Revelation 12:10**

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. “

### **1 Corinthians 1:30**

“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

Write out a prayer request according to Philippians 4:6. Then pray it out loud.

How is your faith strengthened after praying like this?

### ***Believing Who You Are in Christ Jesus By Faith***

Jesus says in John 8:44 that Satan is the father of lies. In Revelation 12:10, a loud voice from heaven calls Satan the “accuser of the brethren.” Both are absolutely correct! As the accuser of the brethren, Satan tries to convince us that we are not who the Bible says we are. Yet, 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us *“It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”* In other words, Jesus allows us through His sacrifice to be righteous, holy, and redeemed. Our part in this divine relationship is to believe this truth and walk in it by faith. When we look at our sinful flesh to determine our righteousness, then our faith is weakened, and we are susceptible to Satan’s lies.

How much more wonderful each day when we remind ourselves who the Word says we are in Christ Jesus. As the sons and daughters of God:

- ▶ We are positioned in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3)
- ▶ We are anointed (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- ▶ We are holy (1 Corinthians 3:17)
- ▶ We are given grace and forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7)

We enjoy this abundant life by faith when we look past the natural and believe God’s Word. Living in peace and joy then becomes a way of life.

Even though we all have 'missed the mark' on more than one occasion, nothing we do, say, or think can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39). If God can take Saul of Tarsus, the great persecutor of the Church (Acts 9) and turn him into Paul an anointed apostle of Jesus Christ, then just imagine what He can do for us!

List a few ways you can remind yourself of your spiritual identity throughout your day.

What are the weapons we have been given to combat Satan's lies?

## Five Keys (5 C's) to Becoming More Like Jesus

Following Jesus transforms us. It changes us. It makes us more like Him. So how do we become more like Jesus? Below are five specific action points called, Five Core Commitments (5 C's). These biblical principles are keys to effective spiritual growth. They are key elements we find in Scripture that helped the disciples turn their world upside down! And for that reason, they are the heart and soul of what Christ Followers are called to do.

**Commit** to be a growing follower of Christ. A committed Christ Follower no longer leads their life; they choose to follow God in full obedience to Him. This happens when we realize we are sinners, recognize that Christ died for us, repent of our sins, and receive Him as our personal Savior. Following Christ is not an event; it is the greatest lifestyle in all the world! If you have not already done so, we invite you to begin this new life in Christ today. It is too good to miss out on! (Matthew 16:24)

**Celebrate** and live the fulfilling lifestyle. We celebrate our new life in Christ 24/7! He knows us by name, forgives all our sins, directs our steps, and gives us the power and desire to live for Him. He works all things together for our good and promises us that we will live forever with Him in heaven! It does not get any better than that! With this kind of a 'benefit package,' how could we help but celebrate? (Matthew 16:25, John 10:10).

**Connect** to others in personal vibrant relationships. To really grow in Christ, we cannot just be committed; we also need to connect with other believers. When we connect with others this makes a large church feel like family. One of the ways to connect is through groups. Join a group, grow in your walk with God, and make new friends along the way (Philippians 2:4).

**Communicate** and share the Good News to everyone everywhere. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." These words are the heartbeat of church, both locally and throughout the world. Lost people matter to God! Our part is to communicate the Good News with passion and power. We want to reach out to those in our communities and beyond, meeting needs

and sharing the love of Jesus. One by one we are making a difference for eternity. It is our greatest privilege! (Mark 16:15)

*Contribute* your time, passion, talents, and possessions. God's work on earth is accomplished by Christ Followers who share what they have to bless others. This is demonstrated in many ways. From the army of volunteers who so generously invest their time and talents, to the generosity of God's people giving their tithes and offerings, the results are the same. Those who contribute find purpose and fulfillment, and the work gets done with joy and excellence! So go ahead – find a place to serve and see for yourself that it truly is more blessed to give than to receive! (Matthew 16:27; Malachi 3:10; Mark 10:45)

If you are serious about following Jesus and becoming everything God created you to be, then let these Five Core Commitments (5 C's) be your roadmap!

### Summary Points:

- ▶ Faith is the key to the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ Faith will guide you peacefully through the storms of life.
- ▶ Remember that nothing we do, say, or think can separate us from the love of God.

### Next Steps:

- ▶ Study the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- ▶ Pray out loud privately to help build your faith.
- ▶ To know who you are in Christ, study God's Word daily.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of  
the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”  
Matthew 28:19