



FAITH





How not to Believe

1

Do not generalise Bible promises.

2

Do not be overoccupied with material blessings.

3

Do not exceed your measure of faith.

4

Do not struggle alone to maintain faith.

5

Do not hesitate to confess the facts.

6

Do not be overridden by disappointing experiences.

7

Do not isolate faith from other devotional exercises.

8

Do not expect all questions to be answered.

9

Do not depend on your goodness.

10

Do not forget God's works of the past.



How not to Believe

Introduction

- Christian life is one of faith from beginning to end —
 - *Saved by faith* (Eph 2:8)
 - Our Leader:
Author of Faith (Heb 12:1,2)
 - Our company/Church:
Family of faith (Gal 6:10)
 - Our lifeline:
Spirit of faith (2 Cor 4:13)
 - Our message:
Word of faith (Rom 10:8)
 - Our prayer:
Prayer of faith (Js 5:15)
 - Our converts (fruits):
Children of faith
eg Timothy— *My son in faith* (1 Tim 1:2)
 - Our warfare:
Fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12)

That's why the Bible says,

*“The just shall live by **faith!**”*

This outstanding statement occurs 4 times in the Bible:

Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38

Faith to Christian life is what water is to fish!

- Supreme importance of faith —
 - *Without faith, we cannot **please** God.* (Heb 11:6)
As much as, *without holiness we cannot **see** God*
(Heb 12:14)

■ Faith:

This subject is not only important,
it's also extremely **precious** —

1 Pet 1:7 ... *than gold* ...

Beware of *shipwrecking* your faith —

1 Tim 1:19

Shipwrecking in two ways:

a) by breaking the ship

— deviating from the faith

b) by sinking the ship

— deserting the faith

The first one is more common than the second:

i.e. corrupting the purity of faith

by wrong teaching on faith

■ Oftentimes we hear words like “simple faith.”

It's simple but profound;

it's simple but difficult.

If we don't apply Biblical principles,

“faith” becomes a complex matter or a complicated thing.

So much of false teaching has entered Christendom
in the matter of faith.

□ Faith protects other **armour** — Eph 6:16

“above all” holding the shield of faith

Therefore, Satan attacks our faith vehemently —

“fiery darts” (Eph 6:16)

That's why Jesus lamented —

“Will the Son of Man find faith when He comes?” (Lk 18:8b)

Faith must not only be **alive**, but also be **right**.

That's why we study *“How **not** to believe.”*

How not to Believe

1. Do not generalise Bible promises.

- The Bible is full of Promises.
Someone said, “It’s the cheque book for the Bank of Heaven!”
But we must understand the applicability of these promises.
There are various categories —
 - a) Personalised Promises
eg) Abraham — *“I’ll curse him who curses you”* (Gen 12:3b).
But now we are commanded to *“bless” those who “curse” us*
(Mt 5:44)
eg) Stephen prayed for those who stoned him (Acts 7:60)
The very next chapter: Saul converted
 - b) National/Tribal Promises
eg) *“Whichever land you tread upon ...”* Josh 1:2-4

But today, not places but people.

The present earth to be consumed ... (2 Pet 3:11-13)
New Heaven and New Earth

Walking around Temples and Mosques is foolish.
Don’t irritate and antagonise non-Christians by organising
so-called Prayer Walks in pilgrim centres.

— Shaking off the dust was only for the villages in Israel,
not India (Mt 10:5,6,14)
 - c) Messianic Promises
eg) *None of “His” bones shall be broken* (Psa 34:20)
Applicable to Jesus only (Jn 19:36)

i.e. the Passover Lamb —

“*not one bone to be broken*” (Ex 12:43,46)

Not even applicable to the saved thief! (Jn 19:32,33)

d) Situational Promises

eg) Money purse

— Don't carry (Mt 10:5,10)

— Do carry (Lk 22:35,36)

Then what does 2 Cor 1:20 mean?

“*IN CHRIST*” — mentioned twice

i.e. Redemptive blessings

Context vv 21,22 ...

i.e. Eternal Life

Righteousness

Holy Spirit

Divine Nature

Resurrection

■ Cannot God use any promise to speak to us personally?

God can;

but check your inner conviction by the Holy Spirit.

Don't be devastated if it is not fulfilled verbatim —

God may work it out in His own way,

in His own time!

That's why,

prophecies must be *judged* (1 Cor 14:29b)

They are imperfect (1 Cor 13:9)

■ God's dealings with individuals differ, one from the other—

eg) Joseph: Prepared in the wilderness

and used in the palace

But,

Moses: Prepared in the palace
and used in the wilderness.

No stereotype

God of variety!

Unique dealings with individuals.

Heroes of Faith of Hebrews 11 can inspire us;
but our modelling is after **Jesus** only (12:1)

They are only spectators;
only Jesus is the *Pioneer & Perfector of our faith!*

How not to Believe

2. Do not be overoccupied with material blessings.

- Both the OT saints & the NT saints are called
to be men & women of **faith**.
 - The main object of the faith of the OT saints:
First Coming of Christ (Heb 11:13,39)
 - The main object of the faith of the NT saints:
Second Coming of Christ (2 Pet 3:4,9,13)

Because,

the Bible is Christocentric —
Genesis to Revelation point to **Christ!**

Jesus, on the Road to Emmaus: Lk 24:27

... Moses and all the Prophets ... concerning HIMSELF

- The primary blessing from Christ is “SALVATION.”
 - eg) Angel: *Call His name Jesus ... save from sins* (Mt 1:21)
 - eg) Song of Simeon ...
 - “a man **waiting**” (Lk 2:25)
 - “my eyes have seen the Salvation ... all people
... **now** I can die!” (vv 30-32,29)

- Therefore —

The references to faith in the NT are mostly for Salvation —

- Heb 10:39 ... “Believe ... saving ... soul”

This is just before the commencement of Heb 11,
the Faith Chapter.

(It’s actually a continuation.)

- This is the **overcoming** faith —

1 Jn 5:4,5 ... *Jesus is the Son of God!*

The purpose of all the writings about Christ,
including the MIRACLES (Jn 20:30,31)

- The end of all faith is “*salvation*” (1 Pet 1:9)

v8 ... *full of joy and glory*

v10 ... *the enquiry and search of all prophets*

- Salvation is “the” blessing of blessings (Acts 3:26)

Salvation is primary —

Material blessings are secondary.

Salvation is central —

Material blessings are circumferential.

eg) Jesus’ rebuke: Jn 6:24-27

Even after performing a material multiplication miracle,
Jesus taught them not to go after the material blessings!

(vv 26,27)

eg) The people’s question and Jesus’ answer: Jn 6:28,29

By “*works of God,*” they thought about material miracles;

but Jesus: the very faith on Him that He is the One “*SENT*”

— “The” purpose of His Coming

- Even though God had blessed **Abraham** with so much of riches and cattle, the promise to Him was **not** primarily “physical” or “physiological.”

It had a “spiritual” or a “missionary” purpose —

“Your descendants cannot be counted!”

Did it mean that Abraham would have 16 children?

He had only one! — Isaac

God meant: “*many NATIONS*” Rom 4:17,18

The ultimate blessing was “spiritual” —

v22 — “*righteousness*”

vv 23-25 — “*justification*”

■ A word to childless couples —

Don’t keep on quoting Abraham and delay **adoption** —

After all, we are all “*adopted*” children to God (Rom 8:15)

— So many parentless children!

— God is a *God of the fatherless!*

— You will earn His smile!

— If you get your own baby after adopting a child,
it’s a double blessing!

— Don’t delay after 4 or 5 years of marriage!

■ Even for “material” giving,

the guaranteed promise is for “spiritual” blessing —

2 Cor 9:7,10,11

OT — Grains (Mal 3:10)

NT — Grace!

OT — Riches

NT — Righteousness (2 Cor 9:9,10)

See how 2 Cor 9 ends —

v15, “*God’s unspeakable gift*”

The Gift of gifts!

(See also Pages 104-106, 439-440, 563-565, 676-679, 755-758)

How not to Believe

3. Do not exceed your measure of faith.

- The faith for Salvation
and other Redemptive blessings is fundamental —

eg) *He who believes shall be saved* (Mk 16:16)

The just shall live by faith (Rom 1:16,17)

This faith is the same for all the Children of God —

2 Pet 1:1 ... *“like precious faith”*

both for the apostles and ordinary believers.

But God’s special enablement to exercise faith

in particular situations varies from person to person —

This is what’s called the *“measure”* (= degree) of faith:

Rom 12:3 individuals = *“everyone ... each one”*

The context is *“gifts”* (v6)

Common faith vs. *“Gift of faith”* (1 Cor 12:9)

“Are all workers of miracles?” (v29)

“Experiencing” miracles is more common

than *“performing”* miracles!

- Examples of extraordinary faith:

— Joshua ... Sun & Moon (Josh 10:12,13)

5 Kings of the Amorites — defeated — time for return

Never repeated (v14)

— Ananiah, Azariah & Mishael... (Dan 3:24,25) Walked in fire.

Don’t attempt fire-walking today!

— Daniel thrown into the den of lions (Dan 6:21,22)

Lions & lambs live together in Millennium only (Isa 11:6-9).

— Elijah stopped rain ... (Js 5:17,18)

Don't attempt it in open-air Gospel meetings.

(In some instances, yes — but not always.)

Not only to **stop** rain, but also to **bring** rain.

We normally ask —

Where is the God of Elijah? (2 Ki 2:14)

But the question is —

Where are the Elijahs of God?

We quote —

Elijah was like us ... (Js 5:17)

But the question is —

Are we like Elijah?

Heb 11 is full of stories of Heroes of Faith —

What's the conclusion/lesson for us?

Are we called to bring down the compound walls

of houses and townships?

or, walk on water or fire?

No, the conclusion is: *"THEREFORE"* (12:1)

"Run the Christian Race with patience!"

— Some preachers deny that there's such a thing
as "measure" of faith.

Then why not print the entire text of Lk 7:22

on posters and handbills of healing crusades?

"blind ... lame ... lepers ... deaf ... dead"

Why do we deliberately leave out "lepers" and "dead?"

■ What about “mountain-moving” faith? Mk 11:22,23

There are 5 ways of crossing over a mountain —

- + Flying over
- + Climbing over — Jesus never removed mountains;
He climbed over them!
- + Bypassing
- + Tunnelling thro’
- + Uprooting

The first 4 are also by faith —

- eg) Caleb (Josh 14:10-12)
... *strength* ... *strength* ... (v11)
Faith in the “*Word*” (v10) (85 years old)

The 5th way of crossing —

“uprooting” — This is a special enablement.

1 Cor 13:2

- eg) A “specific” *word to Zerubbabel* (Zech 4:6,7)

All mountains are not “hurdles” or “stumbling blocks” —

Many of them are actually “challenges!”

The “mountain” example (Mk 11:22,23)

is just to state the power of faith!

■ Similarly, storms in life —

- eg) Tempest resisted/rebuked (Lk 8:22-25)
- Tempest endured (Acts 27:14,15,18,19)

Do not react alike to all storms —

Various **types** of faith to be exercised —

- a) Resisting faith (Lk 8:22-25)
“Power” of God manifested!
- b) Enduring faith (Acts 27)
“Purposes” of God revealed!

They landed in Malta (28:1)
A healing campaign for the tribals (vv 8,9)
Gospel preached!

c) Hiding faith

1 Sam 22:1 ... David ... Cave of Adullam
(Practical wisdom)
Psa 57:1 ... **“Until calamities pass away”**

The Holy Spirit gives us discernment and guidance as to
when to resist
when to endure
when to hide

If we don't go by the “measure” of our faith,
it will end us up in “presumption”
in the name of faith!

How not to Believe

4. Do not struggle alone to maintain faith.

- Even though “believing” is an individual responsibility, we need others to support/strengthen our faith —
 - a) From fellow-believers Heb 3:12-14
 - b) From servants of God
 - thro’ praying — 1 Thess 3:9,10
 - thro’ visits — 1 Thess 3:2
 - (Not just to collect offerings)

The Tempter takes advantage of our afflictions (vv 4,5).

That’s why “*faith*” is often connected to “*love*” —

1 Pet 1:21,22

Eph 6:23

1 Thess 1:3

Philemon 4,5

- eg) Sarah was there to support Abraham in his faith.
Daniel had his friends to support him.
Ezra & Nehemiah had each other for mutual encouragement.
 - King Jehoshaphat had Prophet Jahaziel to encourage him when he felt too weak to overcome the enemy.
 - Moses had Hur & Aaron to support his weak hands.
 - Paul & Silas encouraged each other & sang praises to God in the Philippian prison.
- This is the teaching King Solomon brings out in Ecclesiastes ...

Eccl 4:10 ... When you fall
:11 ... When you feel cold in faith—
Life is of ups and downs!

- When the disciples were struggling for faith,
Jesus encouraged them...
 - Worrying about food (Mt 16:8-11)
 - reminded them of the 12 baskets & 7 baskets.
 - “*Increase our faith*” (Lk 17:5,6)
 - Mustard seed size of faith is enough!
- Christian life is a “*good fight of faith*”
The outstanding warfare passage in the NT —
Eph 6 — is addressed not to individuals but a group —
an army (Eph 6:10)
- No one has enough of faith
for all the aspects and circumstances of life —
We need others’ help where we are weak —
Rom 14:1 ... *receive ... weak in faith ...*
15:1 ... *bear ... the weak*
- That’s why —
Faith is opposed to certain vices in our interpersonal
relationships —
 - Unforgiveness
Mk 11:24,25
 - Partiality
Js 2:1
i.e. Because my brother and I have faith in the same God
— as our *Father* — I cannot show any partiality.
 - Selfishness
Js 2:14-17
Faith dead without works of love!

In other words —

Faith is strengthened by
+ spirit of forgiveness
+ unbiased/impartial love
+ acts of selflessness

■ A warning:

Thank God for all who support you for your faith;
but beware of anyone who tries to manipulate you
while you go thro' faith-shaking circumstances —
2 Cor 1:24 ... *not dominion but help ...*

(See also Pages 303-306, 350-351, 380-384, 517-519, 546-549,
642-646)

How not to Believe

5. Do not hesitate to confess the facts.

- There is a modern teaching which advocates
“positive confession.”
They say, “The miracle is in **your** mouth!”
No, it’s in **God’s** mouth Isa 45:23 ... *That every knee*
55:11 ... *not return void*
We can claim and confess God’s Word of promise;
but the miracle is in **God’s** hand —
Rom 9:16 ... *desire ... run ... God who shows mercy*
eg) What David desired, but God purposed —
David tells his son (1 Chr 22:7,8)
Man proposes, God disposes!
God is the Potter; we are just clay!
- The modern faith teaching says,
We must not speak of our weaknesses/sufferings/failures.
This is simply unscriptural —
Are these negative confessions? —
 - King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:12) ... Moabites & Ammonites
He spoke out his actual feelings.
But God gave him victory (v15) ... A prophetic word
 - Jesus: “*no place to lay My head*” (Lk 9:58)
It was not a complaint,
but words of challenge!
 - Jesus: “*troubled in spirit ... testified ... betrayal*” (Jn 13:21)
He behaved perfectly human and normal.

His weakness but **God's** power — 2 Cor 13:4

We also ...

- Apostle Paul followed the same pattern —
 - eg) His confessions:
 - 1 Cor 2:3 ... “*weakness and trembling*”
 - 2 Cor 1:8,9 ... “*almost death ... not trust in ourselves*”
 - Father of the deaf and dumb boy —
 - Mk 9:22-24
 - “*I believe*” ... “*Help my unbelief*”
 - What’s the difference?
 - God is a Healer;
 - but will He heal **my** son?
 - Blind man Mk 8:23-25
 - “*men as trees, walking*”

Yes, we are to confess —

Not what’s positive or negative,
but what’s *TRUE* ... Phil 4:8

Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), an outstanding Bible Teacher:
“The **faith** that does not come from **reason** is to be doubted;
the **reason** that does not lead to **faith** is to be feared!”
i.e. sound mind & corresponding words

- Then, what about the “*Word of Faith?*”

Rom 10:6-10

— This is just the Gospel Truth (vv 8,9)

to be believed for salvation.

Who will ascend ... descend ... your mouth ... heart ...

i.e. It’s not in Heaven or Hell, but in the heart!

This is a quote from the OT — Dt 30:11-14

i.e. You don't need to go to Rome or Rameswaram
to find the truth!

We don't go searching for the Truth;
the Truth has come to us in Christ! (Jn 14:6)

A similar passage —

2 Cor 4:13 ... "*We believe ... so speak*"

Context? vv 10,14

Confession of faith in Resurrection!

How not to Believe

6. Do not be overridden by disappointing experiences.

- Heb 11 is a Chapter on Faith —
What is normally emphasised is only one side of faith;
there's another side. For example —
 - *By faith* Abraham **received** Isaac (v11)
By faith Abraham **offered** Isaac (v17)
 - *By faith* Moses **taken** to the Palace (v23)
By faith Moses **forsook** the Palace (vv 24-27)
 - *By faith* saints **escaped** the sword (v34)
By faith saints **executed** by the sword (vv 35,37)
 - Stephen:
full of faith ... miracles (Acts 6:8)
full of the Spirit ... killed (Acts 7:55,59)
 - Peter spared
James slain (Acts 12:1,2,3,7)

What's the conclusion?

*“Not only to **believe** but also to **suffer**”* (Phil 1:29)

Believers = Sufferers

It's a *“conflict”* for *“me and you”* (v30)

- A special word to those in the ministry —
 - Jesus Himself could do **no** mighty miracles in Nazareth—
(Mk 6:5,6)
Not all soils are the same.
Do not hesitate to report if the results have not been good.
Only 1 of the 4 soils was good and productive! (Lk 8:5-8)

□ *We don't lose heart ... ministry ...*
god of this world (2 Cor 4:1,4)

□ Pray for 100 sick persons;
even if no one is healed,
God is still a Healer!
Jehovah-Rapha!

Victories must not overexcite us;
failures must not discourage us!

eg) The 70 returned ... (Lk 10:17,20)
*"Your names are **written**" ... This is CONSTANT!*
i.e. Christ is Victor!
Gospel is God's power!
We are God's servants!

■ Be *"immovable"* in shattering situations —
(1 Cor 15:58)

"not in vain" — ultimately
(in the previous verses ... *"death"*)

Be *"patient"* in delaying situations
"If we faint not ..." (Gal 6:9)
(The *due time* is in God's hand!)

Patience for fulfilment of promises —

Heb 10:36 (Not *"instant"*)
eg) Abraham (Heb 6:14,15)

This is an age of *"instant"* everything!
Instant foodstuff
Instant photography
Instant mail

This mentality is opposed to God's ways!

eg) George Muller (1805-1898) —

He prayed for two of his drunkard friends
for 40 years who got saved at his funeral only,
and became overseas missionaries.

*"He who believes does not act in haste
... sure foundation"* (Isa 28:16)

"mind ... stayed ... trust" (26:3)

■ Keep on believing, in spite of —

Job: *"Though He would slay me ..."* (Job 13:15)

Ananiah & Co: *"Even if He does not deliver us..."* (Dan 3:17,18)

Habakkuk: *"Though the fig tree ..."* (Hab 3:17,18)

How not to Believe

7. Do not isolate faith **from other devotional exercises.**

- Faith cannot grow or be sustained without the other disciplines and virtues of Christian life.
It's because,
Faith is actually in a package —
eg) 1 Cor 13:13a ... 1st of 3
1 Tim 6:11 ... 3rd of 6
2 Tim 2:22 ... 2nd of 4
- What are all the other disciplines connected with faith?

a) Sanctification & Faith

1 Tim 1:5 ... *pure heart ... good conscience*

If this is not taken care of,
faith is *shipwrecked* (v19)

Holiness (Sanctification) begins with repentance —

That's why Jesus preached:

*Repent **and** Believe* (Mk 1:15)

Samson is listed as a hero of faith (Heb 11:32);

but because of his unholy alliance with Delilah,

he lost his vision ...

he lost his Lord ...

However he still operated his gift of faith;

he brought down a roof where 3000 people were seated —

a deliverer became a destroyer

of people and himself !

b) Prayer and Fasting & Faith

Mt 17:18-21 ... (epileptic) *except by prayer & fasting*

Eph 6:16,18 ... *shield of faith ... praying always*

eg) Jesus' prayer for Peter's faith —

Lk 22:31,32

We must pray for our own faith.

Even here, faith is effective only when we are aligned to
God's will — (1 Jn 5:14,15)

“*God's will*” here means

“walking in obedience” to please God (1 Jn 3:22)

c) Bible meditation & Faith

Rom 10:17 ... *hearing and hearing the Word*

i.e. regular + sustained meditation

Two hands of a Christian —

Left hand: *Shield of Faith*

Right hand: *Sword of the Spirit* (Word of God)

Together these are called “*armour of righteousness*”

(2 Cor 6:7)

One helps the other!

i.e. sustained by a walk according to God's Word

of Righteousness

If we neglect God's Word,

nothing else can inspire our faith —

eg) Rich man... Lazarus ... *Moses & Elijah* (Jn 5:45-47)

(Lk 16:27-31)

Today mostly only stories from the pulpit!

d) Witnessing & Faith

2 Cor 4:13 ... *“believe ... speak”*

Eph 6:14-16 *“shield of faith, shoes (advance) of the Gospel”*

Advancing the cause of the Kingdom!

The more we share the Gospel, greater will be our **assurance**
in the power of the Gospel and **understanding!**

e) Charity & Faith

“Faith without works” (Js 2:14-17)

Faith without works is dead;

Faith with works is dynamic.

Faith cannot be seen ... Only *“works”* can be seen (v18)

— A challenge!

eg) Honouring the rich and despising the poor (Js 2:1-4)

v1 — *“Lord of glory”*

i.e. eternal glory vs. earthly gold

— Gal 5:6 ... *“Faith working through love”*

— 1 Thess 1:3 ... *“work of faith and labour of love”*

(See also Pages 259-262, 385-388, 651-656, 691-695, 735-737)

How not to Believe

8. Do not expect all questions to be answered.

- We cannot fully understand God's ways —
Isa 55:8,9 ... *God's ways ... God's thoughts ... higher*
These words are reciprocated by Paul —
Rom 11:33-35 ... *depth ... wisdom ... unsearchable ...*
who ... who ... who?
Let's look at some examples of **unquestioning** faith —
 - Mary Lk 1:34-38
 - She did not “fully” understand the explanation given by the angel.
 - Even the example of Elizabeth was not good enough;
because Elizabeth atleast had a husband! (v36)
 - Mary's faith was on the WORD —
“With God nothing is impossible”
 - Such a faith is truly “blessedness” —
“Blessed is she who believed...” (v45)
 - Abraham
 - Heb 11:8 ... **Not** *knowing where ...*
“What” and “where” not important
when we know “who” leads us!
 - Faith in the ultimate lessens our anxiety
about the immediate (v10) ... *“THE CITY”*
 - Simon Peter
 - Mt 14:26-29 ... *“If it is **YOU** ... bid me”*
How can anyone walk on water?

— No questions asked!

But when faith shifts from the “PERSON”
to the condition/situation (waves),
we sink (v 30,31).

Here again Simon had faith on Jesus that He could save him!
Peter’s venture not only gave him a **miracle**,
but also taught him a **lesson!**

- Yes, it’s the element of uncertainty
that adds thrill to Christian life —
 - *Walk by faith ... not by sight* (2 Cor 5:7)
Not just “wait” and “worry” ... but *walk* ...
Not fluctuating but “steady” —
*“always **confident**”* (vv 6,8)

eg) Tabernacle: 3 sections

Outer Court : Sunlight
Inner Court : Candle light
Innermost Court : No light

*God dwells in “**darkness**”* (1 Ki 8:12)

This is the other side of 1 Tim 6:16

“unapproachable light”

vs.

“utter darkness”

Such balancing is necessary.

This was Job’s experience: Job 23:2,3, 8-10

***I** don’t know, but **He** knows!*

This is the teaching of the NT —

1 Pet 1:6-8 ... *“not seen ... yet believing”*

In times of “trials” — *“**various** trials”*

i.e. one after the other!

We may or may not have deliverance from those problems;
but what's assured is the ultimate "salvation" (v9)
"end of your faith"

— What's there to "believe" what we "see"? Rom 8:24,25
Believe: God is planning everything for my good.

2 Cor 4:18 ... *We **look** at what's **not seen!***

What a paradox! — but this is the Truth!

This is true blessedness —

i.e. Believing without seeing
eg) Thomas (Jn 20:29)

— Don't envy those who are granted signs and wonders!

- Christian life is not walked by the external evidences
but by internal conviction —
Lk 17:20,21 ... *"here ... there ... within!"*
- One step further: Faith is more than believing in spite of
evidence; it is obeying in spite of consequences!
- A warning
Don't use faith as a cloak for idleness/laziness —
eg) Pray at 6 am, *"Give us ... daily bread."*
Go to work at 8 am to earn bread!

Don't worry what you will eat,

but work to earn money for food!

eg) Christians in Thessalonica —

First Epistle ... so much on Second Coming

End of each chapter — 1:10/2:19/3:13/4:17/5:23

It's likely some people stopped working
but were simply gazing into the sky!

Second Epistle: *"no work ... no food"* (2 Thess 3:6-12)

How not to Believe

9. Do not depend on your goodness.

- The Pharisee of Luke 18 **believed** in God.
He **believed** in prayer also.
That's why he went to the Temple.
There were also some plus points about him —
 - He started with “worship” (v11)
 - He prayed “within” himself (12b)

But his problem was that

he “*trusted*” in his goodness —

- Personal righteousness (v11)
“*unlike other sinners*”

- Religious duties
“*fasting twice a week*” (v12a)

- Ministerial activities
“*tithing*” (v12b)

When we trust in our goodness,

we normally hunt for others' praise —

Jn 5:44 ... “*How can you **believe**...*”

eg) The Pharisees did not believe John —

Lk 7:29...Tax Collectors justified God's righteousness
:30 ... Pharisees justified themselves

They were so occupied with their own “ideas”
that they rejected *God's “counsel”* (v30)

- That's why the Bible says,
 - “Salvation is of **faith**, *not of works*” (Eph 2:8,9)
 - Not only salvation, but also receiving of the Spirit —
Gal 3:2
- Sometimes we try to have both —
 - Faith in God and faith in ourselves!
 - This is the modern teaching —
“Have faith in yourself!”
 - No, faith must be on God alone —
Whatever we can do is only **“through Christ”** (Phil 4:13)
“... *through Christ who strengthens me*”
 - This means,
otherwise we are too **weak** to do it!
 - That's what Jesus said —
“*I am the Vine ... you are the **branches***” (Jn 15:5)
 - No branch that's cut off can bring forth fruit!
No better illustration!
 - Jesus did **not** say —
“Believe in God, and believe in yourself also!” (Jn 14:1)
 - Paul: *We should not trust in ourselves* (2 Cor 1:9)
 - Jesus Himself did not trust in His goodness—
Psa 16:2 ... (This is a Messianic Psalm — v10)
“*My goodness is nothing apart from You.*”
 - That's why Jesus told the Lawyer,
“*Why call Me good?*” (Mt 19:16,17)
- Practical application of this truth —
 - Taking of medicine —
King Asa: 2 Chr 16:12
God was not against medical doctors;
but Asa “*did **not** seek God.*”

On the other hand,

King Hezekiah 2 Ki 20:5 ... faith

:7 ... treatment

Dr. Ambrose: "I bandage but God heals!"

i.e. Call unto Dr. Jesus before contacting Dr. So and So!

□ Human support

Any King must keep an Army;

but he must trust the Lord —

eg) King David numbered the people — 2 Sam 24:10

God's serious view: "*Cursed vs. Blessed*" (Jer 17:5,7)

□ Our daily needs —

"daily bread"

God is the Source;

our **employer** is only the means!

i.e. our health is from God ...

our education is because of God's help ...

our employment is from God ...

our skills are God's gifts ...

Why boast then? (1 Cor 4:7)

How not to Believe

10. Do not forget God's works of the past.

- One of the outstanding names of Jehovah was told by Jesus—

Mt 22:31,32

“God of Abraham ... God of Isaac ... God of Jacob”

*“God of the **living** ... not of the **dead** ...”*

What does this mean?

Explanation in Ex 3:13-15 a) *“Name”* (v15b)

b) *“Memorial”* (v15b)

i.e. *“I **am**”*

To Isaac:

“As I was with your father, I shall be with you

and your son.”

To Jacob:

“As I was with your grandfather

and your father, I shall be with you.”

i.e. The God of yesterday

is the God of today;

and He will be the God of tomorrow!

i.e. God
of History

He is the “I WAS” of yesterday.

He is the “I AM” of today.

He is the “I WILL BE” of tomorrow.

This has been the common greeting to the Churches
in Revelation — Rev 1:4,8

- God's complaint against His people —

Moses warning: Dt 7:17-19

... remember well ... signs ... wonders ...

But the people forgot: Psa 78:41,42

Result: "God can!" ▶ "Can God?" (vv 19,20)

■ Good examples —

— Joshua remembered Moses (Josh 1:2,5)

— Elisha remembered Elijah (2 Ki 2:14)

"Where is the God of Elijah?"

— David before Goliath (1 Sam 17:34-37)

"... lion ... bear ..."

— Paul in Asia (2 Cor 1:8-10)

"delivered ... does deliver ... will deliver ..."

... protected ... does protect ... will protect ...

This is why we have Hebrews 11 in the Bible!

We are to remember not only what God has done in our lives
but also what He has been doing even from Creation —

Heb 11:3 ... The first heroes of faith are *"we!"*

■ This does not mean that

we are to depend on our past victories;

we are to depend on "God" who granted us those victories!

David ... *"The **Lord** who delivered"* (1 Sam 17:37)

Similarly, Paul ... *"**God** who delivered..."* (2 Cor 1:9)

Jesus reminded His disciples of how many baskets
they filled with the leftovers? (Mt 16:8-10)

■ While saying,

we must not forget the past, there's a warning:

Don't expect that God would repeat the same miracles —

eg) *"He is able ... even if He does not deliver..."* (Dan 3:17,18)

Even **before** God restored to Job his losses, he confessed
“I know that You can do everything!”

Job 42:2

■ **Conclusion**

We have received so many practical corrections
on the subject of faith —

Read the Bible further on, with an open mind.

A final exhortation:

Jude 3 ... *“contend earnestly for the **faith**”*

20 ... *“build yourself on the most holy **faith**”*

The Trinitarian God helps us in this—

Holy Spirit ... God ... Jesus Christ (vv20,21)
