

Seek to Exercise Your Faith and Grow Stronger in Christ



Faith is indeed a huge subject to cover in such a little insert. I just felt impressed to share a portion of my own journey of faith and a few of the things that have helped my faith to grow.

Growing up in a church family I was taught at an early age to believe in God. The testimonies of my grandparents and my parents and then my own personal testimonies had caused my faith to grow. My testimonies and the testimonies of others formed a supporting pillar for my foundation of faith. I felt my faith was strong and sufficient but in reality, it was very weak.

I had never doubted God until thrown into turmoil in my 20's. At the young age of 27, Hal and I faced the death of his father and the mental breakdown of his mother, causing us to have full responsibility for the care of his parents. We had 3 small children under the age of 5, one a newborn infant, and the stress of taking care of the children and Hal's parents caused the complete collapse of our already troubled marriage, and my faith wavered.

As I was caring for my dying father-in-law, watching him lose all ability to walk, eat, talk and function and trying to emotionally support my mother-in-law who was in total hysteria and despair, I thought, "Where are you God?" No answer came but Hal had an emergency appendectomy, his grandfather died, and the children were all ill, then Hal had to have another surgery. Everything continued to go downhill. I began to really doubt and think, "If there is a God why would He allow all these terrible things to happen to us?" My faith was indeed shaken. One pillar was not enough to hold it up.

For the first time in my life, I questioned if God was real. But God is good and He provides a way for us even in our darkest hour. Several years earlier I had read the Book of Mormon and had my own experience that it was true. When my doubt in God seemed to overwhelm my faith, I received a letter from my great aunt, in response to a request I had made many months before, asking her to share a testimony, for a family book of testimonies.

In the letter she shared her testimony of the truth of the Book of Mormon and then went on to say, that knowing the Book of Mormon is true, is really a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ. For if we know the Book of Mormon is true, we know the Bible is true, we know Jesus was the Son of God and that He died on the cross and was resurrected, for He came to the Nephites as a resurrected being. We know God is real and His promises are true.



I was stunned as I read her letter because I had not put that together in my mind. This knowledge became another pillar in my foundation of faith and my faith was bolstered, enlivened, and expanded in that moment. My revived faith sustained me in the difficult days ahead and my faith held through the storm. If you do not have your own testimony of the truth of the Book of Mormon, I would suggest that you seek it. ***Moroni 10:5 And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.***

Several years later our daughter Sharmin was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. She was 13 years old. I cannot even begin to express the horror and terror such a diagnosis puts into the heart of a parent. Fear overcame me and I could hardly pray. Because of some study I had done on prayer and praise, I began to pray with thanksgiving and praise. The scriptures tell us to come unto God with **Thanksgiving**. I did not realize it at the time, but my decision to start praying with **Thanksgiving and Praise** was really experimenting on the word, as Alma tells us to do, in his dissertation on faith. (*Alma 16:149-173*)

Philippians 4:6 Be afflicted for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Psalms 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

I was amazed to discover that when I prayed with thanksgiving and praise the fear would leave me. What an amazing, instant result but I also learned that the fear crept back in. I learned to fight fear with prayer and praise. I learned that praise causes one's faith to grow for it places our eyes on Jesus, not on our problems. To grow your faith, you must learn to pray with **Thanksgiving and Praise**. Praise is actually a spiritual warfare weapon. *Psalms 149:6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.* Learning the names and attributes of God, so that I can praise Him more effectively, has strengthened my faith. This became another pillar in my foundation of faith.

Sharmin received a great blessing and the tumor suddenly shrunk and moved closer to the surface of her brain and became operable. During Sharmin's brain surgery and recovery I discovered that the reading of the word of God brought me peace and also helped me fight fear. It did that because the words of God are alive and they actually feed your soul, nourish your faith causing it to grow, I especially loved the Psalms, but all the wonderful promises of God strengthened my faith. I wrote many of them down in a notebook and would read them over and over again. They became a treasure in my heart bringing peace to my soul and to this day the word of God is a strong pillar upholding my foundation of faith. We must study and have the words of God in our hearts for words of God anchor us in the storms of life.

Although Sharmin's tumor was malignant she never had any more problems and has been healthy. Her healing was a miracle and we still rejoice and thank God for it.

We have not always received miracles. We lost a dear son-in-law in an accident and it was hard to understand how God could allow that to happen. Within just a few years following his death I actually lost 11 family members to death and 3 of them were in their early 40's. I found myself again and again at the funeral home saying goodbye to people I loved. This was difficult. My faith struggled. One day while studying, the Holy Spirit drew me to one particular scripture. The scripture that strengthened my faith then and now is: *Mosiah 2:13-15 Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend.*

This scripture has added another pillar to my faith in that, my mind was enlightened as I read it and I knew I must exercise my faith in God. I realized I must trust God, for I cannot comprehend all the things which He does. We do have to walk in faith and God did not promise us that we would not have trials, or lose people that we love, but He did promise to always be with us in our trials and loss. I was reminded of this scripture once again when we lost our dear sister Christine Hedrick.

Psalms 112:7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

2 Samuel 22:31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

Alma 17:3 I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God, shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.



Digging Deeper

A compellation of remarks made by F. Henry Edwards on *Faith from Missionary Sermon Studies, Fundamentals and For Such a Time as This*. *Mark 11: 24-26 And Jesus spake and said unto him, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, 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 fulfilled. Therefore I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive, and ye shall have whatsoever ye ask.*

A man is known by his faith. Every real man has faith in something or somebody: Some in education; some in the decency of the common man; some in physical strength; others in money; others in intelligence. Men who have no faith in God set up in the place of God their faith in humanity.

Strong Faith involves confident trust, resulting in a willing cooperation and action. The little girl trapped on an upper floor of a burning building will not jump until her mother tells her to do so. Then her confident trust in her mother causes her to do that which she would otherwise be afraid to do. She has faith and acts on her faith.

Faith which contents itself with believing, but no action, is not worth discussing. Such faith without works is dead. Any faith worthy of the name does two things:

1. It gives power and assurance.
2. It indicates a certain course of action.

Where shall we center our faith? Jesus says, *“Have faith in God.”* Paul echoed the words of the Master when he said, *“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5).”* We should take courage and insight from the lives of the great ones who have gone before, and in the light of their faith should run with patience the race that is set before us, taking special courage from the example of Jesus the Lord, who is himself the great

guarantee that our faith is well placed. Jesus believed in God. Jesus made men believe in God because he demonstrated to them beyond all doubt what the love of God means when it is incarnate among men.

Having faith in God is not just advice, it is a command. This command is addressed to every one of us. We obey the command or we are lost. Faith in God has a sure foundation. *Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* No man has any security for life that lies beyond death unless he has such confident trust in God as leads him to plan his life according to the wishes of the God of the living and the dead.

Faith in God is constructive for it prepares the way for: forgiveness of sins...makes possible the healing of the sick....it assures us that all gifts are available for our ultimate good...faith in God is the foundation of Spiritual understanding...Faith was the motive and power in the lives of the ancient worthies listed in Hebrews 11 and by faith we are joined with them.

Those who have faith in God are thereby set apart from all others. Since they are now eager to do the will of God, he can work with them. They are accounted as the children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Such faith is not an end but it is a good beginning.

The man who will trust in God finds his confidence in God growing with that trust. Such faith in God is well founded, constructive, enlightening, active and can be the guiding principle of every life....We need a working faith in times of crises; in bereavement and disaster. It will be too late to build such a faith then. Nor can we then rely very strongly on a faith borrowed from someone else.

Now is the time to learn to see things steadily and to see them whole and to increase your faith: The disciples prayed for the Lord to increase their faith. *Luke 17:5-6 And the apostles said unto him, Lord,*

increase our faith. And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

To have faith in God is to have faith in the final victory of everything that is good. The issues of time and eternity are in the hands of God. He will bring everything good to pass and every evil thing to naught.

It is not enough to be convinced of the truth. We ought to add continually to the reason for our conviction, and we ought to refine those reasons...A good general will strengthen an important position by all sorts of man-made defenses. In like fashion every disciple of Jesus should reinforce his faith with every weapon and every defense which can rightfully be brought to bear.



Action Section

We are living in portentous times. I pray all of us may grow our faith so that we will stay anchored during the storms ahead of us.

Let Us All Develop Strong “Pillars of Faith”.

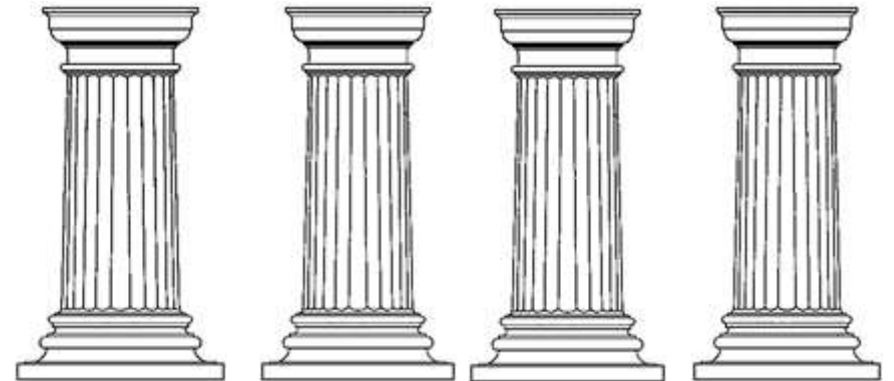
Need Faith = For Salvation

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life.

The action for this month, to help you grow your faith, is to consider the following items listed in the “4 Pillars of Faith.” Note: If you want to put some of these steps into action in your life, to make “Strong Pillars of Faith”, I suggest taking them 1 or 2 at a time. It takes a minimum of 30 days to change or start a new habit. When we try to change too many things at once we often become discouraged. But if we move forward slowly and at a steady pace, every 4-6 weeks adding something new, we will grow our faith and develop “Strong Pillars of Faith.”

4 Pillars of a Strong Faith

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| <p>1. Believe God Exists. Seek God and Personal Testimony, Baptism, Experiment on the Words of God to = Grow & Exercise Faith</p> | <p>2. Be Still & Know Him. Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer, Praise, Study, Fasting, Believe you cannot Comprehend God = Trust in God</p> | <p>3. Action = Love & Serve God, Put God First, Obey God, Seek Testimony of Book of Mormon as 2nd Witness</p> | <p>4. Walk with God, Holy Spirit Working in Your Daily Life = Brings Faith & Hope = Anchors Your Soul</p> |
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Look at the pillars and ask yourself: Do you believe in God? Do you have your own personal testimony? Have you been baptized to make covenant with Him? Do you experiment on His words to grow your faith? Do you keep the spiritual disciplines of prayer, praise, study etc.? Do you love God and put Him first in your life? Do you know the Book of Mormon is true? Do you acknowledge that you cannot comprehend all the things of God and trust in Him? Do you invite the Holy Spirit into your daily life to walk with you and give you daily faith and hope that your soul will remain anchored in Christ? Ponder on these things and Pray for God to assist you in strengthening your faith in Him. Take the actions necessary to Grow Your Faith.