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# Trust is an Expression of Faith

**Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen** (Hebrews 11:1)

Note: All Bible scripture is written in *Italics*.

Moving from step one to step three requires a measure of faith. God is the initial giver of faith, but people's experience, strength, and hope are, by far, the primary faith builders in program. This is why we are called to give testimony (to share our story), and sometimes the best testimony is one given without words. It is given through power of example.

In the recovery programs, there are other vital ingredients, things necessary for the process to function properly. Recovery is just another word for sanctification or transformation, a process that takes place within, eventually manifesting itself outwardly as true change takes place.

## The Helper

God of course, is the One behind it all. Even with Him involved, there are still other vitally important factors in the equation such as true surrender, a willingness, and the exercising of faith on our part. Humility, being a byproduct of true surrender, gets just enough self defeating pride out of the way, enabling us to reach out to God, in faith, and to others for the help we so desperately need. In order to begin the process, we must realize and admit (our failures), and sincerely believe in our heart that we can not survive without fellowship with God and others.

It is not a standard human practice to seek help for a problem we don't believe exists. Nobody try's to fix something they don't or can't see as broken. We must be able to clearly see that our own behavior (our own best thinking) has failed us, and be able to admit that we truly have, on our own, no power to change. We must truly believe this in our heart and mind before a proper 1<sup>st</sup> step can take place. At this point, feeling helpless and hopeless is pretty typical and a perfect place to be.

In reality, we are experiencing the beginning stages of a new life without a substance. We have hope, even if we can't see a future in it as yet. Hopefully, we are at a place of willingness, finally willing enough to listen to the suggestions of others that have already found freedom from the bondage of addiction. From here, hope will increase as we continue



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to do what is suggested and experience the positive results it brings. This hope leads us to a Helper, the Helper, the only One that can deliver us from our sinful destructive behavior. If we have received proper direction, at step three, we will step out in faith and begin to trust God with the things we realized we were so powerless over, and couldn't manage. Without Jesus, the best we can expect is clean & sober, and for how long? With Jesus, everything is possible. No true comfort or healing can possibly take place without Him. It is God's presence within the rooms of recovery that generates the love that is so vitally necessary in bringing comfort and hope, especially to the newcomer. He is able to see in the eyes of those that have pioneered before them, things such as faith, hope, and love. Faith, hope, and love, being essential in the recovery process, eventually produce byproducts such as freedom, peace and joy. The objective is to reach a place of peace without having to ingest a substance. This is totally the opposite of the counterfeits the enemy produces through the things of this world. His peace is but for a fleeting moment, and is always followed by pain and suffering, only to cause the cycle to repeat itself as we continue to seek refuge from the guilt and shame our behavior has brought upon us. This cycle eventually leads to death.

## The Gift of Faith

Now faith, hope, and love are gifts from God, received in measures according to His perfect plan and in His perfect time. Something we must clearly understand about a gift is that there are two sides to it, the giver and the receiver, and the giving and receiving of the gift. Sad but true, many beautiful gifts are missed at the receiving end. Faith is one of those gifts, one used (and necessary) in the exercise of spiritual growth. Life's natural trials and tribulations are overcome by exercising God's perfect faith in us, something we have all been given a measure of. Faith, when exercised, increases our trust in God. As we step out in faith, and as we experience His continuous faithfulness, trusting Him becomes a more natural thing to do. Most of us have hopefully learned by now that we can't trust ourselves, and must reach a comfortable place of naturally "letting go, and letting God." This, without question, requires faith.

### Hebrews 11:1

*What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.*

Common sense and faith are completely opposite of each other. They are as different as day and night, or as the physical is from the spiritual. Faith must be tested and tried before it becomes real in our life.

*"We know that all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28) so that no matter what happens, the transforming power of God transforms His perfect faith into our reality. Faith at work is personal because it is God's purpose to see His perfect faith manifest itself in and through His children.*

The faith filled man says, *"Lord, You said it, it appears to be irrational, but I'm going to step out boldly, trusting in Your Word" (see Matthew 6:33).*

Turning God's faith into your own personal possession is always an exercise. In the physical realm, when exercising the physical body, we learn some important facts. Where there is no pain, there is little or no gain.



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To increase muscle mass, the muscles must be literally torn down, allowed some time to heal, and then torn down again, repeating the process for continuous growth. The weight lifter must eat a healthy balanced diet while exercising hard to tear his muscles down. As they heal (restored), their strength increases and the resistance the next time around must increase in order to experience continual growth.

The same principle applies spiritually. The Word of God is the perfect food for a good spiritual diet. Spiritual exercise comes by way of daily trials and tribulations, while the healing (the restoration) takes place through fellowship with God and other believers.

Exercising faith follows a similar pattern. It is not given the proper opportunity to grow outside the presence of trials and tribulations. They are mandatory ingredients in the process. The Bible tells us to count it all joy <sup>J</sup>

## **Trials & Tribulations to Test Our Faith**

### **James 1:2**

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

Trials and tribulations (without God) inevitably generate anxiety and fear. These negative effects coming from stepping out into the unknown begin to disappear as we experience God's faithfulness.

Remember, the only way we grow spiritually is through the experience of trials and tribulations. When we hit areas of darkness along our path, we can confidently "walk by faith" knowing that God will see us through to the other side. Experiencing His faithfulness builds trust. He brings us into particular situations in order to educate us and increase our faith, because the "nature of faith" is to make the "object of our faith" tangible.

Faith brings us closer to God, giving Him greater opportunity to work in and through us. He often allows us to fail within our rebellious behaviors in order to get our attention. Faith must be tried and tested in order for it to take root and grow.

## **Faith in Action**

### **Matthew 6:30**

Jesus said: <sup>30</sup>*And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't He more surely care for you? You have so little faith!*

<sup>31</sup>*"So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. <sup>32</sup>Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, <sup>33</sup>and He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.*

Make God and His Kingdom (His people, your brothers and sisters) the #1 concern in your life and He'll see that you are (blessed) and well taken care of. Does God mean more to you than anybody or anything? "Living for Him" means that we have submitted ourselves to Him to be used as His vessel. He lives His life here on earth through those that have offered themselves to Him. He uses His willing children to reach others by allowing His love to flow through them



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out into the world. We become His eyes, ears, and mouth, serving Him while He serves others through us. So when you are truly living for Him, you are allowing Him to live His life through you. Making the Kingdom of God our primary concern is about being more concerned for God's people and God's plan than about ourselves. We need not be concerned about our own needs if we are doing His will. He promises to provide everything we need, so our main focus should be on saving other souls.

### **Matthew 21:21**

<sup>21</sup>Then Jesus told them, "I assure you, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and it will happen. <sup>22</sup>If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

### **Matthew 9:2**

<sup>2</sup>Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Take heart, son! Your sins are forgiven."

### **Matthew 8:26**

<sup>26</sup>And Jesus answered, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he stood up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly all was calm. <sup>27</sup>The disciples just sat there in awe. "Who is this?" they asked themselves. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"

### **Matthew 9:22**

<sup>22</sup>Jesus turned around and said to her, "Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed at that moment.

### **Matthew 14:31**

<sup>31</sup>Instantly Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed him. "You don't have much faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" <sup>32</sup>And when they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped.

*As Peter stepped out of the boat and began to walk on the water, he allowed the surrounding circumstances to take his focus off Jesus, and he began to sink. In his eyes, the circumstances became more real than the fact that Jesus was asking him to trust Him. It took away from his faith in Jesus.*

### **Matthew 15:28**

<sup>28</sup>"Woman," Jesus said to her, "your faith is great. Your request is granted." And her daughter was instantly healed.

### **Matthew 17:20**

<sup>20</sup>"You didn't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I assure you, even if you had faith as small as a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."

### **Mark 4:40**

<sup>40</sup>And he asked them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still not have faith in me?"



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## Mark 10:15

*<sup>15</sup>I assure you, anyone who doesn't have their kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God." <sup>16</sup>Then he took the children into his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.*

## Faith Like A Child

The type of faith He's talking about is similar to the faith a child puts in his father. It's pretty obvious for a child to see that all his needs are being met by his parents. He learns to trust them. That is what Jesus expects from us. He wants us to seek all our needs and desires from Him so that He can bless us. In doing so, we will know that He is our loving Father. Just like an earthly father, God wants us to have nice things too, as long as they are good for us. Be sure that what you are asking for is "good and right" in His eyes. Very Important! Below in verse 25, Jesus clearly states the importance of forgiveness. If we want to be forgiven, and if we want our prayers answered, we must take Him seriously when He clearly gives us a direction to follow. Without forgiveness, there can be no true healing. Without it, we can not be set free from the bondage of our resentments. They have held us captive within our own skin for God only knows how long. Seeking forgiveness from those we have harmed, as well as from God, and forgiving those who have harmed us, is absolutely necessary in finding the freedom that brings true inner peace and joy. God is faithful to forgive us if we confess and repent. Confession without repentance is (½ measures), and will avail us nothing. We must confess and then repent (turn away from) that old behavior. In program, while working through the steps, we find that it is impossible to achieve any level of success without a willingness to forgive, forgiving others and ourselves for the things we've done to others, and for the things we've done to ourselves. We need a willingness, along with God's help, to accomplish these things. We must shed our old ways of doing things. This is something only God can help us to accomplish. We need to make the decision, begin to spend time with Him, and He does the transformation. When we change our mind (repent), He changes our heart, transforming us, one day at a time, into His likeness. Through this process, God not only forgives us, but also delivers us from the bondage of resentments and bitterness. We must trust that He will do everything His Word says. This is faith "put to action." Scripture says that faith without works is dead. It literally means that having faith, without a willingness to act, is nothing but mere words. It is easy to say that you trust someone, but until you actually hand them your wallet, you are just blowing smoke.

## Mark 11:22

*<sup>22</sup>Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup>I assure you that you can say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and your command will be obeyed. All that's required is that you really believe and do not doubt in your heart. <sup>24</sup>Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. <sup>25</sup>But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."*

## Jesus Heals in Response to Faith

*<sup>40</sup>On the other side of the lake the crowds received Jesus with open arms because they had been waiting for him. <sup>41</sup>And now a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell down at Jesus' feet, begging him to come home with him. <sup>42</sup>His only child was dying, a little girl twelve years old.*



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*As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. <sup>43</sup>And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors and still could find no cure. <sup>44</sup>She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.*

*<sup>45</sup>“Who touched me?” Jesus asked. Everyone denied it, and Peter said, “Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you.”*

*<sup>46</sup>But Jesus told him, “No, someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me.” <sup>47</sup>When the woman realized that Jesus knew, she began to tremble and fell to her knees before him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup>“Daughter,” he said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”*

Faith is a gift from God. We are all born with enough faith to be able to put our trust in Him. We are all given a measure of faith that must be exercised in order to grow. It initially takes root by the hearing of God's Word, and is nourished through a continuous feeding. We get fed by spending time with Him (in His Word, and through prayer and meditation) and in doing so, we also get to see just how much He loves us. We learn that He wants us to trust Him, and as we start to, we begin to realize just how worthy He is of our trust. We can see how faithful He is by what He has already done. There are a few necessary ingredients in the process of increasing our faith. As we walk through our daily trials and tribulations, in faith, we are walking towards spiritual maturity. Do you want to increase your faith? Read His Word and get to know Him better, and He will not only teach you how to live right, but will also help you to live righteously “in Him,” and by “His power.” We cannot possibly live right without His help, nor can we follow Him without being able to recognize His leading. This all comes through spending time with Him. Then, when we ask Him to lead, we must be willing to follow. Review steps 1-3 and be sure you have been sincere in your decision. Have you truly surrendered your will and your life over to Him? Turning your will and your life over to Him is actually allowing Him Lordship over your life. Who is controlling your life today? Is it evident? The fruits of your 3<sup>rd</sup> step decision, if practiced daily, will eventually be evident to all those around you, and in everything you do. He will “reach out and touch,” in some way or another, all those that come in contact with you. We must believe that He can and will do exactly what He says. The big book talks about “the promises.” The Bible actually confirms them, and also reveals many, many more. An obedient child of God, acting in faith, can count on them. It's not a test, but an experience. An experience specifically designed by Him, to walk us towards perfection, in Him.

**Faith really is a choice that must be put to action. We must choose to trust Him, and then we must act accordingly.**

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