

THE WORD OF FAITH

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SIX HINDRANCES TO FAITH

I Timothy 6:12 - "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

I want you to notice particularly the first clause of this verse, "Fight the good fight of faith." "Fight the good fight of faith." Well, the only fight we have is the fight of faith. I hear folk say sometimes that they're going to fight the devil. I don't know what for because they wouldn't be a match for him anyway. And secondly, Jesus has already defeated him for you. He was your substitute. Then again I hear folk say, "I'm going to fight sin." Well, I'm not. I'm going to preach the cure for sin. No use fighting it. I have a cure for it. Jesus is the cure. No, the only fight that the believer is called upon to fight is the good fight of faith. Well, there is a fight to faith for this text says, "Fight the good fight of faith." If there is a fight, then there must be enemies or hindrances to faith. If there weren't any enemies to faith or hindrances to faith there wouldn't be any fight to it. So, we'll talk about the six big hindrances to faith.

The Bible says in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Many people, when you talk to them, will confess their lack of faith, when actually they are only failing to release it. Their lack of faith is really not the problem. The real reason for lack of faith is a lack of knowledge of God's Word. "For faith cometh by

hearing and hearing by the word of God." Someone said to me, "Yes, that's my problem. I don't know much about the Word but I need faith." You can't get it any other way except through the Word. Someone else said, "I'm praying God will give it to me." Well, you are wasting your time. You might as well twiddle your fingers or thumbs and sing, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," because it would do just as much good as if you prayed for faith. But if you'll take time to feed upon the Word of God yourself, and listen to the many ministry gifts that God has put into His church, (and teachers are a ministry gift that He has put there), then faith will come to your spirit and life, for you can receive knowledge that way. A lack of knowledge will hinder us and hold us in bondage, because we do not act upon God's Word, beyond knowledge. Faith will grow with an understanding of the Word and if your faith is not growing then your understanding of the Word is not growing. A lack of knowledge of what God's Word says, a lack of knowledge of our redemption, a lack of knowledge of our redemptive rights in Christ Jesus are oftentimes the reasons for unbelief.

I.

Let me give you these six big hindrances to faith. The first is lack of understanding of what it means to be a new creature or what the new creation means. In II Cor. 5:17 it says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold all things are new."

A lack of understanding of what the new creature is and what it means to be a new creature hinders our faith life. Many people do not know that they are new creatures. They think God just forgave them of their sins but it wouldn't do any good for God just to forgive the sinner of his sins. It wouldn't help him a bit in the world if that was all the sinner received. He would still go to hell for he's a child of the devil. He has to be born again. He has to become a new creature in Christ Jesus. No, we are not just forgiven sinners. No, we are not poor, staggering, sinning, barely-getting-along church members. No, we are not living down at the end of the block on barely-getting-along street next to grumble alley. That's not for us. We are new creatures, created by God in Christ Jesus with the very life and the nature of God in our



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spirits. We are children of God, sons of God, and heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Many people do not know they have eternal life. They think of themselves as being saved from sin. But John says in his first epistle, "These things write I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life." When you know what you have and who you are in Christ, it makes all the difference in the world.

II

The second hindrance is that so many have a lack of understanding of our place in Christ and Christ's place in our life. I suggest to Christians everywhere that we need to do some definite study along certain lines. I suggest to folk to go through the New Testament, particularly the Epistles, and write down entire phrases. Because what you write down, you remember better. You'll find these expressions, "In Christ," "In Whom," and "In Him." You'll find that expressions like these occur 133 or 134 times in the New Testament. The reason I say 133 or 134 is because I use a couple that don't say these exact words but infer it. For instance, I use I John 4:4 that says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." The other one I use like this is Col. 1:13 which says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Who refers to God, the Father. If you'll go through the New Testament and confess, "This is who I am," "This is what I have," you'll find life will be different for you.

III

The third hindrance is a lack of understanding of righteousness, what it gives and what it is. This holds more people in bondage than anything else. I never shall forget when I lay on the bed of affliction years ago, that I began to see the scriptures on healing and faith. I came to James 5:16, which

says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." I looked at that verse of scripture and I thought, "Oh my, if I were only righteous, if I could ever get to be righteous, God would hear my prayers." One day I happened to be reading that a little more closely and noticed God said Elijah was subject to like passions as we are. He gave him as an example of a righteous man. Something registered in me and I thought if this man could be called a righteous man I could too because I was like him. He had his high moments and his low moments. I thought to myself, "How could God call a person like that righteous when he was so inconsistent." But I read in Psalm 32 where it says, "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." God imputed righteousness to those whose sins had been covered by the blood. Then I found in II Cor. 5:21 where it says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I saw then that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin and that by the new birth we become a righteous new creature. Now God did not make an unrighteous new creature. We are created by God in Christ Jesus. He made a righteous new creature. We are sons and daughters of God as though we never sinned. We can stand in His presence without any kind of feeling of inferiority, sin-consciousness, or without any kind of embarrassment. We don't have to be tongue-tied because of fear. We can come into His presence because we belong there. When we were born again our sins were remitted because our past life stopped existing. God said that he would not remember our transgressions. He doesn't remember, so why should we remember?

Someone might say he has sinned a lot since then and is so weak but I have news for him.

In I John 1:9 it says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He does two things for the believer who may have sinned. When he confesses his sins the Lord forgives him. When we have sinned we feel guilty and have a sense of unrighteousness. We feel embarrassed and spiritually inferior to come into His presence. But he says that He also cleanses from all unrighteousness. Unrighteousness is just the word, righteousness with the prefix "un" on the front of it that means not or non-righteousness. If I am cleansed from non-righteousness then I'm righteous again. I've found many times that when I get folk to see this, they automatically get healed. They've been under condemnation and have thought God was mad at them. They failed to understand that they are the righteousness of God, in Christ.

IV

The fourth hindrance is a lack of understanding of our privilege or right to use the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will hold us in bondage and will give us a sense of weakness. When we know what that name will do then we can defeat Satan and enjoy victory. Everybody believes that the name of Jesus can be used in prayer, because Jesus said, " whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask that your joy may be full." I suggest that the name of Jesus can be used everywhere that the Word indicates that it can. Jesus himself said that in the verses we just quoted in John 16:23, 24. In the 16th chapter of Mark He says, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He goes on saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe." To them that believe the gospel these signs shall follow them -- not the early church, not the apostles,

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AIRLIFT TRIP CANCELLED

Because of very serious illnesses in both of our families my wife and I were unable to make the F.G.B.F.I. Scandinavian Airlift. We have also had to alter our May schedule. We will however be conducting a Seminar in the latter part of May in Dallas, Texas at Christian Center. Thank you for your prayer and financial support in this time of crisis.

Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which is outside the will of God.

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It's unfortunate that some people are like the old mule, which was awfully backward about going forward!

SIX HINDRANCES - Cont'd

not the preacher -- but the believers. They can cast out devils in His name.

V

The fifth hindrance is a lack of understanding about acting upon the Word. We should stop trying and start acting. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord and lean not unto thine own understanding." All that's necessary for you to ask is "What has God said?" If we know that the Word is true and we act as though it were true it becomes a reality in our lives.

VI

The sixth hindrance is a lack of understanding that we are to hold fast to our confession of faith. In Hebrews 4:14 it says, "Let us hold fast our confession." Our faith keeps pace with our confession. In Romans 10:10 it says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Jesus said in Mark 11:23, "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." When I was preaching in St. Louis, a young full gospel minister, who was serving as youth director of the church there said, "Bro. Hagin, I'm 32 and the doctors have said it is impossible for us to have any children. Will you talk and pray with me and my wife?" I told them I would. So we talked and his wife said she would confess that they would have a child. She said that she would say now that they would have one instead of saying they'd like to have one. After 12 months I received a letter that said they had a bouncing baby girl. All they needed was to act upon the Word. Faith is measured by our confession. Our usefulness in the Lord is measured by our confession.

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by

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