

FAITH HAS NO NO SECRET INGREDIENT



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Faith is absolutely essential for a successful life with God and it is impossible to please God without faith (Heb 11:6). But has faith ever frustrated you? Many are confused about what faith really is and how to grow in faith. There are plenty of suggestions, but not all are helpful; there are multiple teachers, but not all they say is biblical. I've studied under some of the most well-known faith teachers in the world and wrote my doctoral thesis on the Word of Faith movement. As a student at Rhema Bible Training College, I listened intently to Kenneth E. Hagin—the father of faith teachings. I'm grateful for many things I've learned, but there were some underlying questions left unanswered about faith, what it is, and how it works. We are told to build stronger faith, that govern faith, to know how to release always a new revelation, a new book on twist in the tale to show us what we are seems like Coca-Cola, having a secret



After meeting believers all over the world I realize that the struggle with faith is a global problem. Some people simply sweep the hard questions under the rug and pretend they don't exist, but for others the questions can be devastating. I know several who, overcome by their frustrations with faith, have left their walk with Jesus altogether. But there is a better way forward.

I've heard the quick and fast answers, but I wasn't satisfied with them. Quoting Hebrews 11:1 ("faith is the substance of things hoped for") or simply telling me "to get my Word level up, didn't cut it. I wanted to go to the bottom of faith, and so I've spent two decades in prayerful study of Scripture and I have learned things about faith that revolutionized my life and ministry. I came to see what faith truly is and also why so many

good believers are confused about the subject of faith.

What I will share here is not mere head knowledge, it is experienced reality. After learning from the Bible what faith is, my wife and I dared to move to Africa with our toddler daughter to start a Bible school without having any financial support and money only for a one-way ticket there. For two years we had to live by faith and God made miracles of provision for us. We have seen over and over again how God honors the steps of faith we take, even the small ones.

You can walk by faith too. You don't need a PhD in theology nor a diploma from a Faith Bible College or an impartation from a celebrity preacher—in fact, the amazing news is that you already have what it takes to



live by faith. Let me share my Eureka story where the Holy Spirit opened my eyes.

The simple yet powerful insight came to me when I was preparing for an exam in New Testament Greek some twenty years ago. I had to know by heart every chapter of the Gospel of John in the original language. It was hard work, but it was exhilarating to dig deeper into the biblical texts. While studying every occurrence of faith I began to recognize a pattern: John (inspired by the Spirit) makes sure to show that biblical faith requires an object—what faith is in. I saw it: faith is to have faith in God or to believe in Jesus. It's that simple! Check out verses like John 1:12; 3:16; 6:29; 14:1 and you will see this for yourself. (The Gospel of John is often called “the Gospel of belief” because of its focus on faith in Jesus—see John 20:31.) The key insight is that biblical faith always requires an object, that is, something that faith is put *in*.

How did this revolutionize my life and ministry? I realized that much of our confusion about faith stems from thinking that faith is something in and of itself; a force, a power, a substance. But faith isn't like that at all. Faith is relational. Faith needs the person of God on the other side, so to speak.

Faith is a relational entity; that is to say that faith

happens and exists only in our relationship with God. Wouldn't it be foolish of me to say that I have a strong and powerful relationship, and to speak about how I have ten keys to a successful relationship, as if you can have a relationship in and of itself? The moment I speak of relationship, the question is with *whom* do I have this relationship. You cannot just have a relationship; it is something that happens between two persons. The same is true with faith. Faith is our relationship of trust in God. I wish I could write that with a finger of fire on your wall (wouldn't that be scary!).

What this means is that faith on its own is actually nothing. When I realized this biblical truth, I saw that I had focused on the wrong thing. Focusing on faith is like trying to grasp the wind. I'd been taught (mostly on the level of assumption) that faith was something in and of itself. But I learned that you cannot just have faith on its own.

Think of a compass. Faith is like the needle that points to the north, and Jesus is the magnetic pole that attracts the needle. If the magnetic power of the North Pole ceased, every compass would immediately be useless and worthless because they have no power in themselves to point the way. And as a compass has no power in and of itself, neither does faith. That's why the focus of the Bible is on God and not on faith. When you

get the object right, faith is not a problem.

When it dawned on me that faith exists in a relationship with God, I saw that there is no secret ingredient to faith. I know that it might sound to some like I'm spoiling a good mystery, but the truth will set you free. This is liberating: as a believer you already have a relationship with God. Faith is living out that relationship—it is our response of trust.

Imagine yourself in a pitch-dark space where you don't see anything; you could stand in front of an abyss, a big lake, or anything. Then you hear God's voice saying, "Jump, I'll catch you." Assured of God's faithfulness you jump. And God catches you. That is biblical faith. Faith is our response to the God we know and whose word we've heard.

There is no secret ingredient to faith. You are already in a relationship with God through Jesus and the Spirit (Eph 2:18). What you need is not some new steps,

keys, or principles—you need to nurture your relationship with God and live accordingly.

Recently when I taught this in a seminar for leaders in the USA, a lady got the revelation. With glittering eyes, she testified that "before I was amazed by big preachers' faith and thought that I needed their faith. Now I realize that what I need is not their faith but their God—and I have Him already!"

Like this lady, I've also found it liberating and transformative to move on from a fascination with faith to a passion to know God. That's where the adventure of faith truly begins. Join the journey!



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