

known people that believed in this interpretation? What is the difference in what Jesus is saying in this passage and “name it and claim it”?

God cannot be reduced to a formula. The “word of faith” referred to in Romans 10:8 is not a mystic or magical word that if repeated enough times or with enough fervor will result in God doing what you ask. Jesus is using a fantastic example (moving a mountain) in His statement in Mark 11 because that level of faith would be extraordinary.

One thing is for certain, we cannot rock along for the most part oblivious to the things of God and then all of a sudden when confronted with a situation, call up the kind of faith that Jesus speaks of in Mark 11 to solve our problems. So how might we increase our faith? I am not some great paragon of faith myself, but there are some prescriptions in the text that would seem to be pretty clear.

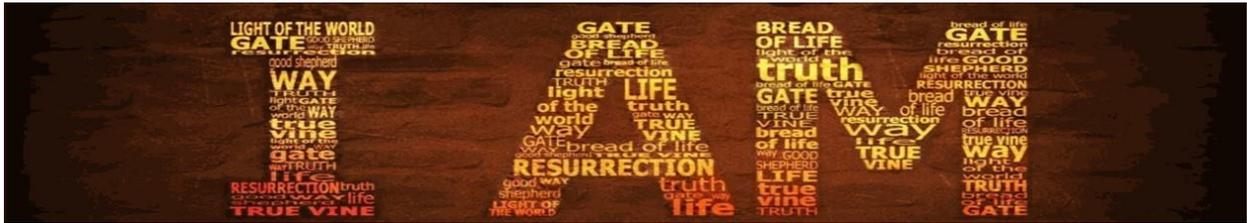
1. Faith is *believing* and not *doubting*. Read James 1:1-8. How does James characterize doubting? Why?

2. Faith is real. We’ve already read Heb 11:1. What word is used to describe faith?

3. Faith must be fostered over time, grown. In the James 1 passage James speaks of testing of our faith. How is our faith tested, and how does that produce endurance? Finally, how does this relate to improving our faith?

4. Faith & works go hand in hand. We know that James makes the case that faith without works is not real faith. In fact, he says it is dead faith. But James also indicates that works bring about faith. Read James 2:20-23. List the ways that faith and works function together

5. Faith is an outgrowth of a close walk with God. In Acts chapter 3 we see a story of Peter and John literally seizing an opportunity to heal a lame man. What were they doing just before this man was healed?



Read Acts 4 which describes the aftermath of this miracle. Pay particular attention to vss 8, 13, and 31. Describe their spiritual state and the results it had on their faith.

Similar is the story of Paul exercising great faith to perform a miracle in Acts 13:8-12. What was Paul's spiritual state before he performed this miracle?

6. The purpose of faith is to further the Kingdom of God. In the examples we just looked at, what was the result of these acts of faith aside from the direct miracle?

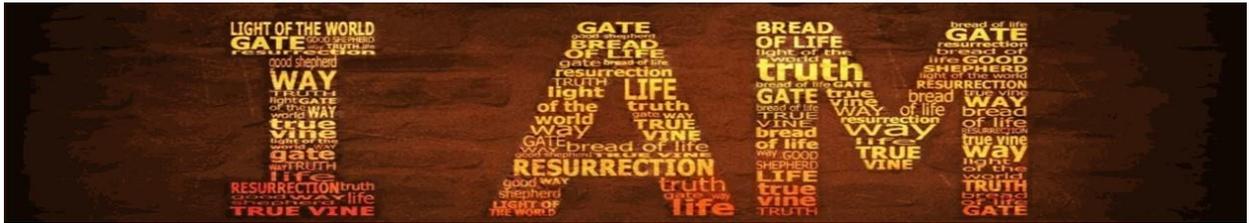
7. The purpose of our faith is not to make God our personal butler. Read James 4:3. What does James list as a primary reason why our faith does not produce results?

8. We have to step out in faith to have faith. In the story of the raising of Lazarus we noted that Jesus could have rolled the stone away Himself. Certainly that would not have been as much a miracle as raising Lazarus from the dead. Yet He commanded that they roll the stone away. We noted that there were many examples of Jesus giving people simple commands before a miracle would occur. These acts had nothing whatsoever to do with the accomplishment of the miracles themselves. Why did Jesus give these commands? Can you list other examples where Jesus did something like this?

Faith is Essential Beyond Salvation

We noted in our study that John 11 records some of the few instances in which we see Jesus displaying emotions. Read vss 33-38. Record the instances of Jesus showing emotions.

In the first showing of emotions we noted that the phrase “deeply moved and troubled” in the Greek carries with it a component of anger (roiling water and snorting with anger). We conjectured that perhaps Jesus was angry with the sinful state of man and the ravages that sin has on us. But since John states



that it was in response to seeing Mary and the others wailing it could be that Jesus was reacting to their lack of faith. Jesus could not have been angry that they were mourning the loss of Lazarus since that is a natural reaction to losing someone who is loved. So if He was angry about the way they were mourning, what would be the reason?

Whether the first instance of Jesus being “deeply moved” was anger about the lack of faith or not, it would appear that the second instance must have been since it seems to be a reaction to unbelief.

We all know that we must have faith to be saved, so at least that level of faith is crucial. Some Christians seem to take the position that anything beyond that level of faith is optional. Based on this passage describing Jesus’ reactions, what would you conclude about how He feels when we don’t develop and grow our faith?

In the great discourse on faith, the writer of Hebrews describes the faith of many of the patriarchs in Hebrews 11. He starts the discourse by stating in v6 that it is impossible to please God without faith. Read Hebrews 11:1-6 and list all the ways faith is used or the benefits of faith.
