

# THREE STAGES OF FAITH

*“The royal official said, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies.’ Jesus replied, ‘You may go. Your son will live’.” —JOHN 4:49-50*

Jesus had barely begun his ministry when a royal official sought Him out, and begged Him to come and heal his son. “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.” The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed (John 4:47-50).

There are three stages of faith this nobleman went through; first, a “seeking faith”. Seeking is usually the first stage in a person’s experience of God, which is often prompted by a desperate need. The nobleman didn’t send an intermediary or a servant, but came to Jesus himself. We often ask people to pray for us, or run to counsellors, pastors or self help books; all of which is good and valid, but there is no substitute for coming to Jesus ourselves. Seeking God is an active, deliberate, thoughtful pursuit, and if we possess that, then God is already at work in our lives, having been the one to place in our hearts that awareness to seek Him.

Secondly, the royal official experienced a “resting faith”. He didn’t need proof, action or evidence, but departed, resting solely in what Jesus had told him. There are many things we’d like God to do, but we don’t tell Him how to do it and we don’t twist His arm. We take Him at His word, leave it in His hands and trust Him.

The third stage is a “knowing faith”. After leaving Jesus, the nobleman’s priority was not getting home. He lived in Capernaum, 30 kilometres away from Cana where he met with Jesus. Had he walked home he would have been there within seven hours or on horseback, within two to two and a half hours, but it wasn’t until the next morning he arrived home. His servants met him on the road. “The boy is well,” they said. “When was he healed?” the nobleman asked. “The fever left him yesterday at the 7th hour,” and the royal official noted that it was the exact hour Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” What he experienced was a work of God and that translates into a ‘knowing faith’.

We know we have taken Jesus at His word when we begin to relax and enjoy peace of mind and heart, because the pressure is off and the issue is settled. Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.” Like the nobleman, we have believed without signs or wonders, but entirely because it is the word of God.

***PRAYER: May I always rest in your word, Lord. Lead me into a strong and knowing faith that takes my refuge in You.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Where is my confidence placed in times of need?***