

## Lesson 4

# Why Knowledge and Hearing is not Faith

## *Going beyond mere belief*

### Introduction

This is a difficult subject, and at first, it is very important to define what is not being said. Later, you will see that “faith” is not only a noun but a verb, and Bible faith does not exist without action, which is consistent with our claim. Additionally, action separate from a belief system doesn’t demonstrate anything except indoctrination, tradition, or willingness to submit to teachings without understanding the source.

The Bible is filled with accounts of people who witnessed the power and presence of God without properly responding to what they knew. It is important to understand that knowing is not faith. Just as faith is not sight, direct knowledge or acquired knowledge is not faith. However, it can lead to faith if we choose to apply it personally in our lives.

In this lesson, we will discuss Bible accounts where people were witnesses of God’s power, but faith was not produced. We must understand that all the knowledge of God’s word may not produce faith, and that may be a stumbling block in putting on Christ and walking in his path.

### What Produces Faith

#### *The Twelve Spies: Numbers 13:1-3, 21-33*

After experiencing the deliverance of God from Egyptian captivity, you would think these twelve men would have understood God’s awesomeness, Power, and purpose. First, witnessing these things should produce conviction, allegiance, and loyalty toward God. That is not the case. What did these men witness that caused ten of them to come back with doubt?

Revelation 21:8 says:

But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death

Some people are tied to self-preservation more than to trusting God. Knowing what God can do, what God has done, and what He has promised has no effect on those who will not surrender their will. Pride is a deadly sin (1 John 2:15-17).

Faith can only be produced in a heart that understands the vanity of life and God’s plan for the faithful.

## Knowing Truth Does Not Guarantee Faith

***Balaam: Numbers 22-24, 31:8, 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 1:11, Rev. 2:14***

Balaam was a prophet of God. In Numbers 22-24, God concisely communicates His message for the King of Moab to Balaam. Balaam understood it and repeated it as God had delivered. Unfortunately, that was not the end of the story. Instead of accepting God's decree, there was some reason that Balaam wanted to placate Balak's request. Balaam mounts his donkey, and the scriptures make it plain: even a donkey can see what Balaam cannot. The remainder of the scripture talks about the way of Balaam, a man who rejected God's word for earthly reward.

The conclusion is easy: until God's word becomes our will, faith will not exist. We will not be driven to action by His word, His promises, or His faithfulness toward His purpose. Until our hope for ourselves becomes God's hope for us, faith lays dormant and unable to develop.

## The Difference Between John and Judas

Without question, John saw some things that Judas did not (the transfiguration, the crucifixion, and the resurrection and ascension). Still, for the most part, Judas was there to see Jesus turn water into wine, Jesus walking on water, and all the evidence that John writes about in His gospel account. The question is not about what they heard or saw but who they were. The challenge of faith is in the heart we choose to have. Hebrews 11:6 states an important fact:

Without faith, it is impossible to please God since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

To acknowledge God without a drive to know Him and seek Him is a futile attempt at faith. Knowledge without understanding or application will continue to make us weak. When we decide to make God the foundation of our life and allow His word to spring forth from that foundation, we have come to the beginning of growing in His grace and knowledge.

Only Joshua and Caleb entered the promise despite the other ten having the same experience. Jeremiah, Isaiah, and many other Old Testament prophets lived the words God revealed, but Balaam is not numbered with the faithful, who have heard words from the same God. Judas killed himself, and John lived a life in exile because of his faith.

Who are we in this pursuit of faith?

## For Discussion

1. Knowledge is not faith. Discuss how personal application of knowledge can transform it into faith. Can you share examples from your life where applying biblical knowledge led to a deepened faith?

2. In Numbers 13:1-3, 21-33, ten spies returned with doubt despite witnessing God's power. Why do you think their experiences did not translate into faith? How can we avoid similar pitfalls in our spiritual pursuits?
3. Balaam was a prophet who knew God's will but chose to pursue earthly rewards. Reflect on times when you might have known the right thing to do but were tempted by personal gain. How can we ensure that God's word becomes our will?
4. John and Judas witnessed Jesus' miracles, yet their paths diverged dramatically. What does this tell us about the importance of the condition of our hearts in developing faith? How can we cultivate a heart that seeks and pleases God?
5. Faith is not just belief but also requires action. Discuss how true faith is demonstrated through actions in your daily life. What steps can we take to ensure our faith is active and visible to others?