

Faith or Folly?

A LEAP OF FAITH:

What Most People Think The Bible Says

- ✓ The opposite of faith is **fear or doubt**.
- ✓ The synonym of faith is **risk**.

A LEAP OF FAITH:

What The Bible Really Says

- ✓ Biblical faith is trusting God enough to do what **He says**,
Not what I **think He says**.
 - ▶ Leaving The Family Business:
Matthew 4:18-22
 - ▶ Walking On Water:
Matthew 14:22-33
 - ▶ Every Bible Story You've Ever Heard:

A LEAP OF FAITH:

How To Live With "Perhaps"

1 Samuel 14:1-23, Psalm 119, Proverbs 4:18, 15:21-22, 19:2-3, 2 Peter 1:3-11

- ▶ Questions to ask before you leap:
 - ☑ *Am I already obeying what's **clearly written**?*
 - ☑ *Is my spouse on the **same page**?*
 - ☑ *What does wise counsel **advise**?*
 - ☑ *How does this fit with what God has already **shown me**?*
 - ☑ *How often have my past feelings **been wrong**?*
 - ☑ *Can I live with the **worst case scenario**?*
 - ☑ *Do I have an **exit strategy**?*

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 21, 2010

QUICK REVIEW

Take a look at your sermon notes and reflect on this week's teaching. Was there a particular point or passage of Scripture that challenged you or caught your attention?

MY STORY

1. Have you ever seen someone, including yourself, take a wild risk of blind faith that they thought was from God, only to find out that it was a bad decision?

If you could go back and counsel that person in the midst of their decision process, what part of this week's sermon would you tell them about?

2. At some point in our lives most of us will probably ask, "How will I know if I am supposed to take this step or not?" or "How will I know if this is from God?" Imagine that you are asking these questions today. Where and how would you look for answers?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Pastor Chris pointed out that living by faith has little to do with taking blind leaps and more to do with taking daily steps of obedience. Read the passages below and then take a minute to catalog a list of clear faith steps that God asks all of His followers to take.

Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. [13] Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. [14] And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

[15] Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. [16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. [17] And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. [NIV]

Psalm 15:1-5

A psalm of David.

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?

Who may live on your holy hill?

[2] He whose walk is blameless

and who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from his heart

[3] and has no slander on his tongue,
who does his neighbor no wrong

and casts no slur on his fellowman,

[4] who despises a vile man
but honors those who fear the Lord,
who keeps his oath

even when it hurts,
[5] who lends his money without usury
and does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things
will never be shaken. [NIV]

Matthew 5:1-11

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, [2] and he began to teach them, saying:

[3] "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[4] Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

[5] Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

[6] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

[7] Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

[8] Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

[9] Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

[10] Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[11] "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. [NIV]

Jesus said that we can be truly content, joyful or blessed when we have the character traits found in Matthew 5:1-11. How would you describe each of these traits in your own words? For example, what does it mean to be pure in heart?

What are some excuses that a Christian may give for not stepping out in faith in these areas? What are a few risks or difficulties that we could still encounter as a result of taking some of these daily steps of faith?

Is there a step that you sense God wants you to take now?

2. We saw this week that the God of creation still guides, instructs and speaks to His people today. It's amazing to remember that we can hear His voice and instruction throughout the pages of His Word anytime we want to listen. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and 171 of its 176 verses refer to God's Word, law, commands, statutes and precepts. How do the selected verses below impact your understanding of, and relationship with, God's Word?

Psalm 119:9-15

How can a young man keep his way pure?

By living according to your word.

[10] I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.
[11] I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.
[12] Praise be to you, O Lord;
teach me your decrees.
[13] With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your mouth.
[14] I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.
[15] I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways. [NIV]

Psalm 119:57-60

You are my portion, O Lord;
I have promised to obey your words.
[58] I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
[59] I have considered my ways
and have turned my steps to your statutes.
[60] I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands. [NIV]

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. [NIV]

Psalm 119:171-176

May my lips overflow with praise,
for you teach me your decrees.
[172] May my tongue sing of your word,
for all your commands are righteous.
[173] May your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
[174] I long for your salvation, O Lord,
and your law is my delight.
[175] Let me live that I may praise you,
and may your laws sustain me.
[176] I have strayed like a lost sheep.
Seek your servant,
for I have not forgotten your commands. [NIV]

How could you take another step toward using God's Word as a "light for your path"?

How could Colossians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 3:16 guide your Growth Group in using God's Word together?

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. [NIV]

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, [NIV]

3. Campus Crusade for Christ has published a booklet with a simple drawing to help us think about how our faith relates to the facts we believe and the feelings we experience. The point of the picture is the order. **First**, we have the facts and truth about Christ. **Second**, is our response of faith. **Third**, we may have feelings that follow.



How would you describe the Christian life and how we grow using this picture and what you learned in this week's sermon?

Do you see any danger with changing the order?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back over the last four weeks, how has your understanding of faith grown or changed?
2. This week's homework put a spotlight on God's Word and our call to trust God enough to do what He tells us to do. Take some time to talk to God about your life and your faith. Maybe use David's prayer in Psalm 139:23-24 and see if He wants to lead you in any new directions.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
[24] See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. [NIV]

PRAYER REQUESTS

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