

March 2011

We Walk By Faith

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” 2 Corinthians 5:7

H. Steps of faith.

*“And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the **steps of that faith** of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” Romans 4:12*

First of all, this is directed to those men and women who have believed on Jesus Christ as their Savior. The passage clearly teaches that Abraham is their father. *“that he might be the **father** of all them that believe,”* Romans 4:11a And secondly the standing of righteousness is imputed to us because we have believed on Christ. *“that righteousness might be **imputed** unto them also.”* Romans 4:11b

So we know that we are dealing with our post salvation experience as believers in Christ, and as believers in Christ, we are to live by faith. And in this passage we see that our journey of faith is step by step, as Abraham journeyed in his life of faith step by step.

Now Abraham had believed on Christ as his Savior back in Ur of the Chaldees, where he also received his call from the Lord to go into the land that he was going to give him. *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”* Genesis 12:1 But instead of going directly there, he followed his father, Terah, up to an area called Haran. It was only after his father died that he finally set out to the land God wanted him at. *“So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.”* Genesis 12:4

We look at the long journey that Abraham made, and at a time when he was seventy-five years old, but we often overlook that this journey was made one step at a time. And each step Abraham made was an opportunity for Abraham to wonder if he had made the right decision, especially at his age and going to a foreign country, where he had no idea of what kind of people lived there. Yet each step Abraham made was a step of faith in the calling of God for his life.

Because we take walking for granted, we need to review what is entailed. First of all there is the destination or goal in mind, and that's something we always have to keep before us. Then there is looking a little down the road to make sure we are going in the right direction. Then there is the ground right before us, so we have to watch where we place our feet looking for unstable footing, holes, snags, etc., lest we trip, fall, or break an ankle. We also need to be aware of what might lie off the path to the one side or another that can hurt us, such as, vipers, or anything else.

The path we are on is the plan and will of God for our lives. Our walking down that path is our **journey** through life. What keeps us from going off the path is the Word of God. The borders of our path that we walk within are the grace of God on one side and the Word of God on the other. What gives us our vision to see what lies ahead is our **faith**. And what gives us **strength** to keep moving forward one step at a time is the empowering of the Holy Spirit as we exercise faith in the promises of God.

I. Strengthened by faith.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;” Romans 4:20 εις δε την επαγγελιαν του θεου ου διεκριθη τη απιστια αλλ ενεδυναμωθη τη πιστει δους δοξαν τω θεω

“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God.” Rom.4: 20. “No unbelief or distrust made him waver (doubtingly question) concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God,” (Amplified Bible)

“He did not waver” is the aoist passive indicative of *diakrino*. “Was strengthened in, or, **by his faith**”, is the aoist passive indicative of *endunamoo*. And “giving God the glory” is the aoist active participle of *didomi*. It doesn't say that **his faith** was strengthened, but that **he** was strengthened! He was inwardly strengthened by **faith**! So, if **he** was strengthened, then **what** was it that strengthened him?

Even Arthur Way captures this concept in his translation. “Nay, his faith was not weakened when he took note of his own physical condition – a man with one foot in the grave (he was some hundred years old) – and the loss of vital power in Sarah's womb. But, when he turned his eyes towards the promise of God, there came no distrust to make him waver. Nay, rather it was by that faith that he was filled with virile vigour, when once he had, by this trusting in God, rendered glory to him, and was possessed by the conviction that God can perform whatever he promised.”

Diakrino, to waver, was to vacillate between two things, **belief and unbelief**. And with the negative ou, it was emphatic. He definitely did not vacillate between belief and unbelief, even when he seriously contemplated his and Sarah's state of being sexually dead. Abraham believed the promise of God, even though he was in such a hopeless state; hopeless, that is, in the eyes of man. This whole episode appears to be pointing to a later period in Abraham's life. He had been promised a son by God, and other things, yet he still had not received them. Year after year of his life went by and still no son; but he was still waiting, hoping, trusting that *Yahweh* would come through on his promise.

Now a new factor had been brought into the equation, something that he didn't have to deal with before. And that was he and Sarah had gotten to the place in life, which happens to all people if they live long enough, that neither of them were capable of having children. And as he considered his own body and Sarah's, and what all that meant, he still remembered *Yahweh's* promise to him and kept on believing it. But now he knew, that if he was going to have that son, then it really was going to have to be **God** who would bring it to pass. Before, one could think that he could contribute some part concerning the matter, and God would somehow make it all happen on the inside. But now he sees that it is going to have to be **all from God** to make it come true. And so he believed and was totally trusting in God to make it all happen.

It says that he was *strengthened in his faith*, and the word for strengthening is the aoist passive indicative of *endunamoo*, which means to be strengthened inwardly, to be **in-strengthened**. It refers to the dynamic of being strengthened on the inside. The question is was he strengthened **in** his faith? Or **by** his faith? The passive voice tells us that it was Abraham received the action of strengthening, or more accurately, the inner strengthening. So what was it that strengthened him, or enabled him to have sex? We could say that his faith was strengthened, when he considered the promise of God, and that would be true. But it was through his faith in the promise of God that he became sexually empowered and was able to have sex with Sarah once again. It was God who empowered Abraham!

The dative case can be used both for in the sphere of something; or, the instrument by which something happens. **If we say that his faith was strengthened; what strengthened it?** He did not waver, stagger, through unbelief, but was strengthened by his faith. I guess it all depends on whether we are looking at the soul as a whole, or the activity of faith going on in the soul. Obviously, one can be strengthened in his faith; becoming stronger in faith, dispelling all the weaknesses of doubt, etc.; **and one can be strengthened, and is, in his soul by faith.**

We have seen under the doctrine of metabolization, that when the believer believes the promises of God, that faith in the Word changes the essence of God's Word into spiritual phenomenon, which in turn strengthens the soul. And that's what we have here. Abraham was strengthened by his faith in the promise of God. This act converted the spiritual energy found in God's Word into the spiritual energy needed to stabilize and strengthen the believer's soul.

And it says that he *gave glory to God*. Well, what was it that he did that glorified God? This glorifying the Lord, orist active participle, occurred **before** he had received his son. It would be natural for him to give God the glory after he received Isaac, but he did it beforehand! The action of glorifying the Lord was in the orist participle, which ties all into Abraham believing the Lord. It was not some meaningless ritual of words that people say that gives God the glory, but the fact that the believer actually believes God! All during this time that he was waiting on the fulfillment of the promise, Abraham was not weakening in his faith, but actually getting stronger. And what was it that did it? The fact that he kept on believing God's promise to him! And this is also what glorified the Lord as well.

Abraham was fully persuaded by faith - "*Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*" Rom.4: 21. The word for being *fully persuaded* is *plerophoreo* and it means to fill up the mind with thoughts or convictions, to be fully convinced. I guess if we were to look at the mind from the standpoint of a container that has nothing in it at all, all the way to being filled up to the top. From the standpoint of positive or negative thoughts, one could say that his mind no longer has any negative thoughts, only positive ones. Or we could say the same thing about peace, happiness, etc.. But here, with Abraham, (and us), it deals with faith; one's mental conviction about a matter.

In the mind, as an unbeliever, the mind has no faith towards God. But when he believes on God, he has some faith; a little faith in his mind, but lot's of unbelief. It's like having a crucible with a little gold at the bottom and filled the rest of the way with dross. But hopefully, as the years go by, the volume of one's mind will be filling up more and more with faith and replacing all that unbelief.

Now Abraham believed God when he had made his promise to him; and he believed God all his life. And when he became sexually inactive, he still believed God! **But something else happened along the way, which really strengthened his faith; and that was when he became fully convinced in his own mind that *Yahweh* had the power to do what he promised!** He had already come to this place before he became sexually dead. We don't know exactly what year it occurred, but somewhere along the way he had become convinced about the power of God. And in the passive voice, it tells us that he had received this conviction; **something had convinced him about God's power.**

Epangello, the word for *promise* was a **legal concept**; and in the perfect tense, it tells us that it had already been stated and stood as an existing fact year after year. *Dunatos*, the word for *power*, though, was used with *eimi* in the present tense, which shows that God continued to still have the power. ***Yahweh* had told him in the past that he was going to give him a son, and he continued to have the power to do it, even though Abraham no longer had the power.**

J. Access to the grace of God.

“By whom also we have **access by faith** into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:2 δι ου και την προσαγωγην εσχηκαμεν τη πιστει εις την χαριν ταυτην εν η εστηκαμεν και καυχουμεθα επ ελπιδι της δοξης του θεου.

This concept begins in Romans 5:1, where it says that we have been **justified by faith**, that is, faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. “Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” To be **justified** meant that one has been declared righteous by God, because he has believed on Jesus Christ.

In the arist passive participle of *dikaioo* it tells us that we have received the action of being justified by God, who is the justifier of men, and that it's an action that is never repeated for it never needs to be repeated. Our being justified by God is a one time act where God declares us to be righteous individuals before his court in heaven, with the result that we are righteous today and we will be righteous for all eternity.

And the reason, once again, is because of our faith in Jesus Christ for when God sees our faith he counts that faith as righteousness. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:5 And the reason for that is because faith is not a work of that individual, nor is it a concept of the individual's personal morality (righteousness), it is nonmeritorious and is the only thing acceptable to the concept of God's grace.

It begins with *by whom*, or, *through whom*, referring back to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the intermediate agency by which the believer in Christ has gained access into the grace of God. If one rejects Jesus Christ, then they not only are rejecting the grace of God, but will never have entrance into God's grace and will now have to face a righteous God in their own sinful works.

The perfect tense of *echo*, to **have**, that we **have access** into the grace of God by faith, is used here to denote that this is a permanent state that we have entered into. Our standing in the grace of God is permanent and eternal, just as our righteousness is permanent and eternal, and just as our being the children of God is permanent and eternal.

The word for **access** is *prosagogen*, from to lead into, and it has several uses. Here it is to be taken in the sense of courtly procession, or courtly protocol, rather than a court of law. The idea is one of being led into the chamber-presence of a monarch. This not only signifies that one has gained access to the monarch, but also that he must be led into the monarch's presence by another person.

The individual has no standing in his own person, nor can he walk into the king's presence by himself and in his own person. Instead, he must be led into the king's presence by someone who has standing before the king, that is, someone who has already been accepted by the king. The Word clearly teaches us that Jesus Christ is the One who has been accepted by the eternal God and it is only Christ that has standing in the presence of God. Therefore, it is Christ who will be leading the believer in Christ into the chamber-presence of the eternal God. “Through whom, [Jesus Christ], we have access”.

The picture would be like a king in some foreign land seated upon his throne with all sorts of people who would like to have an audience with him, so that he might bestow some favor upon them. But to do that, the individuals must have standing with the king themselves, or have access to him through someone else who does have standing with the king.

For this an *Introducer* is needed. This would be one who has legal standing before the king and one who has been accepted by the king. Now if the *Introducer* is a son or relative to the king, so much the better. For believers in Christ, Jesus Christ is our *Introducer* to the eternal Father. He is the one who will lead us into the chamber-presence of God, and he is both **our brother** and **God's Son!**

And not only is he **our brother**, he is **our personal representative to God**. Even though we are not before God in his chamber-presence *in person*, (we are still here on earth in person), we are there in the presence of God in *the person of Jesus Christ* our personal representative.

The grammar of this passage tells us so much. Therefore *having been **justified** by faith* in Christ, the aoist passive participle of *dikaioo*. We have **peace** with God, the present active indicative of *echo*. We now have *permanent **access** to the grace of God* for all eternity, the perfect active indicative of *echo*. We now have a *permanent **standing** in this grace* of God, the perfect active indicative of *histemi*. And we now **rejoice** in the hope of the glory of God. The present middle indicative of *kauchaomai*.

The word *histemi*, standing, refers to one's legal standing in court, or before the presence of a king. What this tells us is that the believer in Christ has a legal and permanent standing before God. The Lord Jesus Christ has been accepted by the eternal Father and has brought us into the presence of God. And because he has been accepted by God, and because he has brought us into the presence of God in his own person, we now have been accepted by God and have a permanent standing with him.

Now that Christ has provided us **access** to God and now that we have standing before God, we are free to go back into the presence of God as often as we wish to receive all the grace he has for us. But it's up to us to do this. We have this access to God and we should be constantly enjoying it. Which is what we are instructed to do! *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* Hebrews 4:16

When the Bible says that Christ *died for us* using the word *huper*, it brings out **four aspects** of **what** he did, for **whom** he did it and **why** he did it. The first one is **protective**. *Huper* always has the idea that an action is performed to protect someone else. The second is **causative**, in that he was caused to perform this action to protect the other person. The third aspect of *huper* is **representative**, which is brought out by the term, *“on behalf of”*, in that, one is represented in law or religion by another person. And the fourth one is **substitutionary**, which is brought out by the term, *“instead of, or, in his stead, or in his place”*, in that he actually takes the place of the other person.

A lawyer will represent us in a court of law, that is, he will act on our behalf. But a lawyer will not act in place of us, in our stead, that is, he will not take our place by taking our punishment. Christ is both our **representative** before God as our defense attorney in the legal arena, and our High Priest in the religious area. In both areas he acts before God on our behalf. And as our **substitute** he has taken our place on the cross by taking our punishment.

Now when we talk about us having access to the throne of grace, it because of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has standing before the throne of God and thereby has the right to be heard. His legal standing is one of righteousness and was accepted by God when he ascended into heaven almost two thousand years ago. But, because he is our personal representative, **we also** have standing before the throne of God. Which means that we will be heard as well! We are not there *in person*, for our person is down here on earth. But we are there in the person of Jesus Christ. And this standing we have is a **permanent** state. We will always have legal standing before God because of our faith **in Christ**.

K. Comes from hearing the Word of God.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17 αρα η πιστις εξ ακοης η δε ακοη δια ρηματος θεου.

One of the tenets that Arminiasts hold to is that they believe every unsaved individual possesses the faith necessary to believe on Christ as their Savior. All they need to do is get to the place where they become willing to believe and then make that decision to do so. While the Scriptures show that man is neither willing to come to Christ, nor does he have the type of faith necessary to believe on Christ.

The Scriptures show that man is saved by the grace of God, through faith in Christ, and that this is a gift from God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” Ephesians 2:8 God provided the grace, God provided Jesus Christ, God provided our salvation, and God provided the type of faith needed to trust Christ for our salvation. And this faith does not originate in ourselves, but in the Word of God!

So faith, that is, **the faith**, originates from the source of hearing the teaching of the Word of God. It comes to us through the instrumental agency, dia, of the doctrinal communication of God's Word. Which also means that if there is no doctrinal teaching, or no accurate teaching of the Word, then the believer in Christ will not be able to develop their faith.

By the word of God, and in some translations, *by the word of Christ*. *Rhematos* looks at a specific doctrine being taught. In this passage, where the subject matter is salvation, Paul explains where this faith to believe on Christ comes from, or what its source is. It comes from the Word of God itself. More specifically, it comes through the doctrines pertaining to the person and work of Jesus Christ, dia rhematos theou, or the Gospel of Christ.

This reveals to us how faith is developed in the soul of the unbeliever prior to salvation; it comes through the sound and accurate teaching of the Word of God concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Lord also brings this out on how people come to him for salvation. He says they are all taught by the Father. “It is written in the prophets, *And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*” John 6:45

So faith comes, is developed in us, by the hearing of the message being taught and the hearing comes by the Word of God. Whether it is the faith needed to trust Christ initially as our Savior, or the faith necessary to live by after we are saved, we get faith by listening to the teaching of Bible doctrine.

This entails that we have two things, both of which God supplies to us. One, the accurate teaching of his Word, and two, the men he has commissioned and given to the Church. As stated over and over, faith must have an object and its object has to be the Word of God. And for us to develop faith in our souls, we must have the accurate teaching of God's Word. When we hear the truth, there is something aroused in our souls, something “comes to life”, so to speak, and that something is **the faith!**

Faith is always connected to the Word of God and so is grace. In fact, grace, faith and truth all come in the same package. **When God extends grace to us**, all the merit lies in the one giving grace, not the one receiving grace. **When we exercise faith toward God**, all the merit lies in the object of faith, not in the one exercising faith. So God has all the merit and all the glory. And when the truth is in the picture, God still gets all the merit because he has sent his truth to us and given us the faith to believe his truth, so that we might receive his grace!

L. Given to every believer.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Romans 12:3 - εκαστω ως ο θεος εμερισεν μετρον πιστεως

One needs to first put this in context. Paul is not addressing the entire world, nor is he referring to the entire world. He is addressing believers in Christ, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren,”* Romans 12:1. Then he addresses the believers in the group there, *“to every man that is among you”*, or to *all* believers there, *pas*, God hath dealt to every man, *hekastos* – each believer, the measure of faith.

The KJV translates *merizo* as dealt. It referred to a distribution, or apportionment, of something to someone and meant to apportion, assign, or to deal out. The word *metron* spoke of a *measurement* of something, here it's a measure of faith. The orist tense of *merizo* shows that this measurement of faith was apportioned to each believer in Christ at the moment of their salvation.

The faith that we needed to believe on Christ as our Savior has been given to us by God in his grace. It is all of grace; God provided Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins; God provided the faith needed to believe on him; God gave us to him and brought us to him. And God provided the faith to believe on Christ through the hearing of the gospel message about Christ. It is all of grace so no one can boast.

Every believer in Christ has been apportioned a measure of faith at the moment of salvation. There is nothing for any believer to brag about, for he or she has been given the faith to believe on Christ just like any other believer in Christ. Christians are so prone to brag about something that they have, or something that they have done; they have to have something, it seems, that makes them different than other believers so they can brag about it. But here, by God giving us all a measure of faith, he has leveled the playing field. We are all sinners. We all have had Christ die on the cross for our sins. And we all have been given the faith needed to believe on him.

Now that we have this initial faith to believe on Christ as a gift of God's grace, what are we going to do with it after we are saved? We know that we are to live by faith; we are to walk through this life by faith; we are to make all of our decisions by faith; our faith is to grow and develop and so much more. So the question is, are we? And if we do, then how are we to get the faith necessary to accomplish all that the Father says?

Here's where we go back to the same principle of where faith comes from. It comes from hearing the teaching of the Word of God. It began with the gospel message, but faith is to grow in so many other areas. To do this we will need a consistent and accurate intake of the sound teaching of the Word of God. This is the reason why God has supplied the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher and the local church.

As the Pastor-Teacher faithfully and accurately teaches the entire counsel of God's Word to his flock, the believers, who sit under his teaching ministry, will be given the various and many doctrines that their souls need. And as they listen to the teaching of Bible Doctrine their faith will grow, become stronger and get to the place of completion.

If our Savior had to live by faith in this life, so do we. He was the **Author** of *the faith*; he originated it and lived by this faith himself. He also was the **Finisher** of this faith, in that, his faith in the Father was brought to a state of perfected completion. Not only that, he also is the **Completer** of this faith in those who believe in him. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our [the] faith;”* Hebrews 12:2a

M. Our acts must be motivated by faith.

“*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” Romans 14:23 ο δε διακρινόμενος εαν φαγη κατακεκριται οτι ουκ εκ πιστεως παν δε ο ουκ εκ πιστεως αμαρτια εστιν.

What this passage teaches us is that everything we do as believers in Christ must proceed out of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight; we make our decisions by faith; we claim the promises of God by faith; we metabolize Bible doctrine by faith; we receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit in the sphere of faith. The life of faith is so important that, if what we do does not proceed from faith, it is sin.

Here's why. We became believers in Christ by faith in Christ. We received the Holy Spirit at that moment, who regenerated us creating a new nature in us. It is this new nature that we are to live our lives by. If we are not living by the new nature, then we are under the control of the old nature. The concept of faith is what applies to the new nature, and without faith, then all we are left with is the works of the flesh of the old nature and all the flesh can produce is human sin or human good.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, he clarified how they received the Holy Spirit in the first place. It was by faith in Christ. “*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” Galatians 3:2 He then goes on to show that perfection, or maturity, is only accomplished after salvation by faith, that is, faith in the Word. “*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*” Galatians 3:3 Anything outside the dynamic of faith in the Father and his Word puts that believer living life in the flesh.

N. Standing fast in the faith.

“*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*” 1 Corinthians 16:13 γρηγορείτε στηκετε εν τη πιστει ανδριζεσθε κραταιουσθε.

Both verbs *watch ye, gregoreo*, and *standing fast, steko*, are in the present active imperative telling us that we are **commanded** to both be on the lookout for and to be standing fast in the faith. *Gregoreo* was used of the guard posted around the camp, or the watchman on the wall, who were to always be on guard for any sign of the enemy. *Steko* was used when the soldier was given the order to stand his ground in the face of the enemy's attack.

Now we notice here, once again, that we have the word *faith* used with the definite article, which draws our attention to the uniqueness of this kind of faith. When we have ***the faith***, what we are looking at is the concept of faith in the Father, faith in his Word, faith in his promises and faith in the doctrines of the Word of God.

We also see that it refers back to ***the faith*** that Christ originated and instituted for the people of God here on earth, which is faith in the Father, his plan, his promises, his power, his protection, his provisions and the process he uses to bring us to maturity. This faith is ***the faith*** that the Lord Jesus also lived by here on earth in his humanity, and it was ***the faith*** that he was perfected in personally.

So standing in ***the faith***, faith in the word of God with the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is accomplished by faith occupation with Bible doctrine, will enable us to withstand the continual pull of the world system on us, to pull away from the control and influence of the flesh nature and enable us to withstand the attacks of Satan against our souls and lives.

