

*The Power
of an
Active Faith*

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ is in the business of restoring unnatural things in life to reflect His nature. Sickness and diseases that affect the body, mind, and emotions are unnatural to Him. It is not part of God's nature of compassion and grace to allow His children to suffer. Rather, His purpose for marriages, families, and the Church is to make men whole.

It isn't natural for a husband or a wife to be distracted into an affair. God made one man for a woman and one woman for a man. That's the way it was meant to be. That's the way it can be.

Acting in faith should come naturally to every believer. We were made to bring glory to God as we respond by faith to His love and mercy toward us (2 Corinthians 4:13-15). God wants the mind to be a center of inspiration, occupied with Christ in the midst of the angelic conflict warring between heaven and hell.

It is strange that Christians who are living lives of faith in action are labeled and ridiculed as being radical and unnatural. Very often these charges are made by folks who profess to know Jesus Christ, which shows how Satan has succeeded in deceiving some believers.

The enemy strives to corrupt divine revelation and darken divine illumination in our minds. This booklet will show that although distractions from the voices of strangers can interfere with God's initiations, we have divine resources for victory.

If my mind is occupied with Christ and the inspiration of His Word dwells in me, I will be quickened to reveal God while opposed by temptation and hell.

Chapter One

PREOCCUPATIONS
AND DISTRACTIONS

So many troubling things happen in our lives. Those things are sent from below to preoccupy us. Even the best Christians become overcharged with preoccupation; we don't mean to, but we do. These preoccupations become serious, sincere distractions. We don't intend to get preoccupied, but we do.

Now, Jesus wouldn't have told us to live by every word of God if it weren't possible to live that way. Yet I guarantee that each one of us lives outside of certain Scriptures because of distractions. It isn't because of rebellion, it isn't willful, but it is something we do.

If you think about it, the areas in our lives where we have problems are the areas where we live outside of the Scriptures. These problems are never really settled; they are dealt with only

on a surface level.

This message is going to encourage us to live by every word of God through grace, through love, and through mercy.

One of the most serious problems in the Church today is men refusing to live under spiritual authority. Until we understand God's order in spiritual authority, we will not have proper protection, we will not have proper provision, and we will not have proper covering for our lives. Most of all, we will not be in the perfect plan of God. As a result, we leave ourselves open to distractions.

He is a Rewarder

“... For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6b).

In the original Greek text, *must believe* appears as *pisteusai dei*, an aorist active infinitive. Let me explain this very simply. This word reveals that God understands our belief system will have gaps in it. In other words, He wants our walk to be straight and narrow with Him, but He's well aware that there will also be times when we get distracted.

Knowing this, He has provided for our re-

covery in Jesus Christ. When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us (1 John 1:9). When we get off the track, He picks us up and puts us right back on.

The word *rewarder* in the Greek speaks of God paying unlimited wages to the one who diligently seeks Him. Can you picture it? The person who produces the action of continually walking in this truth will, continually, receive all kinds of rewards because his faith pleases God.

Do you know why so often people are depressed and withdrawn and think they have no friends? They simply do not exercise what they believe — their faith isn't put into action.

1 Timothy 4:7 says “exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” The Greek word for *godliness* here is *eusebiea*, which refers to a spirituality that is rooted in sound teaching — teaching that exalts the character of God, teaching that promotes the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Can you see why so many Christians have damaged emotions? They aren't rooted in sound teaching. Faith established in sound teaching builds spiritual muscles. The muscles in my arms and legs would become out of shape, even useless, if I decided to stop using them. It's the same with my faith. If I'm not exercising my faith in

the plan and purpose of God, then it becomes useless.

Child-like Faith

Suppose I've been standing for a long period of time and I'm at the point of exhaustion. Then I find a nice reclining chair. Would I sit in it? Certainly! And doing so, I would be exercising a measure of faith by trusting that the chair won't collapse when I sit down. I also trust that I'll feel more refreshed and rested after taking a break from standing. This is a very child-like faith; even little ones know how to sit on a chair.

Jesus Christ wants us to have this kind of faith in Him — simple, confident, secure. If I were to really believe that just as that chair wouldn't let me land on the floor, so Jesus would never let me down, then I would begin to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ. He would become my occupation, and unnecessary distractions would not bother me.

Romans 1:17 speaks of God's righteousness being revealed "from faith to faith." As I exercise my faith, His righteousness is revealed. I start out with a measure of faith. As I exercise, I develop a measure of faith and then a greater measure. Just as weightlifting adds inches to my

biceps, faith muscles grow and grow, and as they do, the righteousness of God is revealed more and more. How? Through His rewards to me.

Imagine being able to get up every morning and honestly believe that God is going to reward you! Jesus asked the two blind men in Matthew 9:27-31, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” They replied, “Yea, Lord.” He then declared, “According to your faith be it unto you.” They received a grace reward of healing because they put faith into action.

Those blind men recognized that Jesus was present to heal. They believed that He had the power to heal and that it was His nature to do it. They opened their eyes and, for the first time, they were able to see a sunrise and a sunset. They saw their little children and their parents and their families. Oh, what a supernatural reward from God!

Why We Don't Get Healed

Let me show you why we don't get healed. It's not because we don't believe. Remember, “the devils also believe, and tremble,” (James 2:19); so, believing is not the issue. In John 5, a man had lain by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years, waiting for his chance to be healed. At certain seasons, an

angel stirred the pool, and whoever got into the water first would be healed. But it didn't happen for this man. He was preoccupied with his need for someone to put him in the pool. The water would be stirred and he would think, "Is there anyone here to put me in first?" He believed something would happen if he could just get into the pool, but he couldn't bring himself to act on his belief.

Then Jesus passed by.

Jesus simply said, "Rise." The Lord made an appeal for action. "Take up your bed and walk." He wanted this man to walk, to trust His healing power and to act upon it. Jesus was addressing the man's ability to trust His nature, His ability, His power, His love.

The man must have thought, "What have I got to lose? I've been here 38 years and still haven't gotten to the pool on time. No one's going to put me in the pool, so here goes"

As the man began to act on the words Jesus spoke, God rewarded his faith and healed him miraculously. This is faith action in the power of unconditional love, in the nature of His mercy, in response to the God of all compassion.

You would think this move of God would have excited those in the synagogue, the reli-

gious leaders of the day. Oh, it did excite them! It excited them to the point of wanting to kill Jesus Christ for violating their policy against healing on the Sabbath. The man was walking for the first time in 38 years, but instead of rejoicing over his miracle, the leaders rebuked him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath. He was walking! But they couldn't see it. Their religion left them blind.

The sad thing is that same religious spirit is a hindrance to many healings today. We confine God and refuse to trust His ability to reward our faith obedience. Don't feel condemned. Be encouraged. I'm just trying to help us understand that God wants us to exercise a particular quality of faith, a faith beyond what we've known before.

Let's get to know the heart of God for healing. Forget rituals. Put doubts aside. I don't even want us to get distracted by an overemphasis on the doctrine of faith.

We can read what the Bible says. Just get to know the heart of God, and I think you will find that, more than ever, He wants to set you free and make you whole.

Chapter Two

THE WORD IS NIGH THEE

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 10:6-11).

Notice how this passage starts out, speaking of “the righteousness which is of faith.” Faith

righteousness, which comes from God, is righteousness imputed and imparted in unconditional love and mercy to men by God. This righteousness makes the word of faith “nigh thee,” as it says in Romans 10:8, and “even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.”

Because of the righteousness that we receive from God through coming to Jesus Christ, the Word is now in us. Faith is a part of us. It’s not outside of us. It’s right there, in us, ready to be communicated and ready to be acted upon in a specific way.

Furthermore, we are promised at the end of this passage that “whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” When we get going in faith action, we will not be ashamed; rather, our faith will be rewarded.

Speak the Word Only

Consider the centurion who came to Jesus in Matthew 8:6-13. This is such a unique passage, but many have ignored its meaning in relation to healing. A Roman soldier comes and pleads, “Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.”

His servant boy was paralyzed and distressed with incomprehensible pain. So, the centurion

asked Jesus for a miracle. What an answer Jesus gave: “I will come and heal him.” No questions about theology. No discussion about who and how God heals. “I will come and heal him.”

The centurion replied, “I’m not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” What a response from a Roman soldier. This tells me that healing doesn’t come because of our worthiness, just as salvation doesn’t come because of our worthiness. This tells me healing is by grace.

Don’t think this way: “I have a drinking problem; He won’t deliver and heal me.” The centurion didn’t think his house was in order, but he did know the authority that a word from the Lord would carry. “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”

The soldier recognized that Jesus was under orders from the Father and that He submitted to the plan of God. He knew Jesus did nothing to please Himself (Romans 15:3) and that the words Jesus spoke were not His own but His Father’s (John 14:10). The centurion knew that the words

of love, grace, mercy, power, provision and protection were spoken by One who had the authority of heaven. He understood the power of his own words when backed by the government of Rome; therefore, he understood that the Word of Jesus Christ, backed by the Kingdom of God, was much greater.

“Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed,” the centurion said. In other words, “You’re the God-man. You’re under the Father who planned everything. I know you have the authority to do this.” And Jesus did it.

Understanding Authority

I am convinced that every born-again Christian must have an understanding of spiritual authority. Out of it comes healing, love, delegated power, compassion and miracles. Don’t be put off by authority as it is exercised in the church. Authority in some form is a part of everyone’s life. We have a man in our church who is a sergeant with the Maryland State Police. He has people over him telling him what to do, and he has people under him who have to follow his command.

Unless you have risen to the level of CEO or work for yourself, you have bosses and supervi-

sors over you. They have authority and I'm sure they don't hesitate to use it. But, ever since a few radically unbiblical movements twisted the Scriptures and used them to control their followers, the idea of authority in any religion is challenged as cultic. Don't get me wrong: Every Christian stands or falls before God. No pastor has the right to interfere and dominate a believer. But the Word of God carries the authority of heaven and the pastor has been commanded to speak it.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, in Romans 10:17. The more I hear the Word, the more authority it will have in my faith. It is written! "The entrance of thy words giveth light" says Psalm 119:130. If I want light in my life, then I must allow God's words to enter. The more I allow His words to enter, the more I will believe in the provision, protection and power of His spiritual authority. The centurion understood it, and that impressed Jesus Christ.

The Lord was so impressed with his understanding of grace for healing, and He loved seeing that the centurion was willing to let the Word of God be the final authority for the situation. "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so

great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matt. 8:10).

Matthew 8:13 tells us that the servant boy was healed. “And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

The centurion recognized Jesus as the authority and wasn’t afraid to let Him exercise that authority. “Speak the word only.” That was enough for him, and he went away believing that it would be as Jesus said it would be.

The centurion would not allow himself to be preoccupied with his unworthiness. It didn’t matter what his feelings were telling him. He ignored the kinds of projections and influence that the demons of the air were trying to exercise.

Preemptive Projections

There are demonic forces whose entire job is to get people to be overemotional, preoccupied and distracted by their feelings. These demons know that if they work up the emotions then some people will withdraw into subjectivity, causing their faith to be hindered.

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm

19:14). When I have faith through the Word as substance in my heart, then the evidence is in my good emotions. I don't live by my emotions, but God has given them to me and they are vital to express Christ and His authority in my life.

So many are trapped with damaged emotions because the words and meditations of their lives are not "acceptable" in God's sight. In other words, His Word is not allowed to be the authority in their lives. We must draw from the objective Word of God. Think of it: He is the author of our healing and we simply exercise trust in His nature. It's faith in the Word that has substance in the heart, and the result is healthy, wholesome, responsive emotions.

Proverbs 23:16 says "My reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things." *Reins* in the King James version often refers to the emotions. The right substance in the heart cleansed by His gift of righteousness produces the right feelings. When you have substance, you can exercise the quality of faith the centurion exercised.

Faith in Him, Not Faith in Faith

Another beautiful thing about the centurion is that he wasn't even conscious of his faith. He didn't make faith an issue. In his mind, the issue

was this: If Jesus will just speak the Word, then my servant boy will be healed. Oh, how different that is from what some are teaching today, where one's faith is put above everything.

Faith must have an objective authority. A person must have faith in the One who has all authority. Faith in faith won't get you anywhere. No, the centurion simply believed that Jesus Christ had the authority and the heart to heal. That was what brought him to the Lord. The centurion knew His Word was life.

How precious is the character of God! He loves us so deeply that He gives us His authority to be saved; His authority over demons; His authority over sin; His authority over disease; and His authority over our needs.

Maybe you feel unfit to be delivered from something that's been plaguing you for years. Don't be distracted. Let Him speak the Word to your heart. Receive it. The same way you trusted Him for His righteousness and salvation, trust His provision. Let His Word become the substance of your heart, and "as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee" (Matthew 8:13).

Chapter Three
**THROUGH JESUS CHRIST
OUR LORD**

“For I do not understand my own actions — I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe [which my moral instinct condemns]” (Romans 7:15, Amplified translation).

Imagine Paul, a man of God who spent three years in Arabia receiving a revelation of truth, one of the great men of the New Testament, an apostle of Jesus Christ, used of God to minister to the Gentiles. Yet, here he is saying that his own actions leave him baffled!

The Apostle Paul goes on in this chapter to say, “I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it” (verse 18b, Amp.). The intention and the urge to do what is right is there, but there’s no power to carry it out. Lamenting his state, Paul continues, “For the good that I would I do not:

but the evil which I would not, that I do O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:19, 24).

Every single person at some time or another finds himself in this same Romans 7 boat, just as Paul did. He had seen the resurrected Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, yet the conflict between his flesh and his spirit was overwhelming. However, Paul saw the way out: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," he said in Romans 7:25. "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Paul came to understand that in himself "dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). Likewise, I must realize that when I'm acting in the flesh, distracted unnecessarily by its appetites and lusts, I am serving the sin principle, which is warring in my bodily members. But when I submit to the new nature, grace takes over, God takes over. He works in me to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13), as I work out my salvation by understanding the experiential provision of His finished work.

Breaking the Cycle

How did Paul break out of the Romans 7 cycle? He thanked God! That's the first attitude

we must have when we're feeling overwhelmed by the reality of our unworthiness. "I thank God!" Paul put his focus on God, not the sin.

Then in Romans 8:1, Paul delivered one of the most sacred, precious, and beautiful passages in all of Scripture: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (There should be a period there because the original Greek manuscripts of this epistle do not include the phrase "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The King James translators inserted that condition, Paul didn't.)

He wrote "*now*" there is no condemnation. Why? Because Paul recognized that he was *in* Christ Jesus, placed there by grace because he simply believed.

Romans 7 shows Paul experiencing a devastating, destructive battle, then rejoicing and thanking God. To some, that may sound hypocritical or double-minded. To me, it's reality. He was just describing the two forces that are at war within us, seeing the great potential in one and the devastating process of the other. We need to see this, too.

The flesh, which speaks of the old sin nature, is warring in the mind against the law of God, using every angle to keep us preoccupied. But

we don't have to come down to the level of our flesh. No, we can stand on the fact of Romans 8:1: No matter what my state or my condition in this conflict, there is now no condemnation because I am in Christ! Settle that first in your mind.

The Breadth, Length, Depth ,and Height

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.” (Ephesians 3:17, 18).

The Word of God brings in the words of faith to our hearts. These words are rooted and grounded in the love of God, which gives us amazing intensity of divine dynamics in four magnificent dimensions.

First, “the breadth” speaks of what’s surrounding me. No person or group can hurt me because the love of God is toward me. He’s surrounding me with His love. People can say what they want, try what they will, but this fact remains and will not change: there is no condemnation toward me. His love ensures it.

“The length” refers to God’s love going all the way back to Adam and removing from my life the effects of the Fall of Man and of the sin

which was imputed to everyone. His love goes back to the beginning and covers us totally, regardless of our family tree. More than that, the love of God extends forward in time, going beyond the present, to cover us until that day when we shall have new bodies and shall be present with the Lord.

“The depth” correlates with Psalm 119:25: “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.” Depth is what I do because of wrong choices. It’s the personal sins I commit in negative volition toward the Word of God. Still, the love of God covers the depth of the decisions I made while cleaving to the dust of my old sin nature. As Paul said in Romans 7:21, “evil is present with me.”

“The height” refers to the demon activity controlled by the prince of the power of the air. These forces operate in organization to oppress, project and impress. They come in through relationships, through a lack of love. Demonic armies strike cities and attack families and marriages. Yet, all the projections and deceptions and conspiracies gathered against us are no match for the love of God.

Be rooted and grounded in this kind of love and you will see the overcoming power of God.

He will not leave us comfortless, but He will deliver us and give us the power to reign as we receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. By this we will reign over the armies of the air, the forces we cannot see and cannot hear. And we will “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Ephesians 3:19a).

The Basis for Action

Is knowledge important? Yes, because it brings in faith. Proper education starts out with words. These words are the basis for facts. The facts lead us to truth. Truth internalized in the soul leads to principles, and these principles are the basis for our decisions, which lead to action.

See how this works. Knowledge brings in faith (Roman 10:17), but that knowledge can only be residential and dynamic if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Love surpasses knowledge. God knows us, He knows our weaknesses, yet He still loves us. He loved us even before we loved Him, so much so that God sent His Son to die for our sins (John 3:16).

The love of God in our hearts must surpass the knowledge we have of ourselves and others. That’s what Paul was teaching in Romans 7 and

8. Paul knew himself; he understood the law of sin at work in his members. Still, he allowed the love of God to surpass that knowledge and leave it behind so he could say, "...we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Christ is living in me by faith as I am being rooted and grounded in His love toward me. He's able to do exceeding abundantly above anything I could ever ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). When I have great thoughts, great hopes, and great visions, He goes beyond them all to reward my soul as I submit to the principle of life and the new nature of the government of grace, motivated by love and the law of faith.

God, at Rest in His Love

God rests in His love (Zephaniah 3:17). He is content, knowing that all that He did in love will be enough to keep us in Christ Jesus. That's why I can say, with Paul, "Now there is no condemnation." Receive this Word of God in meekness (James 1:21) and let it revive your spirit and your heart (Isaiah 57:15). The Word quickens us through the Holy Spirit, and His love saturates us, penetrates us, and moves in us.

What a combination: I rest in His love as He

rests in His love, and then I rest in faith. The first place I rest is in His love; the second place I rest is in faith through the love shed abroad in my heart by the Spirit. This amazing love looked beyond Abraham's failure with Hagar and set him up as the father of our faith.

This kind of love proclaims Lot as righteous (2 Peter 2:7), even though the angels of the Lord had to literally take him by the arm and pull him out of the wickedness surrounding him in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jacob, a conniver, a cheat, and a thief in regard to his brother Esau's birthright, is taken by God's love beyond all that he is and from him God will raise up the twelve tribes of His nation, Israel.

David fell into sin with Bathsheba and sent her husband to his death, yet he wrote a tremendous collection of psalms. Beyond that, I Kings 15:5 says that David did right in the eyes of the Lord all the days of his life.

Can you see the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of God's love in these men? These were men of faith and action.

CONCLUSION

Faith action deals with getting us out from under the dominion of the law of sin and death. So many psychiatrists misunderstand the principle of Romans 7 and 8. They are always working to patch up the product of sin, the function of sin, the acts of sin. They find reasons to explain why someone is the way he is. Well, Paul explained it all in Romans 7 and then gave the solution in Romans 8:1.

Realize that you are in Christ. That's all! That's the answer. Focus upon Him and gaze upon Him in your heart. Receive His Word with meekness, then be quickened by the Holy Spirit in love. Finally, put your shoulders back and thank God for His new nature that takes us beyond the sin that dwells in us.

Don't magnify the sin principle. Don't over-emphasize Satan's influence. Magnify Christ! Hold fast to the truth that there's no condemna-

tion and receive the power that will turn you from darkness to light. Enter into a faith that leaves you purified the moment you step into the principle of the new nature, and walk in the Spirit of the Word and His love.

Jesus simply spoke the Word and there was healing. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the love of God, we can speak the Word and remove mountains of obstacles from our way. We are in Christ. There is no condemnation. We stand complete.

Go beyond what you know. It's not the power of a doctrine that brings healing, it's the love of God. Read the living Word, and let the love that it speaks of motivate you to action.

Amazing, practical deliverance can come at any moment. All that God requires is that you are confessed up to date. No matter how frail you are, no matter how many times you have fallen into the same situation, He is present to heal.

All I need to know to start on the path to victory is right there in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Amen!