

WHEN LIFE KEEPS 'LIFING' AND WE FEEL LIKE GIVING UP!

# IMANI: THE FAITH THAT HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER!

HEBREWS 11:6

Dr. Darryl T. Canady  
RODMAN STREET CHURCH 3.22.26

# **IMANI: THE FAITH THAT HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER!**

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**Title: Imani: The Faith That Holds It All Together**

**Sermon Summary:** This powerful message centers on Imani, the seventh principle of Kwanzaa, which means faith—the spiritual glue that holds all other principles together. The pastor emphasizes that faith is not merely believing in God's existence, but actively believing God and trusting His promises. Drawing from Hebrews 11:6, the message illustrates how faith enables unity, self-determination, collective work, cooperative economics, purpose, and creativity to flourish. We're reminded that without faith, it's impossible to please God, and that anyone approaching Him must believe not only that He exists, but that He actively rewards those who diligently seek Him.

The sermon walks us through four transformative actions of faith: seeking God's help with our whole hearts, submitting to God's instructions even when they challenge our preferences, receiving God's provisions day by day, and being sustained by God's power when life keeps 'lifing' and we feel like giving up. The message culminates in a call to persistent faith that endures through life's challenges, staying connected to God as the ultimate power source.

What makes this message particularly compelling is how it connects faith to our collective journey as a people—from slavery through Jim Crow to

the Civil Rights Movement and beyond and continues to empower the community today. Our ancestors survived not because they had resources, but because they had faith. The message challenges us to move beyond merely believing in God to believing God, trusting His hand even when we cannot trace it. Faith isn't passive; it's active pursuit, consistent obedience, and radical trust that transforms our 'I can't' into 'I can' through Christ who strengthens us.

## **Chapters**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction to Kwanzaa and the Power of Faith**

We are introduced to the seven principles of Kwanzaa and learn that Imani (faith) is the foundation that holds all the other principles together.

### **Chapter 2: Seeking God's Help Through Diligent Faith**

We learn that seeking God diligently is the first sign of our faith, and that we must pursue God consistently, not casually, to connect with our source.

### **Chapter 3: Submitting to God's Instructions**

We discover that true faith requires not just hearing God but obeying Him, even when His instructions challenge our feelings, habits, and preferences.

### **Chapter 4: Supplied by God's Provision**

We are assured that God will supply all our needs when we seek Him and submit to Him, providing resources, strength, and provision day by day.

### **Chapter 5: Sustained by God's Power**

We are encouraged that God's power will sustain us through every trial and keep us going when we want to quit, as long as we stay connected to Him.

## **Key Points:**

- Faith (Imani) is the foundation that holds together all other principles - unity, self-determination, collective work, economics, purpose, and creativity
- There is a distinction between believing in God and believing God - true faith requires both acknowledgment and trust
- Seeking God must be diligent, consistent, and wholehearted, not casual or occasional
- Submission to God's instructions proves genuine faith - obedience demonstrates belief beyond mere words
- God supplies provision for those who seek and obey Him - where God guides, He provides
- God's power sustains believers through trials, setbacks, and life's challenges
- Faith requires staying connected to the power source (God) to remain charged and effective
- Historical faith has brought African Americans through slavery, civil rights struggles, and continues to open doors today
- The Community of Hope vision is built on faith, not resources or human wisdom
- Faith transforms "I can't" into "I can" by connecting us to our divine source

## **Scripture Reference:**

- Hebrews 11:6 - "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

- Matthew 6:33 - "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you"
- Psalm 23 - Reference to walking through the valley of the shadow of death
- The Lord's Prayer - "Give us this day our daily bread"
- Isaiah 40:31 - "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"

### **Stories:**

- The pastor's personal testimony of moving from Florida to Pittsburgh in 2010 during a snowstorm, never having experienced real snow before, demonstrating faith in following God's call
- Rodney McBride's passing - discovered in his chair after missing church, illustrating the fragility of life and gratitude for each day
- Stacey and Nafis moving to Atlanta - stepping out in faith to a new city, trusting God will be there as He is in Pittsburgh
- The LIFE Male STEAM Academy beginning not with a building or resources, but with a burden, prayer, and seeking God about helping black boys
- Sister McCaskill and others with health challenges continuing to praise God and give tithes
- Deacon Fair caring for his wife daily and facing the adjustment after her passing, receiving strength day by day
- Stacey starting a thriving business despite health challenges, becoming a success coach, demonstrating "nothing but God" (NBG)
- Personal testimony of childhood discipline and still bearing marks, relating to submitting to God's correction

- The daughter and mother giving their tithes without an envelope, demonstrating faith and commitment despite challenges
- Historical references to faith during slavery, Jim Crow, Civil Rights Movement, election of the first Black president and vice president

## **Scripture References from the Sermon**

### **Explicitly Mentioned:**

1. **Hebrews 11:6** - Primary text: "And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly diligently seek him."

### **Directly Quoted or Clearly Alluded To:**

2. **Psalms 23:4** - "When you walk through God through the valley of the shadow of death you don't fear no evil because you know that God is with you"
3. **Psalms 139:14** - "I am fearfully and wonderfully made in God's very own image"
4. **Matthew 6:33** - "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you"
5. **Philippians 4:19** - "God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory"
6. **Matthew 6:11** - "Give us this day our daily bread" (The Lord's Prayer)
7. **Ephesians 3:20** - "God is able to give you exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask, think, or even imagine"
8. **1 John 4:4** - "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world"

9. **Isaiah 40:31** - "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary"
10. **Matthew 28:20** - "I am with you always, even until the very end of the world"

### **Thematically Referenced:**

11. **James 2:17-26** - Faith without works/obedience theme
12. **Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trusting God's guidance
13. **Lamentations 3:22-23** - God's mercies are new every morning
14. **Genesis 1:27** - Being made in God's image
15. **Matthew 6:34** - Don't worry about tomorrow

### **Hymn References (Biblical Themes):**

- "We've Come This Far by Faith" - Based on faith journey themes throughout Scripture
- "I Will Trust in the Lord Until I Die" - Reflects Psalm 37:3-5, Proverbs 3:5-6
- "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" - Reflects God's sovereignty (Isaiah 40:12, 66:1-2)

### **QUOTES:**

We don't just believe in God, we believe God, and we believe that God is raising up a Community of Hope, a community where lives are being changed, a community where families are being restored, a community where futures are being built up.

Without faith, unity won't last. Without faith, self-determination won't stand. Without faith, our collective work will break down. Without faith, your economics will dry up. Without faith, your purpose will fade and your creativity will die.

You got to learn how to trust the hand of God when you cannot trace his hand.

Seeking is not just being casual. It's about you being diligent. The text does not just say seek. It says that we are to diligently, sincerely, over and over and over again, seek Him.

Real faith says I'm not going to God just when I need something. I am going to God because I need Him. And if you got God, you got everything God has.

When you seek God, your weakness will meet your strength. Confusion will meet clarity. Fear will meet courage. And your lack will meet provision.

A faith that does not obey God is not faith at all. How can you say, Lord, I trust you and then ignore what God tells you to do?

Where God guides, He provides. Where it's His vision, it's His provision. If it's His will, it's His bill.

As long as you are connected to the power source, God, you will keep on getting charged. Life may try to drain you, people may try to drain you, situations may try to drain you, but as long as you are connected to the power source, God, you will keep on getting charged.

# **IMANI: THE FAITH THAT HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER!**

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**5-Day Devotional: Imani - The Faith That Holds It All Together**

**Day 1: Seeking God Diligently**

**Reading:** Hebrews 11:6; Jeremiah 29:11-13

**Devotional:** Faith begins with seeking. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that without faith, we cannot please God, and that those who come to Him must believe He exists and rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Seeking God isn't casual—it's diligent, persistent, and wholehearted. When we lose our phone, we tear the house apart looking for it. How much more should we pursue the God who holds our very lives in His hands? Seeking God shifts our "I can't" to "I can." It connects us to our Source, not just our resources. When you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him, and in finding Him, you find everything you need.

**Reflection:** What areas of your life need you to seek God more diligently? Are you seeking God only when you need something, or because you need Him?

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## **Day 2: Submitting to God's Instructions**

**Reading:** Proverbs 3:5-6; James 1:22-25

**Devotional:** Submission is the proof of faith. Anyone can say they believe when life is going well, but real faith is proven not by what we say, but by what we do. God's instructions don't always make sense to our limited understanding, but Imani—faith—says, "If God says it, I will follow it." Submission challenges our feelings, habits, preferences, and pride. God may say forgive when you want revenge, wait when you want to move, or give when you want to hold on. But here's the truth: God doesn't bless disobedience. When you submit to God, He strengthens you, covers you, orders your steps, and fights your battles. Trust His GPS system—He knows every pothole, curve, and speed bump on your journey.

**Reflection:** Where is God asking you to submit, but you're resisting? What would it look like to say "not my will, but Thine" in that situation?

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## **Day 3: Trusting God's Provision**

**Reading:** Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:25-34

**Devotional:** Where God guides, He provides. Where there's His vision, there's His provision. If it's His will, it's His bill. God doesn't call you to something and leave you without the resources to accomplish it. The same God who gave you the vision will supply everything you need to fulfill it. God gives us strength day by day, manna for today's journey, grace for this moment. You don't fill your gas tank once and expect it to last forever—you keep returning to the source. Every morning brings new mercies, fresh strength, and daily bread. Your provision isn't tied to your situation; it's tied to your Savior who holds the whole world in His hands.

God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all you can ask, think, or imagine.

**Reflection:** What need are you worried about today? How can you shift from anxiety about provision to trust in the Provider?

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#### **Day 4: Sustained by God's Power**

**Reading:** Isaiah 40:28-31; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

**Devotional:** Life keeps on "lifing"—knocking us down, draining us, wearing us out. But here's the good news: the same God who starts you will sustain you. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. When you get weak, God gives strength. When you get tired, God renews you. When you feel like quitting, God lifts you up. God's power keeps you when you can't keep yourself. As long as you stay connected to the power source, you'll keep getting charged. People may drain you, situations may exhaust you, but stay plugged in. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary. You're still here because God sustained you through every trial, every setback, every closed door.

**Reflection:** What has drained you recently? How can you reconnect to God's power source today?

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#### **Day 5: Walking in Imani - Faith That Endures**

**Reading:** Hebrews 11:1-3, 32-40; Romans 1:17

**Devotional:** Imani—faith—is what holds everything together. Without faith, unity won't last, self-determination won't stand, collective work breaks down, economics dry up, purpose fades, and creativity dies. But

with faith, you can stand when everything around you is falling apart. Faith reminds you who you are when the world tries to define you. Faith keeps you working, walking, building, and pushing into purpose when fear tries to pull you back. Our ancestors had faith when there was no money, no support, when they were in chains, through Jim Crow, through the Civil Rights Movement. We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord. The question isn't whether you'll face trials—you will. The question is: will you trust God until you die? Will you stay on the battlefield, stay on bended knees, treat everybody right until you die?

**Reflection:** How has faith held your life together? What declaration of faith do you need to make today about your future?

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**Closing Prayer:** *Lord, increase our faith. Help us to seek You diligently, submit to Your instructions, trust Your provision, and be sustained by Your power. May Imani—faith—hold together every area of our lives. We declare that we will trust in You until we die. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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## **Small Group Guide: Imani - The Faith That Holds It All Together**

### **Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)**

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive His word and to deepen faith within the group.

### **Sermon Overview (5 minutes)**

This sermon focused on **Imani** (faith), the seventh principle of Kwanzaa, and how faith is the foundation that holds all other principles together. Pastor Canady emphasized that without faith, it is impossible to please God, and that faith is what sustains us through life's challenges.

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### **Key Takeaways**

1. **Faith is the foundation** - Imani holds together unity, self-determination, collective work, economics, purpose, and creativity
  2. **We must seek God diligently** - Not casually, but with our whole heart
  3. **Submission proves our faith** - Obedience demonstrates what we truly believe
  4. **God provides for His vision** - Where God guides, He provides
  5. **God's power sustains us** - We are kept by His strength, not our own
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### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Section 1: Seeking God's Help (15-20 minutes)**

**Scripture Focus:** Hebrews 11:6 - "Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

1. What's the difference between believing *in* God and believing *God*? How does this distinction impact your daily life?
2. The pastor mentioned seeking God like we search for a lost phone. What does this comparison reveal about our priorities? What would change if you sought God with the same urgency?
3. Share a time when you diligently sought God during a difficult season. What was the outcome?
4. What barriers prevent you from seeking God consistently? How can this group help you overcome them?

## **Section 2: Submitting to God's Instructions (15-20 minutes)**

**Key Point:** "Real faith is proven not by what you say, but what you do."

5. Why is submission often the hardest part of faith? What makes obedience difficult even when we've heard God clearly?
6. The pastor said, "God does not bless disobedience." How have you seen this truth play out in your life or the lives of others?
7. Is there an area where God is asking you to submit, but you're resisting? (Share only what you're comfortable sharing)
8. How can we encourage each other to move from hearing God to obeying God?

## **Section 3: Supplied by God's Provision (15-20 minutes)**

**Key Phrases:** "Where God guides, He provides" | "Give us this day our daily bread"

9. Share a testimony of a time when God provided for you in an unexpected way.
10. The sermon emphasized daily dependence on God rather than self-sufficiency. How does our culture work against this principle? How can we cultivate daily dependence?
11. What's the difference between God being our "source" versus our "resource"? Why does this distinction matter?
12. How does trusting God's provision reduce stress and anxiety in your life?

#### **Section 4: Sustained by God's Power (15-20 minutes)**

**Key Point:** "God's power keeps you when you can't keep yourself."

13. The pastor mentioned "NBG - Nothing But God." When have you experienced a "nothing but God" moment in your life?
14. What does it mean to "stay plugged in" to God's power? What helps you maintain that connection?
15. Isaiah 40:31 says those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. How have you experienced this renewal in difficult times?
16. How can we help each other endure when "life keeps on lifing"?

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#### **Personal Reflection (5-10 minutes)**

Take a few moments of silence for personal reflection:

- On a scale of 1-10, how strong is your faith right now?
- Which of the four areas (seeking, submitting, receiving provision, being sustained) do you need to grow in most?

- What is one specific step you can take this week to strengthen your faith?
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## **Practical Applications**

### **This Week's Challenge:**

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### **Option 1: Seek God Diligently**

- Set aside 15 minutes daily to seek God in prayer and Scripture
- Keep a journal of what God reveals to you

#### **Option 2: Submit in Obedience**

- Identify one area where you know God is asking you to obey
- Take one concrete step toward obedience this week

#### **Option 3: Trust God's Provision**

- Write down 10 ways God has provided for you in the past
- Pray daily, "Give us this day our daily bread"

#### **Option 4: Stay Plugged In**

- Identify what "drains" your spiritual battery
- Create a plan to stay connected to God's power daily

#### **Group Accountability:**

- Share your choice with one other person in the group
  - Text or call each other mid-week to encourage and check in
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## **Community of Hope Connection**

The sermon emphasized the vision for Community of Hope. As a group, discuss:

1. How can our faith support this vision?
2. What role might God be calling us to play?
3. How can we pray specifically for this initiative?

## **Group Prayer Focus:**

- The zoning approval in Wilkins Township
  - Woodland Hills to approve LIFE Male STEAM Academy charter renewal
  - Provision for the Community of Hope vision
  - Each member's personal faith journey
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## **Closing Activity (5 minutes)**

**Declaration of Faith:** Stand together and declare:

*"I will trust in the Lord until I die. I'm going to stay on the battlefield until I die. I'm going to stay on bended knees until I die. I'm going to treat everybody right until I die."*

**Closing Prayer:** Have each person pray a one-sentence prayer of faith for the person on their right.

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## **For Next Week**

- Memorize Hebrews 11:6

- Come prepared to share how you practiced faith this week
  - Bring someone new if possible
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### **Leader Notes**

- Create a safe space for honest sharing
- Be prepared to share your own struggles with faith
- Don't rush through questions - let the Spirit lead
- Follow up with anyone who shared something vulnerable
- Celebrate testimonies of God's faithfulness

**Remember:** Faith is not about having it all together; it's about trusting the One who holds it all together!

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How does the concept of Imani (faith) serve as the foundation that holds together the other six principles of Kwanzaa in your own life, and which principle would collapse first without faith?
2. What is the difference between believing in God and believing God, and how does this distinction change the way you approach prayer and obedience?
3. The sermon emphasizes seeking God diligently rather than casually. In what areas of your life are you seeking God halfheartedly, and what would it look like to seek Him as earnestly as you would search for a lost phone?
4. How do you reconcile submission to God's instructions with moments when His guidance contradicts your feelings, preferences, or understanding of what seems best?

5. The preacher states that God does not bless disobedience. Can you identify a time when you heard God clearly but chose not to obey, and what were the consequences of that choice?
6. What does it mean practically to be sustained by God's power day by day, especially during seasons when you feel drained by people, circumstances, or ongoing struggles?
7. How can the African American experience of maintaining faith through slavery, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement inform and strengthen your personal faith during contemporary challenges?
8. The sermon mentions that your struggle is not that you haven't heard God, but that you don't want to do what God said. What specific instruction from God are you currently resisting, and why?
9. In what ways have you disconnected from God as your source and mistakenly relied on your resources (money, relationships, abilities) as if they were the source itself?
10. The Community of Hope vision requires faith without having all the resources in place. What vision has God given you that requires you to step out in faith before seeing the provision?

**DO THE  
POSSIBLE  
& ASK GOD  
TO DO  
THE  
IMPOSSIBLE.**