

Living by Faith in God

Faith is an essential part of everyday life for both believers and unbelievers.

Most days, we exercise faith without even thinking about the object in which that faith is placed.

Take the pew you are sitting in right now.

The moment you sat down, you demonstrated faith.

How did we exercise faith by sitting in the pew?

When you sat down, you trusted that the pew would hold your weight.

You didn't inspect every screw or test its structure.

You didn't ease down in fear that it might collapse.

You simply rested your full weight on it.

You believed the pew was strong enough, so you acted on that belief.

For the Christian, living by faith is not merely believing in God; faith is action—a confidence placed in God outside yourself.

Faith is trusting God enough to obey Him under pressure, especially when Satan seeks to undermine that trust through subtle tests.

Your faith should never be viewed as something static but as a vital reality in your spiritual journey.

Because your faith is a vital reality in your spiritual journey, your faith is either being tested or tempted.

Satan cannot steal our salvation, but he targets our confidence in God's Word and character.

The issue is never whether God is faithful—but whether we will trust Him.

Wiersbe adds, "Whenever God works in and through your life, it is always in response to faith. The thing that hinders the working of God is not his lack of power, but his people's lack of faith."¹

This naturally raises the question, "How can a believer know that he or she is living by faith?"

Wiersbe offers four practical tests to determine if faith is being exercised.

These tests help believers evaluate whether a decision or action is truly an act of faith or a subtle surrender to fear, pride, or self-reliance.

I. The Four Tests of Faith

1. Test #1— "Am I doing this for the glory of God, or just to please myself?"

Abraham is the focus.

God promises Abraham and Sarah a son long after their childbearing years—the impossible.

"He believed, hoping against hope, so that he became the father of many nations according to what had been spoken: So will your descendants be. He did not weaken in faith when he considered his

¹ Warren Wiersbe, *The Strategy of Satan: How to Detect & Defeat Him* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, INC., 1979), 90.

own body to be already dead (since he was about a hundred years old) and also the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do." **Romans 4:18-21**

Authentic faith is rarely revealed in the ordinary; it is exposed in the impossible.

Faith is measured when circumstances move beyond human strength, beyond visible solutions, beyond what we can manage or control.

The proof of our faith in God is most clearly seen when we depend on Him for what we cannot accomplish on our own.

That's why F. B. Meyer's insight is so powerful, he said, "You never really trust God until you trust Him to do the impossible."

Faith that only operates within the realm of the explainable is not deep trust—it is simply self-confidence in circumstances within our control.

Abraham could not control Sarah's womb; only God could deliver on this promise.

"He was fully convinced that what God had promised he was also able to do."

When we exercise faith in God, when logic runs out, resources dry up, and strength fails, that is when faith's substance is real.

Satan's objective is to shift our motivation from God's glory to self-satisfaction, tempting us to seek outcomes we can control instead of trusting God for what only He can accomplish.

2. Test #2— "Am I rushing ahead impetuously, or am I willing to wait?"

"Faith and patience always go together. . . True faith is not in a hurry until God opens the way."²

This question is asking you to examine your posture in decision-making and timing.

It's really probing the heart:

- Am I driven by urgency or by obedience?
- Am I trying to control the outcome?
- Do I trust God (or the process) enough to wait for clarity?

Faith submits to God's will even when it conflicts with personal desire.

Faith does not demand explanations—it trusts God's heart.

Satan tempts us to run ahead of God or lag behind Him.

3. Test #3— "Can I defend what I am doing from the Word of God?"

True faith is always grounded in the Word of God.

"No matter how reasonable an action may seem, if it contradicts the Word of God, you cannot do it by faith."³

² Ibid., 92-93.

³ Ibid., 93.

True faith seeks God's glory, not personal advancement.

No amount of encouragement or favorable circumstances can justify disobedience—if we disregard the Word of God, we are not acting in faith.

Even when others cheer us on and situations seem aligned, faith is never separated from obedience to the Word of God.

I love the side note Wiersbe underlines, "Jonah found a ship waiting on him!"

Satan's objective is to subtly detach our decisions from the authority of God's Word so that we justify disobedience while convincing ourselves we are acting in faith.

4. Test #4— "As I contemplate this move, do I have joy and peace within?"

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." **Romans 15:13**

Faith produces peace, not panic, manipulation, or anxiety.

God's peace is not emotional calm.

It is spiritual confidence rooted in trust.

Wiersbe says, "It is in this area that the Christian must learn to distinguish between his own human emotions and the deeper work of God in his life.

Satan pushes urgency through our emotions to step outside of spiritual confidence and into panic-driven decisions.

Wiersbe offers illustrations from the Old and New Testaments to walk through these four tests.

II. Old Testament Illustration—Abraham and Sarah

Wiersbe uses Abraham and Sarah as the case study.

The waiting period between God's promise of a son and the fulfillment caused impatience.

In their impatience, they decided to help God by allowing Hagar to bear a child for Abraham.

Let's apply the four tests:

Did Abraham choose to have a child with Hagar to glorify God?

No, he sought to please his wife and help God do the impossible.

Were Abraham and Sarah willing to wait on God?

No, they grew impatient and rushed ahead of God, and the ripple effects of that choice are still felt in their family to this day.

Could they base their decision on the word of God?

No, the Lord did not come to Abraham and say, "Take your wife's handmaid as a wife and I will give you a son by her."⁴

Was there joy and peace because of their decision?

⁴ Ibid., 95.

No.

"Sarah saw the son mocking—the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. So she said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!" This was very distressing to Abraham because of his son." **Genesis 21:9-11**

III. New Testament Illustration—Acts 27

Paul has been arrested and is placed on a ship bound for Rome under the supervision of a Roman centurion named Julius.

Early in the journey, Paul warns that continuing the voyage will result in disaster, but the ship's captain and owner persuade the crew to press on.

They sail into a violent northeaster storm that batters the ship for days.

The crew loses hope of survival and begins throwing cargo and equipment overboard.

In the middle of the storm, Paul stands up and encourages everyone.

He tells them that an angel of God appeared to him and promised that, although the ship would be lost, no one would die because Paul must stand before Caesar.

Paul urges them to take courage and trust God's promise.

The ship ran aground on a sandbar near the island of Malta. The vessel breaks apart, but every person on board—276 in total—reaches shore safely.

Let's apply the four tests of faith to Julius decisions:

Did he seek to glorify God?

No, he was more interested in his job at hand.

He probably was not a believer, let alone one who would concern himself with God's glory.

Was he willing to wait?

No.

Did he base his decision on God's word?

No, he rejected what Paul said and listened to the ship's captain and the owner.

Was there joy and peace because of Julius decisions?

No, they were violently tossed at sea for two weeks, shipwrecked, and lost all cargo.

These four tests of faith run parallel with the four people we have studied who had confrontations with Satan.

Eve- disobey God's word by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

"True faith is always based on the Word of God."

Job- was tempted to become impatient with God.

"A willingness to wait on the Lord is evidence of true faith. Impatience means unbelief."

David- sought his own glory by numbering the people.

"Pride is an enemy of faith."

Joshua- suffering under Satan's accusations, he had no joy or peace.

"True faith brings joy and peace through the Holy Spirit."

"You and I must be careful to use the defenses God has given to us. Otherwise, Satan will weaken and discourage our faith and tempt us to stop trusting God."⁵

When we live by faith, we defeat the enemy!

⁵ Ibid., 97.