

Influence Ministries

FIVE THINGS GOD USES TO GROW YOUR FAITH

LESSON 2

TITLE: PRACTICAL TEACHING.

Tonight's lesson is about Faith through Practical Teaching

We began last week by asking a question that I wish all of us could come back to from time to time during the series.

But imagine for just this moment if you would:

If you had absolutely perfect faith and confidence in God—and no matter where you are, imagine if you really did believe there was a God who knew your name, who was a personal God, who heard your personal prayers, and that you could absolutely have perfect confidence all the time.

Even when things didn't go your way or your prayers didn't get answered, your natural response was,

Well, God is in control. God is going to work this out. God leverages bad things for good things; we're just going to wait and see what God has in store.

Imagine how different your life might be.

Imagine the confidence you would have—the personal security you would have.

The insecurities would go away, your ability to face temptation, your ability to face loneliness when you're all alone and someone left you and you're just in despair.

You weren't in denial, but you just had that real confidence and faith in God. Imagine how different your life would be.

And yet, these people just seemed bulletproof. They are just like, you know what, I understand that.

No, I didn't know that. Thanks for sharing that with me, but I am just trusting God.

When we see people with out-of-the-box faith, we may think, You know what, I wish I was as dumb as you are.

Because if I was as dumb as you are I would have the kind of faith that you have.

But unfortunately I'm an educated person. I've got a higher than average IQ, I've seen the world,

I know what's going on, and there's no way I can have that simple kind of childlike faith. But boy, my life would be a lot more peaceful if I did.

Imagine waking up every day with this unbelievable kind of bulletproof confidence in God.

Influence Ministries

As you open the pages of the Old and the New Testament, it becomes very evident that, that is what God is trying to do in all of us—re-establish a relationship of trust and confidence.

So what God wants to do is grow big faith in you, because if you have big faith, if you have big confidence in God that seeps into every single facet of your life, your life will be different.

The way you view relationships will be different, the way you view tragedy will be different, the way you view prosperity will be different, the way that you view money, morality, ethics—everything will be different.

Tonight I want to talk about this first one, this PRACTICAL TEACHING.

Here's what we've discovered. When men and women, or college students, or singles, or whoever tell their story about God growing their faith, one of the things that always shows up is the story that goes something like this:

You know, I had heard about God. I even grew up going to Sunday school, or maybe grew up in a different religion, and then somebody invited me to a Bible study.

Or a guy started a Bible study at work. Or somebody invited me to a church I had never been to before, and there was a guy or there was a woman up there teaching the Bible, and it was like I never knew that stuff was in there.

One of the things that just grows our faith and gives us big faith is the first time we are exposed to practical biblical teaching.

That is, somebody teaches the Bible, and at the end of the lesson we don't just know more, we in fact know what to do with what we've learned.

American church it seems in particular, there seems to be a sense of contentment in most churches with just kind of "cover the material. Here's some stuff the Bible says. God bless you and keep you and be with you.

When Jesus taught, it was different. And when Paul began to teach in the book of Acts and began to expound on the teachings and the teachings of Jesus, it was different. And Jesus, in particular, taught to application, not simply to knowledge.

Matthew, chapter 7 Jesus has just finished up what was called the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount was Jesus saying, If you really had big faith in God, here's what you would do.

If you had perfect faith in God, here's what you would do.

If you had perfect faith in God, here's how you would act. So he said things like this: If somebody asked you to go a mile, you just go two miles;

if somebody really, really, really offends you, you just go ahead and forgive them. Oh, by the way, lust is a sin—not just adultery, lust. What you do with your eyes and with your mind is a sin.

Influence Ministries

This is what it looks like to live as if you have absolute, perfect faith that there is a God who knows your name and is going to take care of you.

So, this whole message, for the most part, is just all this application. Here's what you do if you really, really, really believe that there is a big God who knows your name and is going to take care of you.

Matthew 7:24

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

The thing that's going to blow your faith up is not hearing it, it's not understanding it, it's doing something with it.

When you began to apply the Scripture to the way I thought about my family, my marriage, my education and my future and my morality and my money and my ethics, when I began to apply this stuff, it's like suddenly God came alive in my life.

When your obedience, which is really an act of faith in God:
God, I believe, so I'm going to do; God, I believe, so I'm going to do.

When your faith intersects with God's faithfulness, that is when you put feet on your theology and begin to do some of the things that the Bible says to do, God honors your obedience, because your obedience is an act of faith.

That's an expression of I trust you. That's an expression of big faith. And when you express big faith and God comes through in big faithfulness kinds of ways.

There's God in your life. There's God in your relationships, and there's God in your mind and in your heart. There's God in your marriage; there's God in your finances.

Jesus says, Look, if you want Christianity to explode in the reality of your experience, you have to do things. And this is why: One of the things that pumps up your faith and grows your faith is when you expose yourself and put yourself in environments where people teach the Word of God,

If you want to make a difference, then you can't just listen, you can't just attend, you've got to do.

When you have that kind of faith and it intersects with my faithfulness,

You're going to come alive in whatever arena of your life you've expressed that kind of faith.