

Lesson Two

What Is God's Part and Your Part In God Living His Life In You?

DAY ONE

Overview of Lesson Two

- God's part in living His life in us
- Man's part in God living His life in us
- Understanding how Jesus lived in relationship to His Father
- Why we struggle with dependence
- Why we can't live independently of God
- Four meanings of the word faith
- The two objects of our faith
- Why we struggle with faith

Introduction

I hope that Lesson One gave you a clearer understanding of what the truth is about THE Life being Christ and that He wants to live His life in you. In this lesson, we are going to look at what is God's part and what is your part in order for Christ to live His life in you.

What Is God's Part In Living In You?

This is an important part of the study because many Christians don't understand their part or God's part in God living His life in them. Therefore, I want to look at what the Bible says is God's part, and then we will look at what man's part is in God living His life in us.

God Is The INITIATOR And The CAUSE and EFFECT of Making His Promises An Experiential Reality In Your Life.

*"For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began** a good work **in you**..."
Philippians 1:6a*

What is Paul telling you in the first part of this verse? He is saying that God began the work that He wants to accomplish in you. He began or **initiated** this work in you at salvation. The Father accomplished this work by sending Jesus to die on the cross to save mankind from their sins. However, God promises to do much more than just save you. Look at the second part of Philippians 1:6:

*"...He who began a good work in you **will carry it on to completion** until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6b*

We see in the second part of Philippians 1:6 that God not only began the work but that He also WILL complete the work that He began in you at salvation. This verse reveals to us that:

God Is the INITIATOR and the CAUSE and EFFECT for real change in your life.

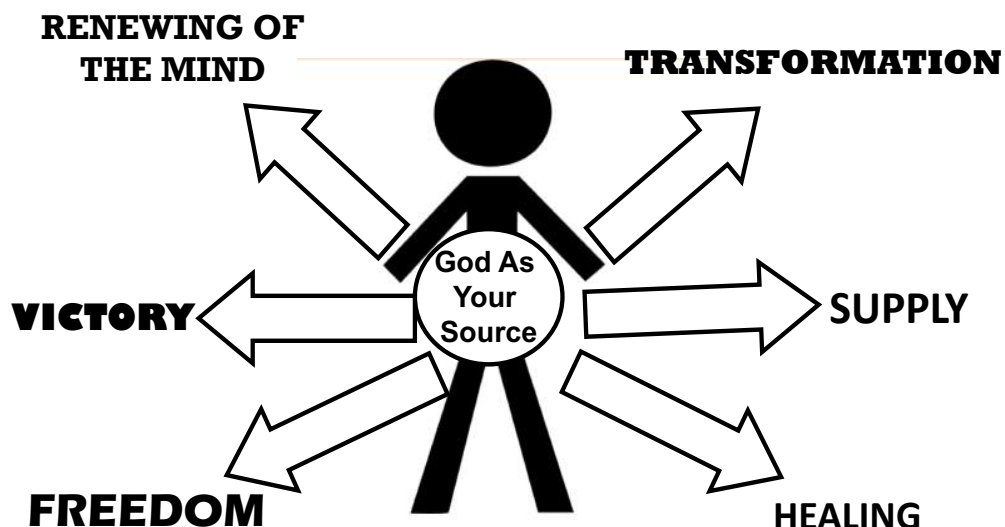
The false belief is that we are to be the initiator and the cause and effect of transformation in our lives. In other words if any change is to occur, it is up to YOU to transform yourself (with God's help). It is because of this false belief that so many believers have either given up or else keep trying harder to live the Christian life. The truth is that only God can be the cause and effect of change when it comes to fulfilling His promises. Another way of saying it is that God will be the Producer of what He promises for you.

What are some of the things that God wants to produce in you? He wants to:

- **FREE** you from the sin strongholds that you can't overcome. Galatians 5:1
- **HEAL** you of your past and present woundedness. Psalm 147:3
- **SUPPLY** your needs. Philippians 4:19
- **Be your VICTORY** over sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan. 1 Corinthians 15:57
- **TRANSFORM** your life for you to experience Christ-likeness. 2 Corinthians 3:18
- **Draw you into an INTIMATE** relationship with Himself. Ephesians 1:5

The next diagram illustrates that our life is to be lived from the inside out with God being the cause and effect to produce His promises of a renewed mind, victory, freedom, etc.

Living From The INSIDE Out



Question: What are some of the things listed above that you want to experience more of?

Engaging God: Ask God to begin accomplishing those things.

One other point that I want to share is that I have heard many believers ask the question, “Is God truly willing to transform my life?” Look again at Philippians 1:6 because it clearly shows that God initiated His work in you at salvation and that He is continuously willing to transform your life.

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you WILL carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6

What I have found to be true in many Christians’ lives is that it is NOT God who is unwilling. It is man’s UNWILLINGNESS to allow God to transform his life.

Questions: Have you believed that it is up to you to transform your life? How might it change how you live the Christian life if you believed that God is the cause and effect of your transformation?

Meditate: on Philippians 1:6. Think about the determined God within you who is more than willing to radically change your life.

Engaging God: If you struggle with God being able or willing to change your life, ask Him to persuade you that He is more than able and is willing.

Without GOD being the INITIATOR of His work in you as well as the PRODUCER of change, there will NEVER be any significant change in your life.

The Vine-Branch Relationship Reveals Your Part

Even though God is the cause and effect of transformation in your life, you have a vital part to play in order for Him to live His life in you. Let’s look at John 15:5 to give you a better idea of what that part is:

“I AM the VINE, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit...” John 15:5a

Jesus is saying that as the physical branch is designed to be totally dependent upon the physical vine for life, you, as a “spiritual” branch, are designed to live totally dependent upon God, the spiritual Vine, for life. The word “abide” is another word for “**dependence**.”



It is important to understand at this point a very key truth:

KEY TRUTH:

**God created man to be *DEPENDENT* upon Him.
His *DESIGN* from the beginning was for you to depend upon Him.**

The key word is “design.” Remember that in our first lesson we learned that God’s design from the beginning was for Adam and Eve to live totally dependent on Him to meet their every need. God’s design has not changed. You, too, are designed to live totally dependent on God. Doesn’t it stand to reason that if God is our Source that our part is to depend on Him to be our Source? That is why Jesus uses the perfect example of the branch being totally dependent on the vine for life.

Therefore, God’s design for you in Christ living His life in you is:

Living with an ATTITUDE of TOTAL DEPENDENCE upon God as your Source

Side note: The word “bears” in John 15:5 does not mean “produce.” The word “bears” means “to carry.” The key point is that the branch does not produce the fruit. The vine is the source for producing the fruit while the branch is the agent through which the fruit is produced.

KEY POINT

***As you walk with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God, He, as your Source,
PRODUCES in you His promises of freedom, victory, healing, etc.
He fulfills your SPIRITUAL destiny of being transformed into Christ-likeness.***

Questions: Have you believed up to this point that YOU are to produce the fruit? If so, how would it change your attitude toward your Christian walk if you believed that your part is “dependence,” and God’s part is “production” of the fruit in you? How does being dependent differ from what our culture is telling us?

Meditate: I know that John 15:5 is a very familiar verse, and Christians seem to give ascent to it without realizing the eternal depths of what Jesus is saying. Therefore, spend time going through the verse by meditating on it slowly and deliberately.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper spiritual understanding of the eternal implications of the branch-Vine relationship as it relates to your dependence on God.

DAY TWO

To Better Understand Dependence, Let's See How Jesus LIVED.

You may be wondering at this point what dependence looks like. To gain a fuller understanding of dependence, let's look at how Jesus lived His life on earth. We need to first understand that Jesus as the "God-man" laid aside His privileges of deity. We see this in Philippians 2:6, 7:

*"He (Jesus) had equal status with God but didn't think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, **He set aside the privileges of deity** and took on the status of a slave and became human!" NLT (Parenthesis mine)*

It doesn't mean that at any time while Jesus was on this earth that He was not fully deity. What it means specifically is that Jesus laid aside His right to be **co-equal** with the Father in order to live as a man. How then did Jesus live in regard to His relationship with the Father?

Let's look at three scriptures that describe Jesus's relationship to His Father:

*"Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the **Son can do nothing of Himself**, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.'*" John 5:19

*"I can do **nothing on My own initiative**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."* John 5:30

*"Jesus therefore said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do **nothing on My own initiative**, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.'*" John 8:28

The common theme in each of these verses is that Jesus said that He could do **nothing apart from** the Father. In other words, Jesus lived in moment by moment dependence upon the Father as His Source while He was living on earth. What does it mean that Jesus was living from the Father as His Source?

***This means that Jesus was not functioning out of His OWN
life and power but out of the life and power of His FATHER.***



Could this mean that the Father, not Jesus, was the Source for all that Jesus accomplished while He was on earth? We see the answer in John 14:10 when Jesus says:

*"Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say are not my own, but **my Father who lives in Me does His work through Me.**"*

What this verse is telling us is that it was the Father's **life** and **power** through Jesus healing the lame, giving sight to the blind, and raising Lazarus from the dead. In other words, Jesus lived dependently on the Father, with the result that the Father **produced** the miracles through Christ. Jesus's life in relationship to His Father was a perfect example of the branch-Vine relationship.

If through Jesus's dependence the Father's life and power flowed through Him to perform miracles, what could that same life and power do in you if you walk dependently upon God? This leads us to the following question:

***If Jesus, as a man, lived in total DEPENDENCE upon His Father as the Source
with the result that the FATHER lived His life in and through Jesus, then
HOW SHOULD YOU LIVE LIFE?***

Key Point: Jesus not only came to die for our sins. He also came to show us how to live.

Question: Referring back to God's promises of victory, freedom, healing, and transformation that we discussed in Lesson One, what do you believe that God will produce in your life if you choose to live dependently upon Him?

Meditate: on the verses from John and think about this question, "If Jesus as our example lived totally dependent on His Father's life and power, then how does God expect us to live?"

Engaging God: You may not have understood until now the relationship between Jesus and His Father and the application of this relationship to your relationship with God. Therefore, ask God to reveal to you how Jesus's relationship with the Father applies to you in your daily life.

Why Do We STRUGGLE With Dependence On God?

As I started my new journey of allowing Christ to live His life in me, I struggled with being totally dependent on Him. As a result of ministering to many Christians, I have found that we all struggle with living dependently upon God. Why? Let me give you three of the most common reasons why we all struggle with dependence.

1. The world says that you are to be INDEPENDENT.

Part of our struggle with dependence is that we live in a world that screams, "be independent, self-sufficient, and self-reliant." We are so inundated and brainwashed with the message of independence from the world that we struggle when it comes to living dependently upon God.

2. The world also sends the message that dependence equals WEAKNESS.



Not only does the world scream “independence,” but it also sends the message that “dependence” equals “weakness.” Since no one wants to be perceived as weak (especially men), then they choose to be “strong” in their independence. (FYI: Dependence = weakness is a false belief.)

3. There is a part of man’s makeup that resists being dependent on God: THE FLESH.

Until we were saved, we were living independently of God. Therefore, when we learn that the Christian life is about dependence, there is something within us called the “flesh” (see Romans 7:18) which resists living dependently upon God. The flesh is simply an attitude within us that says, “I don’t need God to live life because I can do it on my own.”

***Living from the FLESH is the #1 reason why we RESIST
living dependently upon God.***

We will talk more about the flesh in Lesson Four, but it is important to know that there is a part of us that will ALWAYS resist being dependent upon God.

The Truth Is That Man Was NOT Designed To Live Independently of God.

Let’s go back to John 15:5 and look at the last few words in this verse where Jesus says:

“.....apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Let me ask you a question. “What happens to a branch when it is separated from the vine?” It begins to die because it is no longer depending on the vine and is no longer drawing life from the vine. If you, as a spiritual branch, decide to try to live independently of Christ, the spiritual Vine, then what can you expect?

What does Jesus mean when He says that “apart from Me you can do nothing?” This part of John 15:5 creates problems for many Christians. Why? It is because man is capable of doing many things apart from God. As we discussed in the first lesson, man learns how to do a job, to master a hobby or a sport, or to manage his finances. So what does Jesus mean?

***Jesus means that APART from Him you CANNOT
produce “THE” LIFE that God promises you.***

Apart from dependence upon God there will be:

- **NO power** over sin.
- **NO victory** over your flesh.
- **NO freedom** from your defeating sin patterns.
- **NO healing** of your past or present woundedness.
- **NO fruit** of the Spirit produced in your life.
- **NO transformation** of your life.
- **NO intimacy** with God.

You might want to read this list again slowly and let the results sink in if you choose to live independently of God.

Meditate: on John 15:5b and think about how this verse might apply to unresolved struggles that you may be facing in your relationships, to sin patterns that you want victory over, or change that you want to take place in your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to expose the areas in your life (job, marriage, family, etc.) where you might be living independently of Him. Ask Him to persuade you that apart from living dependently upon His life and power you will not experience His freedom, victory, healing, and transformation.

KEY POINT

***The problem is that living from your OWN power, strength, ability, and willpower
CANNOT produce the Christian life that ONLY God can produce.***

DAY THREE

Dependence ON God = FAITH IN God.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6

I equate depending **on** God with walking by faith **in** God. If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you know that our part in our Christian walk is faith. However, what I am finding out is that people have either some misunderstandings or false beliefs regarding the issue of faith.

The reason I say this is because what they believe about faith is not resulting in consistent freedom, victory, healing, or transformation. Therefore, as you go through the rest of this lesson, take a closer look at what you believe about faith and ask the Lord to reveal any false beliefs that you may have about faith. Here is the first question that you might ask yourself:

Is what I BELIEVE about walking by faith TRANSFORMING my life?



Why do I say that dependence = faith? Let me give you an example. When you have a dental problem, it creates a **need** for a dentist. You are totally dependent upon that dentist to deal with your problem. Another way of saying that you are dependent is that you have **faith** in your dentist's ability to do what you cannot do for yourself. It is the same with God. Faith is simply depending upon God to accomplish in your life what He promises to accomplish (and you cannot).

Take another look at Galatians 2:20 to see Paul's part in order for Christ to live in Him:

*"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God** who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20*

Paul says that his part in allowing Christ to live in Him is by **faith**. In essence, what Paul is saying is that he must depend totally on Christ to do what only Christ can do. You see, many Christians have asked me, "How do **I** live the Christian life?" This is the wrong question. The truth is that since Christ is the One to live His life in you, the question should be,

"How do I ALLOW Christ to live His life in me?"

The answer is through depending upon or having faith in Christ. We are going to see toward the end of this lesson why so many Christians are not being transformed because of their false beliefs about faith.

***Walking by faith results in Christ living His life in you to produce
the abundant life that He promises for you.
Faith is the "HOW TO" for the Christian.***

Living by faith allows the Holy Spirit to produce in you:

- **FREEDOM** from defeating sin patterns.
- **VICTORY** over the flesh, the power of sin, Satan, and the demonic.
- **HEALING** of past or present woundedness.
- **TRANSFORMATION** into Christ-likeness.
- **INTIMACY** with God.

Four Ways To Define FAITH

In order to gain a deeper understanding of faith, I want to give you four practical definitions that have helped me over the years. I hope they will do the same for you.

1. Faith Is An ASSURANCE And A CONVICTION.

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
Hebrews 11:1*

Some of the meanings of the word “assurance” in Hebrews 11:1 in Strong’s Lexicon are steadfastness of mind, resolution, confidence, and firm trust. “Conviction” connotes certainty. Distilling all these words down, one definition of faith is as follows:

FAITH
***is an ASSURANCE, CONFIDENCE, and CERTAINTY that God IS Who
He says that He is and that He WILL accomplish what He promises.***

Application: An application of this definition might be, “I am confident that I cannot lose my salvation because God is Who He says He is and has promised me that I cannot lose my salvation according to John 6:37-40.”

Questions: How much assurance and confidence do you have in God concerning Who He is and what He is willing and able to accomplish in your life? Would your lack of dependence on God be an indicator of your lack of assurance and confidence?

Meditate: on Hebrews 11:1 and think about the situations where you are not totally assured and may lack confidence that God is working in those areas.

Engaging God: In those areas, ask God to give you greater assurance and confidence that He is Who He says that He is and that He will accomplish in your life what He promises.

2. Faith Is A PERSUASION and An EXPECTATION.

FAITH
(as defined in Matthew Henry’s Commentary)
***“is a firm PERSUASION and EXPECTATION that God will perform ALL
that He has promised to us in Christ.”***

I like this definition because of the words **persuasion** and **expectation**. Why do we come to God in the first place? We come to God because we believe on some level that God is Who He says that He is and that He will do what He promises to do. In other words, we are persuaded to some degree of God’s ability to produce His promises in us.

However, for the rest of our lives we will need God to further persuade us because of our unbelief. “Divine persuasion” is a necessary part of our transformation. Paul talked about Abraham being persuaded of God’s ability and power to do what He promises in Romans 4:21:

“being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He had promised.”

Application: An application of this definition might be, “As I walk in dependence on God, I am being persuaded by God that He loves me and that He will transform my life.”

Questions: How persuaded are you of God’s ability and willingness to transform your life? Do you need further Godly persuasion?

Meditate: on Romans 4:21 and Philippians 1:20. Think about this question, “What areas in your life do you need further persuasion concerning God’s love, character, and/or promises?”

Engaging God: Begin asking God to further persuade you in those areas that you thought about.

3. Faith Is Believing That “I CAN’T,” BUT “GOD CAN.”

I CAN’T – “...*apart from Me you can do nothing.*” John 15:5b

GOD CAN – “*He who began a good work in your life will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*” Philippians 1:6

We must first come to the place of “I Can’t” because the truth is that only “God can” produce His promises of transformation in our lives. Another passage that points to the truth that God can is Psalm 37:5:

*“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He **WILL** do it.” (Emphasis mine)*

FAITH
***is coming to the realization that you CAN’T do what only God CAN do
in your life and then BELIEVE that He can.***

God tells us over and over again in His word that He can, and He will complete the work that He has begun.

Application: An application of this definition might be, “I can’t set myself free from my fear, but as I walk by faith, God can (and will) set me free.”

Question: What are three things that you know that you cannot do, but God promises to do?

Meditate: on John 15:5b and Philippians 1:6 and think about what it is that you are trying to do concerning living the Christian life but cannot do.

Engaging God: Begin trusting God to do what it is that you cannot do.

4. Faith Is COOPERATION With God.

“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” John 5:30

Faith means that you have made a decision to cooperate with God. This means that you are no longer resisting God’s work or that you are not trying to do what only God can do. Cooperation is a faith attitude that says, “Lord, I am trusting You to live Your life in me and to transform my life according to Your will.”

FAITH
Is your WILLING COOPERATION with God to transform your life according to His will.

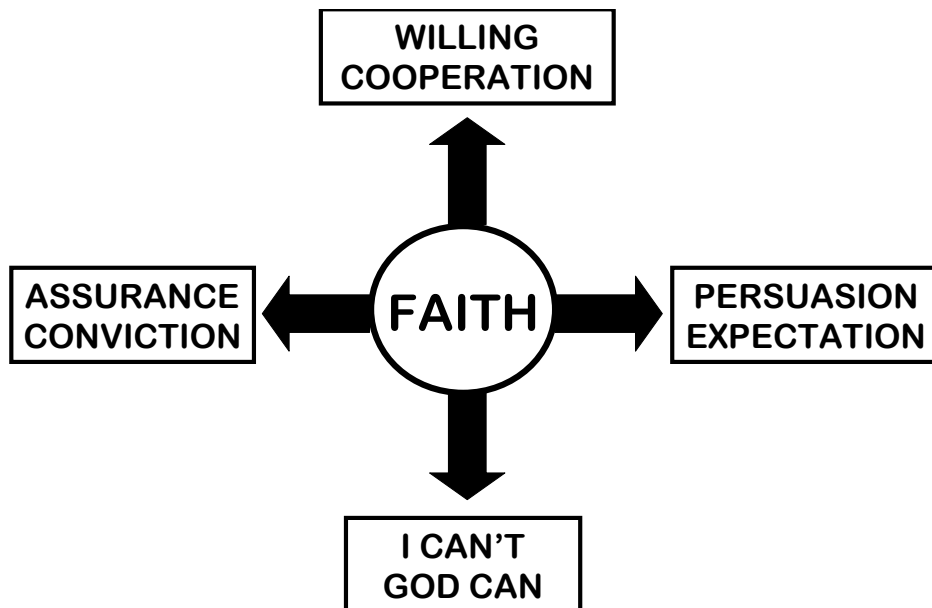
Application: Let’s assume that you struggle with inadequacy. Cooperation with the Lord might look like this, “Lord, I am asking You to give me a willingness to cooperate with You and to not resist Your work in freeing me from my inadequacy.”

Question: In what areas of your life are you possibly not cooperating with God or resisting His work in you?

Meditate: on John 5:30 above and ask yourself, “Why am I resisting God’s work in these areas of my life when He promises to set me free, give me victory, and supply my needs?”

Engaging God: Begin asking God to give you a willingness to drop your resistance to His transforming work in your life.

The next diagram summarizes the four definitions of faith.



Questions: Which one of the definitions of faith are most practical to you? Why?

Meditate: on the four definitions of faith and ask God to give you deeper revelation and willingness to walk by faith.

DAY FOUR

Three Key Truths Concerning Faith

Before we finish our study on faith, let's look at three more key truths about faith.

1. Is It Up To You To Produce Faith?

This is a key question to answer because so many Christians believe it is up to them to produce the faith necessary to live the Christian life. Let's begin looking at the answer to this question by looking at Jesus's last three words on the cross in John 19:30:

"It Is Finished."



These last three words of our Lord on the cross have eternal significance to you and me as Christians. One of the meanings is that Christ once and for all has dealt with our sins. However, there is another meaning that pertains to our Christian walk. Let me ask you a question. "What do you add to a finished work?" Nothing!

In other words, God is not asking you to add anything to His completed work. God does not need for you to achieve anything for Him. Your part as it says in Colossians 2:6 below is simply to RECEIVE:

*"As you therefore **have received** Christ Jesus the Lord, **so walk in Him**"*

How does this apply to faith? Look at Colossians 2:9, 10 that we studied in Lesson One:

*"For **in Christ** all the **fullness of the Deity** lives in bodily form, and you have been given **fullness IN Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority."*

The following is a key truth based on Colossians 2:9, 10:

***If you have been given fullness IN Christ, this means that
you have the FULLNESS of Christ's FAITH in you.***

Couple this verse with Philippians 4:19:

*"And My God shall supply **ALL your needs** according to His riches in glory **IN Christ** Jesus."*

Since God is the Source to supply your faith, then it is not up to you to produce or manufacture faith. Since Christ is in you, and you are in Christ, you contain all the faith that you will ever need. Your part according to Colossians 2:6 is to RECEIVE the faith that is already yours.

Good News!

God does NOT expect you to produce the faith.

He expects you to RECEIVE His SUPPLY of faith.

Questions: Have you believed that it is up to you to produce the faith required to live the Christian life? How much easier would it be for you to simply receive the faith that is already yours in Christ rather than trying to produce the faith required?

2. What Does Jesus Mean By “LITTLE” Faith?



“He replied, ‘You of little faith, why are you so afraid?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.” Matthew 8:26

What Jesus meant by “little” faith in this verse was that the disciples were not **exercising** their faith to full capacity. Why? At this point, the disciples did not have all of Christ’s faith because they would not receive within them the fullness of the Godhead until the day of Pentecost.

You, on the other hand, have the fullness of Christ’s life within you, with the result that you contain of all of His faith. The question is, “Will you exercise more and more of the fullness of the faith within you, or will you be like the disciples and live from ‘little faith?’”

The question is NOT “How much faith do you have?” The question is:

“Are you EXERCISING the fullness of the faith that you already possess IN Christ?”

Question: How might it change your outlook about faith knowing that you contain within you all the faith that you need in Christ?

Engaging God: Seek the Lord for a deeper understanding that you contain all the faith that you need and that your part is to exercise the fullness of the faith that you already possess.

3. God’s Work In Your Life Is NOT Necessarily Contingent Upon Your Faith.

“Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases him.” Psalm 115:3

God's work in your life is not necessarily contingent upon you exercising your faith. God is sovereign, and He can do what He desires in your life regardless of whether or not you are walking by faith. Even when we may not be walking by faith, that does not prevent God from working in our lives. (I call that "grace.") However, I can tell you from personal experience that as I have more intentionally walked by faith these last several years versus the first thirty years of my Christian life, God has accelerated His changes in my life. A key truth to remember is:

***God's transformation process in your life will be ACCELERATED
as you walk by faith.***

Faith Must Always Have An Object.



Faith can have many objects. When you drive your car, you have faith in your brakes, or you have faith in the construction of the building that you work in every day, or faith in the chair that you sit in. It is not faith that is the key.

The key is the **object** of your faith. The object of our faith as Christians should be Jesus. We see this in the following verses:

"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on Whom our faith depends from start to finish."
Hebrews 12:2 (NLT)

"And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus..." Acts 3:16

The Problem Is That There Is ANOTHER Object of Our Faith.

I know that if you have been living the Christian life for some time, you know that the object of our faith should be Jesus Christ. As a result of ministering to many Christians (who have been Christians for 10, 20, 30+ years), I have personally experienced and witnessed that there is another object to their faith. That object is **their own IQ, ability and willpower**. Think about this statement:

***If you believe that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life,
is it possible that the REAL object of your faith is YOUR IQ, ability and willpower?***



Let me give you an example. If you believe that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life, you will take God's promises of victory, freedom, and transformation and try in your own ability and willpower to make those promises an experiential reality in your life.

In essence, what you have done is to put faith in yourself, and you have asked God to help YOU be the source for making those promises real in your life.

However, what do we know is true? We know from Lesson One that 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that God is the Source for living life in us and that He is not going to help us be the Source. At this point I want to make it personal by asking you this question:

***If you are TRYING in your OWN strength and willpower to live the Christian life
are you experiencing any real transformation?***

So many Christians today have been taught as I was that we must “apply” God’s truth to our lives. While that sounds very spiritual, how I see it interpreted is that I must take God’s truth and try to make it work in my life using my own IQ, ability, self-discipline and willpower. The problem with this is that if it is up to me to make it work, and I will **fail** because I will not be able to make it work!

***The truth is that we are TOTALLY dependent upon God for Him to take His truth
and make it work in our lives.***

The following questions may help you determine how your walk of faith is going.

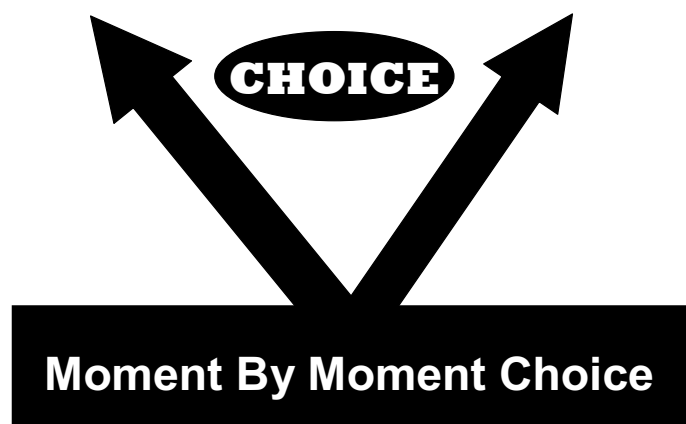
Is your walk of faith producing:

- **Ongoing victory over your defeating sin patterns and Satan?**
- **Ongoing freedom from your sinful behaviors?**
- **Ongoing healing of your past or present woundedness?**
- **Ongoing transformation into the likeness of Christ?**

If you can’t answer “Yes” to each of the previous questions, is it possible that you have been putting faith in your own ability versus faith in God’s ability? I am not asking this to guilt or shame you. The reason that I ask these questions is because when we walk by faith in Christ, He will produce and we will experience ongoing victory, freedom, healing, and transformation. Look at the following diagram to see the results of putting faith in your ability versus putting faith in God.

Faith In Yourself As
Your Source w/God's Help =
lifeless, powerless, unchanged
life, (more of the same)

Faith In God As
Your Source =
Life, Power,
Transformation



What Choice Will You Make?

The consequences of putting faith in yourself will mean that you will not experience Christ's life or His power and that real transformation will never take place in your life. However, living by faith in God as your Source will result in experiencing Christ's life and power with the result that you will experience radical transformation.

Engaging God: Ask the Spirit to reveal to you whether or not the true object of your faith is in your ability and/or your willpower or in God's ability.

Question: What does the diagram above reveal as to what the consequences will be if you are the object of your faith?

Engaging God: If you discover that you are really walking by faith in your ability versus God's ability, then ask Him to give you the willingness to walk dependently upon Him as your Source.

DAY FIVE

Why Do We STRUGGLE With Having Faith In God?

*"Then they asked Him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this, to **BELIEVE** in the One Whom He has sent.'" John 6:28-29*

Before we go on, I believe that it is important to look at three reasons that I have discovered over the years as to why we as Christians struggle with having faith in God.

1. We bring the “LEARN and DO” mindset into the Christian life.



I believe this is the #1 reason why we struggle with the issue of faith. Why? Because it is so easy to walk by faith in our own abilities because that is how we live life. Think about your life. How have you lived life thus far? For most of us, we learn about life, and then we go about accomplishing what we have learned.

For example, you learn how to do your job, and then you do it. You learn how to play golf, fish, or hunt, and you go and do them. You learn how to raise your kids and use what you have learned to raise them. The key is that you are using your own intellect and ability to “learn” and then to “do.” This is the way that we have all lived our lives. The question is, “Does this ‘learn and do’ mindset work in living the Christian life?” Think about this question:

Do you believe that you are to LEARN God’s truth about living the Christian life and then in your own ability (with God’s help) go out and DO what God says?

The Truth: The “learn and do” mindset does not work in living THE Christian life. Why? Because we cannot do what only the Holy Spirit can do and promises to do in our lives. Remember Philippians 1:6? As we learned in the first lesson, it is God’s power and His alone that will create spiritual transformation. As I shared with you about my story, I tried to live the “learn and do” Christian life and I failed miserably. The problem was that it never produced the life-transformation that God promises. It has only been through dependence upon the Lord that true change has taken place.

2. We want to be part of the CAUSE and EFFECT of our spiritual transformation.

Another problem that we have concerning faith is that we can’t bring our intellect, abilities, and talents to be the cause and/or effect of spiritual transformation. This is a problem because we always use our intellect, abilities, and talents in our jobs, in our marriages, and in raising our families. It is natural to want to try to transform ourselves or to help God through our efforts to be transformed, but we cannot produce what only God can produce.

The Truth: In our walk of faith we are depending upon God to bring His intellect, power, and ability to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves. Remember John 15:5b? This presents a struggle when it comes to setting aside our abilities and drawing upon God’s ability. I hope to some degree that you are in the process of being persuaded that only God, as your Source, can bring about any significant change in the way that you think, feel, choose, or behave.

Note: This does not mean we are not to use our intellect and abilities. However, those things will do you no good when it comes to spiritual transformation.

3. LEGALISM nurtures “learn and do” Christianity.

If you spent much time in a legalistic church environment like I did, then you have probably been living a “learn and do” Christian life. What do I mean by “legalism?” Legalism is trying to live the Christian life using your own ability to keep or follow certain rules to produce spiritual

transformation. Legalism promotes the false belief that you are to be the source for trying to keep certain standards or rules to become a good Christian or to please God. For me legalism produced a life of striving in my own strength to try to please God and to set myself free. Can you identify with this?

The Truth: Trying to live up to a set of standards or rules will never produce any real transformation. Trying harder or doing more for God will not bring about the changes that you desire. It will only result in either giving up or trying harder to live the Christian life. True freedom only comes when you put your faith in God's power and ability to produce in you His promises of transformation.

Does This Mean That I Live A PASSIVE Life And Do Nothing?

*"that your **faith** should not be in the wisdom of men but in the **power of God.**" 1 Corinthians 2:5*



I often hear this comment from folks when they are trying to understand about walking by faith in Christ to live His life in them: "Does living by faith mean that I am supposed to do nothing?" Or comments like, "This walk of faith seems very passive" Or "What is my responsibility?" The truth is that the walk of faith is anything but passive.

KEY TRUTH:

is that the Christian life is very ACTIVE, but GOD is the SOURCE of the ACTIVITY (spiritual transformation) taking place.

To understand the above truth, let's look at Jesus's life and ministry. Would you say that Jesus was passive? I don't believe that any of us would. However, what did we learn about how Jesus lived? He was totally DEPENDENT upon the Father. As He walked in dependence, what happened? The Father released His life and power THROUGH Jesus to transform lives. Therefore, you do have a responsibility.

Your responsibility is to DEPEND on Christ moment by moment to live His life in you.

As you do, God releases His life and power in you to radically change the way that you think, feel, choose, and behave.

Meditate: on the thought that as you actively depend on God that He is the Source of the activity (spiritual transformation) taking place in you.

Engaging God: Seek God to give you revelation of this issue of passivity, responsibility and activity.

Summary Points In Lesson Two

I hope that this lesson has given you a better understanding of your part in God's transforming process. The key points that I hope you remember from this study are:

- Your part in living the Christian life is DEPENDENCE upon God as your Source.
- Dependence is another word for FAITH.
- It is not up to you to produce the faith. Your part is to RECEIVE the faith that you have in Christ.
- The OBJECT of your faith will either be in YOURSELF as the source or in GOD as the Source.
- We struggle with the true meaning of faith because of a "learn and do" mindset, your not being able to use your talents and abilities, and from embracing any legalism that you might be experiencing.
- The Christian life is not passive. God is the Source of His activity in you to transform every area of your life.
- The result of a life lived by faith in Christ results in changes in our thinking, beliefs, behavior, and our choices.

Look again at the diagram on page 28 concerning the differences between "A" Life and "THE" Life