

Faith-Believing is Essential for Effective Prayer

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth (from a convinced mind) that you are saved. Romans 10:9-11 NLT

The terms “*faith*” and “*belief*” are synonymous, but often have slightly different meanings in Scripture. The subtle difference is that faith is of the mind and belief is of the heart—it takes both. Let’s look at some Scripture references that help define “*faith*” as well as “*belief*.” Did you notice the subtle differences in our text?

The word “*faith*” defines how you perceive God’s faithfulness in your mind through your five senses. For instance, Scripture tells us that we obtain faith by *hearing* God’s Word. That includes testimonies of His goodness. We acquire faith when we *see* a person healed, and our faith grows when we can *feel* His presence. “*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*” All of our mind-senses help us perceive and grow our faith. Yet, I contend that having a convinced mind alone does not usually produce actionable faith. Let me explain.

While faith is made stronger through a “*convinced mind*,” actionable faith requires a believing heart. Think about the times when you took passionate action—we *take action when our emotions become involved*. Why? Because believing is a function of the heart where our emotions move us to act. Mark 11:22-24 explains more.

“Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Have faith in God (through a convinced mind). I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you’ve received it, it will be yours.”

These promises from the book of Mark are admittedly beyond human comprehension. However, we know we should accept this verse as true because Jesus spoke it to the disciples. How often have we prayed, knowing this verse, but then immediately put limits on the “*possibility*” of having our prayer answered to its fullest? Our sometimes-transient human faith, combined with a wishy-washy heart, has an eye on possible disappointment. Even moments after we pray, we seem ready to defend God and offer reasons why He may not, or will not, answer our prayer.

Could it be that praying for the seemingly impossible creates the potential for a credibility crisis? If my prayer does not come about as I prayed, will the person I pray for think I’m not credible or, worse yet, that God is not credible, faithful or reliable? The answer lies in having child-like faith. As adults, we have become jaded through life’s disappointments, so it’s natural for us to have caution when we ask for the *extra-ordinary* or *super-natural*.

Jesus said many times, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” Yes, faith means having conviction (convinced mind) in the truth of God’s Word. But Jesus said emphatically, “*...have no doubt in your heart...*” All-encompassing faith entails *believing with your heart* what God has said He will do, as well as having eyes to see Him doing it. Having a convinced mind and a believing heart prepares you to receive.

The prepared heart of the believing disciple sees and hears God’s answer and believes all things are possible. We must step into God’s realm by the power of the Holy Spirit and take God at His Word. When we let go of our earth-bound frailties of limited probabilities that hinder our prayers,

and grasp with our hearts the Holy Spirit's quickening power, we step into His provision—His heart of caring love. Charles Spurgeon puts it this way, *“The ground of faith is not the sufficiency of the visible means for the performance of the promise, but the all-sufficiency of the invisible God, who will most surely do as He has said.”*

We must practice believing. This means exercising our faith by frequently taking the truth of God's Word, and applying it without imposing qualifying thoughts, ‘if possible,’ ‘if it's Your will.’ Let's not reduce God's promises to the level that we think is possible. Instead, we must plant both feet in God's kingdom and stand on His promise *“...he that does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatsoever he says.”*

Taking a bold stand requires courage because it opposes the inclinations of our old nature, as well as rejecting the dictates of a non-believing world. Remember, as a genuine believer, you are not of this world; you are a citizen of God's kingdom.

God desires that we produce good fruit. He watches over the Vine to ensure the highest capacity of harvest in our lives. It's ours to join with God to produce the fruit that He desires in us. The fullest measure of His abundant life is to bear His fruit in due season; He delights in a heart turned toward Him in this way. When Jesus said, *“...he will have whatsoever he says,”* He invites us to bring forth fruit abundantly, in His name.

↻ Information and Revelation
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Heavenly Father, You are too holy and fearsome for my finite mind to consider completely. Thank You for loving me despite the vast disparity between us. I want to glorify You with effective prayer. So, LORD, I ask You to work the truths of Your Word into my life.

LORD, I want my mind and heart to agree that, in You, my salvation and redemption are complete. In Jesus, I have an eternal relationship with You, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which I can be saved. I ask that You build in me a solid, concrete faith, knowing that only You can deliver me. Help me to surrender every area of my life to You, no matter the circumstance. I ask You to help me take every opportunity to hide Your Word in my heart so that I can experience You through Your Rhema Word.

LORD, I ask You to build in me deep-seated faith-believing so that I can engage the two colliding kingdoms of this world with Your power and authority. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

By David E. McFadden

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