

Stronger Than Ever

Expect God to stretch you this year. He wants you to use your faith and make it stronger than ever. Once it's stretched you will have greater capacity to accomplish greater things and see greater answers to prayer. Here we will discuss several ways faith can be made stronger.

1. Connect with someone stronger.

Mark 9: 17-27

In this story we see two examples of faith limits being challenged. A man in the crowd had a son possessed of a mute spirit that often convulsed him. He brought his son to Jesus' disciples but they could not cast it out. Jesus rebuked their faithlessness (v. 19). We also see this father himself acknowledging his faith is not what it should be, and asked Jesus to help his unbelief (v. 24).

Even though the disciples were already given authority to cast out demon spirits when they were initially called (Matt. 10: 1), this case was especially difficult for them and was intimidating enough to challenge their faith level and expose unbelief. There will always be situations that arise that will expose where we really are in our faith level.

Whenever we try to believe beyond where our faith currently is, most of the time we are unsuccessful. This is especially true when we are in a crisis and the need is overwhelming to us. That was the case in this story. They did the best thing they could do in coming to Jesus.

When the problem is intimidating, it is important to recognize that your faith may be weak and infected with doubt. If this is the case, you need to find someone stronger spiritually that can agree with you in prayer (Matt. 18: 19-20). Two are better than one. The way to become stronger is to connect with someone already stronger.

2. Focus faith on the Kingdom First, then on the need.

Matt. 6: 30-34

Worry reveals two things. It reveals our faith is small, and it exposes that our focus is wrong. Jesus points that out in this passage. He tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This is where our faith focus should primarily be. He did not say not to seek the other things, but there is an order of priority that must be followed.

The reason we must seek the Kingdom of God first is because God's Kingdom is greater than our need. It's like tithing. The first 10% is to be returned to God first if we are to expect God's blessing upon the rest.

Likewise, seeking God's Kingdom first is like tithing our faith and focus. We are to be about our Father's business first and passionately pursue His glory and holiness. When this is happening, the need becomes smaller and God becomes greater in our hearts and in our prayers. Then when we use our faith on our need, we do so in Kingdom power. This gives us greater confidence when we know God's Kingdom power is involved.

He also tells us not to worry about tomorrow. Why? Because things can change and new needs can arise with the next day, but God's Kingdom is always the same and is more than enough for any trouble that arises. When our focus is on tomorrow it's easy to worry and stress. When our focus is on God's eternal Kingdom and His word, we can have confidence in His ability to handle tomorrow.

3. Keep faith as simple as possible.

2 Cor. 11: 3-4

Paul taught here that our minds can be corrupted from the sincere and pure devotion to what Christ has said (v. 4). The KJV renders this term "simplicity." The idea is to keep our faith simple, sincere and pure. Satan's job is to deceive the

nations (Rev. 12: 9). He tries to get us to doubt what God has said and doubt that God will do what He said. We must constantly pray, "Lord, this is what you said, and I believe it. Any other voice is a lie." Then remind the Lord (and yourself) of what He has promised in His word, and do so regularly. Continually dismiss doubt. You can say when doubt arises, "I don't receive that. I reject that voice." Repeat these confessions above as often as doubt arises.

Having faith as a grain of mustard seed is a faith that is appears small and simple, but when it's planted, grows and becomes great (Matt. 13: 31-32). Jesus made it clear that if we have mustard seed faith, large obstacles will obey our words, and nothing will be impossible for us (Matt. 17: 20).

4. Don't tell God how to answer your prayer.

Isaiah 55: 8-11

Often we have a plan of our own, and in prayer we ask or expect God to bring it to pass the way we envision. However, His ways and his thoughts are far above ours, as high as the heavens are above the earth. He has ways of bringing His word to pass that are beyond us (v. 11).

He can do exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think (Eph. 3: 20). This tells us that He can do things beyond our comprehension. All we need to do is believe in prayer, declare in faith what we believe, and leave the details to God.

All we see is the need. He sees everything. He sees ways to meet the need we can't see. This is why we must trust Him and leave the details to Him. He has the knowledge and power to meet our need in ways we never could have imagined on our own.

If we follow these principles, God can stretch our faith and we will become stronger than ever. Let God stretch your faith and fulfill His plan in your life.

