

INTRODUCTION

*“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit...”
(1 Corinthians 14:1, NIV, emphasis added)*

- God has called us to eagerly desire (from the Greek word *zēloō*, meaning to pursue with zeal) the spiritual gifts He gives, but this call is in the context of walking in His love (*agape*)

*“Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.”
(1 Corinthians 12:1, emphasis added)*

- It’s God’s desire that we not be ignorant (*agnoeō*) of the gifts that He gives us, but to grow in them and understand what they are, and that it is His Holy Spirit who releases them.

I. WHAT IS THE GIFT OF FAITH?

A. Faith (Greek *pistis*, used 240+ times in the NT): God-given belief, understanding, and conviction of the truth, promises, and character of God, especially that which is unseen or unperceived with natural faculties; belief which in turn produces a life lived according to the truth of God (Rom. 4:12, 2 Cor. 5:7, Jas. 2:14-18, Heb. 11)

- Biblical faith is *not*** the ability to proclaim and believe whatever we feel like and see it happen, or to make something that is untrue become true.
(e.g. “Wishful thinking”, “Power of positive thinking”, “Name it and claim it”)
- Biblical faith *is*** to believe and live in agreement with the truth of God though it is not yet fully manifest to us or to others.

B. The gift of faith can be witnessed in us by how we act

*“And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.”
(Matthew 9:2, emphasis added)*

“...and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:18, emphasis added)

C. Faith is also itself a gift from God by the Spirit

*“⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸...the utterance of wisdom...the utterance of knowledge... ⁹...faith...gifts of healing... ¹⁰...the working of miracles...prophecy...ability to distinguish between spirits...various kinds of tongues... interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”
(1 Corinthians 12:4-11, emphasis added)*

II. HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE GIFT OF FAITH?

A. Anyone can receive faith by hearing the truth of God's Word

*“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
(Romans 10:17, emphasis added)*

“¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psalm 19:1-4)

*“...He (anyone) who has an ear, let him hear...”
(Eze. 3:27; Matt. 11:15, 13:9, 13:43; Mar. 4:9, 4:23; Luke 8:8, 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22, 13:9)*

B. What we give our ears (cognitive faculties: eyes, ears, speech, thoughts, etc.) to will either grow us in the gift of faith in God, or cause us to wane in the gift and from the faith entirely

*“²⁰ O Timothy [man or woman of God], guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions (the hearing) of what is falsely called “knowledge,” ²¹ for by professing (or speaking) it some have swerved from the faith...”
(1 Timothy 6:20-21, emphasis added)*

*“²⁰ My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. ²¹ Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.”
(Proverbs 4:20-21, emphasis added)*

*“²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. ²⁴ Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. ²⁵ Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. ²⁶ Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. ²⁷ Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.”
(Proverbs 4:23-27, emphasis added)*

C. We also continue to receive faith by asking God and then positioning ourselves in seeking it

*“And I [Jesus] tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find...”
(Luke 11:9, emphasis added)*

“¹ My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ² making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³ yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:1-5, emphasis added)

III. WHAT IS THE GIFT OF FAITH FOR, AND HOW SHOULD WE EXERCISE IT?

A. Faith encourages others around us in God

“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.”
(Romans 1:11-12, emphasis added)

B. Faith allows us to bring God pleasure and to draw closer to Him

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
(Hebrews 11:6, emphasis added)

C. Faith serves as a conduit for the release of the other gifts of the Spirit and workings in God

i. Some specific examples of the supernatural released through faith:

- a. **Healing** (Matt. 8:5-13, 9:10, 9:22, 9:27-30, 15:21-28; Mar. 2:5, 5:34, 10:52; Luke 5:20, 8:48, 17:19, 18:42; Acts 3:16, 14:9-10)
- b. **Miraculous works of power** (Matt. 21:18-21; Luke 17:6; 1 Cor. 13:2; Gal. 3:5; Heb. 11:11, 11:29-30)
- c. **Prophecy** (Rom. 12:6; Heb. 11:20-22, 32)

D. Faith should be exercised in love towards others like all of the other gifts (1 Cor. 13:4-7) and should be walked out in a manner that builds up the Body in unity (Rom. 14:1-15:7).

“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”
(Romans 14:1)

- i. In all circumstances, love is...Patient (longsuffering), Kind, Joyful in the truth, Bearing the burdens of others, Believing and full of faith, Filled with hope in God, Persevering
- ii. Love is *not*...Envious (covetous), Prideful, Rude to others, Self-focused, Easily provoked to anger, Resentful or unforgiving, Delighting in wrong