



REVIVE US

A HEART READY FOR REVIVAL

Session 5: BELIEVING Personal Study Guide

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Adapted from *Revive Us: A Heart Ready for Revival* by Robby Gallaty

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PERSONAL STUDY 1

THE REALITY OF FAITH

If you're a fan of movies, you've either heard or said the phrase, "Don't tell me how it ends!" If someone spills the ending to a movie you've looked forward to watching, you feel disappointed. Part of the fun with movies is discovering the end. However, the journey through the movie is what makes it influential, not the ending.

The same can be said of our walk with Christ too: We know the ending which makes the journey that much more enjoyable. The Christian life is not necessarily the most meaningful in eternity, it's experiencing God in the journey while alive here on earth.

In what ways are you experiencing God's fullness right now? Why is it important to recognize what God is doing in the middle of the journey?

*You can know God personally.
You can hear Him today.*

FAITH HEARS FROM HEAVEN

Read Hebrews 11:1-3. Name a few unseen spiritual realities you are certain about.

Why are you certain of these spiritual realities?

It is most notable that the Old Testament shows the reality of mankind's bent towards sin and its impact and consequences on our lives but also shown is that sinful people can choose faith – and they have. This is the theme Hebrews 11 – sinful people believing God's promises were true before anyone saw these promises fulfilled. Their faith was approved by God.

Another helpful insight with Hebrews 11 is its presenting of the outcomes of the faith expressed by others. The King James Version (KJV) renders verse 2 to read, *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

Their *good report* is the good report of their testimony in Scripture. Their *good report* is the Spirit-given witness of God's work in and through their lives that preserve for us today. Verse 3 tells us the word of the Lord was offered to them and they responded with faith and obedience.

What do the examples in Hebrews 11 teach us about depending on the Spirit and the life of faith? Why should we trust and press into these reports?

What is an example of a Spirit-given “good report” in your life?

What do the following verses teach you?

Numbers 23:19

Psalm 119:160

Galatians 1:8-9

2 Peter 1:20-21

When we set aside time to be alone with the Lord, in faith, we will hear from Him. We can be confident that the Holy Spirit will not reveal anything to us that will contradict God's Word, so we can move forward faithfully and confidently trust the direction the Lord is leading us in.

Read Hebrews 11:13, 17-19. What outcome of faith should there be for those who receive a word from God?

God's people saw Him move. They heard a word from the Lord. When God reveal truth, they planted their lives firmly in His truth even when it didn't make a lick of sense to the world. Found in the verses of Hebrews 11 are a group of individuals like Abraham, who saw God's promise before they experienced it. Before it was seen, they believed and trusted. Keep in mind they didn't have the Bible as we have it. They didn't read God's word – they heard a word from God.

FAITH STANDS ON REVELATION

Read Mark 6:41-52. What should the disciples have learned about Jesus in verses 41-44?

The miracle of the loaves and fishes were clearly seen by people. Imagine being on that hillside witnessing firsthand that miracle – what would that sight have done for your faith? This particular object lesson wasn't complete with the loaves and fishes. Jesus instructed His disciples to clean up the leftovers and store them before boarding a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee without Him.

The disciples, as you may recall, struggled with the wind all night. Jesus came to them with yet another object lesson in tow: He came to them walking on water. The disciples didn't anticipate that and thought they had seen a ghost and were terrified (Matthew 14:22-33).

In that moment of terror, Jesus spoke, boarded the boat, and the wind stopped. Jesus connected the lack of faith by the disciples to a deeper issue than the reality of wind and the illusion of ghosts.

Describe the disciples' problem in verse 52.

Keep in mind that the disciples had at their feet in the boat, the remains of the miracle of the loaves and fishes when they became afraid of both the wind and the appearance of a "ghost". The entire time Jesus had been teaching the disciples about Himself. At their feet was a revelatory piece of evidence that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

The baskets of leftover food was the physical demonstration the Jesus can handle any situation that arises. Yet, they still panicked. In reality, the disciples still had a very small understanding of who Jesus is and what He can do.

We don't carry around baskets of leftovers, but we do have something even better – we have the revelatory Word of God at our fingertips. Read Romans 10:17. What is the connection between God's Word and your faith?

You can't trust Someone you don't know.

Understanding who Jesus is, is the foundation and strength of our faith not our resolve or willpower to believe. Grasping into an unknown, unseen realm that is beyond our current understanding does not equate faith. Responding to a clear word from God is the substance of faith. Here is why Bible study matters: when you know God's word, you know Jesus. When you know Jesus, your faith becomes revelatory too.

FAITH DEMANDS ACTION

Read Hebrews 11:17-38. What actions here stand out to you as most personally encouraging or challenging? Why?

In one sentence, summarize this section of Hebrews 11.

The writer of Hebrews records in chapter 11 a list of men and women who are known more for their response to their faith than just for believing. They are remembered for what they did. Theologian and Professor of Theology and Human Development at Emory University, Dr.

James W. Fowler writes, *Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions.*¹

Don't be mistaken, you are not that different from those listed in Hebrews 11. You have the same opportunity as they did to be faithful. The "results" of our faith may not be "big," but we're not to evaluate the outcome nor the size of our faith. That is for God the Father alone.

Faith is the conviction that God's Word is true and that by acting on His Word, you will receive blessing.

What are some of the blessings you have received as you have acted in faith?

Does living a life of faith equal earthly comfort or success? Why?

Yes, some men and women of faith came back to life after death. Others succumbed to death. Some were great warriors and were celebrated for their victories in war and conquered kingdoms while others were tortured, stoned, or sawed in two.

Earthly comfort and success are not guaranteed just because we believe God and trust in the fulness of who He is while living out that faith in everyday life. We also must realize and understand that the prayers of the faithful are not guaranteed to be answered in the time frame nor the way they want. Truth is, Scripture is filled with accounts of prayers that weren't answered in the way people hoped (Matthew 26:36-46; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

¹ Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (1981): 14.

What role did suffering and hardship play in the lives of those described in Hebrews 11?

Read Romans 5:3-5. Suffering is a part of the life of faith. Why, then, should you act on your faith?

As a follower of Christ, you are not immune to pain and suffering (John 15:18, 16:33). Let's face it, there will be times when you may experience more suffering than at other times. Remember that God promised a constant companion to walk through it with you. Be mindful to not doubt in the dark what God revealed in the light. Run to Him. Trust Him to walk and see you through the trials and suffering (Psalm 23:3-4). As you do, you will experience God in ways you haven't dreamed of nor otherwise comprehended.

What does the reality of faith teach you about the reality of revival?

What is God calling you to stake your life on?

Personal Study 2

THE LIFE OF FAITH

We might pause at the title of today's session as living a life of faith is uncommon. It's pretty obvious the world is in a mess, and unbelievers are not alone in the mess – the church is as well. Even though the power of heaven is at our disposal, living a defeated life is more common than necessary. Part of the issue is a synthetic Christianity that prays artificial, surface level prayers void of any hope or expectancy that God will answer or bring spiritual transformation.

*We need revival now more than ever before –
and we don't have time to waste.*

God has provided the way to overcome defeat and what is common. How? Living a life faith unlocks and unleashes the riches of heaven.

FAITH IS CONSTRUCTED WITH CONVICTION

Faith always involves an object. Our faith is always in *something* or *someone*.

Think about a problem that concerns you. Now consider the objects of faith listed below. Circle any that you treat with personal conviction as worthy helps for addressing that problem.

Intellect

Expert Opinions

Physical Strength

Human Strategies

Good Choices

Money

Jesus

Friendship

Hard Work

There's nothing inherently wrong with these convictions. They are all helpful in solving the various problems we face. Jesus, however, is the *only* trustworthy anchor of our *faith*. Turning to anything or anyone else as our strongest conviction in life will make our greatest victories be short-sighted and short-lived, at best.

Read Mark 11:12-17, 20-21. How did Jesus respond to people whose “faith” was in the wrong place?

Jesus saw the leaves of the fig tree suggested fruit was ready to eat, but there was no production of what appeared to be reality. The unproductive fig tree became an object lesson for Jesus to discuss the hypocritical religious leaders of the time that looked one way from a distance but up-close-and-personal weren't very productive at all.

Jesus didn't stop there. He was filled with righteous anger when he saw price gouging, greed, and a lack of reverence for the temple as he entered. The result? Jesus threw everyone out of the temple.

The message is loud and clear: Jesus deals with their hypocrisy of inauthentic faith. Perfection is not demanded as we are all sinners (1 John 2:1-2). Genuine faith in Christ is constructed with conviction.

Read Mark 11:22-24. From Jesus's words here, how should the conviction of genuine faith in God manifest itself in our lives?

Think again about the problem you're facing and the objects of your faith for addressing the problem you identified on the previous page. How do you need to apply Mark 11:12-24?

Israel's hypocrisy brought Jesus's response seen in the cursing of the fig tree and clearing the temple. His words to the disciples: Keep trusting God. Essentially, Jesus was teaching the disciples to not allow the expressions of lack of faith seen in others or yourself affect your/their expectations of God to move.

The hyperbole was used by Jesus to make a point. True revival is hindered by misplaced convictions of faith. The good news? Jesus is wanting and able to remove those barriers and obstacles and bring revival if we will ask Him and believe He will.

FAITH IS REALIZED THROUGH CONFESSION

It is possible to have conviction that only Jesus is truly worthy of your faith and still struggle with doubt. Have you ever experienced this? How so?

Doubt is an enemy to the life of faith. What are some practical ways we can fight doubts that come when we ask God to move mountains?

Circle the words *says* and *tell* in Mark 11:23-24.

“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain,
‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does
not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he
says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore
I tell you, everything you pray and ask for – believe
That you have received it and it will be yours.”

MARK 11:23-24

Words carry great power. Verbal confession is a way of agreeing with God. It is an affirmation of what you believe – and it is a way to invite the Spirit to help you believe when doubts arise.

Faith is realized through the confession of biblical truths. When doubts arise, quote the Word of God.

Consider the doubts we often think or verbalize. Then read the Scriptures listed and note the biblical truths that confront those doubts.

I have failed miserably and am of no use to God.
Ephesians 2:8-10

There's no way this can turn out for good.
Romans 8:28

I can't do it.
Romans 8:37

I'm overwhelmed.
1 John 4:4

I'm living in defeat.
Philippians 4:13

I'm weak.
2 Corinthians 12:9

Unintentionally, we categorize our lives into the possible and impossible classifications. From the human perspective, things will always seem impossible. From God's perspective, Matthew 29:16 rings out: *with God all things are possible*.

How might speaking biblical truths aloud impact your faith going forward?

Your internal dialogue affects the outcome of your life.

More times than not, verbal confessions are abused and misused. People often say things they don't mean. On top of that, there are no magical "name and claim it" guarantee as some want to push. A life living out authentic faith is not easy. At the same time, words carry power. A deeper realization of faith comes from speaking Scripture truths in times of doubt.

Based on today's study, what verbal confession do you need to make? Write it down and then say it out loud.

FAITH IS LIVED OUT WITH CERTAINTY

Despite internal conviction and verbalized confession, God makes promises we can never experience with those things alone. Genuine faith involves laying hold of the promises of God and applying them to our lives. The short story: We act on God's revealed truth by faith.

Note the following two truths and corresponding promises, for example.

TRUTH: Jesus died for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2).

PROMISE: Only those who have believed Christ's atoning sacrifice by grace through faith experience eternal life (John 3:16).

TRUTH: The devil has been defeated on the cross (Colossians 2:15).

PROMISE: When we resist the devil, he will flee (James 4:12). Until we stand firm in the armor of God and embrace God's victory, he will continue to cause havoc in our lives (Ephesians 6:11-13).

Read Mark 11:22-24 again. Identify God's revealed truth and how you must personalize and apply that truth to receive the promise.

TRUTH:

PROMISE:

*When you get a word from God,
you need to stand on it.*

Prayer and faith must be joined together. Simple steps of faith release God's supernatural power in our lives.

Revival cannot be experienced apart from authentic faith in Jesus. Quit listening to the world. Have faith in God. Receive His Word of truth. Then center your life around it.

What is a step of faith that you need to take?

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

PRAYING THE SCRIPTURE

Doubt takes the rug out from under our faith and can short-circuit the work of God in your life. Allowing the power of God's Word to build and solidify your faith with conviction is so important. Remember: Scripture doesn't necessarily offer explanations to cope with life's problems – it offers promises to cling to.

25 MINUTES

This week as you increase your time of silence and solitude to twenty-five minutes each day, meditate on the promises of God. Listen to Him as He speaks to you from the following Scriptures or choose a few of your own. Use the blank space provided to journal what God reveals to you.

For nothing will be impossible with God.

LUKE 1:37

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God – who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly – and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting.

JAMES 1:5-6

I will instruct you and show you the way to go;
with my eye on you, I will give counsel.

PASLAM 32:8

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

ROMANS 8:28

