

THE GIFT OF FAITH

The Gift of Faith is one of the "power gifts." It is called a power gift because it is a small expression of the all-powerful nature (omnipotence) of the Lord. The power gifts can break through the "laws of nature" to do amazing things to accomplish God's divine will.

The gift of faith is not the same as general faith. We will take a quick look at the three basic kinds of faith. But first let us define the gift of faith.

The gift of faith defined:

The "gift of faith" is the God-given ability to believe Him for the impossible in a specific situation.

It is not the general faith which believes God for the things we need. The gift of faith goes beyond general faith. With the gift of faith, a person "Just knows" that a particular thing is the will of God and is going to happen.

The gift of faith is a supernatural gift. The Holy Spirit shows Himself, or makes His presence known by His own activity.

This gift of faith is specifically mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9

1 Corinthians 12:9 The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And, to another, that one Spirit gives gifts of healing.

The gift of faith is referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:2

1 Corinthians 13:2 I may have the gift of prophecy. I may understand all the secret things of God and have all knowledge, and I may have faith so great I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I do not have love, then I am nothing.

We can see the results of the gift of faith throughout the Gospels and Acts.

There are three kinds of faith shown in Scripture.

1. Saving faith
2. Faith as a fruit of the Spirit
3. The gift of faith

Saving faith – Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8. etc.

This is the faith you use to answer God's call. Saving faith brings you into the Kingdom of God. God uses saving faith to give us the ability to accept and believe in Him.

Galatians 3:26-27 You were all baptized into Christ, and so you were all clothed with Christ. This means that you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

God saved us by GRACE. We accept His grace by FAITH. We have a "faith grip" on Him, and He has a "grace grip" on us.

Ephesians 2:8 I mean that you have been saved by grace through believing [Greek word is *pistis* = faith]. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God.

Saving faith is like the pipeline that lets His grace get from God to you.

Faith as a fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22; Acts 6:5, 8; Acts 11:24; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Colossians 2:5; etc.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control...

When we think about fruit, we think about:

gradual growth
seasons
weather conditions
nourishment/nutrition

Faith as a fruit of the Spirit is in our Christian character and personality. Paul shows this as something that is developing in the life of believers. In Romans 1:17, he uses the phrase "that begins and ends with faith."

Romans 1:17 The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, "But those who are right with God will live by faith."

Paul taught us that becoming right with God (righteousness) is received by faith. After righteousness is received, it produces more faith in our lives, and we go on to "live by faith."

This kind of faith can be blown up and down by the wind.

James 1:6 But when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea, blown up and down by the wind.

This kind of faith can be strong.

Romans 4:20 He [Abraham] never doubted that God would keep his promise, and he never stopped believing. He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God.

The Scripture teaches us about weak faith.

Matthew 16:8 Knowing what they were talking about, Jesus asked them, "Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small."

This kind of faith can be temporary faith.

Luke 8:13 The seed that fell on rock is like those who hear God's teaching and accept it gladly, but they don't allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They believe for a while, but when trouble comes, they give up.

This kind of faith can be real sincere faith.

2 Timothy 1:5 I remember your true faith. That faith first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I know you now have that same faith.

This kind of faith can be great faith.

Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. He said to those who were following him, "I tell you the truth, this is the greatest faith I have found, even in Israel."

Faith, just like love, cannot stand alone. It is always connected with other qualities such as:

Patience

James 1:3 because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience.

Love

1 Corinthians 13:13 So these three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

Power

2 Thessalonians 1:11 That is why we always pray for you, asking our God to help you live the kind of life he called you to live. We pray that with his

power God will help you do the good things you want and perform the works that come from your faith.

A good conscience

1 Timothy 1:5 The purpose of this command is for people to have love, a love that comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a true faith.

Goodness

2 Peter 1:5 Because you have these blessings, do your best to add these things to your lives: to your faith, add goodness; and to your goodness, add knowledge;

Good confession

Romans 10:9-10 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we declare with our mouths that we believe, and so we are saved.

The Bible teaches us that faith is a way of life. It is not just something we have in a crisis. We are supposed to live a life of faith.

We are all supposed to have strong faith. But really, our faith is strong in some areas and weak in other areas. Our faith will be shown in a variety of ways. We all have strengths in different areas. For example, a transmission specialist might be able to install an air conditioner in a car, but not as well as an air conditioning specialist.

We must recognize this truth in order to understand body ministry. We all benefit from the strengths and gifts and faith God has placed in each member of the church. God does not expect each of us to have everything. We are not supposed to expect every member of the church to be the same. That is why He placed us in a body (church).

The gift of faith – 1 Corinthians 12:9; 13:2; Romans 12:6

1 Corinthians 12:9 The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And, to another, that one Spirit gives gifts of healing.

1 Corinthians 13:2 I may have the gift of prophecy. I may understand all the secret things of God and have all knowledge, and I may have faith so great I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I do not have love, then I am nothing.

Romans 12:6 We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace God gave us. Whoever has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in a way that fits the kind of faith they have.

Sometimes it is hard to know the difference between faith as the fruit of the Spirit and the gift of faith. There are some examples that could be either one (or maybe both!). But let's try to look at the clearest and purest examples in Scripture of the gift of faith.

The gift of faith demonstrated in the life of Christ:

Matthew 8:1-3 When Jesus came down from the hill, great crowds followed him. ² Then a man with a skin disease came to Jesus. The man bowed down before him and said, "Lord, you can heal me if you will." ³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man and said, "I will. Be healed!" And immediately the man was healed from his disease.

Jesus did not have any doubt about the healing of this man. The words Jesus spoke to him as He touched him were, "I will. Be healed." We see in these words absolute faith.

John 11:11 After Jesus said this, he added, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him."

Jesus knew that He was going to see a dead man. Lazarus had already died, but Jesus said He would "wake him."

John 9:1-7 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ² His followers asked him, "Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind—his own sin or his parents' sin?" ³ Jesus answered, "It is not this man's sin or his parents' sin that made him blind. This man was born blind so that God's power could be shown in him. ⁴ While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ After Jesus said this, he spit on the ground and made some mud with it and put the mud on the man's eyes. ⁷ Then he told the man, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam." (Siloam means Sent.) So the man went, washed, and came back seeing.

Jesus knew that this man was going to be healed so that the works of God might be clearly seen. Jesus had absolute faith in an act which had not yet happened.

The gift of faith demonstrated in the lives of the Apostles:

Acts 3:1-7 One day Peter and John went to the Temple at three o'clock, the time set each day for the afternoon prayer service. ² There, at the Temple gate called Beautiful Gate, was a man who had been crippled all his life. Every day he was

carried to this gate to beg for money from the people going into the Temple. ³ The man saw Peter and John going into the Temple and asked them for money. ⁴ Peter and John looked straight at him and said, "Look at us!" ⁵ The man looked at them, thinking they were going to give him some money. ⁶ But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you. By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth, stand up and walk!" ⁷ Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong.

Peter announced this man's healing with unwavering faith. Then he took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet.

Acts 5:1-10 But a man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land. ² He kept back part of the money for himself; his wife knew about this and agreed to it. But he brought the rest of the money and gave it to the apostles. ³ Peter said, "Ananias, why did you let Satan rule your thoughts to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep for yourself part of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Before you sold the land, it belonged to you. And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this? You lied to God, not to us!" ⁵⁻⁶ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came in, wrapped up his body, carried it out, and buried it. And everyone who heard about this was filled with fear. ⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, but she did not know what had happened. ⁸ Peter said to her, "Tell me, was the money you got for your field this much?" Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹ Peter said to her, "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Peter fearlessly told both Ananias and Sapphira what God was going to do to them.

Acts 13:8-11 But Elymas, the magician, was against them. (Elymas is the name for Bar-Jesus in the Greek language.) He tried to stop the governor from believing in Jesus. ⁹ But Saul, who was also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked straight at Elymas ¹⁰ and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies, always trying to change the Lord's truths into lies. ¹¹ Now the Lord will touch you, and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun." Then everything became dark for Elymas, and he walked around, trying to find someone to lead him by the hand.

Paul received the gift of knowledge and the gift of faith to know what was to happen to Elymas the magician. Immediately after he spoke, Elymas became blind.

Acts 20:7-12 On the first day of the week, we all met together to break bread, and Paul spoke to the group. Because he was planning to leave the next day, he kept on talking until midnight. ⁸ We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lamps in the room. ⁹ A young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window. As Paul continued talking, Eutychus was falling into a deep sleep. Finally, he went sound asleep and fell to the ground from the third floor. When they picked him up, he was dead. ¹⁰ Paul went down to Eutychus, knelt down, and put his arms around him. He said, "Don't worry. He is alive now." ¹¹ Then Paul went upstairs again, broke bread, and ate. He spoke to them a long time, until it was early morning, and then he left. ¹² They took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

A young man of Troas fell from the third story and was dead. Paul went through a procedure similar to that used by Elijah and prayed for the boy. He then told the people not to worry; the boy would live.

The gift of faith requires knowing the will of God. That starts with hearing the Word of God, then knowing the Word of God, then you can know the will of God.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing the Good News, and people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing people what is wrong in their lives, for correcting faults, and for teaching how to live right.

1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness we have in God's presence: that if we ask God for anything that agrees with what he wants, he hears us.

Faith requires a reason or foundation. God never asks us to believe without foundation or reason. If faith does not have a reason, it is not real faith, just wishful thinking.

The gift of faith depends on the gift of knowledge. They are blended together and cannot be separated. When God shows something about His will, the gift of faith makes us "just know" it will happen. This is a strong faith that cannot be shaken.

Notice this principle in the "faith chapter" of Hebrews 11:

11:7 Noah acted in faith at the word of God about the flood.

11:8 Abraham was willing to move to a new city because of faith in God's word to him.

11:27 Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt

The gift of faith often operates together with several other gifts. It often operates with the gift of miracles and the gift of healings. It nearly always involves a word of knowledge, and possibly even a word of wisdom and discerning of spirits. It may also involve prophecy.

The gift of faith should be among the "best gifts" for every believer, mainly because it greatly edifies (builds up) the Body of Christ when it functions in proper balance. God has placed no limit on how much faith a person can have.

Romans 12:3 Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to everyone among you. Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you.

Though each of us is given an amount of faith, that faith can grow to as much faith as we are able to receive.