

FAITH IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

As we journey through this life as a Christian we repeatedly find ourselves in discouraging situations. I believe as Christians we need to understand the purpose of these challenging times and we must discover God's plan for them. In the book of first Peter we find that trials have a purpose.

1 Peter 1:6-9 (NIV) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The testing that we undergo establishes the validity of our faith. Genuine, Spiritual faith is the result of consistently abiding in the Word of God – it comes from taking the Word of God in repeatedly. True faith is a fruit of the Word.

As we continue on this journey of life our faith is essential. Eternal value is assigned to our faith; therefore, we must study it and understand what it is, how we obtain it, how it works, what classifies it as genuine, what its benefits are, and so on. As you commence on your journey into this

realm of faith you may need to adjust your thinking. What you discover about faith may surprise you and it may challenge what you have been taught and what you have been influenced to believe. Allow God's Word to be your point of reference and open your eyes to the truth of the Word. In John chapter eight, verse thirty-two, Jesus tells us that only through abiding in the Word do we discover the truth; in so doing, we become personally acquainted with the Word and sequentially we are set free. I am trusting that you will find the freedom you have longed for in this book, freedom that can only come through abiding in the truth of God's Word.



Chapter 1

FAITH DEFINED

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)
Now faith is the substance
of things hoped for, the evidence
of things not seen.

A proper definition of faith is necessary if we are going to completely understand faith. God's Word defines faith as *the confidence we have with regard to what we are eagerly anticipating*. Faith is our guarantee of the unseen.

Faith is the substance (or assurance) of things "hoped" for – hope is defined as earnest expectation. A person who lives in expectation can be compared to a child eagerly anticipating Christmas. The child waits with an energized expectancy that persists even when Christmas does not arrive as quickly as they would like. They will even encourage others as to the certain arrival of Christmas. Living in expectation produces a good attitude; it produces joy, peace, and enthusiasm about life. A person who lives in expectation is a joy to be around. They are not depressed and downtrodden; they are optimistic as they look forward to the fulfillment of God's Word.

When someone mentions the word "hope" we may mistakenly assume that they are wishful rather than certain. "Hope" has been used interchangeably with the word "wish" and because of this we may find ourselves misunderstanding the Word of God. ***Biblical hope is defined as expectant anticipation; it has nothing to do with wishing.*** Chance

has nothing to do with the hope that the Bible speaks of. Faith does not need physical proof. Faith only requires the Word of God.

Faith, we can conclude, is the *guarantee* of what we are expecting; however, that surety is blind. Faith is not based on something that we can see; on the contrary, it is based on the unseen. Faith does not need physical proof.

Romans 4:18 (NIV) Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Genuine faith believes against all hope or against what the circumstances would make one expect. It believes when there is absolutely no natural reason to believe.



Faith is not based on you, your circumstances, your “good deeds,” or others; genuine faith is exclusively founded on the Word of God.

Many times the Word proclaims promises which, in the natural, have no earthly reason to be expected. I would even go so far as to say that *most* times those things which we are promised in the Word lack proof in our *natural* circumstances. In the same way Abraham had to believe against all hope, we will have to do likewise. Abraham was old in age as was his wife; they were lacking any evidence that would imply they should have a child. In fact, all of their circumstances demonstrated the complete opposite of the promise that God had made to them.

As we begin to live in the Word of God we will uncover promises that appear to be as likely as the moon being composed of cheese; however, appearances can be deceiving. The Word even boldly announces that appearances *are* deceiving and we are not to be betrayed by them (John 7:24, 1 Samuel 16:7). As a Christian, we are not bound by what we see.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

The definition of faith entitles us to believe without any physical corroboration.

2 Corinthians 4:18 (NIV) So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The Word of God clearly proclaims that we are not limited by what we see physically. If truth be told, we will have to disregard many of the things we do see if we are going to live by faith. In order for us to live by faith we must become skilled at fixing our eyes on the unseen; staying focused on the Word will be our main objective. The Word informs us of how things *should be*; it also produces the faith we need to believe these things *will be*. The sole source of faith is the Word of God. It is fundamental that we are in agreement with the fact that we cannot acquire faith without the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 (NIV) Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

You will have to remain focused on the Word of God, as opposed to your circumstances, if you are going to live by faith. Fixing your eyes on the unseen requires a *steady* diet of the Word of God.

Faith, at times, has been misunderstood due to the improper use of the Word of God. In the same way that you can misuse a chair by standing on it or sitting only on two legs, we can misuse the Word. People have faith in a chair's ability to hold them because of their experience with the chair. If every time you sat in a chair it would collapse under your weight, you would then soon lose your faith in the chair. A sturdy chair will not just collapse under a person; the person must cause the collapse by using the chair in a way it was not designed to be used. People have progressively lost faith in the Word because of improper use. Many times we use the Word as a rulebook instead of a love letter; this misuse hinders faith. Instead of reading to be in relationship with our Savior, we are reading because we falsely believe that it will keep us in His good graces. This is undeniably wrong. The Word is for *our* good; it is *our* tool to stay away from sin and to walk in the Spirit.



The Word is not something we must try to live up to; the Word is the way to live! The Word was designed to enable us to live a Spiritual life - not for us to attempt to conquer it in our flesh.

We must use the Word correctly. We must see the Word of God as the love letter that it is and we must abide in it. If we are misusing the Word and it is not coming to pass in our lives, then we only have ourselves to blame in the same way the chair is not to blame when we misuse it.

Faith comes from a Spiritual source which is the Word of God; therefore, faith is eternal the same as anything Spiritual is, in fact, eternal.

Psalms 119:89 (NIV) Your Word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

The Word is eternal; faith is eternal. We must understand that faith can never be depleted. As long as you are alive you have the opportunity to walk by faith and see God bring His Word to pass in your life!

Ecclesiastes 9:4 (NIV) Anyone who is among the living has hope--even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

Hope is trust and confidence – it is a byproduct of faith or a byproduct of the Word in your life. If you are reading this, then you have hope! Do not let Satan deceive you into believing that you have gone too far, you have done too much, or you have passed the point of no return. We have a living hope; the Word of God is our proof that we *can* see change. We have the privilege of going to the Word for everything we need.



If I desire change in any area of my life, then I need to discover what God's Word says on that subject. My consistent intake of the Word will produce faith and that faith will produce Spiritual actions in me; whatever needs carried out in my life can *only* be accomplished through the Word!

As we define faith it is important that we define “works of faith” as well. Faith is the result of hearing the Word of God, taking it in, and making it part of who you are; therefore, a work of faith is an action that is the outcome of the ingested Word being worked out of you. There are two kinds of works: those done by faith and those done by the flesh.

James 2:18 (ESV) But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

James 2:26 (ESV) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Faith, which is produced by a steady intake of the Word, will produce Spiritual actions in your life. Works or actions *can* be accomplished apart from faith; however, those actions are classified as dead, meaning *of the flesh*. If your faith does not produce a Spiritual action in your life, then it is dead. Dead faith is *not* Spiritual; it is *not* the result of living in the Word of God. Dead faith is a belief based on the flesh and any actions associated with it will also be of the flesh. Living faith is produced courtesy of the Word of God and it is the only way to produce Spiritual fruit in your life. Instead of focusing on what *we* are doing, we must focus on the Word of God and allow the Word to do the work in us!

Matthew 17:20 (Ampl.) He said to them, Because of the littleness of your faith [that is, your lack of firmly relying trust]. For truly I say to you, if you

have FAITH [THAT IS LIVING] like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

The word “littleness” is not found in the original translation; only the word “unbelief” is found. Size is not of the essence here – life is. Only living faith, or Spiritual faith, will produce the actions we long for. Equating faith to a mustard seed demonstrates the life-giving power of faith and its potential to do the impossible in your life. The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds but it becomes one of the largest garden plants (Mark 4:31-32) and a provisional source. Your faith may seem inconsequential; but make no mistake, it is most important in your life. Its significance is found in its source – the living Word of God.

Faith does not need to be spoken for; faith speaks for itself in the form of actions. Faith, which comes from abiding in the Word, will produce Spiritual actions in us over time. Living, Spiritual faith will produce Spiritual fruit; it is impossible for faith to remain fruitless. The Word of God, speaking of itself, tells us that it will not come back void; it will produce fruit (Isaiah 55:11). It is impossible for us to abide in the Word and not see Spiritual fruit eventually produced in our lives. We can prove our faith, or the time spent in the Word, *by* our Spiritual fruit. We do not have to tell everyone how Spiritual we are, how much faith we have, or how much time we spend in the Word; it will be evident by our behavior, our words, and our attitudes as we continue to abide.

It is all too often that we *think* we believe, yet our lives are screaming out that the opposite is in fact true! If I say that I believe God is in control of my finances, yet I

worry about paying my bills, I complain about high prices, and I am stingy with the money I do have, then I do not possess living, Spiritual faith in regards to my finances. My actions declare loud and clear what I truly believe. The person who pays their bills peacefully, retains joy no matter what the prices are, and possesses the ability to give – that person has living, Spiritual faith pertaining to their financial situation.

It is important for us to notice the difference between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit. Another important distinction is the longevity of each. The works of the flesh will not last, but those done by faith will. Works of the flesh see their reward, if there is any, here on earth and their reward goes no further. The works of the Spirit, however, are of eternal significance. When you are abiding in the Word of God it is active in you and it is being worked out of you (or it is being accomplished in your life); and accordingly, works of eternal value are being produced, works that are the end result of taking in the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV) We continually remember before our God and Father *your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Work, spiritual work, is exclusively produced by faith and faith works by love (Galatians 5:6). It is critical that we ingest this truth; otherwise, we continue on with the misconception that we produce Spiritual works on our own via our love, fear, discipline, or some other counterfeit vehicle. There is absolutely no other method for producing Spiritual works.

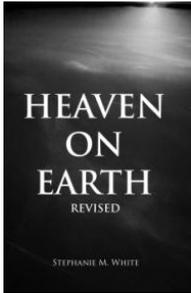


Stephanie White is a wife, mother, Bible teacher, and author. She enjoys spending time with her family and she is actively involved at her parents' church. She is passionate about sharing the Word of God with others so that they can live the life that Christ died to give them.

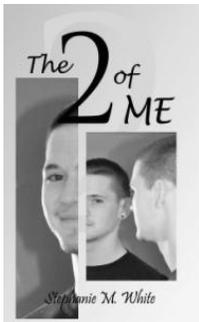
She loves to study the Word of God and share her studies with others. She has a website with monthly Bible studies, creative ideas for family and friends, date night ideas, and more.

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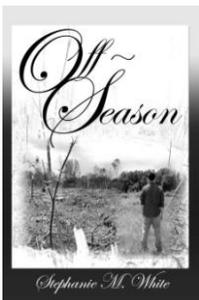
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Heaven on Earth: it is a life most people believe is not possible to achieve, but according to God's Word that is exactly what we can have! Heaven on Earth takes you on a journey through the Word of God so that you can find out what is available to you as God's child and you will also discover how to enjoy this life to the fullest.



As Christians, we must understand that we have two natures - our Spiritual nature and our flesh. Each nature wants to dominate, but only one can. This book will take you through a thorough study of your two natures and it will help you understand each one. It will also show you how to rule over your flesh and defeat its power in your life.

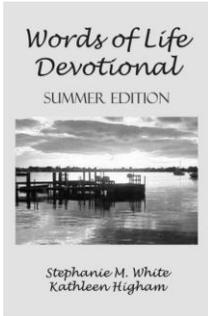


Everyone experiences an off-season in life - sometimes more than one. An off-season is a dry time; it is a time of lack and a time of trials. These times can feel daunting and painful; therefore, we must understand the purpose of these times and we must be sure that God has a plan for our good and His glory.

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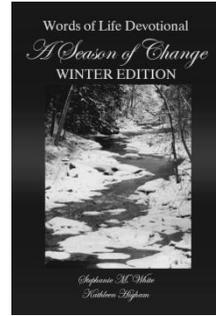
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