

THE COMPASS

Faith for the Win

Exercising Faith through Adversity

For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. - 1 John 5:4-5

Session 1 - Faith vs. Fear: The Battleground

Each of us is confronted by fear all the time. It can terrorize you. It can paralyze you. It can interrupt your life. That's actually fear's goal: to stop you from living your best life - the one God intends for you to live. But, although we may experience fear throughout our lifetimes, here's the great news: fear does not have to consume us. When we are in relationship with Jesus Christ, we have all of Heaven behind us as we battle fear. And here's the greatest news: in actuality, fear has already been defeated by Jesus. We just have to walk in the victory! We have to walk by faith!

What is faith?

Let's talk about what faith actually is and how we grow it and use it.

- Biblical definition of faith - Hebrews 11:1
 - NKJV = Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
 - AMP = Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses]
 - God's Word Translation = Faith assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see.
- The concept of faith existed from the beginning
 - Hebrews 11:2-3
 - Genesis 1:1-5

So, even from the very beginning, God wanted to model this concept of faith. The belief that something exists even when we can't see it. The understanding that - by the Word - a thing can be called from the spiritual realm - a place that we cannot see - and into the natural realm - the place that we experience things through our five senses.

How do we get and grow faith?

- Romans 10:17 - So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - Let's meditate on this scripture for a bit.
 - **Faith** comes by **hearing** - The more that you hear the Gospel of Jesus, the Good News, the more you hear God's Word, the more you flood and inundate your ear and, ultimately, your soul with God's Word - His promises, principles, and precepts - the more faith comes.

- **Hearing** by the **Word of God** - The more you consume the Word of God, the more you are able to hear from God - His truth, His love, His Peace, His assurances. The more you feed on God's Word, the more keen your spiritual hearing becomes.
- This idea of faith coming by hearing is crucial because **fear often battles us through messaging** - through what we consume through our ear gate.
- All of our natural senses are entry points to the soul. Our **soul is made up of our will, our emotions, and our thoughts**. It's through the soul that we make decisions on how we will act and live out our lives. The more we fill our soul with God's Word and what He wants for us, the greater our chances that we will live in His joy, His peace, and His rest.
- This is why, in this particular season that we find ourselves in, it's important not to consume so much news and so much reporting on the coronavirus. In our home, we've made a point to watch one or two briefings per day - our governor's briefing and maybe 30 minutes or so of the news. Just enough to stay informed of any new rules or orders. Beyond that, the messaging begins to move into fear, doom and gloom, and uncertainty.
- So, it is important to feed on and bathe in God's Word every day. God's Word is truth, and it is life.

What is fear?

The initial answer may be that fear is a negative emotion, right? But the Bible tells us that fear is a spirit.

2 Timothy 1:7 - For God **has not** given us a **spirit of fear**, **but of power** and of **love** and of a **sound mind**.

- If the Word says that God has not given us a spirit of fear, that means that fear is a spirit, and if fear is a spirit, it can be battled and defeated.
- If God has not given us the spirit of fear, that means the spirit of fear has to come from somewhere else besides God. Fear is a demonic spirit.
- But, here's the great news: God's Word tells us that 'greater is He that is in us, those who have accepted Jesus as Savior - than he who is in the world.
- Let's dig into that passage of scripture
 - **1 John 4:2-4** - By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
 - **Here are the takeaways here:**
 - The enemy sends spirits to make us fearful, to take us off course, and to try to stop God's plan, purpose, and peace in our lives
 - But, when we accept Jesus as our Savior, we receive His Spirit, and His Spirit is greater than any demonic force that can come against us.
 - **We are on the winning side! We just have to walk in victory by faith.**

The Battleground - The Mind: Where Faith and Fear Collide

Remember that our soul is composed of our emotions, our thoughts, and our will. It's the perfect battleground for fear to fight and try to gain ground.

Think about it: fear sows seeds into our soul - seeds of doubt, worry, uncertainty, indecision, anger, bitterness, rage, frustration, anxiety.

But here's some more good news - seeds need nourishment to grow.

And here's even more good news - we have control over whether those seeds get nourishment to grow or whether they get starved to death.

Again, this is why it's so important for us to feed our souls God's Word. Fear, nor any demonic force can stand up against the Word of God. God's Word creates good, fertile ground for growing faith, but God's Word is pesticide and weed killer for seeds sown by fear.

Faith is a key weapon in slaying fear in the battleground of your mind. Let's take a look at the armor that God gives to us for battle.

Ephesians 6:10-18 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

The Bible is clear that we will fight battles, and those battles are spiritual. But, we don't go to battle unarmed. We have many different types of weapons for battle, one of which is the shield of faith.

Notice that faith is described as a defensive weapon - it's a shield. It's job is to stop or quench the fiery arrows that come from the enemy.

This visual of a fire-quenching shield comes from a practice that Roman soldiers use to perform. They would dip their shields in water before battle so that when their attackers would light their arrows on fire and shoot in their direction, the fiery arrows would be extinguished on contact with the shield.

We know that in God's Word water is often used to refer to the Holy Spirit, so your **faith is a Holy Spirit drenched, fire extinguishing shield!**

5 Concrete Ways to Use Faith to Slay Fear on the Battleground of Your Mind

1. **Read and meditate on God's Word.** Here's are some go-to scriptures to get your started: **Psalm 91, Romans 8, Psalm 23, Isaiah 53:4-5, Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 John 4:4, 2 Timothy 1:7**
2. **Pray without ceasing** - Talk to your Father God all day, every day. Talk to Him in short prayers and long prayers. Tell Him your worries and concerns. Tell Him how much you love Him. Give Him thanks. The more you are talking to God and listening to Him, the less space fear has to try to battle you in your mind.
3. **Guard your gates** - Be mindful of what you consume through your senses. Fill your ears with praise and worship music. Be careful of how much negativity you consume. Be careful not to feed negative cravings. These are places where fear likes to infiltrate and plant those seeds.
4. **Get a battle buddy (or two or ten)** - Connect with other believers who will pray for you, and speak God's Word into your situation when you are fearful. Don't run to people who will water those fear seeds.
5. **Trust God and believe His Word** - God does not lie, and He does not break promises. He loves you (John 3:16). He promised to never leave you nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6). He promised to strengthen you, help you, and uphold you (Isaiah 41:10), He promised to cause all things to work together for your good (Romans 8:28).

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Week Two

Why Do Christians Go through Tough Times?

You accepted Jesus into your heart. You got saved. You got your “fire insurance.” Now life is going to be roses, cupcakes, and happily ever after. Right?

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”

Why do Christians go through tough times? Why do we even have to battle?

- **To develop perseverance that leads to hope** - Romans 5:1-5
 - We have been **justified** by faith. Because we put our faith in Jesus, by accepting Him as Savior, He makes it **just as if** we had never sinned.
 - This justification by faith gives us peace with God the Father through Jesus.
 - We have access to God's **grace** (unmerited, unearned favor) and stand in God's grace (we are positionally set) by faith
 - Because of our positioning in God, we **rejoice in hope** (the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best) of the glory of God
 - Because of faith, justification, grace, rejoicing, and hope, we can **glory** (exult in triumph; rejoice proudly) **in tribulations**
 - Tribulations produce **perseverance** (a steady persistence in a course of action or a purpose - especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement)
 - Perseverance produces **character** (moral or ethical quality)
 - Character produces **hope**
 - Hope **does not** disappoint. It is not a worldly hope but a **Holy Spirit driven and infused hope** that is based in the **love** of God.
 - We know that true love, God's love, never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:8a
 - **Bottom line:** We cannot fully realize the development of perseverance, faith, hope, and development of our character unless it is tested and strengthened. How will we know that hope doesn't disappoint unless we have had occasion to see it by experiencing victories in the face of trials?
- **So that the glory of God may be revealed through the situation** - John 9:1-11
 - You don't always go through tough times because of something you've done wrong or as a punishment from God. Sometimes, you go through tough times so God's glory and His works may be revealed in you or in your situation.
 - In this particular case, the revealing of God's glory in the blind man's circumstance resulted in his receiving sight. This is also true of our situations.
 - Sometimes, after God has brought us through to the other side of our tribulations, we have clearer vision - about Him, about our relationship with Him, about ourselves, about our circumstance, and even about the adversary.
- **A transaction in the spiritual realm to reveal to the enemy where you stand in God and to reveal to you where you stand in God** - Job 1:6-12. 2:1-10
 - Satan was roaming the earth looking for his next attack candidate
 - God asked Satan if he had considered Job.
 - Job hadn't done anything wrong, had lived an upright life, and had been faithful to God.
 - God was confident that Job wouldn't curse Him.

- Through the trials that Job endured, the enemy got to see how strong Job's relationship was with God. Job also got to see how strong his own faith was in his God.
- In the end, Job remained faithful to God, he didn't sin with his lips, and he received double for his trouble.
- God already knows who we are and where we stand with Him. Sometimes, we have to learn where we are and where we stand, and sometimes the enemy needs to be put on notice about where we stand with our Father.
- **To partner with Christ in His suffering and therefore partner in His glory** – I Peter 4:12-13
 - If we partner with Christ and share in His sufferings (although we'll never, really suffer the way Christ suffered for us), we will share in his glory with gladness and exceeding joy!
 - God is so good that although we may go through suffering, we will never go through anything in life what Jesus suffered, BUT we still get to experience ALL the glory, gladness, and joy that He gives us!
- **A testing of your faith** - 1 Peter 1:3-9 NLT
- **A result of your disobedience** - Jonah 1, 2, I Peter 4:14 – 16
 - There are trials, tribulations, and suffering that come as a result of us stepping outside of God's will or as a result of us being disobedient.
 - Because God is a just God, there are consequences (good and bad) for our actions.
- **So that your testimony will benefit the Body of Christ (maintain the house of the Lord)** – 1 Chronicles 26:27
 - Earlier in Chronicles, David and his army had been through many battles. After winning battles, there were always spoils or things that were won in battle. Those spoils were for their personal enjoyment and for the upkeep of the House of the Lord.
 - We come through battles better and stronger than we were going into the battles so that we can have a testimony of God's greatness to share with others.

All tough times require us to act – Slay Fear with Faith through Adversity Action Items

- **Self-evaluation** (Did I step outside of the safety of obedience to God and His will? Am I in a time of transition? Is there something I need to learn? Do I need to be strengthened in a certain area?)
- **Prayer** (talking and listening) – Ask God why you are in this place, and be ready for the answer. Ask God for instruction. Ask Him what you are supposed to learn in this season of trial.
- **Praise** – I will bless the Lord at ALL times – Psalm 34:1
- **Speaking God's Word** - "It is written" Matthew 4:1-7
- **Surrounding ourselves with believers** – Hebrews 10:23-25
- **Spending quality time with the Lord/Run to the Lord first** - Psalm 143:9-10, Psalm 37:3-7
- **Adjust your focus** – John 9:1-5 - maybe it's time to change the way you think about God and your relationship with and devotion to Him.

When you are faced with tough times, hold on to God's promises: Romans 8:28, 31-32, 35, 37-39

Outcome sentences: Complete one of the following:

1) One thing I learned from today's study is...

2) One of the above action items I plan to pursue next time I face a challenge is...

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Week Three

Equipment for Slaying Fear through Adversity

We know that we will face tests and trials in life. It's much easier to face a test when you are prepared! This week's study is about discovering and learning how to use the equipment you have to pass the test.

- **Speaking the Word of God to your situation** – Jesus gave us this example when He was tempted in the wilderness – **Matthew 4:1-17, Deuteronomy 8:1-5, Deuteronomy 6:16-19**
 - Jesus reached back to a context in which the Israelites were in the wilderness for 40 years just as Jesus had been in the wilderness for 40 days
 - Jesus knew that God the Father had been faithful to the Israelites, and He would be faithful to His Son.
 - Just as the scripture read, Jesus did what was right to cast out the enemies before Him
 - The enemy kept coming, but Jesus kept speaking the Word against Him. Finally, the enemy had to flee.
- **Surrounding yourself with Believers** (if you have the strongest faith in your group, find another group) – Ephesians 4:11-16, Hebrews 10:23-25
 - We were designed to be a unit, a family, to build each other up, to support each other, to encourage each other, and to love each other
- **Pray**
 - James 5:13-18, prayers of believers are powerful and effective
 - Matthew 18:19-20 – If two of you agree on earth, it will be done
 - Philippians 4:6 – Be anxious for nothing, pray
 - 1 John 5:14-15
- **Praise – Boasting aloud on God**
 - Psalm 68:19 – Praise the Lord!
 - Psalm 24:1-10
 - We praise to remind us of who God is, to put the enemy on notice, and to get our souls in agreement with the Holy Spirit
- **Worship – Bowing before the Lord, submitting yourself to the Lord, recognizing His awesomeness, His mightiness, and His Power**
 - James 4:7, 10
 - Psalms 59:16
 - Psalms 4:8
 - Psalm 91
- **Take steps of faith toward the vision that God has given you**

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Week Four Speaking Life

Words have creative power. What you speak is what you will invite.

USING THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences. – Proverbs 18:21

A major component in the application of faith is being mindful about how we speak. We can invite life, or we can invite death with what we say, so it is important that we choose life.

Let's start from the very beginning!

Genesis 1:1-12

God created the Earth and the fullness therein by His spoken Word. He spoke, and it became!

The same Spirit who spoke the Earth and all of its parts into existence is the same Spirit who lives within us.

Romans 4:17

Q. What does that mean for us?

Jesus speaks to the fig tree.

Mark 11:12-25

In this instance, Jesus *cursed* the fig tree. On the surface, it looked like nothing happened once Jesus spoke, but when He and the disciples returned the next day, the tree had withered and died.

Jesus followed this discovery by telling the disciples to have faith.

Q. How does this biblical example apply to our lives?

Jesus says speak to the mountain

Mark 11:22-24

Q. What do mountains represent? How does this apply to our lives?

The Centurion recognizes the power of Jesus' words.

Matthew 8:5-13

The Centurion recognized the power and authority Jesus had to be able to speak healing to the man's servant. The Centurion **EXPECTED** that his servant would be healed if Jesus gave the command.

Jesus was excited by this Centurion's faith!

Q. How can we apply the Centurion's methods to our lives?

Don't speak faith and doubt from the same place - **James 3:1-12**

Do what Jesus did – **Luke 4:1-13** – speaking The Word against satan

Hide the Word in your heart and surround yourself with the Word – **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

Have other Believers speak the Word to you and encourage you in your faith – **Proverbs 12:25-26, Acts 14:21-23**

"Our words have creative power. Whenever we speak something, either good or bad, we give life to what we are saying. Too many people say negative things about themselves, about their families, and about their futures. They say things such as, 'I'll never be successful. This sickness will get the best of me. Business is slow; I don't think I will make it. Flu season is coming. I'll probably catch it.' They don't realize they are prophesying their futures. The Scripture says, 'We will eat the fruit of our words.' That means we will get exactly what we've been saying. Here's the key; you've got to send your words out in the direction you want your life to go. You cannot talk defeat and expect to have victory. You can't talk lack and expect to have abundance. You will produce what you say. If you want to know what you will be like five years from now, just listen to what you are saying about yourself. With our words we can either bless our futures or curse our futures. That's why we should never say, I'm not a good parent. I'm unattractive. I'm clumsy. I can't do anything right. I'll probably get laid off.' No, those thoughts may come to your mind, but don't make the mistake of verbalizing them. The moment you speak them out, you allow them to take root. There have been plenty of times where I've thought something negative and I'm just about to say it, but I'll catch myself and think *No. I'll zip it up. I'm not speaking defeat into my future. I'm not speaking failure over my life. I will turn it around and speak favor into my future. I will declare, 'I'm blessed. I'm strong. I'm healthy. This will be a great year.* When you do that, you are blessing your future." – Joel Osteen from *I Declare*

Speak God's blessings over your life. Catch your tongue when you are tempted to speak negativity.

"I am healthy, healed, and whole."

"I am blessed with financial favor"

"The peace of God flows in and through me."

"I am the righteousness of God in Christ."

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Q. What are some declarations you can speak over your life?

Q. What are some things you will make an effort NOT to say?

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Faith for the Win - Week 5

God's Favor and Faith

Psalm 84:11, 12 (NLT) For the lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right. O Lord of Heaven's Armies, what joy for those who trust in You.

Continuing with the concept of faith being active Hebrews 11 – Roll Call of the Faithful

In Hebrews Chapter 11, we discover a roll call of many of the faithful people of the Bible. The Amplified Version of the Bible gives us some action words. These words reveal to us that not only were the people in the Bible active, faith itself became active, and in many cases, personified.

Urged on (by faith)
Prompted (by faith)
Actuated (by faith)
Aroused (by faith)
With eyes of (Having seen) (faith)
Motivated (by faith)
By the help of (faith)

Faith is at its best when it is active. **James 2:14-26**

What does it look like to put works or action to your faith?

- If you are believing God for healing, speak as if you are already healed. Speak God's Word over your health
- If you are believing God for a home, buy a piece of decor or furniture for your home
- If you are believing God for financial blessing, tithe and give to others in need.

God's Favor

In many instances in the Bible, God showed favor on those who had faith in Him. Below are several of the many examples of God's favor working in the lives of the faithful.

Healing – Luke 5:12-13 Man healed of leprosy

- The man believed that Jesus could heal him.
- The man believed that Jesus was loving and compassionate.
- The man put himself in a posture of worship and expectation.

Physical Deliverance, promotion, and testimony building – Daniel 3 – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:26-30)

- Not only did God bring them through the fire, but he also promoted them.
- Those who were nonbelievers like Nebuchadnezzar bore witness to the true and living God.

Fertility/reproduction - Hebrews 11:11, 12 Abraham and Sarah – At first, they laughed when God told them they would conceive, but God checked them. **Genesis 18:13, 14.** They were honored to conceive because they believed that God would fulfill his promise. They even named their son Isaac, which means “laughter.” We like to think that was a reminder not to laugh at God when He tells us that He is going to do the supernatural in our lives.

Monetary Increase – Malachi 3:6-12 – Tithing as an act of faith that results in God’s favor.

Winning uneven battles - 1 Samuel 17:37-50 David and Goliath – Through human understanding, there was no way that David should have won this battle, but through spiritual understanding and faith, David won!

Salvation – John 3:14-18(AMP)

Special Promises to Those who Exercise Faith

God makes promises that He has committed to keeping with us if we trust Him. Below are just a few examples of His promises.

Answers to Prayers Matthew 21:21-22

Power to Live Romans 10:11, Hebrews 10:38

Spiritual Inheritance - James 2:5

Ability to Speak to Obstacles and Trials and Make them Move – Matthew 22:21

Healing - Mark 5:34

Exercise your faith each day, and watch it grow. Exercise your faith each day, and watch God favor you. It pleases God when we take steps of faith. Without faith, it’s impossible to please God.

What are some areas of your life where you can put actions behind your faith?

What are some examples in your life of times when you took a step of faith and God met you there?

When you are feeling fearful or discouraged, what ACTIONS can you take to walk in faith?

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Week Six

Faith Action Planning

What is faith? In order to create a faith action plan, you have to know what faith actually is. Based on our study, what scripture defines faith? Write the scripture reference and copy the scripture below.

Why do we go through tough times? List 6 actions we can take when we are confronted with a tough time. List a few scriptures that can explain why you are facing an adversity.

What equipment do you have in your arsenal to battle through adversity? Make a list of things you can do/use while you are going through a tough time.

What are some examples from the Bible that can keep you encouraged and that can give you inspiration for battling through adversity? We studied the accounts of some people from the Bible who battled victoriously through adversity. List some of them as reminders to you.

What types of declarations and affirmations can you make during tough times? We studied how words have creative power. What words will you speak as you face different kinds of adversities?

List some times that God has brought you out of a difficulty. List some blessings you have received and are receiving. List miracles you've witnessed in your life. Reflect on some of these when fear rears its head. The same God will bring you through.

Encouragement Scriptures

List some scriptures under each subject heading that can help you to stay focused on Jesus and His promises as you battle through adversity.

Sickness/Injury

Financial Troubles

Sudden death or injury a loved one

Loss of a home, job, or other need

Fear/Anxiety

A Heart's Desire

A Goal

Other