

Faith 2

‘Faith’ is a word that is very often used by Christians. Usually it is used in the context of having a general faith, which is part of the life of every believer. The faith that Paul mentions as one of the spiritual gifts in **1 Corinthians 12: 9** ‘*...to another faith by the same spirit*’, is not a reference to our general faith, but to the special supernatural ‘Gift of faith’ that God gives. Like the other Gifts of the Spirit, it cannot be obtained by earning or learning, only by the will of God when He decides to use an individual in that capacity. The nature of this special ‘Gift of faith’ is probably the most difficult of the gifts for us to understand.

God’s faith

As with other spiritual gifts, God gives us only a very small part of what He has. As human beings we are quite unable to grasp the extent of the faith that God has, yet He has endowed every one of us with the **same** ability as Himself to speak words of faith. As we speak, breath comes out of our mouths and this is exactly how God created everything in the first place. **Genesis 1:3** ‘*God SAID, “Let there be light”, and there was light.*’ It does not say that He prayed about it or did any other action at all except speak. When we read **Genesis 1** we can see that He made Heaven and earth, day and night, land and sea, vegetation, sun, moon and stars and living creatures all in the same way – ‘*God SAID*’ – by using His breath to say a word that produced the results.

The special supernatural ‘Gift of Faith’

How does the way in which God brought creation into being affect us as Christians? It is God who gives us the supernatural ‘Gifts of the Spirit’, along with the ability to use them. The absolutely glaring examples of how He used His breath to speak and create is the first thing that is written about in our Bibles and yet many of us have missed the importance of this and do not distinguish between general faith and the supernatural ‘Gift of faith’. How can we often have missed such important guidance? How many times have we read **Genesis 1** without realizing that right from the very start God showed us how the ‘Gift of faith’ operates? The thing that I find rather amusing is that even before He got round to creating a person He did not just cause to be written ‘*God SAID*’ once but seven times! I would say that He most definitely wants us to notice what He is trying to show us don’t you think?

Practical aspects

When God gives us a ‘Word of faith’ to speak out, it is His Spirit within us that is speaking out that word, so it has the **same** power as if God Himself has spoken. In order to utilize the ‘Gift of faith’ we must first have digested God’s Word. As we read our Bibles God not only helps us to understand what is written but will also see that it goes into our hearts and spirits; which will particularly equip and prepare us to receive a ‘Word of faith’ from Him. We receive a ‘Word of faith’ at the moment that God gives it to us. Even if it does not happen immediately, as it has come from God, then it **will** definitely happen because it is dependent on the faith of God and not on our own general faith.

The ‘Gift of faith’ in the Old Testament

Since Pentecost the Baptism of the Holy Spirit enables Christians to receive the ‘Gifts of the Spirit’; although of course, not all of these gifts are received by any one person as God gives them out as He

chooses. Before Pentecost most of the Gifts were also in evidence, but God's Holy Spirit came upon individuals at a specific time for a specific purpose, but did not remain with them in the same way as He does today.

Elijah and the ravens

We can read in **1 Kings 17: 2-6**, how Elijah was given a 'Word of faith'. ***'The Word of the Lord came to Elijah, "Depart from here and hide yourself by the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."*** ' Elijah acted on that word from God, even though it may have seemed a bit stupid to think that ravens would supply him with bread and meat in the morning and evening; after all, one would expect the ravens to eat the food themselves! God does not always do things in ways that we are expecting. There are times when we think, "Why on earth did God do it like that?" Of course, He is God and He always has a purpose for doing things in a particular way – even if we are not able to see His purpose at the time.

Elijah and the widow

We are not told how long Elijah was fed by the ravens, but the experience of being fed in such a supernatural way, must have increased his faith tremendously. Immediately following this he received another 'Word of faith' when God told him that a widow would continue to feed him. The widow was about to prepare a last meal for herself and her son as her provisions had come to an end. Elijah asked her to give him what she had and told her that the Lord would continue to provide for her until the rain came again. **1 Kings 17: 8 – 16**. Notice that although the 'Word of faith' came from God, it was Elijah who spoke out that Word to the widow. By God's spirit within him Elijah spoke and breathed out the 'Word of faith' in exactly the same way as when God initially created everything.

The 'Gift of faith' in the New Testament

When Paul and Barnabas were in Cyprus they were summoned to the presence of the proconsul, who wanted to hear what they had to say about the Lord. Elymas, a magician, was also there and his aim was to try and turn the proconsul away from any thoughts of becoming a Christian. Paul had received a 'Word of faith' from God and told Elymas that because of his deceit he would be blind for a while. This happened exactly as Paul had said when he spoke out the Word that he had received, which had the brilliant result of the proconsul becoming a believer. When God gives a 'Word of faith' saying that a particular thing is going to take place, then it will, because it is the faith of God that is being spoken.

Receiving a 'Word of faith'

Miraculous Words of faith are given to those who are steeped in God's Word and who have allowed it to go deep into their minds and spirits. It is something that is extremely powerful and which God uses to perform miracles and healings that are supernatural and are way out of the ordinary. All of this was available in Bible times, but, is also available today whenever God has people who are willing to step out and be used in whatever way He wishes.