

Studies in Faith Rest #1

Once you believe in Jesus Christ as savior, now what? Do you go about and live like you used to as an unbeliever or do you have a new life? How do you live that life? How do you deal with troubles in your life?

A simplistic answer is doctrine plus faith. In believing in Jesus Christ as savior you had to understand the gospel (in other words doctrine) through the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit and then apply faith to it. In the Christian life, you are empowered by the Holy Spirit when trusting Him to understand doctrine including information to guide us in our Christian lives. Then you apply faith. This doctrine plus faith leads you inevitably to God, His essence, the God who resides in you, God the Holy Spirit. He causes you to have fellowship with Jesus Christ who takes you to God the Father. Christianity is a relationship with God through trusting Him. It is a fellowship with God the Father. We are in His plan. Walking by Faith, we participate in that plan and share in the blessings of that plan.

On a personal note, it was through “faith rest,” that I began to realize the Christian life is a life of faith. When I arrived at Spring Valley Bible church, Herman gave words to what I was thinking. I taught this concept previously under the title of “Staying Spiritual.”

“Faith” has a long history in the Bible. In the book of Genesis:

Genesis 15:6 Then he (Abraham) believed in the Lord; and He credited it (imputed it) to him as righteousness.

The word for faith is not used as often in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament. The emphasis in the Old Testament is to demonstrate faith in action. The Old Testament illustrates how people used faith. As a

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result, many teachings on using faith in the Christian life come from the Old Testament. The New Testament defines (Hebrews 11:1) and explains faith (e.g. the book of Romans). This study on faith rest will use Old Testament passages to illustrate the technique used by believers when faced with specific challenges in life. Robbie Dean explains a rationale for using the Old Testament in Bible teaching.

“One of the great principles in using the Old Testament is that often the principles that we see in the New Testament that are explained in the epistles as more mechanics, more exhortations and commandments, mandates, for the spiritual life we see displayed worked out in flesh and blood. We look at people who are not dissimilar from us and we recognize that as James says of Elijah, "they are men like us," they have the same problems, they have the same sin nature, they have the same struggles that we do and as we look at them we gain a greater perspective, I think, of how God works in our own lives and of the depths of His grace.” [<https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/judges-menuitem/message/2000-judges-030/read>]

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.

Faith in the Old Testament is no different than it is in the New Testament. There are many differences between the two testaments, but faith is the same. Salvation is by faith in both testaments. A believer lives a spiritual life by faith in both testaments. It is true that the Christian has greater assets than the Old Testament believer. In the New Testament, we have the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, we have the person and work of Jesus Christ revealed in detail. In the New Testament we have “position” in Jesus Christ, sharing everything He has. But, we still operate on faith.

1 Corinthians 5:7 ...for we walk by faith, not by sight...

Romans 14:23b ...whatever is not from faith is sin.

I want to focus in this study, on the application of faith to promises which help us focus our spiritual attention on the essence of God and our relationship with Him.

There is a “technique” originally taught by R.B. Thieme which he called “faith-rest.” The idea is that I just trust a Bible promise of God and then rest in it. He taught this concept extensively in his basic doctrine courses. It has variously been called a technique or drill. Since we live by faith, I prefer to call it the faith rest life.

One student of Thieme said:

“R.B. Thieme, Jr. developed the doctrine of the faith-rest drill early on in his ministry. The term faith rest describes the way of life of the believer in the Old Testament and faith rest is one of the spiritual mechanics in our lives as believers in the Church Age.”

http://kukis.org/Doctrines/faith_rest.pdf

From another student of Thieme, Hal Lindsey, in “Combat Faith” (p 34):

“The faith-rest, briefly described, is that principle taught in the Word of God by which we enter a divinely provided dynamic rest from struggling to live for God. This is done by believing the promises of God’s Word, which releases God to work in and through us with His mighty power and wisdom. Even the indispensable means of living the Christian life called “walking in the Spirit” is appropriated by believing God’s promises of the Holy Spirit’s ministry to us.”

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I could probably go on the internet and find many Bible churches teaching faith-rest. R. B. Thieme Jr. had many students, both in Houston and throughout the world. He himself was a student of L. S. Chafer of Dallas Theological Seminary. Since many Bible churches teach faith-rest, where did Bible churches come from? Although this is slightly off subject, I think it is important to understand who we are and where we came from as a Bible church. Here is a quote from George Harry Leaf, himself a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary:

“A final word must be added with regard to the part that Dallas Theological Seminary has played in the growth of Bible Churches. This is not to say that other schools have not played an important part, too, but it is clear that Dallas Seminary has had the most prominent role.

“Although having become very diversified in recent years with regard to the educational requirements of the various functions of Christian ministry, the core curriculum at Dallas Seminary is designed to equip men to be expositors of the Word of God. They are not involved in teaching men to function under a denominational job description. Consequently, most of the graduates of the Master of Theology program at Dallas Seminary either become teachers at Bible colleges or seminaries, missionaries, or pastors of Bible Churches. But even among graduates of Dallas Seminary one may find vast differences in philosophy of ministry and teaching style.

“Current trends and recent history clearly indicate a sharp decline in the Bible Church Movement in America. To be sure new Bible Churches are still being planted. But because of a major shift in large segments of the Church away from biblical exposition to a more experience oriented ministry, the demand for churches with Bible Church distinctives has all but vanished in most areas of our country. However, for those new Bible Churches that are being formed, as well as those already in existence, if they maintain their distinctives and remain committed to the biblical

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objectives of the Church, the Bible Churches in America will continue to provide a tremendous force for the gospel of Christ.”

Read from L.S. Chafer “Conclusion” in “He That is Spiritual”/Systematic Theology Vol 6 (Pneumatology)

Now back to our subject of faith-rest.

Robbie Dean has a keen insight on how faith-rest works:

“The first step in the faith-rest drill is to mix faith with a promise. The second step is to think through the doctrinal rationales that are embedded in that promise. We come to a certain conclusion, and the conclusion isn't simply a statement of that proposition. We come to the conclusion that God is in control.” [3John lesson 13]

What Robbie Dean said is key to understanding the faith rest life. It is easy to quote a promise from the Bible like an incantation and think we have applied faith. You may not understand all the complexities and inter-textuality of a quoted passage, but you must understand that it is taking you to faith in God. We have a relationship with God the Father. If we have a good human father, you will trust him to provide the best he can for you. God the Father, is in control of history. He does not make us do things, but He knows everything that will happen and has made provision in Love for His children.

Matthew 7:11 So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

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He is your Father. You have a relationship with Him. Talk to Him. Ask Him for help. Then trust Him to respond in your life. But you must mix the promise with faith.

Hebrews 4:1 (NASB) Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they (Exodus generation) also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Faith united with promises (Bible Doctrine) is a dynamic in the Christian life. It helps us focus on what is important: our relationship with God. Just like the dynamic in salvation, we understand something from the Bible and use faith. We trust God, we trust His word. He has already done the work. We are here to witness God's work. We share in that work since God works through us. The more we walk by faith, the more we are willing to trust God.

When we are out of fellowship in status quo sinning, we need to realize and acknowledge that fact and return to trusting God by faith.

Proverbs 28:13 One who conceals his wrongdoings (1 John 1:8,10) will not prosper, But one who confesses (1 John 1:9) and abandons them will find compassion.

We get back into fellowship with faith.

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Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote about being filled with the Spirit by faith:

“How can one be filled with the Holy Spirit? We are filled with the Spirit by faith. We received Christ by faith. We walk by faith. Everything we receive from God, from the moment of our spiritual birth until we die, is by faith. Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? You can be filled right now, wherever you are, by faith. [<https://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/transferable-concepts.html>]

Do not get disappointed. A new Christian will slowly learn there were many sinful activities he engaged in, unknowing they were sinful. Ask God to help you with those sins that you frequently repeat.

God did not call perfect people to be Christians. Indeed, Christ was accused of fellowshiping with tax collectors and prostitutes, the supposed dregs of society. Those type of people understand they cannot please God on their own. They have no illusions that they will make it to heaven on their own. Hebrews chapter 11 contains so-called faith heroes. But everyone in that list was less than perfect. So be careful if you think you have to be perfect. This is not a green light to sin. No, it is a warning not to become discouraged in the Christian life.

Perhaps there is something in your past that makes you think God could never use you. Sometimes God must put us in situations that humble us. This is to remind us that we are as nothing before God. As someone put it, without faith, without the empowerment from the Holy Spirit, we are helpless, hopeless and useless. And yet, we are extremely precious to God the Father. He is our Father. A good Father.

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Hal Lindsey on the power behind faith:

“Faith works because God is faithful and able to keep His promises. The more we learn about God, the more we become certain of the things for which we hope. It is our knowledge and confidence in the object of faith that grows, not faith itself.” [Combat Faith, p22]

“Another important part of the Bible’s definition is that in and of itself, faith has no effective power to accomplish God’s work. The power in true faith comes from its object. Biblical faith must have an object, and that object is God Himself.” [Combat Faith, p24]

“Everything about the biblical definition of faith stresses that it is not something in us that makes it work, but rather the character of God that makes it work. This prevents faith itself from becoming a human work and gives all the glory of our faith exploits to God.” [Combat Faith, p24]

Here are a couple more Bible verses to keep in mind concerning faith:

2 Corinthians 5:7 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—

Galatians 3:11 11 Now, that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “the righteous one will live by faith.”

Let’s take a journey through some of the promises that God has given us through His Word.

The first one to be considered here is from 1st Samuel chapter 17, “The battle is the Lord’s” said by David just before he attacked Goliath and

killed him. This is often quoted and used by believers. There are parallel passages that say the same thing that we will also study:

Exodus 14:14 The Lord will fight for you, while you keep silent.”

2 Chronicles 20:15b This is what the LORD says to you: ‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.’”

I suspect that David was familiar with the Torah, in this case the book of Exodus.

1 Samuel 17

The background of 1 Samuel 17 is that Saul is king faced with the Philistine enemy.

This study is about getting started with Faith-Rest, not an exegetical study of individual passages. However, there will be some verses that may need some correction or amplification.

1 Samuel 17:1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

1 Samuel 17:2 Saul and the men of Israel were assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah, and they drew up in battle formation to confront the Philistines.

1 Samuel 17:3 The Philistines were standing on the mountain on one side, while Israel was standing on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

The Philistines had challenged Israel. The battle scene is familiar to those who study the book of Judges. The individuals in the nation reverted to living by their sin natures and no longer trust God. In some cases, they have abandoned God altogether. They are living like the Canaanites. God poses a challenge to get them back into walking by faith. God gives them promises. If they trust those promises which cause them to focus on their God, then they will be successful. If they continue to abandon God, then the challenges become greater.

1 Samuel 17:4 Then a champion came forward from the army encampment of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath. His height was six cubits and a span.

1 Samuel 17:5 And he had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze.

1 Samuel 17:6 He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze saber slung between his shoulders.

1 Samuel 17:7 The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-carrier walked in front of him.

The point of all this description is to portray the fierce countenance of Goliath from a human perspective. There was not a single man from the Israelite army that stood a chance against such an opponent using the same type of weapons. Goliath's weaponry was bigger, heavier, and the spear head was made of iron which is stronger than bronze. This was an impossible situation from a human perspective. The Israelites knew that from a human perspective. They were not looking at the situation from a divine perspective. They were not used to using faith to solve problems.

1 Samuel 17:8 He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle formation? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man as your representative (literally "choose a man for yourselves") and have him come down to me.

1 Samuel 17:9 If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us."

1 Samuel 17:10 Then the Philistine said, "I have defied the ranks of Israel this day! Give me a man, so that we may fight together."

1 Samuel 17:11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and very fearful.

When Dr. Dean taught this passage, he used a list of five tests that produce champion believers:

1. The Test of Preparation 1 Samuel 17:34-36
2. The Test of Discernment 1 Samuel 17:25-27
3. The Test of Humility 1 Samuel 17:28-30
4. The Test of Authority 1 Samuel 17:31-37
5. The Test of Human Good 1 Samuel 17:38-39

Note that the first point appears out of sequence. The preparation came before the rest of the narrative chronologically but it is not mentioned until it was needed to logically provide background information.

1 Samuel 17:12 Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, the man whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men.

1 Samuel 17:13 The three older sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who had gone into the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and second to him, Abinadab, and the third, Shammah.

1 Samuel 17:14 So David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul,

1 Samuel 17:15 but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.

1 Samuel 17:16 And the Philistine came forward morning and evening, and took his stand for forty days.

1 Samuel 17:17 Then Jesse said to his son David, “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers.

1 Samuel 17:18 Bring also these ten slices of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the well-being of your brothers and bring back confirmation from them.

1 Samuel 17:19 For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the Valley of Elah, fighting the Philistines.”

They are not actually engaged in battle. They are waiting for something to get the battle started. In God’s Plan, He has everyone waiting for His faith warrior, David.

1 Samuel 17:20 So David got up early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper, and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the entrenchment encircling the camp while the army was going out in battle formation, shouting the war cry.

1 Samuel 17:21 Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle formation, army against army.

1 Samuel 17:22 Then David left the baggage in the care of the baggage keeper and ran to the battle line. And he entered and greeted his brothers.

1 Samuel 17:23 As he was speaking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard him.

1 Samuel 17:24 When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very fearful.

These are soldiers who are fleeing. They are fleeing a battle. Would you call this cowardice?

In our spiritual battle, we do not seek out a spiritual battle against the forces of evil. But we do stand our ground, using doctrine plus faith, as David will do.

The Test of Discernment

1 Samuel 17:25 And the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will make the man who kills him wealthy with great riches, and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.”

High Risk. High Reward.