

A Divine Example of Faith

By Dr. Sam Wolfe
Huntsville, Alabama

I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM

(Hebrews 2:13)



Introduction:

The words of the text above are a statement by the Lord Jesus who, in His humanity, stated that He was disposed to put His trust in His heavenly Father. At this stage of my life, a supreme desire of my heart is for the Holy Spirit to develop in me a stronger disposition to believe God. The Bible tells us four times that *The just shall live by faith*. Because of that truth, I must give special attention to the example of Jesus who was disposed to believe His God without hesitation or reservation. If my Lord and Savior who Himself is God so trusted His heavenly Father, why should I not do the same? *What about you?*

I have no reference to the response of the human intellect we call faith—what the mind is capable of conceiving and believing without any divine enabling. We can believe that 2 plus 2 are four without divine help. I am referring to the interaction between the human spirit, in union with the Holy Spirit, and my heavenly Father. This interaction can be counterfeited or imagined, but by the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit it is real.

As breathing is a physical function of the body that hardly requires noticeable effort, believing God is a supernatural function of the human spirit in union with the Holy Spirit. As breathing comes naturally, the disposition to believe God comes supernaturally. However there may be a problem with believing God that has to be solved. Normally we breath with no hesitation, but there may be *a hesitation to believe God—that is a problem we must deal with. Why do we hesitate?*

I believe there is a parallel in the way God created us physically to the way He created us spiritually. He gave us a disposition to eat when hungry, a disposition to drink when thirsty, and a disposition to acquire what we need physically. Likewise, He gave us a disposition to believe Him for spiritual as well as physical needs—this disposition is implied by the promises He made to us. However, in the fall of Adam and in our inheriting his nature of corruption, this disposition was adversely affected, if not completely destroyed, in humanity. But in God's great work of redemption and restoration, the means of communication with Himself came into effect—and that is faith. The Bible states, *He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him* (Hebrews 11:6).

My passion is a supernatural disposition to believe my heavenly Father **without hesitation**—Jesus did and so can we. So, let's follow His example. But I must remind you that when He was in the flesh on earth, He was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit—not on the power that was His by means of His deity. So we cannot say that, because He was God, He had no difficulty.

Consider the fact that because we are so accustomed to living in the natural, we have little supernatural living experience. We are so earth bound we have hardly any connection with Heaven. But the truth is, God wants us to live the life of eternity now, for we have eternal life dwelling in us.

Paul wrote about the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery that God ordained before the world unto our glory (I Corinthians 2:7). He also said that the things of God knows no man but the Spirit of God. Let

me share with you some things about Donald Gray Barnhouse who was pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia for many years. Editor of *Eternity Magazine*, author of a dozen books, an inveterate world traveler, teacher for thirty years of a New York City Bible class that drew more than 500 people every Monday evening. In describing his experience of how God made clear to him the truth of his union with Christ and how by faith he realized his position in the heavenlies he said:

“I remember so well the first day I went to Heaven. I was on shipboard, traveling alone. I had set myself to read the Book of Ephesians a hundred times on the Atlantic crossing. I had known it by heart since the days of my youth. I was lying on my deck chair with my eyes closed, seeing every line and poring over its meaning. Suddenly I saw the whole new living way from myself all the way to the throne of God, with the lord Jesus seated there, desiring me to join Him...I was completely joined to the risen, ascended Lord...I was in the heavenlies joined by faith to my Lord...The eternal life He gave me when I was saved was now realized to be the life of eternity that I was privileged to live in time. I was to spend the rest of my life seated with Christ in the heavenlies.”

Hopefully, you understand the implications of Dr. Barnhouse’s testimony. It is imperative that we understand that we are not only earthy beings—we are spirit beings with a capacity for the things of God that only the Holy Spirit can teach us. And He will teach us from God’s Word, the Scriptures. I am not referring to an extra biblical experience, but union with God by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. This is....

A. The Foundation of Faith.

The supernatural basis for faith is our union with God that was established at our conversion when God saved us. The Holy Spirit baptized—positioned or placed—us into the mystical body of Christ. In John 15, Jesus explained it by the vine and the branches. He told us that He is the Vine and that we are the branches in the Vine. This illustrates a divine relationship between the believer and God, and explains why we can communicate with Him and He with us. As was Dr. Barnhouse, we must be conscious of our union and utilize the advantage of it—that the Holy Spirit might develop in us a disposition to trust God. A superficial understanding is not adequate. We must be Spirit taught.

B. The Foothold for Faith.

- ❖ **Unity** – While union is the foundation, unity is the foothold. Jesus said, *If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything you shall ask, it shall be done of My heavenly Father.* The agreement Jesus spoke of is unity—and unity is the oneness that exists between Himself and His Father. We have union, but we must have the assurance of unity Jesus had with His Father.
- ❖ **Communion** – Jesus said, *If you abide in me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you* (John 15:7).
- ❖ **Fellowship** – To abide in Christ is to *continue* in an unbroken fellowship with Him. This is a prerequisite to communication with God.
- ❖ **Knowledge** – Abiding fellowship with Christ creates spiritual knowledge of God and endears us to Him like nothing else will. This shows Him that we love him supremely and desire intimacy with Him.

- ❖ **Intimacy** – Consider Paul’s testimony in Philippians 3:10. *That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.*

Later, in a situation that could not have been any more dangerous, distressing or discouraging, Paul said to the men on board the sinking ship, *Sirs, I believe God* (Acts 27:25). And he said it without hesitation, for he had God’s testimony and assurance that not a life would be lost.

Paul already knew Jesus, having met Him on the Damascus road in a life-transforming conversion, but he had a consuming passion to know Him intimately. When I think of intimacy with God, I think also of Enoch. Hebrews 11 tells us that he had the testimony that he pleased God. He walked with God and served Him faithfully for 365 years. Then God took him. Why? Because He wanted him. Remember, Enoch did not have the advantages we think we must have today. He had no digital device, nor computer, nor CD or tape player. He had no Bible study courses, not even a Bible, but what he had was enough—he had God and God was sufficient.

- ❖ **Hearing God** – One great secret to a disposition to trust is hearing God. While Jesus was on earth during His ministry here, He was in communication with His Father. As the Son of Man, He heard His Father. He said, *I speak to the world those things I have heard of Him* (John 8:26).

Dear Friend, I am saying to you that we must stay in touch with our heavenly Father. Jesus was never out of touch, so to speak. Let’s follow His example.

- ❖ **Mental Development** – The discipline of the mind is vital. Paul names things we should think on: things that are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report*. Paul said, *Think on these things.*

To think on the opposite of these things will corrupt the mind and grieve the Holy Spirit. Our thoughts can be provocative. Lucifer’s were, for God judged him for his thoughts.

- ❖ **Judging God** – How we judge God makes a great difference. Isaiah judged Him **Truthful**. Daniel judged Him **Able**. Sarah judged Him **Faithful**. **How do you judge God’s Word?** David judged it **Pure, Sure, Righteous**. Isaiah judged it **powerful** to accomplish God’s purposes.

God does not make empty promises, nor does He tantalize us. He says what He means and means what He says. The Mind is of supreme importance to faith. It must be developed to trust God without hesitation. Thought life must be disciplined.

You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You (Psalm 26:3)

Conclusion:

A closing thought—Faith is a divine impartation. *For by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Ephesians 2:8). Now how does God give faith? He created us with the capacity to interact with and believe Himself. This capacity is inherent in us. It is opposed by human weakness sometimes to the point of refusing and rejecting what is offered and available. But the Holy Spirit divinely challenges and enables our faculties by divine stimulation to enable us to trust God by believing His testimony given in His Word. Remember, *The Just shall live by faith*. God has made it possible.