

**WEEK 7 - GROWING IN FAITH
DAY 1**

Last week we learned that one of the things which hinders our prayers is not believing. We read many verses from the Bible which show us that we must have faith when we pray.

1. Can you remember the other things which hinder our prayers? Write them:

- (1) _____ (2) _____
(3) _____ (4) _____
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Read these verses again to see how important faith is in our praying.

Hebrews 11:6:

And without faith it is impossible to please him; for anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who search for him.

Matthew 17:19-20:

Afterwards the disciples came to Jesus and asked him privately, 'Why could not we cast it out?' He answered, 'Your faith is too small. I tell you this: if you have faith no bigger even than a mustard-seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move: nothing will prove impossible for you.'

James 1:6-7:

But he must ask in faith, without a doubt in his mind; for the doubter is like a heaving sea ruffled by the wind. A man of that kind must not expect the Lord to give him anything.

2. How many answers to prayer can we get without faith? _____

When we read these verses we see how necessary it is for us to believe God when we pray. We see that God wants to do wonderful things through our prayers, but we have to believe he will do them. We want God to do these things but we see that our faith is small. How can we make our faith grow? That is what we want to learn this week.

3. Do you feel that you need more faith? _____

The only way that we know how God wants us to pray is through the Bible. We believe the Bible is God's word. In the Bible, God gives us many words to encourage our faith. Look at the words which Jesus spoke to his disciples on the night before he was crucified. We find these words in John chapter 14, 15 and 16. These are very important words. Jesus was leaving his disciples. They would carry on his work. He knew they would not have strength to do this work alone. They would need help. Jesus told them again and again that he would help them if they would pray.

John 14:13-14:

Indeed anything you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name I will do it.

John 15:7:

If you dwell in me, and my words dwell in you, ask what you will, and you shall have it.

John 15:16:

You did not choose me: I chose you. I appointed you to go on and bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father may give you all that you ask in my name.

John 16:23-24:

When that day comes you will ask nothing of me. In very truth I tell you, if you ask the Father for anything in my name, he will give it you. So far you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete.

4. How many times in these verses did Jesus tell the disciples that they could receive answers to their prayers?

If we want to tell people something important we repeat it many times to be sure they have understood.

5. Was it important to Jesus that the disciples should pray and get answers to their prayers?

When we read how Jesus told the disciples that their prayers would be answered, we know that these promises are for us also. We know that Jesus is still wanting to remind us many times that we can receive help through praying. Then we know how much God wants to answer our prayers.

6. Does it help your faith to grow when you remember how much God wants to answer your prayers? _____

There are other promises in the Bible which can strengthen our faith. One which we think about is this one in Matthew 7:7:

‘Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened.’

7. What happens if we come to God and ask? _____

Matthew 7:7 is a verse which we can repeat to ourselves when we pray and find strength for our faith.

8. Say this verse over and over again until you have memorized it. I will ask you to say it in class.

Here is another verse which will help your faith.

1 John 3:22:

We obtain from him whatever we ask, because we are keeping his commands and doing what he approves.

9. If we are obeying God, can we expect him to answer our prayers? _____

1 John 5:14-15:

We can approach God with confidence for this reason: if we make our requests which accord with his will he listens to us; and if we know that our requests are heard, we know also that the things we ask for are ours.

10. When we know we are asking for something that is God’s will, what can we expect?

There are many, many more verses in the Bible which promise that God hears and answers our prayers. We cannot write them all in this book. As you read your Bible, you will find them. When you find them, draw lines under them and memorize them, so that you think about them as you pray.

11. What can you do to make your faith grow? _____

ANSWERS

- 8. Be prepared to say Matthew 7:7 in class.
- 5. Yes, it was important.
- 7. We will receive
- 2. None
- 6. Answer as you feel.
- 10. We can expect him to hear us and answer us.
 - 1. Sin, unforgiveness, asking for selfish things, not continuing in prayer.
- 11. Find God's promises in the Bible and memorize them.
 - 9. Yes
 - 4. Six times
 - 3. Answer as you feel.

**WEEK 7 - GROWING IN FAITH
DAY 2**

Yesterday we learned the first thing we can do to strengthen our faith.

1. What is it? _____

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In the Bible we read many promises that God will answer our prayers. But we not only have promises. We also have many things which happened to show that God keeps his promises. We read the stories of how God did answer prayer for people in the Bible.

2. Does it help you to believe someone if you know that he kept his promises to other people?

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When we read the Bible, we read about times when God answered prayer. We see that God keeps his promises. When we see how God answered prayer for other people, our faith grows stronger that he will answer prayer for us.

3. What can you read in the Bible besides promises to make your faith grow strong?

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Let us look at the story of Elijah. God answered prayers for Elijah. First, God sent drought to make the people remember him. Then God sent fire on Mount Carmel in answer to Elijah's prayer. This was to show that he is the true God. Then when Elijah prayed again, God sent rain after there had been no rain for three years. We read this story in 1 Kings 18. Open your Bible to this chapter and read verses 36 to 45 to see how God answered Elijah's prayers.

4. After reading this story, do you believe that God answers prayers?

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But when we read this story we say to ourselves, "Yes, God answered Elijah's prayers, but Elijah was a very great man. This is why God answered his prayers." That is not what the Bible says. In the New Testament James tells us that Elijah was a person like we are, yet God answered his prayers.

James 5:17-18:

Elijah was a man with human frailties like our own; and when he prayed earnestly that there should be no rain, not a drop fell on the land for three years and a half; then he prayed again, and down came the rain and the land bore crops once more.

5. Did God answer Elijah's prayers because he was a very great man? _____

It helps us to believe God to answer our prayers when we read how he answered the prayers of Elijah. We can also make our faith grow when we read how God answered the prayers of Jesus. Jesus often prayed to God. And God answered his prayers. We will look at just one time. In John chapter 11, Jesus was standing beside the grave of his friend, Lazarus. Open your Bible to John 11 and read verses 39 to 44 to see what happened.

6. What did Jesus do before he commanded Lazarus to come forth?

Jesus knew that God heard his prayers. He said, "I know that you hear me always." But how does that help our faith? Jesus was the only begotten son of God. Surely God would hear him and help him do miracles. But notice what Jesus said to the disciples in John 14:12:

In truth, in very truth I tell you, he who has faith in me will do what I am doing; and he will do greater things still because I am going to the Father.

7. What kind of works did Jesus say his disciples would do? _____

Let us look at one more time when God answered prayer for people in the Bible. In Acts chapter 4 some of the disciples were put in prison because they were preaching about Jesus. After a while the rulers let them go, but they commanded them not to preach in the name of Jesus any more. What did the disciples do? They prayed that God would give them boldness to keep on preaching. Open your Bibles to Acts 4 and read verses 23 to 31.

8. How did God answer the prayers of these people? _____

9. In what way does it help us to read the stories of prayers which God answered in the Bible?

10. From this lesson, what can we do to strengthen our faith? _____

ANSWERS

- 1. Reading the Bible.
- 3. Stories of how God answered prayer for other people.
- 5. No.
- 7. Greater things.
- 9. It gives us faith.
- 2. Yes.
- 4. Yes.
- 6. He prayed.
- 8. He gave them boldness.
- 10. Read how God answered prayer in the Bible.

WEEK 7 - GROWING IN FAITH

DAY 3

We have learned that there are two things in the Bible which we can read to strengthen our faith.

1. What are they?

(1) _____

(2) _____

Another thing which strengthens our faith is to take away the things which we know hinder prayer.

2. What is it in our hearts that can keep our prayers from being answered?

If we want to believe God's promises, we must know that there is no sin in our heart which keeps God from answering our prayers. But how can we know this? How can we be sure that our hearts are clean? We can ask God to show us if there is anything sinful there which we have not confessed. He will show us.

Jeremiah 17:9-10:

The heart is the most deceitful of all things, desperately sick, who can fathom it? I, the Lord, search the mind and test the heart, requiring man for his conduct, and as his deeds deserve.

3. If God promises to answer our prayers, will he show us sin in our hearts if we ask him to show us?

What shall we do if we find sin in our hearts when we pray? We know that God will not hear our prayers when there is sin in our hearts. We must get rid of that sin.

4. How can we get rid of sin in our hearts? _____

God promises to forgive our sins if we agree to them.

1 John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.

Sometimes sins are against other people. We ask God to forgive us. But we must also make the matters right with the other people. Remember what Zaccheus said when he repented in Luke 19:8:

But Zaccheus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Here and now, sir, I give half of my possessions to charity; and if I have cheated anyone, I am ready to repay him four times over.'

5. Will God hear your prayer if you have stolen from someone and have not returned those things? _____

When we confess our sins to God and make the matters right with other people, then we know our hearts are clean and we have faith to believe that God hears our prayers.

1 John 3:21-22:

Dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, then we can approach God with confidence, and obtain from him whatever we ask, because we are keeping his commands and doing what he approves.

6. If our hearts condemn us, can we have faith towards God? _____

7. If we search our hearts and God shows us that they are clean, what happens to our faith? _____

ANSWERS

7. It grows stronger.

5. No.

3. Yes.

1. (1) God's promises, (2) Stories of how God answered prayer for others.

6. No.

4. Repent and ask God to forgive us.

2. Sin.

WEEK 7 - GROWING IN FAITH

DAY 4

From the lessons of the past three days, what have you learned about how to strengthen your faith?

1. Write a few lines about what you have learned.

Many times in the Bible when Jesus healed people he said it was because of their faith.

Matthew 9:22:

But Jesus turned and saw her, and said, 'Take heart, my daughter; your faith has cured you.'

Matthew 9:28-29:

And when he had gone indoors they came to him. Jesus asked, 'Do you believe that I have the power to do what you want?' 'Yes, sir,' they said. Then he touched their eyes, and said, 'As you have believed, so let it be.'

Matthew 15:28:

Hearing this Jesus replied, 'Woman, what faith you have! Be it as you wish!' And from that moment her daughter was restored to health.

2. Did these people believe God? _____

But people did not always believe Jesus easily. Even the disciples sometimes failed to believe. Many times Jesus told them that their faith was small.

Matthew 8:26:

'Why are you such cowards?' he said; 'how little faith you have!' Then he stood up and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a dead calm.

3. Did the disciples have great faith at this time? _____

Did Jesus help them even though their faith was small? _____

Many times we feel like the disciples. They knew that their faith was small, so they asked Jesus to help them.

Luke 17:5-6:

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith'; and the Lord replied, 'If you had faith no bigger even than a mustard-seed, you could say to this mulberry-tree, "Be rooted up and replanted in the sea"; and it would at once obey you.'

4. Whom did the apostles ask to help them with their faith? _____

Here is another thing we can do to make our faith grow. We can ask God to increase it. Jesus did not criticize the disciples when they asked for faith. He helped their faith by telling them that even a little faith can do great things.

5. If you have some faith, even though it is small, will God hear your prayer?

There was another man in the Bible who had trouble with his faith. This man had a child who had an evil spirit. He brought the child to Jesus and asked him to cast the spirit out.

Mark 9:23-24:

'If it is possible!' said Jesus. 'Everything is possible to one who has faith.' 'I have faith,' cried the boy's father: 'help me where faith falls short.'

6. What did the man do when he saw that his faith was small? _____

7. What can we do when our faith is small? _____

ANSWERS

3. No. Yes.
5. Yes, he will. If you said no, read the verse from Luke again.
1. We will talk about this in class.
7. We can cry to God to strengthen our faith
2. Yes
4. Jesus
6. He cried, 'Help me where my faith falls short.'

WEEK 7 - GROWING IN FAITH
DAY 5

What have we learned this week about how to increase our faith? We have learned that we can:

1. Remember God's promises.
2. Think about how he answered prayer for other people.
3. Ask God to search our hearts for sin.
4. Ask God to increase our faith.

1. Did Jesus answer the prayer of the man who cried, 'Help me where faith falls short?' _____

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When the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith, we do not read that he gave them much more faith, but rather he showed them that even a little faith can do miracles.

Luke 17:6:

And the Lord replied, 'If you had faith no bigger even than a mustard-seed, you could say to this mulberry-tree, 'Be rooted up and replanted in the sea,' and it would at once obey you.'

2. What did Jesus say our faith can be like? _____

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Is a seed a big thing? No, mustard seed is very small. Perhaps you feel that your faith is very small. Perhaps you sometimes say, "I cannot pray for things. My faith is not enough." Jesus did not tell the disciples to wait for more faith. He said that even if their faith is as small as a seed, they should use it.

3. Do you have little faith or much faith? _____

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If you have faith like a seed, then begin to pray for small things, which you can believe God for. Let us say you are praying for someone in your family to become a Christian. Do not begin by praying that that person will repent tomorrow. Begin by praying that God will help you show your love to him. God will answer your prayer. Then ask God to give you a chance to talk to him about spiritual things. Then ask God to help him agree to read the Bible with you and pray with you.

4. Do you have enough faith to ask God to give you a chance to talk to your friend in a way that will show your love? _____

When God answers your prayer for a small thing, rejoice that he has answered you. Thank him for rewarding your small faith. Remember that it was because of your faith, even though it was small, that God answered you.

5. God answers our prayers because we have _____

Sometimes when God answers our prayers we are tempted to think, "Well, it would have happened anyway, even if I had not prayed." To say this is not to believe God. Saying this makes our faith weak. It takes away God's glory. One time Jesus healed 10 lepers. Nine of these men, when they saw that they were healed, just went on their way and never even came back to thank Jesus. Open your Bible and read this story in Luke 17:12-19.

6. What did one of the lepers do when he saw that he was healed? _____

7. What should we do when God answers our prayers? _____

Use the faith which you have. Ask for small things first. God will answer you. Thank him and then ask for bigger things.

8. What happens to your faith when you see that God has answered a prayer for you?

9. What can we do with faith that is small? _____

We do not need to be discouraged if we feel that our faith is small.

- (1) We can read God's promises in the Bible,
- (2) We can remember how he answered the prayers of other people.
- (3) We can ask God to show us if our hearts are clean.
- (4) We can ask God to help our unbelief.
- (5) We can use the faith we have and begin by asking for small things.

10. Read again these five ways to make our faith grow. Cover them and learn to say them without looking.

ANSWERS

6. He came back to thank Jesus.
3. Answer as you feel.
1. Yes.
7. We should thank him.
4. Answer as you feel.
2. Like a seed.
8. I believe your faith grows stronger.
10. Be prepared to say them in class.
5. Faith.
9. We can use it.