

Week Seven Daily Training Tips

Living in the Faith-zone: Faith-Stretching Exercises

personal / group study for use with the message on February 27th and 28th, 2010

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

Introduction.

Spiritual maturity is propelled forward when we engage with God in things that are too big for us to handle on our own. "If you can explain it, God didn't do it." When we 'stretch our faith,' or 'take faith-risks' we place ourselves in a dependent position with God.

Read.

1. Understanding Faith. Read Hebrews chapter 11 and on into 12:1-3.

What does this chapter teach you about the importance of walking by *faith*?

Can you find a good definition of *faith* in this chapter?

How important is *faith* in God's eyes?

When these people stepped out *in faith*, in obedience to God's leading, how did it turn out for them? Did they receive what they expected from their step of faith?

Do you see anything in this chapter that speaks to issues in your life right now?

Chapter 12:1-3 invites us into the arena of faith. Who are the spectators watching us run the race?

2. Faith in action. Read Matthew 14:22-33.

Peter takes a big risk here. Why do you think he took this risk?

What caused Peter to begin to sink?

What do you think the other disciples were thinking as they watched Peter go out, and go down?

Is there some area of your life in which you need to take a faith-risk? Is it something that will honor God, something that He is inviting you to do with Him?

If you take this faith-risk, how do you think you will be perceived by those around you?

John Ortberg recently wrote a book, *If you want to walk on water you've got to get out of the boat*. If you are interested in studying this passage and its application to life more in-depth, check it out.

3. The testing of Faith. Read Genesis 22:1-19.

Why did God ask Abraham to offer up his only son?

How did Abraham respond to God's command?

How did Abraham trust God through this whole situation?

Sometimes God will test our faith by challenging one of the 'idols' in our lives, something we cling to. He will challenge us to lay that idol on the altar. This requires a step of faith, a risk, because we are letting go of something very dear to our hearts.

Is there something, someone in your life that might be an 'idol' that God is asking you to lay on the altar?

Kay Warren wrote a book entitled, *Dangerous Surrender*. It is a radical read about a woman who is taking radical steps of faith in her walk with God. Warning: This book is dangerous to 'safe-zone' living!

4. When Faith has a blow-out. Read 1Samuel 27-30.

This is a long section, but I hope you will ponder it deeply. David had been anointed to be Israel's next king when he was a young man, perhaps a young teen. Yet, he had been waiting for nearly 14 years, and had not seen the promise of God fulfilled. Finally, after too much waiting, David takes matters into his own hands (ch.27). His faith fails.

But note what's happening at the very same time (ch.28). God is preparing to bring Saul's reign to an end, just when David has given up hope! In ch.29 you see the predicament that David finds himself in when he takes matters into his own hands. He ends up on the wrong team!

Finally, note how he comes back and restores his faith in ch.30. Circumstances brought him to his knees, and back to a place of trusting God.

Have you ever had a time in your life where you were waiting so long for God to 'come through' that you quit believing that He would *ever* come through???

5. Faith comes by hearing. Long reading yesterday, short one today: Romans 10:17.

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

“Faith” is “trust.” It is hard to trust someone you don't know. On the other hand it is easier and more natural to trust someone you know well, someone whose character you can depend on.

This is why it is important to get to know God through the pages of Scripture. The more you get to know God (hearing), the more you are able to trust Him in different areas of your life (faith).

This is an important principle of spiritual growth. Faith grows as your knowledge of God grows. Again, this is why it is so important to undergird your spiritual life with regular intake of God's Word. Your faith will grow, the more you know of God's character.

*All scripture taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.



“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).