

Exercising Faith

Hebrews 11:32-34

Though faith is the gift of God, the operation of this grace is active, not passive. We believe God's Word. **Faith, leaning upon the arms of Omnipotence, accomplishes what would otherwise be impossible.** Jesus said if we have faith in Him, even small faith, "Nothing shall be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20). There are nine fruits of the Spirit (internal attitude) and nine fruits of faith (external accomplishments).

1. Faith enables us to conquer kingdoms.

There are two great, warring kingdoms standing in the way of the Kingdom of God reigning within us: *the flesh*—the kingdom within you; "Through the Spirit we put to death the flesh and live" (Rom. 8:13) and *the world*—the kingdom around you; "For he who is born of God overcomes the world" (1 Jn. 5:4).

2. Faith leads us to do right for the sake of justice.

These words, in their strict sense, refer to the exercise of judicial righteousness, the enforcement of law; not unlike Joshua executing the inhabitants and the king of Hazor (Josh. 11), to David executing judgment and justice in Israel (2 Sam. 8:15), to Elijah executing the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).

3. Faith obtains for us God's promises.

Abraham obtained Isaac. Jacob obtained the birthright. Moses delivered Israel. Joshua conquered Canaan. Gideon defeated the Midianites. David received the throne. They all obtained it by faith.

4. Faith enables us to shut the mouths of lions.

We know of Samson and Daniel. But Satan is the roaring lion. Faith stops the lion's mouth! "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion ... seeking whom he may devour" (1Pet. 5:8).

5. Faith quenches the power of fire.

Paul probably had in mind those three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace. But the promise of God is to us! "When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched; nor will the flame burn you" (Isa. 43:2). Satan's attacks are called "the *fiery* darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16) and we have *fiery* trials.

6. Faith empowers us to escape the edge of the sword.

David (1 Samuel 18:4), Elijah (1 Kings 18:10), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 39:15-18) were empowered by faith. There is no question; persecuted believers escape the edge of the persecutor's sword by the grace of God.

7. Faith, in our moment of weakness, makes us strong.

Samson, in his weakest hour, was out of weakness made strong. Hezekiah was, upon his deathbed, out of weakness made strong and became the father of Josiah, the progenitor of the Christ! (II Cor. 12:7-10).

8. Faith makes us mighty in war.

Faith refuses to be intimidated. Faith is undaunted by reason. Faith stubbornly refuses to give in. The kingdoms of the flesh and of the world will not stop faith in her path.

9. Faith enables us to put to flight our enemies.

Joshua put to flight Ai and the kings of the Amorites (Joshua 10:1-10). David put to flight the armies of the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17-25). So it is with us who believe in Christ; we put to flight our enemies.