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Trusting in God: The Key to Life

(1) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (2) This is what the ancients were commended for. (3) By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

We have now come to the important matter of how we embrace God, who is the holy center and wellspring of a life under the Shepherd's care. Going forward, the focus of these devotionals will be on one of the three things that must be working within us before we can truly experience the sufficiency of God: faith, death to self, and agape love. These three combine to create a triangle of sufficiency in our lives. When faith, death to self, and love are alive in you, you will find that hope and joy pervade your entire life as a natural result. Each one is a gift from God, and our privilege and calling is to become the kind of people who can receive these gifts and work with God to develop them as we learn to live a life without lack.

Faith—trust—is the key that unlocks our readiness to receive God's sufficiency in our lives. Given how we commonly use these words today, it is helpful to replace all occurrences of faith in the Bible with trust. For example, "For by grace you have been saved through trust" (Eph. 2:8). To have faith in God is simply to trust God, to rely upon him in the face of all fears.

The best-known definition of faith in the Bible is this: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Substance means what stands under something (sub-stance or under-standing). Faith is the substance of things hoped for in this way: when we have faith, we act in relationship with God to bring what we hope for into reality. Faith is also "the evidence of things not seen." What are the "things not seen"? In the same passage, a few lines later, we are told that "the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (v. 3). The phrase "things not seen" refers to the word, or even energy, of God in action. When we have faith, that is sure evidence that the word of the unseen God is active in us. Faith is a gift; God creates it in our hearts.

The Mount of Transfiguration had a dramatic effect on Peter's faith. Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain, and while they were up there Jesus began to shine like the sun, Moses and Elijah showed up for a chat, God spoke from heaven, and the three disciples found themselves flat on their faces, overcome by the glory of it all. Once things had returned to normal, Jesus led them back down the mountain only to encounter a great commotion involving his other disciples, some religious leaders, and a man with a son troubled by a demon. The man had brought his boy in hopes that Jesus would heal him. In his absence, Jesus' disciples had given it a try without success. Jesus asked the man how long his son had suffered. "Since childhood," was his response, followed by the desperate plea, "If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (Mark 9:22).

Reflect: *Now comes the part of this account where most of us want to crawl under a chair and hide. Jesus told the man, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes" (v. 23). All things? Really? Does this mean all things are possible to us too? Yes, it does.*

(Q) In what area of your life should you feel free to speak right back to Jesus the words of the desperately hopeful father, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (v. 24)?