

GROWING FAITH

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of everyone of you all toward each other aboundeth.”

2 Thessalonians 1:3

The Apostle Paul refers to the Thessalonian's faith as a growing faith. We often do not see our faith as anything beyond a mental belief or persuasion as to what is true. But faith is much more than that, it is a living force that is to be working in our lives even when we are not paying particular attention to it.

Concerning our faith, Hebrews refers to Jesus as the *“chief leader and the One who will carry it through”*. So it is more than a mental force within our lives, it is a spiritual power that exists and is designed to grow to a level of greater influence in our lives than other persuasions or convictions. There is much more to faith than simply knowing faith has been imparted to us as believers. I believe God intends for our faith to be a living and growing force in our lives.

Faith, defined as a firm persuasion based upon hearing, is to be a vital part of our lives. As this persuasion grows or takes on a greater influence in our lives, so does its impact upon our conduct and relationships. Faith not only connects us with God's resources in the time of need, but influences how we conduct our lives relative to values and choices we make. God's use of faith was a creative force that made all that this physical universe is. His faith He has placed in our life is a practical down-to-earth ingredient to be used if we intend to live the Jesus-life.

Paul expresses a thankful heart because he perceives the Thessalonians' faith as a growing influence. He says it grows exceedingly! This word for growth is ***huperauxano*** meaning to increase beyond measure, an abundance of growth of that which lives, naturally or spiritually.

Faith, then, is a living force which grows and is the result of us being persuaded because of what we have heard. We hear, we believe, and we act out our believing or what we call an exercise of faith. God's intent is for it to grow, even exceedingly. It would seem obvious that it should grow as everything that we know about, if it is alive, growth is a natural function. It is important to consider that your faith will not grow simply because you want it to. Your faith will not appropriate more of what God says you can have, just because you want more of what God says you can have.

Faith, a firm persuasion, grows when it feeds on Word food. This world's value system does not provide you with the necessary nutrition to enable it to grow. Taking into your mind the message of this world does not give your faith life or strength. One way of thinking of this could be what we relate to the most is what influences our life the most. And, what influences our life the most is what we give ourselves to the most. Jesus indicated that His relationship with the Father empowered Him to do what He understood the Father wanted Him to do. His relationship with the Father and His faith were deeply interrelated with each other, mutually connected as a function in His life of faith.

It is no different with us. Knowing the Father's heart naturally develops faith for whatever He wants done. Spending time in the Word is necessary in order to find what His will and pleasure are. So, the greater the influence of the Word is on your thinking, the effect is greater growth of faith in your life. Faith does not grow on desire. Faith does not grow on good intention. It grows when we submit ourselves to, and hear, hear, hear, the Word of God both in preaching and private time with the Father in personal fellowship.