

3: REAL FAITH ISN'T BASED ON RESULTS

By John
In Faith, Mindset, Resilience

7 Min Read



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Faith in the Fire Series: When God doesn't fix it.

OPENING THOUGHT

Does your faith only grow when God says “yes?” When the promotion comes through, when the family member or friend recovers from their illness, even when we avoid the consequences of a bad decision, we celebrate and proclaim His goodness. But what happens when our prayers seem to go unanswered, when God's timeline isn't ours, or His response is “no”? That's when our faith gets tested. Many of us tend to place our faith in outcomes rather than God Himself. When He comes through, we celebrate. But if He doesn't, disappointment sets in.

True faith is refined in the crucible of disappointment. It's forged in the fiery furnace of "if nots." It says, "God, I trust You, not just what You can do for me." This kind of faith isn't about getting our way but aligning our hearts with His. God is not in the business of transactions, but transformations.

Daniel's friends stood before the furnace with that kind of confidence. They didn't bargain their way out of being thrown into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar. They declared, *"Our God can deliver us... but even if He doesn't, we will not bow."* That's faith at its rawest—unshakable, surrendered, and deeply rooted in who God is, not what He does.

SCRIPTURE

**"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen."**

—Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

Hebrews 11:1 provides a definition of faith that's radically different from what people expect today. We expect results within our timeframe. We request a ride to the airport, and Uber or Lyft shows up at our front door. When we're craving our favorite cuisine, we order it up with DoorDash, and soon, there's a knock at our front door. Genuine faith isn't based on visible evidence or immediate results—it's confidence in what we hope for and certainty in what we cannot see. It's trusting that God is good and His promises are true, even when the outcome doesn't line up.

Biblical faith is not blind optimism; it's not fingers crossed. Biblical faith doesn't deny, loss, pain, disappointment, or difficulties. Genuine faith is not pretending that everything is fine, God will come through at the last minute. Instead, it's anchored in God's character and His Word, not in our emotions or expectations.

Daniel's friends in Daniel 3 model this beautifully. Their faith was not dependent on rescue—it was rooted in trust.

APPLICATION

How do we apply this "genuine faith" to our lives? How does it work? What does it look like? How do we model it?

Faith starts with God, not you. Real faith is not manufactured through positive thinking or a person's willpower. You won't find books on genuine faith on the shelves of your bookstore in the Self Help section—try Christian Books or Christian Living and look for a Bible. Authentic faith is a response to God's truth, not just wishful thinking.

Faith is anchored in God's character, not results. Faith is not the result of answered prayers checked off on a scorecard. Biblical faith isn't tied to circumstances—it's tied to who God is. Hebrews 11:6 says, *"Without faith it is impossible to please God,"* which means trusting Him even when we can't see the whole picture.

Faith produces obedience. Faith is acting on what you believe God is saying. Kay and I packed up our family and moved from Illinois to Colorado, having many unanswered questions. As we settled in and the trauma of leaving our families behind subsided, we could see how the move was the best thing that had ever happened to our family. James tells us, *“Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”* Genuine faith moves us to obey God’s Word, even when it’s costly. Noah built the ark before there was rain. Abraham left his home, not knowing where he was going. Faith leads to action.

Strong faith doesn’t come instantly, but God usually grows it through trials. Faith is like a muscle; it needs to be stretched to develop. James 1:3–4 reminds us that *“the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”* Waiting seasons, suffering, and unanswered prayers all become classrooms where faith matures.

Faith is rooted in our relationship with Him, not religion. Faith is not just believing; even the demons believe. Our faith grows through time spent in God’s Word, prayer, worship, and daily fellowship with Him.

Our faith can be strengthened without our even realizing it. I once witnessed to a barista at a local coffee shop. At the end of our conversation, she asked if my wife, Kay, and I would give her a ride to church that Wednesday evening. As she raised her hand at the end of the service to accept Christ, I swear my feet didn’t touch the ground for five minutes. God is faithful even when we don’t ask.

Genuine faith is not about getting God to do what we want; it’s about learning to trust Him no matter what. It appears to be a combination of surrender, obedience, and resilience. It’s less about perfect confidence and more about clinging to God when life makes no sense. Over time, faith shifts from “God, prove Yourself” to “God, I trust You because You already have.”

TODAY’S CHALLENGE: TRUST GOD’S ABILITY NOT YOURS

Write this statement in a journal or on a card:

“Even if God doesn’t _____, I will still follow Him.”

Fill in the blank with your deepest hope—the thing you’ve been praying for, waiting for, or longing for God to do. Let that statement be your declaration of trust. Place it somewhere you’ll see it often, as a reminder that your faith is in Him, not in what He gives.

Then pray this:

“Father, I confess that I often tie my faith to outcomes rather than to who You are. Forgive me for doubting Your goodness when things don’t go my way. Teach me to trust You fully, even when You say no or not yet. Strengthen my heart to declare, ‘Even if You don’t, I will still follow You.’ Help me to live out Hebrews 11:1—not as a theory, but as a reality in my daily walk. I trust You because You are faithful, not because life always feels fair. Amen.”

FINAL THOUGHT

Faith is not measured by how often God answers yes but by how deeply we trust Him when He seems silent. True faith doesn't negotiate with God or treat Him like a vending machine; it rests in His character. The "even if" kind of faith Daniel's friends demonstrated is the same faith God wants for us today—a faith that stands firm when prayers are delayed, healing doesn't come, or dreams are shattered.

This week's step: Each day this week, thank God for who He is, not just what He gives. End your prayers with, "Lord, even if You don't answer this prayer the way I hope, I will still trust You." Over time, this simple habit will reshape your heart, anchoring your faith in God's character rather than His answers.

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