

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

A MATTER OF TRUST — TITHING CHALLENGE, Part 2

Pastor Miles McPherson — January 26, 2014



MEMORY VERSE

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

How do you explain the concept of faith to a 5-year-old child? How would you explain faith to a 30-year-old adult? What are the similarities and differences to approaching both age ranges? Why do you suppose people have a difficulty with faith as a whole?

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Sunday Sermon Review:

- A Tithe is first **10%** of what you receive from God. **Gen. 14:18-20; Matt. 23:23**
- Tithes were a **source** of blessing. **2 Chron. 31:4-10**
- Giving removes a curse and secures a blessing on the 90% you keep. **Deut. 26:13-15; Mal. 3:8-10**
- Giving is a heart issue, not a money issue. **Matt. 6:19-21**
- Tithe challenge – 90 days with a money back guarantee.

1. God blesses what is **given**. **Luke 6:38**
2. Our gifts need to be given **first**. **Prov. 3:9-10; 1 Cor. 16:2**
3. Giving to God first secures a **blessing** on the rest. **Mal. 3:8-10; Rom. 11:16; Deut. 26:13-15**
4. Giving to God first demonstrates faith of **more to come**. **1 Cor. 15:20, 23; 1 Cor. 16:15**



Study Introduction:

Often in our culture, we view faith as something that is “blind” or in some circles; it can be viewed as a fairytale concept that we mature out of. This misses the very point and purpose of true biblical faith. This Sunday Pastor Miles discussed challenge of tithing, but because we discussed tithing last week in our groups, it may be best to touch on the core issue of tithing: faith. Faith is the reaction to the truth of Christ and all that it means for the follower of Jesus.

Our study this week will force us to draw our understanding of faith from two key aspects. The challenge is for us to grow in the “**facts**” area of faith, as well as grow in the “**acts**” response to our faith.

Study Questions:

1. Read Heb. 11:1-3 together as a group. What are some initial observations you can make about the concept of faith?
 1. Faith is the Greek word *pistis*, and it has five primary meanings:
 - Believe – The verbal expression usually refers to Scripture (John 2:22), the prophets (Acts 26:27), Moses (John 5:46-47), or even John the Baptist (Mark 11:31). This is usually with a ‘yes or no’ response. We either believe or not.
 - Obey – Simple belief is not enough. It requires strict obedience to what we believe (see above; Ro. 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:8).
 - Trust – Our trust in God will lead inevitably to prayer, or communication with God, as Creator, Sustainer, and Father (Mark 11:22; James 1:6).
 - Hope – Our hope reveals a sense of confidence in what we believe, especially that which can’t be seen.
 - Faithfulness – If you are hopeful and confident in your faith, it is natural for you to persevere under any circumstances (Heb. 12:1, 13:7; 2 Tim. 4:7; Rev. 2:13).
 2. v. 3 states that by faith we can “understand” that the universe was created by the word of God. Understand is the Greek word *nooumen*, which at it’s root simply means to have an inner sense or a powerful perception of an object. Here we can have a well-informed knowledge of the work of God by faith. All of the elements of God’s creation came from an outer source. This is believed, obeyed, trusted, by faith.
2. Consider the five aspects of faith: believe, obey, trust, hope, and faithfulness. Which of these do you seem to comprehend really well, and which ones are hard to grasp onto? How are you living this concept of faith out in your daily life? Can you give a practical example where your faith was a progression of these five aspects? Explain.
 - This may take time to formulate, but challenge the group to think through the implications of these components of faith. How can we integrate them if we lack, and how can we encourage each other to persevere in our faith?
3. Read James 2:14-17 together as a group. True Christ-centered faith involves “works.” How can we reconcile the definition of faith above the concept of true faith including works?
 1. The context explains that “works” was the assistance of the poor and the widow. The typical Jewish community often neglected these people in their culture at this time. James explains that this neglect displays a lack of faith because of its lack of practice.



