Advancing in Faith

SUMMARY

Walking with the Lord Jesus is the most exciting life a person can live.

Your eternal home in heaven is assured; the opportunities ahead are full of hope; and you have the very best Companion on the path of life anyone could desire—the living God.

Although being saved is a one-time experience, you have entered into a relationship with the Lord that is continuous. But what can you expect on this daily walk with Him?

First, you are assured that you will get to know God in an intimate and personal way. Second, you will discover His will and purpose for your life. Third, you will learn to listen to and obey Him. Fourth, you will experience His unfailing presence, power, and wisdom in your life. And fifth, you will learn to walk by faith.

SERMON POINTS

God wants you to grow.

Many people accept Christ as their Savior and do not realize this is only the beginning of their relationships with Him. Some believe they can stay where they feel safe and comfortable, and merely talk about trusting God.

However, the Father desires more than that for each of us. His plan is that we mature in our knowledge and understanding of His ways—living vibrant lives in obedience to Him. He wants us to grow in our faith, which is the confident conviction that He will do all He has promised.

Are you growing in your faith? Is your trust in the Lord increasing? Do you believe that God hears and answers your prayers? If you have been struggling with doubt and unbelief, it is possible that you have begun to stagnate in your faith. The Father wants to bless you and work through you in a powerful way, but you must trust Him to do so.

You see, many believers are not being used by the Lord because they’re unwilling to rely upon Him. But if a person is to advance in his or her faith, dependence upon God is absolutely critical.

You have the presence, power, and wisdom of almighty God to help you through anything you must face in life. You can have complete confidence that He will do as He has promised. And you can trust Him to increase your faith through the following avenues.

Ten ways our faith advances:

■ Our faith grows through facing and overcoming adversity and trials. It is when we encounter troubles, temptations, and obstacles that we must decide whether we truly trust God or not. He will challenge us to obey Him, even though our circumstances appear absolutely impossible. Will we give up and quit when the path ahead becomes trying and difficult? Or will we cling to the Father and praise Him for answering our prayers, despite how things look?

■ Our faith grows through understanding God’s nature. The Lord is fully trustworthy. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, loving, and merciful. It is in discovering His unfailing character that we realize we can completely rely upon Him. Therefore, we should make every effort to spend time with Him and get to know Him more intimately.

■ Our faith grows through meditating on the Word of God. Of course, one way we can know the Lord better is through His Word. In fact, we cannot grow in our relationships with Him if we ignore Scripture.
It is the fuel of our faith and how He directs our paths. If we desire to know the Father—how He thinks and acts, as well as His will for our lives—we must meditate on the Bible daily. This means we read it, think about what it means, and ask the Lord how He wants us to apply it.

■ Our faith grows through applying the principles of God’s Word. Once the Father reveals His direction for us, we must step out in complete confidence of His wisdom and provision. The Lord wants us to succeed, so He enables us to do so. As we watch Him working in our lives and honoring our obedience, our faith in Him grows.

■ Our faith grows through observing God’s ways. By comprehending how the Lord works in others’ lives, we can understand His activity in our own circumstances. The Father often operates in unusual ways that we do not expect. However, by learning how He demonstrates His power through believers and teaches us during times of adversity, we can remain confident regardless of what happens.

■ Our faith grows through observing God’s work in the lives of others. The Lord will also instruct us through the lives of the biblical saints and believers we know and respect. They are truly examples of His principles in action. He works through them to strengthen our faith and plant His truth in our hearts and minds.

■ Our faith grows through obeying God and leaving the consequences to Him. We live out the words of Hebrews 11:6, “He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” This is the perfect expression of faith. We do as the Lord says, regardless of what it costs or requires of us—all the while trusting that He will help us. We believe wholeheartedly that He will not only honor our obedience, but will also bless us abundantly.

■ Our faith grows when God answers our prayers. It is such a wonderful experience when the Father responds to our requests. We see the full power and provision of heaven employed in helping us. This is why we should always pray with expectation, confidence, boldness, assurance, diligence, and persistence.

■ Our faith grows through worshipping God. The songs we sing in praise to the Father offer us an opportunity to profess our absolute trust in Him. We remember all the ways He has been faithful to us, and that never fails to bolster our confidence in the Lord.

■ Our faith grows when we confess our faith failures to God. The Father will not reject us because we’ve failed. He wants to forgive us, give us another opportunity, and bring us back into unhindered relationship with Himself. When we fully experience His unconditional love, it will deepen our trust in Him and help us continue growing in our Christian walks.

RESPONSE

God wants you to grow and reach your full potential because this brings Him glory. He wants you to believe in Him—to rely on Him so completely that others recognize His presence in your life and realize their need for Jesus.

Here is the challenge for you. Take a moment to evaluate your life. Is there anything that the Spirit of God brings to your attention, that you know doesn’t fit who you are as His child? If so, then it is hindering your walk of faith with the Father. Friend, lay it down. Deal with the issues that cause your confidence in the Lord to waiver, and embrace the ways He grows your faith. The Lord has awesome plans for your future. Don’t miss out on experiencing life at its very best.

■ What active steps are you currently taking to further your relationship with God?

■ Recall a time when God answered a prayer of yours. How did that answer grow your faith in Him?