

What Is Mature Faith?

When you ask your best friend to water your plants while you're on a trip, how often do you call them and remind them to do it? When you ask them to feed your cat, how much of the trip do you spend worrying and fretting about it, wondering if your cat is going hungry?

No, when you ask your friend to do something, if you trust them, you forget about it. You know it will get done – you don't need to give it another moment's thought. It just will. That is faith. Faith in your friend.

But what if you *were* to call your friend daily, to remind them to do what they had already promised to do – why, they'd get pretty annoyed at you, wouldn't they? They'd be offended that you thought them so incompetent and unreliable that you had to nag them over and over to do something they were already doing! And next time you went on a trip, they might just tell you to find some other friend whom you trust more to take care of your houseplants for you!

This is not complicated. It's absurdly simple. We all understand this, and we'd all feel the same way. **So why is it that NO ONE trusts God this way?**

How many people ask God for something – once – then walk away and forget about it, because they *KNOW* it will get done? They don't worry, they don't wonder, it never even enters their mind again. They asked God to do it, God already promised He *WOULD* do it in the Bible, so... it's as good as done. **That is true faith.** And that's what you'll learn about in...

LESSON 38: WHAT IS MATURE FAITH?

When it comes to faith, the world knows only the problem and the solution; and nothing in between. It's like being homeless and cold in the winter and having someone tell you the solution is to live in a house. That's absolutely true! But unless they tell you *how* to live in a house, where you can find one or how you can build one **their advice is useless – even though technically true!**

Faith is the same way; everyone knows they don't have faith – the problem. So everyone tells everyone else “Just BELIEVE!” – the solution. And yes, faith IS belief. But belief in what? And HOW do you get that belief? And what does it look like when you get it? That's the huge section in the middle that no one teaches!

To put it another way, it's like when Marie Antoinette was supposedly told “the people are suffering because they have no bread”, and she responded “then let them eat cake!” which missed the point entirely. Likewise, every preacher I have ever heard, or heard of, when told, “the people have no faith”, respond, “then they should BELIEVE more!” – which likewise completely misses the point.

True faith is the result of a very specific sequence of events and lessons you must learn. It's not haphazard. People don't just jump across all those lessons with the single word “BELIEVE!”, no matter how loudly

you shout it from the pulpit. Faith is built upon obedience; a clear conscience; more obedience; practice seeing God protect you; trials where God doesn't protect you so promptly; more obedience, failures, successes, and so on before you can truly believe God.

You studied faith long ago in Lesson 4. And that was the foundation of faith, and all you really need to know. If you diligently followed what you learned in that lesson, this one will be a complete waste of time. Because if you truly cleansed your conscience and made yourself blameless before God and man, then you will have automatically come to trust God to water your plants when you're gone (so to speak).

But this takes time and practice and it helps to know what the goal is; so this is the other side of Lesson 4. Remember how most people know only the *description* of love, but have no idea what the *definition* of love is? And remember how you learned in Lesson 27 that the description of love is unnecessary if you truly follow the definition? Well, faith is similar.

The difference is, no one in the world understands either the description *or* the definition of faith! But after studying Lesson 4, you know the definition – you know HOW to get it. But in this lesson, you're going to learn more about the DESCRIPTION of that mature faith, and how to USE it.

In this lesson I'm going to assume you have obediently done everything you've learned that God commanded you. That you keep the Sabbath, travel for the Holy Days, save two tithes, don't eat unclean meats, have gotten rid of your idols (crosses, last-suppers, angels, and so on), and in short that you are "living by every word of God". **If you haven't done these things... why not? Why bother to be a Christian if you're not going to obey God?** Halfway obedience to God is worse than none at all (**Revelation 3:15-16**).

As I said, I'm going to assume you've already done those things, for if you haven't, then you cannot possibly have faith since each of those things will interfere with your faith – and attract God's attention to you (and not in a good way). But if you HAVE done all this, then you're ready to start to learn how to use faith in your life. I stress this first because if you try to step out on faith and let God catch you – while you're disobeying Him – **He won't be there to catch you!** (**Proverbs 1:25-33**).

UNBREAKABLE PROMISES

God has made ample promises to the righteous. Far more than most people realize. And a promise from God is an unbreakable promise. It doesn't need repeated, renewed, or reminded; once spoken, what does God say about His words? **Isaiah 55:11**. Will God ever break or re-write His promises? **Psalms 89:34**.

So if God says blah blah blah about "the righteous" then in order to receive blah blah blah, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BE RIGHTEOUS! The promise has been made. If you make yourself fit the description of the person who receives the promise **you will receive it!** It's that simple. In Lessons 3-4, you learned how to qualify yourself to receive these promises. But now it's time to learn more about what God has already promised.

Let's start in a chapter which is a bit overused but needs to be read anyway; **Psalms 91**. Read the whole thing. Who is this addressed to? "*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High*" (**verse 1**). But who is that? Is there some secret place on Earth where you must go to receive these promises? **Verse 9**. No! This applies to a person who has made *the Lord* "His habitation". Who does that? **John 15:5-7**.

So this is addressed to anyone who "abides in Christ". That simply means you have Jesus' spirit living in you and through Him you have access to the Father (**John 17:21-23**). And naturally when you have that spirit of Christ, you live "under the shadow of the Almighty"! And why does such a person get delivered from trouble? **Psalms 91:14-16**.

So if you want to inherit these promises, obey God; trust God; follow the promptings of the holy spirit, and keep a clean conscience. If you do that, then every word here applies to you **and no man or spirit can break it! Not even God Himself can break it!**

Now look at the specific things you are promised protection from; things that should not worry you at all. The list includes disease/plagues, darkness/night, war, stubbing your toe, lions, snakes, and in short “no evil shall befall you” in your long life.

Imagine a war so violent that a thousand die on one side and ten thousand more die on the other side, yet it doesn't come near you; that “only with your eyes” will you “see the reward of the wicked”. If God can protect you from that, how worried should you be about car accidents, hurricanes, robbers, spiders and snakes? That was just to give you some perspective. But we're just starting.

THE DOMINION OF MAN

What power did God give Man? **Genesis 1:28**. Adam was given DOMINION – kingship – over all the creatures on Earth. How many creatures were put under his control? **Psalms 8:4-8**. What promise did God make Noah about dangerous animals? **Genesis 9:2**.

These creatures are DELIVERED into your hand. Any battle is ALREADY WON by man, because man is their RULER, their KING. A power given to him by God! A power which included “creeping things”, and thus, serpents!

Did you ever wonder why Satan didn't just nip this thing in the bud and kill Adam and Eve? God apparently turned a blind eye to his presence in the Garden... so why not take advantage of his angelic power and kill or conquer Adam? **BECAUSE HE COULDN'T!** Because Adam was king over the Earth and everything that walked, flew, swam or crept upon it! Even the Devil had to obey his word!

Was Jesus a “type” of Adam? **1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45**. Did Adam even look like Jesus? **Romans 5:14**. When confronted by the Devil, how did Jesus respond? **Matthew 4:1-11**. Satan OBEYED Jesus – even though Jesus had forsaken all His powers and was merely a man, Satan had to OBEY HIS COMMANDS.

Adam faced a similar temptation back in the Garden, but Adam succumbed to Satan's offers – no doubt the same offers Christ rejected. But rather than commanding the Devil to flee as Jesus, the second Adam, did... the first Adam OBEYED the Devil. And how do you show who is your master? **Romans 6:16**.

God gave the rulership of the Earth to Adam. Adam gave it to his wife when he obeyed her suggestion to eat the fruit. She in turn gave it to the Devil (**Genesis 3:9-13**). Now the DEVIL was king of the Earth, which he proudly boasted in **Luke 4:5-6**. It had been DELIVERED to him! By he whose right it was, Adam! And that is how Satan became the god of this world! (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

Satan's promises are vague and fickle; in order to be protected from the animals, you have to join his government and live in his cities, which is why Nimrod was a “mighty hunter before the Lord”, or as it should be translated “in PLACE of the Lord” and why he “built cities” (**Genesis 10:8-10, 11:1-4**). They needed a mighty hunter to REPLACE the blessing of the Lord, because **now the animals did not fear them as God had promised righteous Noah they would!** God did not protect the servants of Satan because they were not obeying Him, so they needed someone else to do it for them!

DOMINION OF THE SAINTS

Thus sinful man lost the dominion over the Earth. But then Jesus came, and judged the prince/king/god of this world (**John 16:11**). Now He has qualified to inherit the Earth, and has given the power that God

originally gave to Adam as king of this world to the saints. The first Adam failed, but the second Adam “overcame the world” (**John 16:33**). And He passed this dominion on to us (**Luke 10:19**). So once more righteous man has power over the Earth and everything in it.

How do the righteous behave? **Proverbs 28:1**. Should a Christian fear – once he is righteous? **Isaiah 54:14-17**. They WILL gather together against us – but they shall fall, for our sake, without us lifting a finger (**Exodus 14:13**). We will be able to STAND STILL and see that “*no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper*”. Every tongue that rises to judge us for our weird religion WE will be given wisdom to condemn (**Luke 12:11-12, 21:12-19**).

This is OUR inheritance! This has been GIVEN to us. **We don’t have to beg God for it, plead and sweat blood to get Him to hear our prayer and grant us our request! God ALREADY GAVE US THE PROMISE!** All we have to do is seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and ALL THESE THINGS will be ours – if we only will trust Him to give them.

They WILL attack us. They WILL hate us (**John 15:18-20**). This has been promised, and woe unto us if they DON’T hate us! (**Luke 6:26, 2 Timothy 3:12**). But the protection against them has also been promised! (**Isaiah 41:10-13, 51:7-8**). But sometimes, for several reasons – not the least of which is to test your faith – God may wait until the last minute to save you. That is why “*in your patience you possess your souls*”.

This is the inheritance God has promised to us. You need fear nothing. No matter where you travel or what you do – just like the patriarchs who are our spiritual parents (**Psalms 105:6-15**). God rebuked KINGS for their sakes, saying “*Touch not mine anointed, and DO MY PROPHETS NO HARM*”. And He has promised the same to us, who are the SEED of Abraham! (**Galatians 3:29**).

That’s why this Psalm is addressed to YOU, you who do the works of faithful Abraham! God made a covenant with Abraham and YOU are the heir to that promise! It applies to YOU, if you do the works of Abraham (**John 8:39**), and BELIEVE God (**Romans 4:3**)!

Need we fear snakes and poisoning? **Mark 16:17-18**. Did Paul fear snakes? **Acts 28:3-6**. Again let me point out that Paul didn’t pray, screaming to God for deliverance; from this story, it appears that Paul was quite casual about the whole thing. Because Paul knew what God had promised him and you, and knew he had nothing to fear from the snake – didn’t Jesus say so? **Luke 10:19**.

Does God protect the righteous? **Psalms 5:12**. Does He encamp around him in a circle? **Psalms 34:7**. Is this also called a wall or hedge that God builds around a person or people? **Job 1:10, Isaiah 5:1-7**. Is that hedge – that wall – broken down by sin? **Ezekiel 22:23-31**. What is required for God to be there to deliver you? **Deuteronomy 23:12-14**.

God puts a hedge around the righteous; but that hedge is weakened by sin, allowing the enemy to come in and destroy. This nation had a hedge build around it, which is why there have been no military attacks on continental American soil in hundreds of years – possibly the only significant nation on Earth that can say that.

But over time, that hedge has been weakened by sin. And now it’s almost gone – America is ripe for destruction. Can false ministers repair that hedge? **Ezekiel 13:1-9**. What do they tell the people? **Verses 10-16**. Does this tactic appear to help – a little bit? **Jeremiah 6:13-15**. Is it working? **Jeremiah 8:15**. Do such people need to fear snakes (literal and metaphorical)? **Verse 17**.

Today’s preachers say “Peace! God loves you as you are, God won’t let anything happen to you! Bless our nation, pray for our troops!” when what they should be doing is reciting **Isaiah 1** and **Hosea 4**. Those might

HELP. But telling a sinful nation that God loves them as they are is like repairing a fortress wall with tissue paper. God has very clear rules about blessing and cursing a nation; **Leviticus 26** and **Deuteronomy 28** lay it out in detail. If you think about those curses and compare them to recent world history, you can see we're already well down the list of curses there – and worse are coming.

But those curses don't need to come near you, because you have your own personal hedge about you (**2 Peter 2:7-9**), which protects you from what happens to the rest of the nation. How does God protect people? **Deuteronomy 11:25**. Often the best protection God gives, is making other people fear to attack you. How do you find peace with your enemies? **Proverbs 16:7**. How do you avoid harm? **1 Peter 3:13**. Who doesn't need to fear evil? **Proverbs 12:21**. Who is your protector? **Psalms 121:5-7**. Does God save hypocrites? **Job 13:16**. Do these things apply to nations as well as individuals? **Job 34:29**. Do you need to fear storms? **Psalms 107:23-31**.

One of my favorite passages is **Job 5:19-23**. It says the servants of God – far from being fearful, will LAUGH at the idea of destruction and famine harming them. That speaks of a deep confidence in God that is practically unknown in our time. And the animals, even the stones, will be at peace with you. More on that later.

These promises, and these are only a fraction, repeat over and over that WE NEED FEAR NOTHING. From the smallest virus to an asteroid striking the Earth; from spiders to snakes and robbers to murderers; if your ways please God, even your enemies will be at peace with you. Even the animals and rocks will be at peace with you. Scorpions and devils both have to obey God; and if God tells them “touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm”... you can bet they will obey. Or else.

The only condition to ALL of these promises is that you keep yourself focused on seeking the Kingdom of God and fulfilling His righteousness – in every way and in every area that God reveals to you. Then all these things will be added unto you.

TEMPTING GOD

But – you probably knew there was a “but” coming eventually – there are some qualifications which must be made to that statement. Will God protect you – no matter how righteous you are – if you *deliberately* court disaster? **Matthew 4:5-7**. The passage the Devil quoted, and it was quoted correctly, was a valid promise God gave which you already read in **Psalms 91:11-12**. The Devil can read the Bible too!

As the most righteous person ever to live, this promise certainly applied to Jesus! But only if He *accidentally* tripped. Deliberately jumping off a tall building just to see if God will catch you – even to prove a point to the Devil – **will leave you a red stain on the sidewalk**. God doesn't work like that. He takes His promises seriously, because He purchased them at the cost of incredible suffering.

How are we healed? **Isaiah 53:5**. Jesus was flogged until He bled **for our physical healing**. The OT lamb was not abused or tortured before it was killed. It simply died, gave its blood and body for the sins of the Israelites. But Jesus went far above and beyond that, because His sacrifice had greater things in mind. To pay for spiritual sins, Jesus had only to die and have His blood poured out as the Lamb of the world. But Jesus was beaten, bruised, and bled *for our physical healing*.

So when God heals someone, it is possible only because Jesus suffered wrongfully and bled IN OUR PLACE. This is the cost your sins carry! Without the shedding of blood, no sins can be forgiven (**Hebrews 9:22**), and all sickness is the result of sin (**Matthew 9:2-6**). God takes this very seriously, and playing with this promise deeply offends Him (**Hebrews 10:29**). Tempting God by knowingly breaking His law, expecting grace to cover it and expecting God to pay for your laziness **will fail**.

But most of you haven't done that in so many words. Only the more radical Pentecostal groups tempt God by playing with snakes and poison just to "prove" that God loves them. But this principle of casting yourself off the temple has many subtle applications in everyone's life. Hold that thought a moment.

ALL HIS STATUTES

Do you need to fear sickness? **Deuteronomy 7:15**. Do you need to fear it if you disobey God? **Deuteronomy 28:60**. What did God promise Israel when they left Egypt? **Exodus 15:26**. Archeology has shown that all the diseases we have today – cancer, heart disease, dental problems, and hundreds of other things – were common in ancient Egypt.

God boldly promised these things would be unknown in Israel! But God said they only receive that protection *IF* they DILIGENTLY listen to God, do right, listen to the commandments, **and keep ALL His statutes**.

That doesn't mean obeying the Ten Commandments only! That's mentioned too of course – but for this particular promise to be fully realized – that you will live in a land free of all disease – you must keep ALL His statutes. Most people glaze over most of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy – but they contain hundreds of laws designed to make a nation righteous, happy, **and healthy**.

There is far too much to cover here. Indeed, unraveling all of it would take many years. But let me give you one example in **Leviticus 25:1-7**. This "land Sabbath" requires you neither to plant nor harvest every seventh year. This requires great faith, for it means a risk of going hungry unless God fulfills His promise in **verses 19-22**. And what does God call this command? **Verse 18**. This is one of those statutes that is REQUIRED for God to bless a nation with NONE of the diseases from Egypt!

Today, people are too faithless and too greedy to ever give the land a chance to rest. But this rest is VERY important to God – important enough to exile an entire nation to let it happen! (**Leviticus 26:33-35, 2 Chronicles 36:21**). Why is this so important to God? **Because God knows something our modern society has forgotten!** God knows this rest is NECESSARY to growing healthy food; which in turn is necessary to growing healthy people; **which in turn is necessary if we are to avoid those diseases of Egypt!**

The benefits of the seventh year of rest would fill a book. But again, to give you just a taste; every seventh year, weeds grow. Weeds are worthless to us – but not to the land. They pull minerals out of the air, out of the deep soil, and concentrate them. Then they die, and are tilled under the next year – enriching the soil. The next seventh year cycle, different weeds grow – I've watched this myself in my own pastures. They fill different needs for the soil. Left untilled long enough the land recovers a great deal of fertility on its own, simply by "resting".

There are dozens of ways this benefits a society, and that's just one statute – but that's not the point of this lesson. The point is, if you expect God to protect you from the diseases of Egypt **you must obey ALL His statutes! If you study all of God's law and put it all into practice, it will make the deserts blossom, and give health to the nations (Isaiah 35:1-7)**. The millennium will prove this.

God has hundreds of laws and thousands of implications, which affect farming, living, food preparation and health. But for those to be fully explained, I'll need to live a very long time or have a lot of converted people to study and understand it and help me explain it.

Meanwhile, on an individual level we inherited the curses of our ancestors breaking all these laws, so God is much more inclined to heal us because we really didn't cause all of this – though we have perpetuated it.

The point of all of this is that to enjoy full health and none of the diseases of Egypt, you have to understand and obey these laws and statutes and judgments – ALL OF THEM.

If you don't have the health of Moses who was 120 and was neither blind nor weak, it's only because you and your nation are not obeying the laws and statutes of God. God can and will heal you for your sins of ignorance. But He expects you to go back to your life and sin no more... lest a worse thing befall you (**John 5:14**).

PROTECTION FROM BEASTS

A similar line of reasoning applies to mosquitoes and ants and spiders which bite you. To fully realize those promises, you must live by every word of God. Not just the laws, but the statutes as well – which, when obeyed, cause the noxious beasts to be wiped out of the land (**Leviticus 26:3, 6**). But when disobeyed, cause them to take over (**verses 21-22**). But even if the nation is afflicted by beasts, are you personally promised protection? **Ezekiel 14:12-21**. Why? Same verses.

But think about what **Job 5:23** said. It said the beasts of the field shall be at PEACE with you. But what if YOU aren't at peace with THEM? Suppose I'm at peace with you and wish you no ill; and I've made every effort to let you know this. But then suppose you are paranoid and mistrustful of me anyway, and are constantly behaving suspiciously and provoking me. Can you really be surprised if I become your enemy?

So if you're at peace with a snake, and you step on its tail... it's you that broke the peace, not it. If you stand on an anthill and destroy the work of thousands of ant-hours, who broke the peace? Who will blame them for stinging you? If you've made a place in your home where spiders and scorpions are welcome, is it their fault if they took advantage of it? Or if you sit on one and get stung? If you make a place for evil things, aren't you responsible for the consequences? **Ephesians 4:27**.

Or suppose you're at peace with me; but then tempt me to invade you by offering me something I desperately want. Is that the act of someone who loves peace? So if you carelessly leave food out to attract the bears, is it really them who broke the peace?

Or suppose you make yourself a tasty morsel that mosquitoes can't resist (let's face it, they're not converted – resisting temptation isn't part of their nature). Is that their fault, or God's? Some people are seldom stung by mosquitoes. This has to do with health as well. I'm certain that God didn't bring mosquitoes to Adam and, while naming them, he swatted the first pair! (God later had to make a second pair secretly and release them in some other part of the Garden.)

Or suppose you constantly drag bums into your house, and proudly show them your gun collection, your bars of gold, your expensive tools; how did that work out for Hezekiah? **2 Kings 20:12-19**. Hezekiah was boastful of all God had given him, in front of a greedy and carnal nation's messengers; how could that possibly end well? By tempting those bums for your own selfish ego's sake, you broke the peace; not them. Just as when you tempted the mosquito, bear, and scorpion above.

Showing off your treasures in order to impress carnal people and lift yourself up is done at your own risk. If it goes badly, God is not to blame. God offers you protection. But if you flaunt that protection in the face of your enemies – for no purpose other than personal pride, personal gain, or just plain arrogance – well, how will that work out for you? **Matthew 5:25-26**.

Don't misunderstand – I'm not saying you need to fear your enemies catching a glimpse of your possessions, or fear to show them things they need to see; God will protect you from all those things, have no fear. If you meekly do your thing and mind your own business, then God will make your enemies turn a

blind eye to you so that they won't even see or desire your possessions (**Exodus 34:24**), nor remember that they hate you (**Proverbs 16:7**).

But if you flaunt your blessings like Hezekiah did, flaunt your authority like David did in stealing Bathsheba, or flaunt God's protection like Satan tried to get Jesus do in jumping off the temple... well, you just might lose whatever you flaunt. Rejoicing when God curses your enemies falls in the same category (**Proverbs 24:17-18**).

God didn't give you these promises to make you feel good about yourself, to make you think you're better than other people. He gave them to you as tools to help you be a better Christian – and hopefully, a more humble and meek one. If the blessings God gives you aren't doing that, then God may try curses instead – perhaps those will work better.

A BAD KING

This is all pretty simple stuff. But there is another aspect to consider as well; your failure as a king. You were given dominion over this Earth. Literally, Man is king over the Earth. And as the greatest on the Earth, what is our responsibility towards the lesser creatures? **Mark 10:44**. Why did God put Man in the Garden (and by implication, on Earth)? **Genesis 2:15**.

An unusual way of looking at those verses, but valid nonetheless. As a good king, we are responsible for the way the Earth is managed. It is our responsibility to dress and keep it, and God says to those who fail that He will “*destroy them which destroy the earth*” (**Revelation 11:18**). So when predators and poisonous creatures take over the Earth, is it God's fault? Man's sin caused this (**Romans 5:12**). So whatever these creatures do to Man, is his own fault.

And on a smaller scale, how you manage your property largely affects how these nasty creatures like it there. Do you make nice places for poisonous snakes to live? Leave food out for the bears? Are you exercising your dominion wisely, as you would in the world to come? Or are you being a lazy Louis XVI, hoping good things will come from your subjects just because you're their king – no matter how worthless a king you are?

Of course, these things don't always apply – when you travel and have no control over your environment, for instance. And these don't negate the frequent promises of protection. But they do factor in, to help explain the occasional spider bite or bee sting. In my experience, even these nearly disappear under God's protection; but they can be completely eliminated in an ideal world.

Also, don't misunderstand and think we should never kill our animal “subjects”. We were given dominion over them, and like with any kingdom we have a responsibility to control malicious elements. Killing poisonous snakes, spiders, and so on falls under this mandate. **Not because we fear them, personally; but because they could harm others who don't have that level of faith.** In the same way that we don't fear robbers, but we still turn robbers into the police to protect our neighbors, we need not fear poisonous spiders but still may kill them to protect others.

NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FEAR

Everything you've read only works if you believe it. I could literally fill this lesson with nothing but verse references about God's protection for us against man, beast, and devil; but it won't work if you don't believe it. And you can't believe it, unless you know you deserve it. And you can't believe you deserve it, unless you know you are keeping His commandments and doing those things that are pleasing in His sight (**1 John 3:22**). And that's back to Lesson 4 again.

What does God promise to the fearful? **Proverbs 10:24**. What is the condition you must meet to move mountains? **Mark 11:23**. The whole world misunderstands that; they think it means not doubting the things which GOD says. But read it carefully; who is the subject of the “he” there? God?

“Whosoever shall say unto this mountain... and shall not doubt... but shall believe... that those things which HE saith shall come to pass”. Remember the introduction to this lesson; when you ask a friend to take care of your plants, you know that it will “come to pass”. You trust them, **and knowing that you trust them and are counting on THEM, they will try extra hard not to disappoint you**. If they’re a friend worth having, anyway.

Likewise, if you ask God for help, but also ask Smith & Wesson for help, God won’t be too worried about helping you. When you ask God to move the mountain and then buy a bulldozer to “help” Him, God won’t need to worry about moving the mountain for you. When you’re sick and ask Him for help, then go ask your doctor for help as well – God won’t be likely to intervene.

Is God jealous? **Exodus 34:14**. Does He resent it when you go to other people for help instead of Him? **2 Kings 1:1-6**. Does He resent helping people who don’t trust Him? **Judges 10:10-14**. How should you ask God for things? **James 1:6-7**. If you are not sure it’s going to happen – if you aren’t confident, and don’t trust God **it probably won’t happen**.

But – and here is what the world can’t grasp – you can’t just work up that faith and blindly jump hoping you’ve convinced yourself that you believe. Like with love, you can’t just jump from keeping the commandments to embodying **1 Corinthians 13**. You learn it one step at a time, you build on it, and then one day you just have it.

Faith is the same way. You start with the law, you clean your conscience, you learn the promises of God, believe them, watch them happen, watch the protection around you – and when the real test comes, you won’t be too worried. When the test after that comes, you shouldn’t be worried at all. (**Proverbs 3:23-26**).

What happens to the fearful? **Jeremiah 6:19**. If you’re going to fear something, what should you fear? **Proverbs 14:26**. Was Peter fearful? Or was he BOLD to walk on water? **Matthew 14:25-29**. What happened when Peter started to fear? **Verses 30-31**.

The righteous are bold as a lion. **Therefore, if you are not, you are not righteous**. If you fear anything, it is because you are unrighteous, and some part of you knows it. This world is yours, or should be, along with everything in it. Nothing can hurt you. God has said so. If you doubt that, it’s because you doubt yourself. And if you doubt yourself, you need to re-read Lesson 4 and do what it says – which, summarized, is basically what it says in **Isaiah 1:16-18**.

Reason with God. Figure out where your sins are, by comparing yourself with the law and statutes and judgments; and then stop them. Fear God, and you’ll find no place for any other fear.

TO LEARN THE LAW

I should make something clear, though. That doesn’t mean if you just stop working, sit home on the couch and watch TV – or even just read your Bible – that God will see to it that crows bring you food like He fed Elijah (**1 Kings 17:1-6**). God told us to work six days a week (**Exodus 20:9**). He told us to work with our hands (**Ephesians 4:28**). To lay up for our grandchildren (**Proverbs 13:22**).

These promises aren’t given to compensate for laziness, or to say that God will feed you while you spend your life memorizing the Bible and never putting it into practice. They are given to safeguard and reward you while you learn how to be a good king or priest when Jesus returns.

We are put on this Earth to acquire the divine nature (**2 Peter 1:4**); and the simplest verbal expression of that divine nature is in the Ten Commandments. We are put here to learn to love the law, so that we will be fit to administer it throughout eternity. Read all of **Psalms 119** for how a man after God's own heart (**Acts 13:22**) feels about God's law. This is your goal, too – to feel this way about the law.

We are not put here to goof off and have God protect us because “we're good people”. We're not put here to get in trouble and expect God to bail us out over and over and over again. We're put here to make mistakes – then to LEARN from those mistakes and not repeat them again. Well, not often anyway.

The promises you've read today were not given to circumvent the law; they were given to reinforce it. The law kills (**Romans 4:15**); you've been given promises of salvation to help you stay alive long enough to obey it (**Romans 7:7-13**). The “magic” of God, His power and the miracles He can give us, are meant to forgive sins of ignorance so that the law doesn't “work wrath” and prevent us from living long enough to learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

They are *not* meant to heal the lazy or rebellious who aren't interested in living by the law. They aren't given as an alternative to doing the right thing. They are not given to get around obedience to the law; they are to help you learn to live within it.

God seldom uses magic. God uses simple law to solve problems in all but the most extreme circumstances. When faced with the choice of building a fence at the top of the cliff or a hospital at the bottom, He always chooses the fence (**Deuteronomy 22:8**).

If a saint is eating poison every day, God can either miraculously encapsulate and eliminate the poison... or tell the saint not to eat that poison. The first is magic, and God will gladly do that if it's the only option. But the second is teaching the saint to live *within* the law. While God CAN do either, He always prefers the law. Because that's what He loves, and what we should love.

Miracles are not given as an alternative to Vitamin C. When Vitamin C is what your body needs, taking it IS living within the law. It is learning how to feed your body as God intended. Snubbing the laws of health in favor of “faith” is not faithful, it is disrespectful of the sacrifice of Christ. Refusing to take Vitamin C and asking God to heal you instead would fall into that category.

Likewise if your body needs to fast, prayer is not an acceptable alternative. If you need to forgive your enemies to be healthy (by reducing stress, removing a curse on you, or whatever), then *fasting* is not an acceptable alternative (**Isaiah 58:3-12**). If what it needs is for you to stop smoking, drinking sugary acidic colas, eating white flour or drinking several gallons of beer a day then – again – prayer will not help. God will not do for you what obeying the law will do for you.

All of these examples are no different, in principle, from leaping off the temple to prove a point to the Devil. Leaping off because you're too lazy to use a ladder, leaping off because you are too drunk to know better, leaping off and expecting God to catch you because you're too stubborn to pull the cord on the parachute God gave you... these all fall under the heading “thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God”.

But when you HAVE done all you know, if you *are* obeying every law and every statute God has revealed to you, and if you're actively *searching* for more, THEN if you find yourself in a tough situation, THAT'S when the power of God comes into play. THAT'S when the miracles are appropriate. But those situations should become fewer and fewer as you become better at obeying the law; that's the whole point of the law.

The law avoids bad situations. It stops them before they start, so that you NEED less dramatic miraculous influence on a daily basis. To be clear, by “law”, I mean EVERY law. Not just the great ten, but also everything from “salt is good” (**Luke 14:34**), to “his teeth shall be white with milk” (slightly paraphrased

from **Genesis 49:12**), to pouring out the blood of slaughtered animals on the ground and covering it (**Leviticus 17:10-14**), and everything else. We may not know what all of these things do; but we don't need to, in order to inherit their blessings. We only need to do them.

Only by living by EVERY word of God can you inherit EVERY blessing of God, for the law is the path to every blessing. Not by magic, not by the power of God – by obedience to the law, the law itself blesses you. And when you and the law are friends, you understand the universe and know there is nothing in it that can harm you – if you are a follower of that which is good (**1 Peter 3:13**).

Calmly and surely believing that is mature faith.

THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF MATURE FAITH

We have now summarized the promises God has made, explained the exceptions and problems you might have; now it's time to make a 1-Corinthians-13-version of Faith. A quick example is found in **Genesis 26:17-22**.

Note the passive nature of his faith; if they fought him for a well – a well he had every legal right to possess – he simply went elsewhere and dug another. If they wanted that one, he moved on and dug another. They didn't want that one – and by that, he knew God had *made a place for him!* When you genuinely feel and act that way, you will know you are nearing mature faith.

But as always, we turn to Christ for our only perfect example. The actions of Abraham, Isaac, Paul, David, and the other heroes are full of examples of imperfect faith – alongside other actions that WERE full of faith, of course. But only in Jesus do we have Someone whose faith is beyond reproach.

The most important part of Jesus' faith is found in negatives; in what Jesus did *not* do. What is one reason people don't get answers to prayer? **James 4:3**. Can you come up with a single example from Jesus' life where He ever asked for ANYTHING for Himself? When, for instance, He was physically attacked by the Pharisees, did He pray about it? **John 8:59, Luke 4:27-30, John 10:39**.

In each of these instances, it seems like Jesus just started walking back through the crowd that was trying to kill Him – and somehow disappeared in the crowd. No flashy miracle or prayer; they just couldn't seem to grab Him, find Him, whatever. And in none of the cases did He show any great concern about His welfare. Why not? **John 19:11**. Why didn't God let that happen? **John 8:20**. Did Jesus know He had access to power if He wanted it? **Matthew 26:53**.

In each of those cases, Jesus could have blustered and fumed and called down fire from heaven on each of those crowds – the disciples certainly thought it would have been a good idea. Why didn't He? **Luke 9:52-56**. There are only two reasons why calling fire down from heaven is a good idea.

1. To make a point and prove your authority, as with Elijah (**2 Kings 1:3-15**).
2. To punish the wicked (**Genesis 19:24, Revelation 20:9**).
3. For defense against the wicked.

Notice I said there are only *two GOOD reasons*. The third reason is why most of us would be tempted to call fire from heaven if we had the power to do so. **But there is no need to kill the wicked for self-defense – EVER!** Elijah was in no danger – God plainly said so. The deaths of the two rude captains served to make a point to Ahab, and the third captain was much more polite and didn't sarcastically put “man of God” in air-quotes.

But there was no reason to call down fire from heaven for Elijah's safety. He might as well have been living in a force field. He was in no danger. Likewise, Jesus was never in the slightest bit of danger in His entire life **provided He obeyed and trusted God!**

One of my favorite illustrations of this point is in **Luke 8:22-25**. What a story! What point do you get out of it? That Jesus could rebuke the wind and it would obey Him? That's what most people get. But that's not faith – that's just a parlor trick. When you look closer, you see the REAL point of the story. During this gigantic storm that had the disciples fearing for their lives... **Jesus was down in the boat peacefully... sleeping!**

Jesus rebuked the wind for THEIR sakes, and then rebuked THEM for their LACK OF FAITH to worry for their lives in the face of a little wind! But for Himself, He wasn't the least bit afraid of the storm. **While Jesus was on it, NO POWER ON EARTH COULD SINK THAT BOAT!**

And if perhaps it WAS sunk, there weren't enough concrete boots to make Jesus sink with it! And if He DID, some fish would come along and swallow Him and then vomit Him up on shore. One way or another, **Jesus had nothing to fear from that storm or any other AND HE KNEW IT!**

The point of this story WASN'T what the faithless disciples and the faithless world got from it – that Jesus *could* rebuke the wind! The POINT was that **Jesus didn't need to rebuke the wind!** His calm faith in the face of terrifying danger was far more important than His power to rebuke the wind. Sure, He could – but why bother? It wasn't going to hurt Him. So He only did it for the sakes of the fearful around Him – but not without a rebuke for their lack of faith.

So you never see Jesus asking for anything for His own safety, nor even for His own desires. And He condemned people who did worry about such things in **Matthew 6:25-34**. This, in a nutshell, is mature faith. You don't need to worry about food, clothes, safety, storms, or anything else.

You don't need to pray for protection before you drive to town; God already promised that protection. You don't need to pray for protection from the destruction of the wicked. God promised that, too. You don't need to pray for deliverance from your enemies, because, again, that promise has been given. Obedience to God comes with a package of protection that makes it unnecessary to worry about much of anything – obey God, do the work He put you here to do, and let Him worry about the rest.

IT'LL WORK OUT

None of this means you will never stub your toe, get stung by a wasp, or be slapped by an enemy. That isn't the point of any of this. What is the point? **Romans 8:28**. It means those things will not seriously harm you. It means you can have peace IN SPITE OF, and even WHILE, these things are happening (**Daniel 3:23-27, John 16:33**).

One of the simplest ways of looking at things when faced with a problem is simply to remind yourself "it'll work out – it always does". Like most, I am faced with problems on a daily basis; some of my own creation, some beyond my control. Problems of a very serious nature come, on average, about once a month or so. Enough to drive most people into straightjackets from stress. But after many years of watching these turmoils come and go, I've gone from merely stating it to actually (mostly) believing it – it always works out, and almost always better than I had hoped.

My prayers for myself have diminished over the years as well, as I've observed there simply isn't much need for them. God takes care of me and mine, without me reminding Him about it on an hourly basis. It's not a sin to ask God to do something He already promised to do; just as it isn't a sin to call your friend to

remind them to feed your cat like they're supposed to do while you're away. It's not a sin – it's just unnecessary and bordering on rude.

THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW

This seems like a good place to answer a question, which has probably been on your mind for the last three lessons; what about the widow that Jesus praised because she kept asking for something? **Luke 18:1-8**. Now read that carefully – what is the real point of that passage? Is it that you should just keep praying, over and over again, for decades if necessary? This is all most people get out of it. But that's not the real POINT of the story at all.

In **verse 2**, we find a judge who cannot be intimidated by anyone. Based on **verse 7**, this judge is the Father. That seems shocking because the judge is called “unjust”, which certainly doesn't describe the Father; but the point is that this judge cannot be swayed by fear of God or man. So there is no way to force Him to do your desire. Just like the Father.

But Jesus gives us a way – get the Father to say, “**because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me**”. So, nagging God to do what you want CAN work, in spite of everything I've said here. BUT! There's more to it than that.

The REAL point is found in **verses 7-8**. He says “*shall not God avenge his own elect ... I tell you that he will avenge them SPEEDILY*”. Read that way, it states that “His own elect” will not have to nag Him, but that God will avenge them SPEEDILY – as He promised, “*before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*” (**Isaiah 65:24**). This parable of the unjust judge cannot contradict such a clear promise!

Yet the parable was given for a reason. And that reason is in the other halves of **Luke 18:7-8**! “*Which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? ... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*” – by “rightly dividing” these verses and putting them together this way, they show up in a new light. The REASON He is making them wait is because, in the end times we now live in, FAITH IS HARD TO FIND!

What this parable is saying is that in the end times, faith will be weaker than ever in history; even among God's elect. And surely that prophecy has been fulfilled! **God often cannot answer us as quickly as He did the prayers of Abraham or David because our hearts are much more unclean!**

Yet God knows it is partly because of the evil time we live in. And so God does hear our prayers. But He can't pretend we're the same as Peter or Joseph if we're not! So sometimes, if we want our answer we have to work harder. **God promised a speedy answer to prayer to those with a clean conscience! Those whose heart did not condemn them! Even in this same parable!**

But John tells us that EVEN IF our heart condemns us, God is able to overlook it and WE MIGHT get an answer anyway! (**1 John 3:20**). He knows our frame, knows that we are only made of dust! (**Psalms 103:14**). So God might answer us, if we make a good enough argument, pray enough, nag Him enough! That's the point of this parable and the similar one in **Luke 11:5-8** – you *can* nag God if your heart isn't perfect and you still need an answer **but that's not the goal!**

The GOAL is for God to answer us BEFORE we ask! To protect us from trouble BEFORE it happens! To avenge us SPEEDILY of our enemies, without us even asking! *Thousands* of verses in the Bible bind God to do just that! You *can* have that sort of a relationship with God, a relationship where you don't have to nag or beg or plead with Him; where He delights in answering you. It's just harder today than ever before... but rarity makes things that much more valuable.

You have an opportunity to truly shine above all the other saints in history because none faced a more difficult challenge than we do today. No time has ever had greater deceptions or more excuses to disobey God. If you can overcome them, you will be one of the few.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Climbing Mt. Everest and standing upon the roof of the world was one of the high points (literally) of mankind's achievements. It wasn't successfully done until 1953, when Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay did it. Many had tried before and failed, often dying in the process. But men kept trying, knowing if we never succeeded then those men died in vain. On that first successful expedition, over 400 people climbed the mountain; only four of those tried for the summit. Only two succeeded. But the other 396 people never were intended to climb the mountain; they were there solely to help make sure one of mankind's greatest moments happened.

The calling of the firstborn is not only the primary purpose of this age; it is for all intents and purposes the only purpose of this age. The creation of the incorruptible firstborn of God is, for now, the only thing that matters to God. This age is just a playground for those children. The rest of the world is completely expendable. God will do with them what He wills (**Romans 9:20-23**).

Because the firstborn children of God are what matters today. And this is fair – not only fair, but it is for THEIR benefit. The world does not love God enough to be firstborn children of God; there is no hope for them to climb Everest today. So they are there to carry oxygen and supplies for the saints, there to provide a sandbox for us to play in, to provide lessons that we can learn by watching their mistakes or give us trials to overcome by harming us.

See, if you ARE one of those who has a future as a firstborn child of God, then the world NEEDS you. They've already sinned, earned the death penalty, and most are past even a hope of salvation in this life. So they NEED incorruptible beings to lead them to fountains of living waters in the next life. It's their only hope. They need someone who will watch out for them, take care of them, and sacrifice himself for them.

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

The world NEEDS this sacrifice; not a sacrifice of your self, of your time, or of your life. The world's false churches can do all of that for them; no, what the world needs is for you **to sacrifice your carnal nature**, so Jesus can present you to His Father "*holy and without blemish*" (**Ephesians 5:27**), having "*crucified the flesh with the affections and lust [thereof]*" (**Galatians 5:24**).

The world NEEDS you to present to God the sacrifice of your clean conscience, which is worth more to Him than any number of burnt offerings (**Proverbs 21:3, Mark 12:33, Micah 6:6-8**). God will then use your sacrifice for the good of the world – now and forever. Which brings us to a scripture people have trouble understanding...

Galatians 6:14 *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

For now, those people cannot contribute any spiritual help to your salvation, nor you to theirs; so the only way they can be useful to the saints in this life is as a support group for the children of God. The world has no hope of summiting this spiritual Everest, the most they can do is to carry extra oxygen for you. So God, in the same sense that you will one day be crucified to them, now crucifies them to you.

He does that in many ways; one is to have them make money so that they can give it to you (**Proverbs 28:8**). Or He uses them to fight legal battles for you – like the Seventh-Day Adventists have done for health food, vaccinations, and the right not to work on Saturday. He puts the fundamentalist Christians on the front lines of battles for raw milk, religious freedom of speech, and exemption from military service. They are “sacrificed to us” to fight these battles for us.

God also uses the world to hire you to provide you with money while you learn lessons; random strangers help you when you have trouble; and sometimes the most valuable service the world performs for us is to allow us to see and learn from their mistakes.

The saints are the rightful heirs to the rulership of this world. The world exists for their benefit, and God will use it in any way He sees fit to help your salvation. So you have nothing to fear from the rocks, beasts, people, governments, storms, or even wicked spirits in the Earth; for they are delivered unto you; you have dominion over them – within the boundaries of the law of God, of course.

But all this is for nothing if you are not crucifying your carnal nature for them. If you are not a fit sacrifice for them, then all of those billions of porters who even now carry your tents and food and snow gear up this mountain will die in vain. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness – ALL His righteousness, every word of God – and nothing else matters.

In conclusion, turn to **Romans 8** and read **verses 16-18**. We are heirs of Christ; destined to be glorified with Him, should we overcome our carnal natures in time. Now read **verses 19-23**. This is a beautiful passage when you really understand it. Who is this “creature” who is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God? Obviously, it isn’t us – for we’re the sons of God according to **verse 16**. So who?

“Creature” means something that was created; a person, animal, or thing. Later in **verse 22** we see that the WHOLE creation is groaning together! The whole of creation can only mean EVERYTHING God created except the saints, who have already been mentioned separately. So why is this creation groaning and suffering, and why is it anxiously awaiting the birth of the sons of God?

Because that’s when the CREATURE will be DELIVERED from bondage to sin! That’s when the government is given to the saints of the most high! **Verse 21**. When the Kingdom of God rules the world, there will be liberty here – for wherever the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! (**2 Corinthians 3:17**). Read about the liberty of the world that spirit will create in **Isaiah 11:1-9**!

Today the rabbit trembles in the shadows in fear of the fox; the eaglets starve in their nest because a hunter killed their parents; the starling is sick because it lives off of unhealthy food in McDonald’s parking lots; even the trees, if they could talk, would groan for cursed soil and lack of rain in due season that Man’s manifold sins have brought upon this Earth.

ALL of creation is groaning and suffering together! ALL OF CREATION is waiting for the sons of God to be born into the family of God as spirit beings and take their place in Jesus’ throne banishing suffering and injustice from the universe! Don’t make them wait any longer than necessary! The universe is waiting for YOU to save it!

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold**; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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