

BE A MAN

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

8 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY MAN

FAITH

PERSEVERANCE

VIRTUE

GODLINESS

KNOWLEDGE

KINDNESS

SELF CONTROL

LOVE



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INTRODUCTION

Today, we have too many males who don't understand what it really means to be a man. The enemy has so infiltrated our society that being masculine or a real man is considered by many to be a bad thing. By masculine, I am not talking of an overbearing tyrant, but rather a man who properly understands the role that God has given him to lead in both his home and in society.

As Christian men, we need to be examples to those around us in how we live our lives. The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:2, "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;"¹ An epistle is simply a written letter. You and I are written letters that people around us read every time we encounter them. If that's the case, may I ask you, "What is it that people are reading from your life?" Is it something that you would like published for all to read or instead, a letter that you'd rather hide and hope that no one reads?

The great news is that none of our letters are so bad that God can't change them, but it takes grace. That grace comes from God, but because of the grace He gives us, He expects some work on our part. No, I am not presenting a works-based gospel. We are all saved only by the blood of Jesus and His finished work on the cross, but because we are saved, we do good works. The works don't save, but God gives us the grace to discipline our lives. Discipline, a word we all love. I heard one person say, "We all love the results of discipline, just not the effort or the actual work of discipline." But without discipline and work on our part, we will never really become the mature men of God that He wants us to be.

During this "Be a Man" discipleship series, I want to share with you eight characteristics from God's word that exemplify a Godly Man. These are taken out of 2 Peter 1:5-9, which says:

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.²

There are 8 characteristics or disciplines that Peter mentions here—

1. Faith
2. Virtue
3. Knowledge
4. Self-control
5. Perseverance
6. Godliness
7. Brotherly Kindness

8. Love

These are the characteristics that we'll both discuss and work on putting into practice over these next several months. Peter says that if these characteristics live in you then, "*you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." However, he says if they aren't in you, that you are "shortsighted, even to blindness and have forgotten" that you were cleansed from your old sins. Peter obviously thought these disciplines were vital to the life of a believer.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of Godly characteristics, but they're a beginning to living a more God centered & Christ like manhood in front of those around you. Also, just because there are 8 characteristics, this does not mean this study will only be 8 Lessons, but rather some of these disciplines will entail a couple lessons each. As we start this journey to become the men, husbands, fathers & grandfathers that God has called us to be, I encourage you to find an accountability partner to help hold you accountable for putting these disciplines into action in your life.

Pursuing Christ,

Pastor Mike

CHARACTERISTIC ONE: FAITH

Lesson 1: Our Foundation of Faith

What is Faith? Faith is double faceted. It's like a coin that has two sides. There is firstly our faith, meaning the foundation of what we believe. Like when someone asks the question, "What is your faith?" And we respond by saying, "I'm a Christian." It's the basis or foundation on which all our other beliefs and values are established and that we endeavor by the power of the Holy Spirit to follow.

Secondly, faith is trusting & believing God for an answer to prayer without seeing the evidence of it. It's a belief and hope that God will come through in a situation, even when it seems impossible. The writer of Hebrews defines this aspect of faith in Hebrews Ch. 11 when he says in verses 1-3:

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

² For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.³

In this Lesson, we will focus on the first aspect of faith- our Foundation of Faith.

The construction of every building, whether a home or a skyscraper starts with the foundation. Why? Because it's the most important step and without a solid foundation, the weight of the building itself will cause it to be unstable and eventually crumble to the ground. The same is true in our lives. Our faith must be built on Jesus and His words, they alone are that rock solid foundation. Jesus himself explains this in Matthew 7:24-27 when He says:

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."⁴

In this parable, Jesus talks about two men, one wise and one foolish. As we look at these two men what was the difference? Jesus explains that they both heard the same words that He spoke, they both had the same opportunity to build in the right place, the only difference was one chose to obey His words while the other didn't. Jesus said the only distinction between a wise man who builds his house on a solid rock foundation and a foolish man who builds on a weak sandy foundation is whether they choose to not only hear His words but also obey them. Jesus gives every one of us the same

opportunity to build the house of our lives on rock or sand, it all depends on your choices to obey His words or not. The question is, are you building your life on Jesus?

Your foundation of faith to follow Christ is not just in the moment of salvation, which is a completely free gift, but also in the decisions you make to follow Him every day. The foundation of a home is not just made up of a footer but also the blocks that are laid down individually and cemented together. In the same way, we lay the blocks to the foundation of our faith by the daily choices we make to obey God's Word and put Christ first in all our decisions. It's also essential to remember that even though we may have laid a good foundation, we must periodically check it. For just like in the natural a home settles and may show through in cracks in the walls, sometimes we can allow our spiritual foundation to become settled (comfortable), and cracks begin to appear in the walls of our life. Therefore, it's important to consistently reexamine our lives to ensure we are continuing to build it on Jesus alone and His Word.

So, if it's critical to build our lives on the right foundation, which Jesus says is obeying His words, how can we do that if we don't know His words? Simply put, we can't. This is why having a daily quiet time with the Lord is vital to our spiritual growth. You may be unfamiliar with the term "quiet time" but let me explain. A daily quiet time with the Lord is a preset, intentional time every day that you get away from any distractions to a quiet place that you have fellowship with the Father in prayer, meditation and reading the Bible. The whole purpose is to help you grow more intimate in your relationship with God and to help you grow spiritually.

I can tell you from personal experience, that my relationship with the Lord and my knowledge and understanding of His word grew tremendously when I implemented this practice in my life soon after I gave my heart to the Lord at 19 years old. For me, I started out with 10-15 minutes of quiet time, but it soon grew to over 30 minutes and now it is not uncommon for me to spend an hour or two in quiet time with the Lord. I count it as the most important part of my daily routine and I believe you will too, if you implement this fundamental discipline in your daily life.

Lesson 1 Questions

1. What does it mean to have a Foundation of Faith in your life?

2. What did Jesus say was the only difference between the wise man and the foolish man in Matthew 7:24-27?

CHARACTERISTIC ONE: FAITH

Lesson 2: Our Faith in Action: Part 1

In our previous lesson, we talked about the two aspects of faith. We elaborated on the importance of our foundation of faith, that it must be built upon Christ and His Words alone. In this lesson, we will discuss our faith in action. Our faith in action can also be broken down into two parts. First, how do we walk out our faith in our daily lives and second, how do we have faith to believe God in situations that seem impossible. Today, we'll discuss the first.

Faith is useless unless we put action behind it. One can say all day that they're a Christian, but if the fruit of the Spirit is not being shown in their lives by their actions it means nothing. Jesus said in Matthew 7:16-20:

¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.⁵

Fruit on a natural tree is something you can see, touch and taste, as well as something that brings nourishment to our physical bodies. In the life of a person, fruit is their character that is reflected in their works or actions. When people come around you and I, what fruit are they able to pull from our lives? Do they see, touch and taste "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."⁶ If not, why? I think many believers, especially in this younger generation, have bought into the lie that says, "I'm saved, so it doesn't really matter how I talk, or act or what I do, because Jesus already paid the price for my sin," Basically, the thought is you can do whatever you want as long as you prayed a prayer. It's what is termed the hyper-grace movement. In other words, it teaches that God's grace is already there for us, therefore we can live how we want and still be blessed and make it into heaven.

However, there are major problems with this line of reasoning. First, it flies in the face of how Jesus, the Apostles and the early believers lived as examples for us to follow. Second, it goes against the heart and message of the teachings of Jesus and the writings of the New Testament authors. The Apostle Paul when confronting this very line of reasoning in the early church said in Romans 6:1-3:

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.⁷

CHARACTERISTIC ONE: FAITH

Lesson 3: Our Faith in Action: Part 2

How do we respond when things aren't going our way? Maybe it's a sudden health issue, a financial crisis, or a dream the Lord has spoken to you that seems impossible. The question is, are we going to believe God and His Word when we face those seemingly insurmountable mountains or are we going to succumb to the doubtful voices around us or even in our own mind?

This is where our faith comes into play, because the fact is, our faith isn't even necessary unless there is something pressing it into action. Think about it, unless we are faced with a problem then our faith is unnecessary. Even the foundation of our faith, belief in Christ, first had to start with a problem. The problem was our sin, which separated us from a relationship with the Father. But, by repenting and having faith in Jesus and what He did for us on the cross, we were saved.

This same concept applies when we are facing tribulations in our own life as believers, there will be problems, but with God there is always a solution if we act in faith. I am not suggesting that God's solution is whatever you want it to be or even speak it to be. But you can be sure of this, nothing will happen if we don't at least have faith that believes that the God of the impossible can come through. Jesus put it this way when addressing the father whose young boy was possessed by a demon in Mark 9:23, "...If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."¹⁰ We must believe! Believing is our faith put into action.

The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 11:1-3, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."¹¹ In other words, he starts by showing us that even though we can't see faith, it is real because of belief.

He continues by saying in verses 4-6:

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *"and was not found, because God had taken him"*; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.¹²

He states that, "without faith it is *impossible to please*" God, then throughout the rest of chapter 11, he tells of the testimonies of the patriarchs of faith that preceded us in the Hall of Faith. Before we go any further in this lesson, read Hebrews 11:7-39:

⁷ By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

¹¹ By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called*,” ¹⁹ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land*, *whereas* the Egyptians, attempting *to do* so, were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped

the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens* and caves of the earth.

³⁹ And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.¹³

Every one of these testimonies is an example to us of faith in action, believing God before we see the results of our faith. I remember one personal story from my own life that I have shared many times. Over 20 Years ago, about 3 years into pastoring FaithHouse Church I wasn't making very much of a salary while pastoring full time. My wife was running our small Christian school and was making less than anyone else on staff even though she was their leader, but it's what we felt the Lord called us to do, so things were very tight on our budget. One month there was too much month at the end of the money, and we didn't know how we were going to pay our rent and another bill that was due the very next day. My wife and I were pretty stressed out about it, because we believe in paying our bills, but we were at a crossroad, were we going to believe the situation or have faith and trust God? Also, we never even hinted to anyone else about our situation, only God knew.

About seven o'clock that evening I told my wife I was going out to the church to pray about our situation, so I did. I went back home almost three hours later, and she was sitting on the coach with our youngest son who was still a baby. I told her that I had peace about the situation and that we just needed to believe God for a miracle, so we prayed a simple prayer of trust. We finished praying and I told her to I would put Aaron in his crib. As soon as I stood up and started across the living room our doorbell rang. It was 10 o'clock in the evening on a Tuesday night and I wondered, "Who in the world would be ringing our doorbell at this time in the evening?" I looked through the window, and it was a couple from our church. I immediately thought, "Oh know, what's wrong?" I preceded to open the door and asked if everything was okay and they reassured me that everything was fine and asked if they could come in. When they came in, they looked at both of us and said, "The Lord has been speaking to us to do something for a couple days, and we want to be obedient. Here this is for you all." As they handed me an envelope.

Mary and I just looked at each other, then back at them and started to cry as we explained to them that we had just finished praying about this situation just one minute before they rang the doorbell. After we thanked them and talked for a few minutes, and cried some more, we hugged them, and they left. When I opened the envelope, they

had given us \$1,000, almost exactly what we needed to pay our rent and another bill that was due the next day. God is so faithful, we just need to have faith and believe.

Maybe there's a mountain that you're facing today. It doesn't matter what it is, God sees it. He is the God of the impossible. No matter what the enemy or anyone else says to the contrary, have faith and believe God and His Word!! Remember, "all things are possible to him who believes."¹⁴

Lesson 3 Questions

1. Do we even need an active faith if everything is going well? What do problems present us with?
2. What is "faith in action" as described in Hebrews 11:1-3?
3. Does having faith guarantee that you'll have exactly what you pray for?
4. What is a situation you're going through now that looks impossible that you need to have faith for?

CHARACTERISTIC ONE: FAITH

Lesson 4: Our Faith at Home

What is your life like at home? Do you portray one thing at church or in front of others, but you don't follow through with that at home in front of the ones that matter most? This doesn't mean that we are perfect or that we don't make mistakes, but do we make excuses for our behaviors that we would never do in front of others. The reality is God sees us all the time and in your home is where it matters most.

As husbands, we are called to lovingly lead our wives in the things of God and be a voice of reason when emotions are running high or as my wife and I like to call them, "moments of intense fellowship." Unfortunately, I didn't always get this right, especially in our early years of marriage. The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:25-29:

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ¹⁵

Think about that, Jesus was God in the flesh, He held all authority, but He loved us so much that He gave Himself for us. Are we doing that with our wives? Are we laying down what we want or our preferences for her. Now of course I'm talking about personal preferences, not Biblical issues, which we need to stand strong on. One thing I found out about myself was that I was so concerned about being right and proving to her that I was, that I didn't take time to really listen to her point of view. That wasn't real love. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 says, "**4** Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ¹⁶

As true men of God, we need to be able to differentiate, by the Holy Spirit, the things that are vitally important and stand on those things without compromise, while also laying down some of our preferences to those of our wives. Of course this goes both ways, a godly wife should not always be trying to get her way either. It's a godly balancing act of compromise on both parts. However, I believe it's the man's responsibility to initiate by sowing these acts of love and compromise to his wife's wants

and needs. For a woman, one of her biggest needs is for her husband to be a godly example for their children.

As fathers, we are called to teach our children the Word of God and lead them by living out a Godly life in front of them. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 says:

“⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”¹⁷

Further, Ephesians 6:4 states, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”¹⁸ My responsibility to my children as they were growing up was to love and care for them, but even more importantly to teach them the things of God, not just by my words, but by my example. Was I living at home what I preached? I can honestly say that for the most part, I did. Was I perfect? By no means, there were definitely times that I blew it with Mary and the kids. Whether it was with my attitude, my anger or my words. However, when I did blow it, I always did my best to make it right with them.

I have found that the failing of many men is their pride. We feel we are right, and we very well may be, however our words and attitude may be completely wrong. This is what we need to repent of, especially with our family. The key is that when we do we make a mistake, we need to own up to it and ask our wife and children to forgive us and then endeavor by the power of the Holy Spirit to not continue in that pattern of behavior. To me the key to being a real man of God is owning up to our failures by repenting first to the Lord and then to those we've hurt, then making the necessary changes not to continue in that behavior.

Lesson 4 Questions

1. Why is it so important to not just “preach” the Word to your wife and children, but to live it front of them?

¹ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 2 Co 3:2.

² 2 Pe 1:5–9.

³ Heb 11:1–3.

⁴ Mt 7:24–27

⁵ Mt 7:16–20.

⁶ Ga 5:22–23.

⁷ Ro 6:1–4.

⁸ Jas 2:14–24.

⁹ Mt 5:16.

¹⁰ Mk 9:23.

¹¹ Heb 11:1–3.

¹² Heb 11:4–6.

¹³ Heb 11:7–40.

¹⁴ Mk 9:23.

¹⁵ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 5:25–29.

¹⁶ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Co 13:4–7.

¹⁷ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Dt 6:6–9.

¹⁸ Eph 6:4.