

What God Wants To Do With You #3

He Wants You To Trust Him

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. We've been thinking together for the past couple of weeks about the subject, "What God Wants To Do With You."

1. We began with the most fundamental concept – God wants you to know him
2. Last week, we looked at another fundamental concept – God wants you to love him

B. This week, I want to talk about one more thing God wants to do with you, that is also at the Heart of any relationship we can have with him, and is the crucial element to anything Specific that God might do with us

1. Hebrews 11:6 (a pivotal verse)

6 And 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 seek Him. NASU
2. It's not only a pivotal verse, it's an amazing verse
 - a. my personal view is that this is the single best, practical definition of faith in the Bible
 - b. it wraps together in one simple statement, the seemingly complicated and intricate details of this thing called faith
 - c. it links together the two complementary principles that compose any real faith – belief and action – in a way that shows that they are truly connected
 - d. it summarizes what it takes to please God into a statement that just about anyone can understand
 - e. it also serves as a wonderful text from which to launch today's study because it has everything to do with trusting God, and that is what God wants to do with you

C. Illustration

George Mueller said, "Faith is not a matter of impressions, nor of probabilities, nor of appearances. Faith is the assurance that what God has said in his word is true, and that God will act according to what he has said in his word."¹

1. This is a tremendous observation
 - a. basically Mueller has said that we must trust God – that is the essence of what we call "faith"
 - b. yet, this is not exactly what the Hebrew writer says about pleasing God
2. To the Hebrew writer, faith isn't just a belief in God, rather one's belief in God is complemented by the consequent action of seeking God, and the fact that one seeks God demonstrates a profound trust in God greater than mere intellectual agreement

¹Discipleship Journal : Issue 10. 1999 (electronic ed.). The Navigators/NavPress: Colorado Springs

I. "TRUST" IS THE REAL HEART OF "FAITH"

A. Scripture declares God to be "faithful" – in other words, it tells us that we can trust him

1. Deuteronomy 7:9

9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; NASU

- a. this verse is part of a warning given to Israel prior to entering the promised land
- b. much of the concern was that when they entered the land, the people would face the temptation of being turned to idols and false gods
- c. how do you keep that from happening? By remembering all that Jehovah God had done and that he is completely trustworthy

2. 1 Kings 8:54-61 -- Solomon's Benediction after dedicating the temple

54 When Solomon had finished praying this entire prayer and supplication to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven. 55 And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: 56 "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant. 57 "May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us, 58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, which He commanded our fathers. 59 "And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day requires, 60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else. 61 " Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day." NASU

- a. Solomon's words were intended to encourage faithfulness in the people
- b. but notice, that his statement urging their faithfulness is based on the fact that God has already proven himself faithful – "not one word has failed of all his good promise"
- c. Solomon wanted people to trust God

3. Hebrews 6:13-18

13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, " I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken

refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. NASU

a. obviously, the purpose of the writer is to encourage his readers to be confident in God, to "take hold of the hope set before us"

b. to do so, he turns to God's promise to Abraham

1) God made a promise to Abraham

Genesis 17:1-8

1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." 3 Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. 7 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 " I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." NASU

2) God made an oath to Abraham

Genesis 22:15-18

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, " By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 " In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." NASU

B. Now, the whole point is simply this: God can't lie (it would be a violation of his nature to do So), so he gave to immutable or unchangeable things to assure Abraham

1. He gave an oath and a promise

2. That was good enough for Abraham – to trust God and became for us the single best illustration of a man of faith

- a. the question is how did he come to have such great faith
- b. the answer is that he trusted God
- c. he trusted God because God is completely trustworthy

II. TRUST IN GOD IS A KEY FACTOR IN THE LIFE OF FAITHFUL PEOPLE

A. There are some important principles involved in trust

1. Heb 11:6 is a powerful verse around which to build a concept of a God with whom we can have a relationship and from whom we can receive what we need

- a. illustration (Jeff Jerigan, "Taking God At His Word")

Early in my Christian life I memorized Heb. 11:6: "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." I put that verse into practice and, from the very beginning, my God was real and personal, acting specifically in my own life. My ability to trust Him grew as I saw Him act.

One aspect of seeking God, and therefore one step toward being rewarded by seeing Him act in our lives, is obedience. Belief in and obedience to Christ are the foundation for faith-building experiences. They form the context of a personal relationship with Christ in which faith grows.²

- b. it is trust that enables us to steadily grow in our ability to extend ourselves into the will of God, to put that will to work in our lives
 - c. in fact, I think it is obvious that the reverse is perhaps easier to see – if we do not trust God, we will not do what he says
 - d. therefore, trust is essential to motivate us to find and do the will of God

2. All the tremendous examples of faith were people who had an abiding trust in God

- a. illustration – Penelope Stokes, "The God in Whom We Trust"

True faith is not a matter of personal strength, not an issue of quantity, not a question of how much certainty we can muster to meet our needs. Biblical faith, rather, is dependence upon the Person in whom we claim to believe. The key to a life of faith lies in focusing our attention on God, our Source, instead of on the answers to our prayers. True faith focuses not upon the believer's ability to believe, but upon the grace and faithfulness of God.³

- b. Hebrews 12:1-3

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. NASU

- 1) the admonition is to "fix our eyes on Jesus"
 - 2) that admonition is bracketed by two statements, one referencing the great cloud of witnesses, the other is Jesus

²Discipleship Journal : Issue 29. 1999 (electronic ed.). The Navigators/NavPress: Colorado Springs

³Discipleship Journal : Issue 40. 1999 (electronic ed.). The Navigators/NavPress: Colorado Springs

- c. We need to remember great examples of faith because they show us what happens to people who trust God
 - 1) Abraham – God was not known to his family, he had not "history" with God, he did not know where God wanted him to go, but he was willing to trust God
 - 2) Moses – he was confronted with two very different possibilities for his life; he could have lived as a prince of Egypt or opt for the slave heritage of his true background. Later, he was confronted with two other choices; he could remain a shepherd in the middle of nowhere or he could deliver God's people. Both required him to trust God
 - 3) Joshua and Caleb – the two spies who took God at his word that they could defeat the inhabitants of the promised land. All the others distrusted God, but Joshua and Caleb trusted him
 - 4) a multitude of prophets who braved opposition, scorn, persecution, and death in order to deliver God's word to his people – that's great trust
 - 5) Nehemiah returned to a city in ruin, with crumbled walls, and trusted God to enable them to rebuild and restore the city
 - 6) Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego who refused to bow to the king's statue choosing to trust God instead – in their words:

Daniel 3:16-18

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 " If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 " But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." NASU

B. Proverbs 3:5 -- Trust in the LORD with all your heart NASU

- 1. That is the prime concern today – do you trust God
 - a. do you trust him enough to seek his will
 - b. do you trust him enough to resist the temptations of the world
 - c. do you trust him enough to obey his will
- 2. Trust is at the heart of the man or woman who has faith in God

CONCLUSION

A. Do you trust God? If so, how do you demonstrate that trust?

B. Invitation