

I hear knocking at my door;
I wonder who it is?
A tale Christ told in ancient days
suggests it may be Him!

The Son of God, Jesus, Lord,
who suffered for my sins,
promises me miracles
if I but let Him in.

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“First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ”



*“Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten that
the Lord is able to do all things according to his will,
for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him?
Wherefore, let us be faithful to him.”
(1 Nephi 7:12)*

AFTER HAVING TO silently sit through a sixty-minute sacrament meeting, excited Latter-day Saint children quickly step out of the chapel and speed walk towards the primary room for Sunday School singing time.

Enthusiastic tunes, coupled with corresponding pictures, signs, dancing, and games, both entertain and educate the lively bunch of three- to eleven-year-olds.

Ask any primary grad, and they’ll tell you all about the hits—*Popcorn Popping, Once There Was A Snowman, Book of Mormon Stories, Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam*—that get routine play on that muted, worn-out upright piano typically nestled in the front corner of the room.

Another one of the more popular songs is called *Faith*. It has a simple, yet catchy four-four, tap-your-toe type of beat to it,

and lyrics that are guaranteed to stay in your head after singing just a line or two.

It also repeats, unfortunately, an extremely incorrect teaching of foundational Christian doctrine:

“Faith is *knowing* the sun will rise brightly each new day. Faith is *knowing* the Lord will hear my prayers each time I pray....Faith is *knowing* I lived with God before my mortal birth. Faith is *knowing* I can return when my life ends on earth.”¹

No, faith isn't *knowing*. In fact, faith is *not knowing*.

“Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things,” says Alma of the Book of Mormon, but a “hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”²

The author of Hebrews defines faith as, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”³

There's nothing a person can hold with their hands or examine with their eyes that would prove Jesus Christ lived here on earth. All that are available are written witnesses that detail the actions of a miraculous man by such a name. A part-human, part-god; a Being who healed the blind, deaf, limp, lame, sick, and dead; a Teacher who had command of the water, waves, wind, and weather; and a Saint who sacrificed His life for the world's sake.

Faith is hoping that these stories and descriptions are true, that God and Jesus are real, and that everything They've ever

said or done really did or will one day happen. Faith is trusting in what the scriptures say and following the commandments found within them. Simply put, faith is believing in God and the things of God.

The booklet *True to the Faith* teaches, “Faith is a principle of action and power. Whenever you work toward a worthy goal, you exercise faith. You show your hope for something that you cannot yet see.”⁴

Exercising faith, like exercising your body, builds, strengthens and fortifies personal convictions. As you put forth the good disciple’s effort, your convictions, or testimonies, will, as Alma teaches, “get root, and grow up.”⁵

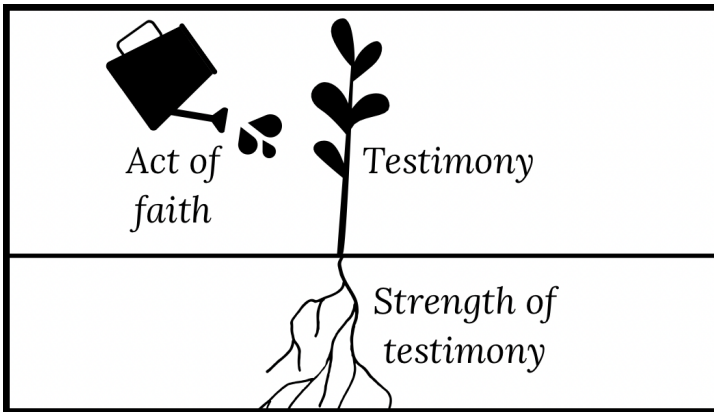
As your testimony grows, your faith will, too, and so will your sensitivity to the soothing, schooling, and saving effects of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. To receive a piece of the life-altering power provided by Jesus’ sacrifice is the entire purpose of exercising faith.

Faith, however, isn’t permanent. Obtaining faith isn’t like an achievement in a video game—you earn it and it’s forever yours—but, as former Church President Gordon B. Hinckley explained, faith’s more “like the muscle of [your] arm. If [you] use it, if [you] nurture it, it grows strong; it will do many things. But if [you] put it in a sling and do nothing with it, it will grow weak and useless.”⁶

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Your faith is either growing stronger or becoming

weaker....The future of your faith is not by chance, but by choice.”⁷

Focusing on faith’s ability to shift in strength isn’t meant to suggest that faith is either flimsy or flakey. Rather, it’s to emphasize that the continual development of belief and trust in God must be a top spiritual priority for any believer. Doing so keeps already formed and found faith healthy and alive, while creating the space for new testimonies to bud and bloom.



Watering your testimony with acts of faith produces new leaves of belief, and strengthens the convictions you already have.

“By small and simple things,” the scripture says, “are great things brought to pass.”⁸ The consequences of minute but consistent faith-building behaviors are gradual, though no less grand than an outcome offered by a one-time, dramatic demonstration of belief. Your testimony is layered line upon line, precept upon precept, prayer upon prayer, verse upon verse, and act upon act.

In a 2009 General Conference address, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following comparison and lesson:

“In my office is a beautiful painting of a wheat field. The painting is a vast collection of individual brushstrokes—none of which in isolation is very interesting or impressive....

“However, as you gradually move away from the canvas, all of the individual brushstrokes combine together and produce a magnificent landscape of a wheat field....

“Just as the yellow and gold and brown strokes of paint complement each other and produce an impressive masterpiece, so our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results.”⁹

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THE FIRST BOOK in the Book of Mormon features “a round ball of curious workmanship” called the Liahona that directed Lehi and his family “whither [they] should go into the wilderness.”¹⁰

This device helped the group find food, cross miles of barren land, and travel across the sea. Text would also periodically appear and disappear on the ball, words “which did give [them] understanding concerning the ways of the Lord.”¹¹

The one-of-a-kind Liahona certainly was a curious object, as it wasn’t solar-powered or battery-powered, but *faith*-powered.

The benefits the part-compass, part-teaching-manual provided were contingent on the travelers' righteousness.

Lehi's son, Nephi, explained that the Liahona worked "according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it."¹² When they believed, the heavens were open.

But when "they were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith...those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey."¹³

Years later, the prophet Alma used the unique properties of the Liahona to teach one of his sons about choices and consequences.

He said, "For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise."¹⁴

But as "our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass," Alma explained, "they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual."¹⁵

Alma showed his son, by using the example of Lehi's Liahona, that the blessings of Jesus' gospel are dependent on if current faithful actions are taking place, so, as faith fluctuates, so do the blessings of God.

Moroni, the final prophet of the Book of Mormon, taught, “if there be no faith among the children of men, God can do no miracle among them.”¹⁶

So if it is necessary for you to show your faith before your Heavenly Father hands out blessings or performs miracles, *how* much faith do you have to show?

Scripture suggests close to none. At a minimum, you must have “a desire to believe [and] let this desire work in you.”¹⁷

If you now have a desire to believe (or even *a desire to have* a desire to believe) and fear it does not fulfil God’s commandment to have faith in Him, don’t worry—it does. What you’re offering is enough. The Lord has a habit and a history of making the most out of the least.

Think about David’s single smooth stone defeating Goliath the giant, or Moses’ brazen serpent healing the snakebitten Israelites. Ponder the twelve loaves and four fish that Jesus used to comfortably feed 9,000 disciples, or Mahonri’s collection of once-common, now-heaven-touched rocks that provided light for his and his people’s near-year-long trip across the ocean.

Jesus taught that with faith the size of an almost-invisible mustard seed, “nothing shall be impossible unto you...ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove.”¹⁸

Though your level of belief may measure but a mere mite, the Lord, the most generous gift giver, will always reward your sincere efforts.

References

1. Beatrice Goff Jackson, "Faith," *Children's Songbook*, no. 96.
2. Alma 32:21, Book of Mormon.
3. Hebrews 11:1, Bible (King James Version).
4. *True to the Faith*, 2004, 54.
5. Alma 32:37, B of M.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign or Liahona*, June 1999.
7. Neil L. Andersen, "Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice" *Ensign or Liahona*, November 2015, 65.
8. Alma 37:6, B of M.
9. David A. Bednar, "More Diligent and Concerned at Home," *Ensign or Liahona*, November 2009, 19.
10. 1 Nephi 16:10, B of M.
11. 1 Nephi 16:29, B of M.
12. 1 Nephi 16:29, B of M.
13. Alma 37:41, B of M.
14. Alma 37:45, B of M.
15. Alma 37:43, B of M.
16. Ether 12:12, B of M.
17. Alma 32:27, B of M.
18. Matthew 17:20, Bible (KJV).

The first step to finding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is to let His word "spoken by the mouth of His servants, the prophets" touch your heart. But it is not enough merely to let those words wash over you, as if they alone could transform you. We must do our part. It is interesting that the one who is suffering often gains faith through suffering and accepts the Lord's will, "faith will be done," while family members and caregivers may have a difficult time accepting the tragic outcome and being able to strengthen their faith from the experience. We cannot measure faith by "an extra day." When the challenges of mortality come, and they come for all of us, it may seem hard to have faith and hard to believe. Contemporary English Version I pray that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give peace, love, and faith to every follower! Douay-Rheims Bible Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. GOD'S WORD Translation May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give our brothers and sisters peace and love along with faith. For peace is first with God, in the thankful receiving of His mercy; from this naturally arises "love with faith" towards Him; and out of this, again, peace and love towards men, in the conviction that, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). All these are gifts from "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." For which reason, because we have righteousness through faith, let us be at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Common New Testament. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Daniel Mace New Testament. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Darby Translation. even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; Romans 3:26-28. for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:30. since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, - New American Standard Version (1995). Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; - American Standard Version (1901). For which reason, because we have righteousness through faith, let us be at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; - Basic English Bible. The first gospel application that is made to believers is that we have peace with God and therefore have unhindered access to God himself Romans 5 1 2 . Because we have been joined to Christ legally and have been therefore declared righteous, and joined to Christ vitally and have been therefore made righteous, we have direct access to God. Can faith in the Lord mark the way? Some of you are worried about employment opportunities and what will occur after you finish your studies at the university. Can faith in the Lord mark the way? Some of you are concerned about marriage "will I get married? If so, to whom and when?" [Lectures on Faith, Lecture First, 16, 24]. The simplest definition I know of faith is, "Faith is power." How do you exercise faith in the Lord to help you resolve the challenges of life? How do you learn to use that power to bless yourself and others? [1 Nephi 3:15; emphasis added]. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is fully sustaining. You can pay the price by disciplining yourself and then causing things to happen. Hold your word as sacred to God, to others, and to yourself.