



## Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group

Transforming Faith Series (Fall 2019) | Lesson #3, Thursday, September 19, 2019

Transforming faith is a play on words. Faith is transforming in and of itself, but the adding word “transforming” as an adjective or descriptor gives our faith a dynamic element as mature in Christ. Faith is necessary to be saved from the “penalty of sin”, but it’s amazing how as Believers we can failure to experience salvation from the “power of sin”.

Faith is evidence of God’s work in our lives. Scripture tells that it is *impossible to please God without faith* (Hebrews 11:6). I’ll go a step further - absent faith and an underlying belief in God’s ability to accomplish anything, we will never be able to accomplish all God has called us to do. When we truly get hold of this concept, we will be in a position to move mountains. Now, that is transformational living!

In this series we’ve got four goals:

1. Explore what the Bible has to say about faith and learn from our “Heroes of the Faith”.
2. Try and understand WHY faith is important to us. The WHY drives the HOW and WHAT.
3. Identify areas in our lives where faith can really transform our Christian living.
4. Have fun! Following Jesus is the greatest experience we can have. We of all people should enjoy life.

### Series Bible Verses

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

Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

<sup>5</sup> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB)

### Series Quote

*Faith is acting like it is so, even though it is not so, so that is might be so, simply because God said so!*

Dr. Tony Evans

Provided below is the outline for our 6-week series.

1. **September 5<sup>th</sup>:** Why is faith important to us as followers of Jesus in how we live?
2. **September 12<sup>th</sup>:** What’s the opposite of faith? Taking shortcuts limits God’s work in our lives
3. **September 19<sup>th</sup>:** **Exercising the muscle of faith – it’s got to be exercised!**
4. **September 26<sup>th</sup>:** Houston, we have a problem. How lack of faith is impacting Christians in America.
5. **October 5<sup>th</sup>:** Faith’s role in salvation – stepping to *Sanctification* from *Justification*.
6. **October 12<sup>th</sup>:** The Power to Move Mountains and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Tonight’s lesson is focused on **Exercising the muscle of faith – it’s got to be exercised!** By the time you get to the stage of life most of us are at you’ve got two kinds of people: (1) those who exercise and (2) those who don’t. I happen to fall into the former group (running is my therapy). However, there are some people who are just plain irritating with how they build their lives around exercise and eating correctly. It’s almost as if they *live to exercise* as opposed to exercising to have a better quality of life! It’s impossible to be focused too much on God, but it is possible to be focused too much on the things of this world, one of which includes being overly-concerned with our earthly bodies.



Just like it's possible to gain weight due to physical inactivity, it's also possible to become spiritually obese. As Isaac Newton's first law of motion states, *a body at rest tends to remain at rest and a body in motion tends to remain in motion unless acted upon by another force*. Just as Isaac Newton's statement applies to inanimate objects in the world of Newtonian Mechanics, the same can be said of our spiritual activity level. In the context of faith, spiritual obesity results when we fail to take risks for the Kingdom of God and choose to limit God's work in our lives for a variety of reasons we'll discuss tonight. Inactivity means we are content to sit on the sidelines and let others do the work God called us to do (not someone else).

The avoidance of spiritual obesity is best achieved when we are in a healthy spiritual state focused on God; but that is a choice. Just as the person who works out on a regular basis, we have positioned ourselves for spiritual success by exercising our "muscle of faith". Believers who are experiencing the greatest levels of joy are those who are spiritually exercising on a regular basis. Joy is an indicator of how healthy we are living as reflected in the following statement.

*The greatest contributors to joy in our lives are abiding in Christ, loving others, and a belief that God is ultimately in charge of every aspect of our lives.*

During our lecture time we'll hit the following points:

- Discuss how is faith like a muscle in that it must be exercised in order to develop.
- Spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible study, and times of meditation are extremely import.
- Developing a strong prayer life, as reflected in James 1:2-8. A strong prayer life helps improve our dependency on God.
- This study is as much about **prayer** as it is on **faith**. *Show me someone who prays a lot and I guarantee you that person has faith in God's ability to do anything.*

Remember that through the power of the Holy Spirit, God gives of all us the resources we need to be successful for His Kingdom as reflected in 2 Corinthians 12:9-11 (NASB):

<sup>9</sup> And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.<sup>10</sup> Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

If you're not already doing so, make it a priority **this week** to make plans for getting in shape spiritually.

#### Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Would you consider yourself spiritually healthy? Explain why or who not.
2. What challenges you the most in terms of developing a strong desire to pursue God?
3. If you could believe (and act like) that God was in 100% control of your life, how would that impact your actions and the decisions you are currently making in life?
4. Are there any specific areas in your life that are preventing you from tasks risks for the Kingdom? Examples include fear of failure, discouragement, past failures, and feeling of inadequacy.