

Developing



Strong Faith!

by Jason Peebles

I want to give you five ATOMIC POWER KEYS for faith. I've used these keys for most of my Christian life and I can tell you that they WILL produce results. Just like *atomic power* releases the fundamental force of nature, these five keys will help you experience God's power.

Before we get started, though, it is imperative that we understand an important paradox in God's kingdom. A paradox is a statement that is seemingly contradictory to common sense and yet true. And what is the paradox related to strong faith? The apostle Paul summarizes the paradox of God's strength in 2 Corinthians 12:9 -- "*And He (Jesus) said unto me, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, most gladly will I rejoice in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*"

Strength from Weakness

Wow! Initially, Paul's statement does not seem to make sense at all. How can anyone rejoice in weakness and hope to be strong? Yet this is precisely the foundation that Jesus identifies for His power. If you want His strength, then you cannot see your weaknesses as limitations. **In fact, your weaknesses (your shortcomings, past failures, heartaches, lack, and handicaps) can actually "help you" by reminding you to depend on Christ and His ability.** Ironically, you cannot trust

in your strengths either. You must come to the point where you realize that all your strengths (*your talents, skills, education, money, and accomplishments*) will fall pitifully short of what you COULD BE if you would truly trust in God's ability. **Thus, you must commit not only your weaknesses to Christ but also what you consider your strengths.** You see, strong faith is not about gritting your teeth and "trying hard" to be strong for God. It's about trusting in the ability of Jesus Christ in you. When you do this, it's like putting your potential on divine steroids! Otherwise, you will only live in the realm of what "you" can do.

Christ-based Faith

Building on this paradox, it is vital that we distinguish between genuine Christ-based faith and Self-based faith. You see, there are different types of "faith." There's self-confident faith, sales and marketing faith, self-help faith, religious faith, and on and on. The problem with every other type of faith (other than Christ-based faith) is that it focuses on what "you" want and what "you" can do. You can go to sales meetings and self-help rallies and get "pumped up" about believing in yourself. "You can do it!" is the mantra of human-based faith.

Unfortunately, this type of faith is often confused with Christ-based faith. When I listen to some preachers, I can't help but wonder if they are advocating authentic faith that is squarely based on surrender to Christ and His will – or, if they are encouraging others to write their own ticket with their own terms. To give my brothers the benefit of the doubt, I sometimes conclude that they must mean well but are missing the mark regarding surrender to God's will. It's like teaching children about "atomic power" when they don't have the good sense to use it properly. In God's Kingdom, before "you can do it" can be true, you must have a revelation that "you cannot do it." Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). You must have this revelation before you can experience, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). Paul had come to the point where he said, "I count all things (weaknesses and strengths) as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ" (Phil 3:8).

I can tell you from experience that your flesh will resist this path of genuine dependency on

Christ. Your flesh wants to take charge, create its own plans, and then ask God to rubber stamp it. **You must learn that the foundation for authentic Christ-based faith is not what you want or what you can do, but what God wants and what He can do.** Understanding this will prepare you to use your faith properly.

All Things Possible

Faith is part of the human makeup. Even the "unsaved" have faith. In my missionary travels, I've observed people in many nations (most who are not yet Christians) and they have faith. They all have hopes and dreams about a better life. They want clothes, homes, and the ability to take care of their children. That's faith. It may not be strong faith or properly placed faith (in Christ), yet faith is there. Romans 12:3 says, "God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." One of the greatest gifts that God gave the human race is the ability to dream about the future and have faith. Over and over in the New Testament Jesus said, "Thy faith has made you whole" (Lk 8:48). Faith is the source of creativity, productivity, and accomplishment. Matthew 19:26 says, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mt 19:26). So what are the keys that can take the seed of faith and turn it into STRONG FAITH?



Faith Key #1 – DETERMINE the will of God and become convinced of it.

This is the starting point. Strong faith knows what God wants. You might ask, “*How can anyone possibly know what God wants?*” It’s really not that hard. The starting point is the Word of God. If the Word says to forgive those who offend you (Mt 18:35) then what does God want? If the Word says that you can be healed (Ps 103:3) then what does God want? If the Word says that God can supply all your needs (Phil 4:19) then what is the will of God? Folks, this isn’t rocket science!

Thus, the better you know the principles and promises in God’s Word, the more you will be able to determine God’s will. In John 15:7 Jesus connects miracles to his WORD and ABIDING: “*If you ABIDE in me and my WORDS abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.*” **Faith is based on God’s Word and your relationship with the Lord Himself.** As you talk with Him (prayer) you will eventually sense what God wants. It may come in the form of a verse that you recall or a strong impression. There are many ways that the Holy Spirit can communicate. His desires will become your desires. Thus, you will start desiring things that are in line with God’s will.

Romans 10:17 says, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*” This is the starting point. **If you want STRONG FAITH then you must “know, that you know, that you know” what God wants.** Why is this so important? Because when you run into obstacles (as we all do), you will be able to persevere and overcome. Yes, there may be occasions when it’s difficult to determine the exact will of God or His “timing” – but those situations are not as numerous as people imagine. If that happens, then wait, pray, study, and talk to others until you have clear direction. But with most things, God has ALREADY declared His will in His Word.

Faith Key #2 – SEE THE ANSWER. Let the Holy Spirit give you a picture of the completed goal in your heart.

Once you know the will of God, it’s not hard to start “seeing” your future. This is what “*believing in your heart*” is all about (Mk 11:22-24). **God has given you an imagination, so start using it the right way!** Start “seeing” yourself

with a successful business. Start seeing yourself with good health. Start seeing yourself in ministry. Let the Holy Spirit take the revealed will of God (*from His Word and through prayer – Key #1*) and create an IMAGE of it in your heart. “See” it.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will endeavor to show you things to come (Jn 16:13). In Genesis 15:5 God said to Abram: “*Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars ... so shall thy seed be.*” What was God doing? God was showing Abram his future and putting a picture of it in his heart. King David “saw” the Temple that he never built. 1 Chronicles 28:11-12 says, “*Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern ... the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit.*” What an amazing story! The Holy Spirit gave David detailed blueprints of the future Temple. It goes on to say in verse 19: “*All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.*” In a similar way, the apostle Paul said, “*While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*” (2 Cor 4:18).

If you are going to fulfill God’s will, your imagination is an absolutely critical element to your faith. Paul even used this idea in evangelism. Galatians 3:1 says, “*Before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you*” (Gal 3:1). Jesus died in Jerusalem, not Galatia. Yet Paul had painted a picture of the crucifixion so vividly that it was as if they had “seen” it. What was the result? The Galatians had faith and believed. Likewise, you must start “seeing” what God wants for your life. Faith starts by becoming convinced of God’s will (Key #1) and then “seeing” it in your heart (Key #2).

Faith Key #3 – SAY THE ANSWER. Start speaking in line with God’s will.

The next key to strong faith is to speak in line with what God wants. In fact, Key #2 and Key #3 will probably happen together. They tend to reinforce each other. The more you “see” it the more you will “say” it. And, the more you “say” it the more you will “see” it. **There’s definitely a heart-and-mouth connection throughout God’s Word.** Romans 10:8 clearly illustrates this – “*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and*

believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with **the heart** one believes unto righteousness; and with **the mouth** confession is made unto salvation.” Can it be any clearer? If you believe something in your heart then you will speak about it with your mouth.

Here’s a truth that you can go to the bank on. You can’t go through life being critical of everyone, speaking negatively, envisioning wrong things and then expect miracles. It doesn’t work! Proverbs 18:21 says, *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”* Your words are important. When asked to teach on faith, here’s what Jesus said -- *“Whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that those things which he says will be done, he will have whatever he says”* (Mk 11:23).

Faith Key #4 – DO SOMETHING to release your faith. Ask God for a plan of action and get started.

True faith will eventually “do” something. James 2:17 says, *“Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”* It goes on to say in verse 18 – *“Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”* You must be willing to start small. Don’t wait for the “big breakthrough” to get started.

I’ve been an instrument pilot for many years. But I remember when it was just a dream in my heart. I didn’t have the money to take my first lesson, much less own an airplane. Yet, I would go out to the local airport and watch the small airplanes take off and land. **It seemed like an insignificant step, but at least I was “moving.”** I started talking to every pilot who would listen to me. And, if they let me look inside their airplane, the better! I put photos where I could “see” it. Eventually, I learned to fly and I’ve owned several airplanes through the years.

Doing something helps release your faith. I remember when we couldn’t afford a home, but we went and looked anyway. We couldn’t afford an office building, but we looked. There’s always something that you can do to get started. **Strong faith doesn’t wait for a magic day to come when the answer arrives on a silver platter. It’s willing to roll up its sleeves and get started.** If you want the grace

of God to flow into your life, then you can’t despise the day of small beginnings. Read Zechariah 4:6-10 and you will clearly see the connection between grace (God’s ability), speaking (shouting grace), and getting started in small ways.

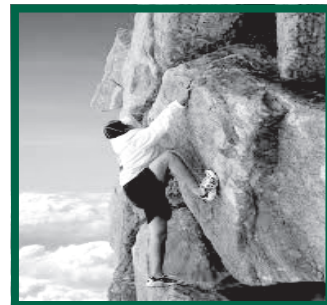
Faith Key #5 – STAY SUBMITTED to ensure the answer remains.

This is a big one. Many people end up losing the miracles they get. I’ve seen people lose businesses, ministries, and families. They forget that you have to *“protect the garden”* (Gen 2:15). They forget that we are in a spiritual battle that requires armor (Eph 6:10-18). Satan would love to snare and rob you of what you have (2 Tim 2:26). Thus, you can’t afford to “coast” in life or start living in sin. Seed-time and harvest will catch up with you.

2 Chronicles 26:5 is one of the best verses in the Bible: *“As long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.” As long / As long / AS LONG as he sought the Lord God made him prosper.* When you read the entire story, Uzziah prospered until pride defeated him. Verse 16 says, *“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.”* If you want strong faith that births miracles AND KEEPS THEM, then you must stay submitted to Christ and His will. If you sense yourself “drifting” then recommit immediately. Return to the basics of prayer, reading the Word, and fellowship with other Christians. Get in the habit of *“continuing education”* where you always have good Christian literature by your bed. Staying connected to the vine is vital for true success that remains (Jn 15).

Dear friend, I pray that your faith will grow stronger and stronger. I pray that these keys will produce God’s blessings and help you fulfill God’s will.

■ -- Jason Peebles



Key Memory Verse:

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”

Ephesians 3:20

Prayer for Strong Faith

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. Teach me to have strong faith by committing both my weaknesses and my strengths to you. I want to dream your dreams and accomplish your plans. I give you my mind, my imagination, and the words of my mouth. Thank you for your great love. In Jesus Name – Amen.”

We hope this Study Guide helps you. *World Outreach Ministries* was founded in 1979 by Jason Peebles. We are the home office for missionaries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and South America, and the islands of the sea. Our missionaries are from all types of church backgrounds and are involved in a variety of outreaches – evangelism, schools, medical clinics, children’s shelters, aviation, translation work, broadcasting, leadership training, and support roles. God’s kingdom has all kinds of workers!

We are a faith ministry – that is, we look to God to impress friends like you to partner with us. If this Study Guide encourages you, then please consider supporting our outreach in one of the following ways. *Your gifts will directly help our Missionary Agency . . .*

Missionary Agency Info:

www.WorldOutreach.org

1-800-832-WORD

Online Support:

www.WorldOutreach.org/00

Mail Support to:

World Outreach Ministries

P.O. Box B

Marietta, GA 30061

(designate for Home office)