

Home Group Study Guide

(#296) **Believing Before Having**

You find the transcript of the message which informs this study @
<http://www.livinggracetoowoomba.org/2017/sermons17.htm>.

Warm-Up

1. Has God ever made you promises which you believed? Did they come true?
2. How confident are you believing in eternal life and spending your future in heaven? Do you feel assured that you are being saved and has this hope ever been tested?

Let's Talk About It

1. At 15 years of age, Kenneth Hagin was sick in bed and he was dying. Then he discovered the Bible verse of Mark 11:24: *“Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* What is your spontaneous and immediate reaction to this verse? Does it apply? Is it practical? Can you rely on this promise? Should a sick and dying boy become hopeful in response to this verse?
2. Kenneth Hagin had the following experience when he discovered Mark 11:24:

It seemed as if someone had turned on a bright light in a very dark room. And you cannot imagine how dark it can be, even in the daytime, when you are shut in between four walls and are staring at the ceiling all the time with a feeling of utter hopelessness.

I didn't know that the Psalmist had said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). But without knowing the Word, I had the experience. The whole room suddenly seemed engulfed in light, and there seemed to be light on the inside of me. I never have forgotten that experience or that Scripture. It is as if it were branded on my heart.

... I'd pray and was sure God had heard me and had healed me because I sort of had the feeling that He had. I don't mean I felt it physically, because I didn't feel any different. But I just felt like He had heard me. I can't say that physically I felt that God heard me; but I'm talking about a spiritual sense of some kind.

When I would pray for healing, I would sense, this is it; my prayer has been answered...

After this experience, Kenneth went on a faith journey of healing. Before you go on a faith journey and make a stand for a promise of God, do you also need some kind of experience which assures you of being in the will of God? Have you ever had anything that was “branded on your heart”? Or have you had a “spiritual sense” that certain prayers would be answered?

See Matthew 14:28-29 and 2 Chronicles 5:17-25 for the Biblical practice of getting confirmation before going ahead with claiming a promise a certain way.

3. Kenneth began to doubt the meaning of Mark 11,24 and wanted a pastor to explain the verse to him, three pastors promised to come. Two failed to come and the third did not pray for him but

simply patted his hand expecting him to die soon. This caused the 15-year-old Kenneth to fall into a depression and he laid motionless on his bed for 30 days.

Have you ever experienced that someone or something completely robbed you of faith and hope? How did you react? How long did it take you to recover?

4. After 30 days, Kenneth read the Bible again and especially Mark 11:24: *“Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* Then he grew bolder. He writes:

I told God I was going to take Him at His Word: I was going to believe He told the truth, and this verse meant what it said. If the New Testament was true, then I was going to come off this bed. I told Him I was going to live and not die. “If I don’t get off this bed, then the Bible isn’t so, and I am going to have them take it and throw it in the trash can.” I meant business!

Some time later, an ambulance drove him through the middle of town and he had another experience where his resolve grew:

Just as we turned the corner and started down the south side of the square, I turned and looked at the old courthouse that sat in the middle of the square. I shall never forget that moment as long as I live. In that instant, something said to me, “Well, you never did think you would ever see these old buildings again. And you wouldn’t have, if it hadn’t been for the kindness of the man who is taking you.”

Then I remembered the verse in Mark 11:24: *“Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them,”* and I recalled the verse that went before it which said, *“he will have whatever he says.”* [Mark 11:23-24 NKJV: “For assuredly, I say to you, 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 he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”]

As I said it in that ambulance that day, tears rolled down my face. I didn’t understand all that I know now. I had just one small gleam of light. It was like a little light that might peep through a crack in the door, but it was a beginning point for me this first day of January 1934 about 2 o’clock in the afternoon.

I said, “Yes, I will see these buildings and this courthouse again. I will come and stand in this courthouse square, because Jesus said that what you believe in your heart and say with your mouth shall come to pass.” I had committed myself.

Was Kenneth’ boldness too daring? Was he wrong in committing himself to believe? He was ready to throw the Bible in the trash can if Mark 11:24 was not coming true for him. Have you ever become bold in believing a promise from God? How did that boldness express itself?

See 1 Samuel 11:6 and Acts 4:29-31 for illustrations of how the Holy Spirit can inspire people to boldness in their faith.

5. For seven more months, Kenneth exercised bold faith but remained sick. Then, he discovered where he went wrong. He writes:

I had been struggling with Mark 11:24 for a long time, but I still wasn’t any better. I told the Lord, “You said when You were on earth that *“whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* I desire to be healed, and I believe. If You were to stand here in my room and I could see You with my physical eyes and take hold of your hand, and if You were to tell me my trouble is that I’m not believing, I would have to say this isn’t true. I am believing.

Then a voice on the inside of me spoke so clearly it seemed as if someone had spoken audibly: “Yes, you are believing as far as you know, but the last clause of that verse says, ‘and ye shall have them.’”

...In this moment, I saw exactly what that verse in Mark 11:24 meant. Until then I was going to wait till I was actually healed. I was looking at my body and testing my heartbeat to see if I had been healed. But I saw that the verse says that you have to believe when you pray. The having comes after the believing. I had been reversing it. I was trying to have first and then believe second. That is what most people do.

“I see it. I see it!” I said with joy. “I see what I’ve got to do, Lord. I’ve got to believe that my heart is well while I’m still lying here on this bed, and while my heart is not beating right. I’ve got to believe that my paralysis is gone while I’m still lying here helpless, flat on my back. “I believe in my heart that You have heard my prayer! I believe that my heart is healed and that my paralysis is gone! I believe in my heart that I have received healing for my body!”

What was Kenneth’s mistake? What does it mean that “the having comes after the believing”? Kenneth had prayed with some kind of faith but it was more hope than faith. He had not yet exercised faith conviction – believing with certainty – and thus lay hold of his healing.

What is the difference between praying with hope and praying with faith? How much of your praying is hopeful but not strong in faith? How can we pray with stronger faith conviction?

6. Why did God let Kenneth struggle for a further seven months before helping him with further insights? Why is God sometimes seemingly slow to deliver us in times of crisis? For the rest of his life, Kenneth Hagin would minister to thousands upon thousands all across the world by exercising strong faith, but why did it take so much pain and so much time for him to learn the lessons about faith and Mark 11:24?
7. Finally, Kenneth learned to act on his faith regardless of his feelings of helplessness and doubt. There may be doubtful thought and doubtful feelings but you can ignore them and take a practical step of faith which can activate the promise of God. This is what Kenneth discovered:

Then I said, “Thank God, I’m healed.” I lifted my hands and praised God. Momentarily, I started to feel my heart to see if it was beating normally, but I caught myself and stated that I wasn’t going by feelings but by faith. I kept saying that my heart was well. I praised the Lord in this manner for about 10 minutes.

Then the Holy Spirit spoke as an inner witness on the inside of me and said, “You believe that you are healed. If you are healed, then you should be up and out of that bed.”

I felt this was right, so I pushed myself up to a sitting position with my hands. Then I reached down, got hold of my feet, and swung them around to the side of the bed. I couldn’t feel them, but I could see them. Then I said that I was going to stand and walk.

Negative thoughts were coming to my mind, just as fast as a machine gun fires bullets...

I grabbed a hold of the bedpost, but my knees wouldn’t function. My limbs wouldn’t function, so with my arms around that bedpost, I just hung there, sagging at the knees.

As best I could, I lifted one hand a little bit, and said, “Thank God, I’m healed. I wanted to declare in the Presence of Almighty God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels of heaven, and in the presence of the devil and evil spirits, that the Word of God is true. I believe I’m healed. I believe it!” That old room started spinning because, you see, I’d been lying flat on my back for sixteen months.

The floor seemed to be where the ceiling was just minutes before, and I could see the chest of drawers moving as that room seemed to spin around and around. Everything was just spinning. I just shut my eyes and held onto that bedpost. In a few minutes, I could tell everything had quit spinning. I opened my eyes and everything

was in place. I said it again, “Thank God, according to the Word I’m healed. I believe that.” Then for the first time in many months I felt something. Feeling actually returned to me. It seemed to start in the top of my head, and went down over me, like you might take oil or something warm and pour it over someone’s head.

For example, if you poured a lot of oil on someone, it would just run down over the whole body. This feeling, like warm oil being poured on me, went down all over my body. And when it got to my waist, feeling came, as that warm oil went down and out the end of my toes. Every nerve in my limbs was reactivated, and I felt like two million pins were sticking me in my limbs.

Then I just simply felt normal. My paralysis was gone. I said, “I’m going to walk now,” and I did. And I’ve been walking ever since! That is when I first learned what it means to have faith and to act on my faith. Here’s what I’m saying to you. Believing you receive before you have it is not only true for exercising faith for your healing, but faith also comes into operation that way in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, too, or any other petition from God.

If you have heard God give you a promise, how can you act on the promise now? What are some instances where you acted on your faith even though your emotions and thoughts were expressing doubt and fear? When God is responding to people acting on their faith, what does this teach about the importance of practical obedience and doing something?

What Now?

1. How can Mark 11:24 become part of your life: *“Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”*
2. What do you want from God? What will you ask of God, get assurance from him that he has heard you, commit yourself with boldness, exercise faith and act on your faith? What has God placed on your heart?