

CHAPTER 16

THE LAW OF FAITH (e²)

"...If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

Gunnar Olson, a Swedish industrialist in the plastics field, is the Founder and Chairman of ICCO, International Christian Chamber of Commerce. I met Gunnar in 1979, at the time he was an International Director of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. Our local Seattle chapter had invited fifteen leaders of the Fellowship from Europe to spend a week in our city for training and fellowship. Gunnar stayed in our home along with a man from Germany.

At the time Gunnar stayed in our home, I had been a Christian for only three years, but I remember vividly a story that Gunnar shared with my wife and me concerning an aluminum pot and pan business he owned. The company had produced a warehouse full of thousands of pots and pans, and sales had been very slow. The company was running out of working capital; the situation was desperate. In his Friday night prayer group one of the members shared a Bible scripture which inspired Gunnar to speak to his mountain (the warehouse full of pots and pans). His prayer group joined in agreement with Gunnar, and in the name of Jesus he commanded the pots and pans to move out of his warehouse. Within days new sales came into Gunnar's Company and the warehouse was emptied. Years later, when I was faced with a serious lack of sales in my business Gunnar's simple testimony shared in the living room of our home inspired me to speak to my mountain. While I didn't see immediate results, as I continued to stand on the word of God, we were awarded the largest project our company had ever received, and the next year we sold six times the work we had sold in the previous year. Subsequent to Gunnar Olson visiting Seattle in 1979 he sold the aluminum pots and pan factory and purchased a plastics factory named Alfapac. Gunnar relates the following story:

Alfapac produces huge plastic bags in which farmers store their silage. Alfapac had introduced these plastic bags to farmers as a cost-effective method for storing the silage and they very soon dominated the market. "One year, however Alfapac experienced an enormous problem. with the silage bag production- Production had begun in December and the first shipments of the bags were scheduled for the end of April. When it came time to ship, we had our storage yard full of thousands of silage bags worth several million dollars. I had no idea that anything was wrong until my brother, who was the general manager, came to me. He looked troubled. "Gunnar, I think we've come to the end of the road at Alfapac," he told me. "Whatever do you mean?" I asked.

I listened as he explained that all the bags, which had been produced during the last five months, were faulty. Something had happened to the plastic molecules during the processing and instead of producing a bag with two sheets of plastic; they had laminated together forming a single sheet of plastic. After heat-sealing the bottom of the bag, we had an automatic folding machine which had made it impossible to discover the problem until it was too late. Over one thousand pallets of silage bags were standing in the yard ready to go, but not one could be used! That week, engineering and manufacturing experts had been called in from all over Europe but no one could suggest a solution. Our production was totally useless, and the reject bags could only be used by recycling.

My poor brother was almost sick with worry from it all, as he had been carrying this burden of this problem for over a week. We had been producing bags for over five months and no one had noticed the problem until it was time to ship! He knew that Alfapac was ruined. The company could not sustain such a great financial loss, and we would never be able to regain the market. I told my brother to go home and relax. I knew that our answer was to be found in prayer, and I knew that my brother couldn't pray effectively feeling as he did.

I assembled the family and shared the news. Then we decided how we would deal with the problem in prayer. We would simply present the situation to the Lord and then listen to His Holy Spirit because after all we had given the company to Him.

"Lord," I prayed, "You know what's happened. What shall we do?" Then we waited on the Holy Spirit. After a short time of praying, each person shared what he or she sensed the Lord was saying. We began with Git, our youngest. She said, "This situation is not from God; it was the work of the enemy and we should stand against it in the name of Jesus." Mats agreed, and my wife Asther said, "If Jesus could turn water into wine, then plastic bags are no problem!" I felt that if we had faith the size of a tiny mustard seed we could command this "mountain of a problem" to be thrown into the sea. And so we all agreed. We weren't going to receive the problem, even though it was a fact in the physical world. By faith we were going to receive the solution. Just as we finished our prayer, the phone rang. Someone was calling from London; it was a man I had met earlier in China.

"Listen," he said, "I don't know what's going on, but I have a word for you. You must speak to the invisible."

This word of encouragement was just what we needed, and our faith was strengthened. Then the man continued, "If you can't deal with the small things, how are you going to deal with China?" At that time, I had some plans for China, and his words really spoke to me. How we praised the Lord and thanked Him for answering our prayers! That phone call had reassured us of God's love and His faithfulness, and I felt the pressure of the burden lift away. I immediately phoned my brother and told him to relax with his family and go and play a round of golf.

"What's up with you?" he asked. "How can you tell me to relax at a time like this? Don't you understand you're finished?"

"Just go and play golf," I replied. "There's not going to be a problem." My brother had told me the bad news on Friday, and the first opportunity we had to visit the factory and see the pallets was Sunday evening. Driving out to the factory, we agreed that we would not allow even the tiniest piece of sealed plastic to remain after we had prayed. As we stood holding hands in the yard, I was glad I hadn't seen all the pallets before. They were everywhere! To the natural eye, it was overwhelming. For a while, we stood and praised the Lord for His faithfulness and mercy. Then I yelled at the top of my voice, "Listen heaven and earth! Who is the Lord over Alfapac? His Name is Jesus! In the name of Jesus, I command all those plastic molecules to come back into line!"

*Praying in tongues, we laid hands on each pallet and after three hours we had finished the job. We went home. On Monday morning, my brother ordered the whole factory staff to open all the boxes and check their contents. And to the glory of God, not one plastic bag was sealed! What a mighty God we serve! **This is the glory element which becomes visible as we submit every aspect of our lives to Him.** There is a joy which carries us through every difficulty as we work with Him, and He is excellent in everything He does. (1)*

Gunnar says there is a difference between a secular business and one that's given over to the Lord: "There is a glory dimension to a Kingdom business which distinguishes it from the secular business! It is a dimension which should be normal for a Christian businessman, but I had to learn about this as the Lord brought us through various situations at our company Alfapac." (1)

Gunnar's obedience in speaking to his mountain caused God to manifest a miracle in his company and no doubt saved Alfapac from financial ruin.

FAITH PLEASES GOD

"But 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 diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Many desire the promises of God's Word, without living a life that is submitted to God's Word. In the book *Business by the Spirit*, we emphasize the importance of faith, as well as the development and exercise of your faith. Faith is certainly important, because the writer of Hebrews says that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Yet it is also true that in order to please God you must also live your life in accordance with the moral tenants of His word. In the above scripture from the book of Hebrews, the writer is obviously speaking about the "God kind of faith"--the kind of faith that comes by believing and living in accordance with God's Word.

If we cannot please God without faith, and we want God's blessing in our lives and our business, then we need to understand what the "God kind of faith" is, and how to develop and release it in our lives.

FAITH IS INFORMATION WE RECEIVE FROM GOD

Let me share with you what I believe is the best human definition of faith that I have ever heard. "Faith is a noun; it is information. It is something you have... you get a set of instructions or information from God which becomes your faith. Believe is a verb; it is something you do...your acting is your believing." (2) Believing is an action you take as a result of the faith you have in your heart. "You do not believe in the Biblical sense without acting on your faith." (2)

When you meditate upon (think upon and confess) a promise that God has given you in the Creator's Handbook, or word spoken into your heart by the Spirit of God, it plants a seed of hope in your heart and that seed begins to grow. When the Word of God is fully established in your heart it becomes your faith. Your faith, the information you get from God to act on, tells you in advance what the will of God is concerning a matter. God's Word is His will.

The eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews is often referred to as the "faith chapter." The writer of Hebrews gives us several examples of Old Testament men and women of faith such as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and others. All of these men and women received information from God, information that told them in advance what they were to do. That information became their faith, and they demonstrated that they believed God by acting on their faith. As an example, Noah received advance information from God concerning a worldwide flood which He was going to bring upon the earth. God also instructed Noah as to how to construct an ark whereby Noah, his family and two of every creature might escape the flood. It was that information that became Noah's faith. Noah acted on his faith by building the Ark, and by doing so he became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith (Hebrews 11:7). Acting on your faith (the information you get from God) is the only way that God will account you righteousness, and when you are righteous you are in right standing with God.

In the twenty-first century we usually get our information from God in two basic ways: (1) we get it from the Scriptures, and (2) God may speak a "Rhema word" directly to our spirit.

EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS THE "GOD KIND OF FAITH"

When you were born again the Spirit of God moved into your spirit. Speaking to the believers in Rome, Paul said, "...God has dealt to each one a measure of faith"(Romans 12:3). Paul was talking about a measure of the "faith of God" that was given to you when you were born again. God starts every believer off with the same amount of faith; it is yours to be used and developed in your daily life. The measure or the amount of faith that God gave to you when you were born again can be increased - it can grow (2Thessalonians 1:3). However, you are the one who increases it - not God. You can increase your faith by:

- (1) Meditating upon (thinking upon and confessing) the Word of God, and
- (2) Exercising you faith, by putting it to work in your daily life and business affairs.

THE LAW OF FAITH DEFINED

One day Jesus and his men were walking from the town of Bethany on their way to the city of Jerusalem when He became hungry. In the distance Jesus saw a fig tree, and He approached the tree to see if perhaps He might find some figs on it. Finding no fruit He said to the barren fig tree, "let no one eat fruit from you ever again!" (Mark 11:14). The next morning as He and His men were passing

by the same fig tree, Peter noticed that it had dried up from its roots. Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away" (Mark 11:21). Jesus used the incident to teach his men concerning faith, and said to them, "Have faith in God." One modern translation says "Have the faith **of** God." Jesus had demonstrated the "God kind of faith" when He cursed the fig tree. Then Jesus went on to explain the "God kind of faith": "For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, (his spirit), 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'" (Mark 11:23 - 24). These two verses define the Law of Faith, and in the above incident with the fig tree Jesus, gave us a practical demonstration concerning the exercise of the Law of Faith. First, our faith must be in our hearts and in our mouths to get results; second, our faith must be in God, based on God's promises (remember - "faith is information we get from God to act on"); thirdly, Jesus' words **those things** means that the "Law of Faith" will produce whatever things that God has promised us in his word; fourthly, you can either **say** your faith or **pray** your faith.

On another occasion Jesus spoke the same principle to his men using slightly different words: "... for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Think about that! If you develop the "God kind of faith" in your spirit concerning prosperity in your business affairs, "...nothing will be impossible to you."

YOU MUST KNOW WHEN TO RECEIVE

Most of us get the believing and confessing part of the law of faith right, but we miss it in the receiving part. Jesus taught that we are to receive the answer to our prayer when we pray (Mark 11:24). After we pray we are to think and act like we have received the thing for which we prayed. This is the area of the faith walk in which I experienced the most difficulty in the early years of my Christian business career. I would believe that God had given me a certain thing, and would even confess that I had it, but I didn't think and act as if the thing for which I had prayed was mine. When problems developed and doubt began to bombard my mind, I would think my faith wasn't working and become discouraged. The receiving of the thing for which I believed was always in the future.

The thing we pray for becomes a fact in the spiritual world when we believe that we receive it, but it may not manifest in the physical world until a later time. I have found that believing God for finances is generally a process. It takes time, because our faith grows gradually. First the seed, and then the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head, and when the grain ripens the harvest comes (Mark 4:26-29).

Most Christians have a measure of faith, but they are not using the faith they have, because they don't know how to release their faith.

YOU CANNOT SAY JUST ANYTHING TO YOUR MOUNTAIN

In his book *What Have They Done with Abraham's Blessings?*, author Jay Snell (2) explains: "The Law of Faith states that 'you shall have whatever you say, if you believe what you say in your heart' (Mark 11:23). In this scripture the words translated *say* is the Greek word *LEGO* which emphasizes the content of what is said. Jesus could have used the Greek word *LALEO* which would have emphasized the way the speech was strung together. But, he used *LEGO* to stress the content of what they are to say to the mountain. What we are to say to our mountain must be limited to the information that we receive in advance from God concerning our mountain." (2) You see, it is limited to our faith. We cannot just say anything to our mountain. If we want our mountain to move, we must say the same thing that God has said about our mountain. In other words, we must first find a promise which God has made in His word or a word that God has spoken into our hearts concerning our mountain. Suppose you have a financial problem...let's say your business needs money to make the payment on its bank loan. In order for you to speak to your financial mountain you must first find a scripture that promises that God will meet your financial needs (scriptures like Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Philippians 4:15-19). Then you must meditate (think upon and confess) on that promise day and night until faith for finances is established in your spirit. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). You might also receive a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom spoken

directly into your spirit from the Spirit of God guiding you as to what you should speak to your mountain.

Faith comes by hearing, but faith is released by speaking.

FAITH MUST BE IN THE HEART AND IN THE MOUTH

Paul expresses the "law of faith" in another way in Romans 10:6-8 "But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way... But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):" Notice that Paul calls the Word of God "the word of faith" (Romans 10:8). The "God kind of faith" is developed in our spirit by meditating upon (thinking upon and confessing) the word of faith. But the "God kind of faith" is released from our spirit by speaking it from our mouth.

You may have great faith for a thing in your heart, but for it to produce results you must speak the faith you have for that thing from your mouth, and not just once, but continually until you receive the thing for which you are believing. The Word of God must be believed in your heart and confessed with your mouth to bring the manifestation of your faith to pass in your life.

In the next verse Paul, talking about the born again experience continues: "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" (Romans 10:9 & 10).

Notice that a person must confess that he has salvation, before he actually receives it. This is the touchstone of the "Law of Faith," and it applies to everything that we receive from God. We must confess that we have it before we receive it. We must believe that we have received it, and confess that we have it before it actually manifests in the physical world (Mark 11:23 & Mark 11:24).

The English word *salvation* used in the above verse is the translation of the Greek word *Solteria* (Strong's #4991), and it means deliverance, preservation, soundness, prosperity, happiness, rescue, and general well-being. The word is used both in the material, temporal sense and in the spiritual, eternal sense.

Therefore Romans 10:9&10 could just as well have been written, "That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that He has redeemed you from the curse of poverty, you shall become prosperous. For with the heart one believes unto redemption, and with the mouth confession is made unto prosperity."

A MAJOR HINDERANCE TO YOUR FAITH

Jesus is the Son of God; He is the express image of God's person, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. (Hebrews 1:3) The creation trusts God's word because God is faithful to His words. In order for you and me to walk in the God kind of faith we must also be faithful to our words. The Pharisees developed elaborate rules regarding the making of promises or vows, declaring that only those employing the name of God were binding. Yet Jesus declared, "let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no.' He pointed out that you shouldn't need to swear by the name of God; your word ought to be good enough.

If you are careless with your words, you will also doubt God's word! To be careless with your words is to care less about them; it means you place little or no value on the integrity of your word. If you do not have faith in your own words, how can you develop faith in God's Word? If you are not faithful to your words, it is because you do not really know Him, because He is faithful. I have found the younger businesspeople to be particularly careless with their words; they say they will meet at a certain time and routinely show up fifteen to twenty minutes late. They agree to complete a task at a certain time and do not keep the deadline. They place little value on the integrity of their words.

In order for you to become successful in business you must be faithful to your words even when it will cost you to do so. In the Psalm 15 David says, "Lord who may abide in Your Tabernacle? Who may

dwell in Your holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1). David describes five traits of those who dwell in God's presence. I deem the fourth trait cited by David to be extremely important to your success in business: "He who swears* to his own hurt and does not change;..." (Psalm 15:4). The fifteenth psalm concludes by declaring: "He who does these things shall never be moved." *A footnote in my Bible concerning verse 15:4 explains: "Swears - refers to a man's giving his word on a business deal that turns into a deficit, but in which he still keeps his word."

During my many years of experience in the business world there have been several situations where my verbal business agreements have turned into a deficit, but I have always honored my word even when it was quite costly to do so. I know that because I keep my word, God has honored me and prospered me because my faith was not compromised.

YOUR FAITH IS CONTINGENT UPON YOUR LOVE AND YOUR HOPE!

"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13). Faith is important, but as we have discussed in the previous chapter the Creator's Handbook describes the God kind of love is greater than faith. Notice that in the preceding verse of scripture that Paul includes faith, hope, and love all in the same context.

The New English translation says, "And what is faith? Faith gives substance to our hope, and makes us certain of realities we do not see (Hebrews 11:1 NEB). According to this scripture, hope is important for without it faith would have nothing to give substance to. Therefore it is important that we understand hope and how to obtain hope even in seemingly impossible situations. We discuss hope in more detail in the next chapter.

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(2) *What Have They Done with Abraham's Blessings?* Author: Jay Snell Volume 1, 2, 3, & 4; Copyright 1989 by Jay Snell Evangelistic Association, Manuel, Texas 77578) (Volume 4, Pg 17, 43, & 44)