

CHAPTER 18

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH (e²)

"...The righteousness of faith speaks in this way...The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that is the word of faith which we preach" (Romans 10:6 & 8).

On November 1 of 2002, which was the start of our 2003 fiscal year, I turned the operational management of my consulting firm over to a Christian man whom I had been training for several years; I will call him Joseph. It was my intention to allow Joseph to manage the company for a year, and then at the start of the following fiscal year sell the company to him. During the 2003 fiscal year, I still retained ownership of the firm, but I spent less time in the office, acting in an advisory capacity to Joseph. For some thirty years it had been my habit to spend a considerable amount of my time doing Christian mission work in other nations, but after turning over my business to Joseph, I began to travel even more, making several trips within the country and mission trips to Italy, Wales, England, Germany, and Russia during the first seven months of the fiscal year.

During the seventh month of the company's fiscal, year I returned to my office to find that the firm's sales were extremely low; we had sold only forty-five percent of the work which was required to keep our staff busy. I also found that the company had lost some sixty to seventy percent of its net worth. (One month later this loss would increase to eighty-five percent of our net worth.) But the immediate problem was that our sales backlog was far below that which was required to keep our staff productively employed; we were in a desperate situation. Our situation was particularly alarming in that we routinely made eighty-five percent of our annual sales during the first eight months of the year, and this year we had sold less than half that amount. This meant that during the remaining four months of the fiscal year we had no reasonable hope of obtaining enough sales to meet our expenses, let alone to make a profit. In addition, it was clear that my wife Barbara and I would have to pledge our personal wealth to the bank in order to obtain the working capital required to keep the corporation in business. It was apparent to me that if we didn't have a major increase in sales in the next several months, even with the new working capital, we would be out of business in ninety to one hundred twenty days. Joseph tried to put a happy face on the situation, assuring me that God would provide.

As I reviewed the desperate condition of my company, a spirit of the fear came upon me; from a human standpoint I saw no natural hope of our sales improving. One evening I told my wife Barbara "my faith isn't up to this situation." I knew I needed to increase my faith and I needed to increase it fast. I began to meditate (think upon and confess) the Word of God for several hours in the morning, and often I would spend several hours in the evening, sometimes even as many as five to six hours a day. Frankly the situation was so hopeless that I had nowhere to go but the Word of God. I went to Galatians 3:13&14 and began to confess that "Christ had redeemed me from the curse of poverty." On the basis of Luke 6:38 and 2 Corinthians 9:6&8 and other similar scriptures, I began to confess: "I have given cheerfully. I have given abundantly and God will make all grace abound toward me so I always have enough to give to every good work. My companies are prosperous and successful." I went to Mark 11:23&24 began to confess the Word of God concerning His promises to prosper me. About a month later I sensed faith rising in my spirit. With this new found faith, I decided to not just believe God for the same sales volume as previous year, but to believe Him for 150 percent of the average monthly sales from the previous years. The apostle Paul admonishes us to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1), and he also said that God calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Romans 4:17). So I began to imitate God and call sales that did not exist as though they did. I confessed that my company was prosperous and successful while it was almost bankrupt. I confessed that we had sold more than 150 percent of last year's sales when we had sold less than 45 percent of last year's sales. I confessed that we had those contracts before they were ever manifested in the natural realm.

The first month after I began my confession (that we had sold more than 150 percent of last year's monthly sales), we sold 174 percent. The following month we sold 142 percent, and the month after that we sold 205 percent. It looked as if things had turned around, and then the devil counterattacked. You can always count on a counterattack from the devil because he won't give up easily. Suddenly our sales came to a halt. During the next four-month period, when we should have sold another 600 percent of last year's average monthly sales, we had only sold 124 percent. In the natural it looked like Mark 11:23 wasn't working. It is easy to rejoice when the sales report shows that you have sold 150 percent of your average monthly sales. But it's not so easy to rejoice when the sales report indicates that you have sold nothing.

More believers lose the good fight of faith during the devil's counterattack than at any other time. Things start to get better and it looks as if God is going to deliver you from your problem; then just when you thought the battle was won, the attack comes at you from another direction. If you lose the confession of your hope (Hebrew 10:23) and give up, the devil will defeat you soundly. I recently saw a billboard with a picture of Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, during the Second World War. He was holding up his fingers to form his famous "V" for victory sign. On the billboard with the picture was the following quote: "Never, never, never give up." That's good advice when you are walking by faith.

By the beginning of the sixth month, our sales were far below that which that I had been confessing were mine. But then I began to understand where I was missing it. I had in effect established a deadline for God to answer my prayer, and that is unscriptural. Time is the dimension of this earthly life that tests our faith, and by expecting God to meet my sales goal every month, I had unconsciously removed the time element from the fight of faith. If we always received an answer to our faith at the end of the month then there would be no fight to faith. Understanding this principle, my wife Barbara and I came into agreement and claimed the nearly 450 percent of sales that we were behind, but this time we did so without establishing a deadline to receive the answer. (See my discussion of this prayer of agreement in the chapter entitled "Spiritual Authority in the Area of Finances.")

A month later we had received only a small portion of the sales we had claimed, but now we no longer had a deadline for God to answer our prayer. Immediately the devil challenged my mind. He told me that there was no way we could possibly receive that amount of sales, particularly during the winter months when construction is slow. He continually tried to put the "fear of failure" into my mind and my heart. He tried to get me to think negative, fearful, defeat-filled thoughts. He tried to get my mind focused on the battle, and get my mind off the Word of God and the confession of my hope. He told me over and over that my company was too far gone and that it would never recover. He impressed his negative thoughts of defeat on my mind continually. He told me that my faith was too weak. And to my natural mind it looked like God's Word wasn't working because in the last few months we had received only twenty percent of the new sales which we had claimed. For the second time, I had to go to the bank and borrow additional working capital to keep the firm in business.

But now I understood where I had been missing it, and each month I simply claimed the additional sales that we required to reach my goal of 150 percent of last year's average monthly sales. At the beginning of March of 2004 we were more than five months behind our goal. In the natural things looked dismal, but I continued to confess that God's Word was true. I continued to confess, "My God supplies all my needs from His riches in glory" and "My Company is prosperous and successful." I confessed that my companies were successful even though my eyes could see deficits on the financial statements and my ears could hear the worried comments from my staff.

On March 8th of 2004, Joseph, the man that I had been training to take over the business, walked into my office and announced that he was leaving the company. He had become fearful that the company would fail.

Then two weeks after Joseph resigned, we received in one week thirteen new contracts totaling over five months of sales. And exactly one year after I began to believe God for 150 percent of last year's sales (a 50 percent increase over the previous year's sales), we ended the year with the largest profit the firm had ever experienced. **Joseph had missed his inheritance by two weeks.**

Keep in mind that during much of the time my company was in this test, I was not actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the business, so it was not my personal sales efforts that caused the increase. It was solely the fact that I had built up my faith so that I could believe God for a fifty percent increase over the previous year's sales. And I continued to confess what I believed even when it looked impossible. God's Word always works for the man or woman who will be strong in the lord and in His power and might. (Ephesians 6:10). It works for anyone who will take his stand on the Word of God in confession and prayer, and **"never, never, never give up."** If you will do these things, you will always win the fight of faith.

If you wait to confess and believe that you will have a fifty percent increase over last year's sales until after you actually receive them, you will never have them. You must confess your hope (that your company has the increased sales) with your mouth **before** you actually have them. By believing in my heart and by confessing with my mouth, my faith gave substance to my hope and it caused new sales to manifest in the physical world, the world in which I needed them.

THE FIGHT OF FAITH IS IN YOUR HEART AND IN YOUR MOUTH

The devil will try to get you to fight the fight of faith in your mind, but the Creator's Handbook tells us to fight the good fight of faith in your heart and in your mouth. *"The righteousness of faith speaks in this way... 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is the word of faith which we preach):"* (Romans 10:6 & 8).

The devil and his demons will pummel your mind with thoughts of defeat and failure; he will tell you it's no use to continue to fight because the battle is lost. He will attack you by trying to get you to doubt God's Word—he will try to get you to worry about your problems, he will remind you of your past failures, he will do everything in his power to keep the faith battle in the arena of your mind. He knows that if he can divert your attention from meditating on God's Word and get you to meditate on **his** thoughts of failure and defeat, then he will win the battle.

YOUR CONFESSION MUST BE CONSISTANT

Often we fail to maintain a consistent confession. ***In times of crisis*** we faithfully meditate on and maintain our confession of God's Word. But when things are going well, we get busy with other things, we neglect our time in the Creator's Handbook, and soon we are in trouble again. Don't wait until your business is in financial trouble before you begin to meditate upon the Word of God. When you are in trouble you can be making the right confession, but the negative circumstances that you see with your eyes, the negative reports that you hear with your ears, and the thoughts of failure that the devil and his demons will impress upon your mind, can cause fear to harden the soil of your heart and cause your faith to fail.

During the financial battle I faced in 2003, my eyes saw deficits on the financial statements, and my ears heard the negative remarks my employees were making concerning the condition of the company—my **senses** told me we were going bankrupt. And the devil was sitting on my shoulder, telling me, *"You are going bankrupt...see you had to borrow more money...you better just close this business down and see if you can cut your losses. You are going bankrupt, you are going, bankrupt, you are going bankrupt.* But I kept meditating on the Word of God and speaking to my mountain, and God brought the victory.

It's hard to develop faith in a storm. The development of your faith (the information you get from God to act on) is a process. You need to start confessing that your needs are met well in advance of the time that you face a need; this is especially true in the business and financial arena.

FAITH IS NOT BLIND

Faith is not blind to the reality or the severity of a situation, but it declares that the power of God will overcome the situation, and it makes that declaration right in the face of what appears to be a seemingly hopeless situation. Moses records a report given by twelve spies he had sent to spy out the Promised Land in Numbers 13:27-33 & 14:6-10. Ten of the spies gave the children of Israel a bad report (Numbers 13:32). But Caleb and Joshua gave them a good report, a faith-filled report. Caleb's declaration was in agreement with the promises that God had given to the Israelites. He said, "*Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.*" (Numbers 13:30). Caleb's faith, however, was not blind. He had surveyed the same land, and he had seen the same giants and the same walled cities that the other ten spies had seen. Faith confesses victory in the face of apparent defeat; it confesses abundance in the face of apparent lack. The unbelief of the other Israelites delayed Caleb's receipt of God's promise, but it did not prevent him from receiving it (Joshua 14: 6-14).

WE ARE TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD

The Creator's Handbook tells us to "*...be imitators of God as dear children.*" (Ephesians 5:1). One of the God's attributes is that He "*...calls those things which do not exist as though they did;*" (Romans 4:17); this is the way God releases His faith. If we are to imitate God, then we must release our faith the same way that He does—we are to call conditions that do not exist **as though they do!**