

**Good to
Great**

**~ Grow in
faith and
love ~**



- **Sometimes as one reads the scriptures certain words and phrases seem to jump at the reader. The next logical thing to do will be to find out whether those words or phrases are just “one-offs” or appear elsewhere in scripture.**
- **Since the scriptures are written for our instructions it is important for us to examine them and seek to live our lives by them**
- **The words “faith” and “love” are two words that have captured my attention lately. They have been used in the same sentence or held together by the word “and” a number of times in the letters of Paul**
- **We will look at the scriptures where these two words occur in sentence see what lessons we can learn from them; if any.**

- **Paul used the same expressions in his letters to:**
 - **Ephesians**
 - **Thessalonians**
 - **Colossians**
 - **Philemon**
 - **Timothy**
- **Were these two his pet phrases?**
- **Were they just for “sound bites”?**
- **An examination of the context and usage will help us in deciding whether these were just pet phrases or if they carry important messages that would require our utmost attention and observance.**

- **Three types of faith**
 - 1. Faith that brings one to salvation – the gospel**
 - 2. Faith to live by from day to day**
 - 3. Faith as a gift or manifestation of the Holy Spirit**
- **Please note that all of the above stem from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **Whilst one cannot be a Christian without the first and would require the second to live a victorious and fulfilling Christian life, not all would have the third; faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit**
- **Without faith that leads to salvation the other two will not be possible**

- **Hebrews 11:1**

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

- **After we have come to know Jesus Christ as lord and saviour, we need to step up to the faith that gets things done**
- **Remember what Jesus Christ said about “faith as small as a mustard seed”? ~ Luke 17:16**

- **Agape love is defined as a deliberate or volitional act, a determination to relate to another person in a way that is for that person's highest interest.**
- **Love is not a feeling**
- **Love is a choice one makes**

- **Ephesians 1:15**

Therefore I also, after I heard of **your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,**

- **The object of the faith of the Christian must always be in God personified in the Lord Jesus Christ**
- **Our faith should:**
 - **Never be in man**
 - **Never be in the Church**
 - **Never be in a formulae – mere forms and ritual**
 - **Never be in an ordinance – idol worship**
 - **Never be in our prayers, fasting, anointing oil etc**

- **1 Thessalonians 1:3**

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

- **Our faith in God should result in a work of faith**
- **Anything else is a sham or false faith**
- **Love does labour**
- **Love that does not labour is nothing but hot air**
- **The work of faith relates to the work that is done**
- **The labour of love is how the work of faith is done**
- **Labour of love is the intensity and application**

- **A work of faith is that which is conceived, planned, executed and faithfully completed in the power of the Holy Spirit**
- **It is never whimsical or fanciful**
- **Our work of faith can be as small as expanding one's resources – money, time, energy etc – on another person or venture in the firm belief that the Lord will use it as a vehicle for that persons benefit or welfare and the glory of God**
- **It is a work of faith because to the human mind it may seem to be futile and yet in the eyes of the Christian of faith all things the possibilities are endless**
- **The work of faith does not have to be in the realms of miraculous**

- **To say you love some of the saints is that kind of love that is not accompanied by faith.**
- **It is discriminatory, divisive and not of God!**
- **Three times the phrase “all the saints” appear in the passages we are looking at. This is used in the context of love**
- **How genuine is the love you profess to have?**
- **“your love for all the saints” - Colossians 1:4**
- **your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints – Philemon 1:5**
- **your love for all the saints – Ephesians 1:15**

- **“since we heard of your faith” - Colossians 1:4**
- **“hearing of your love and faith” - Philemon 1:5**
- **“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith” - Ephesians 1:15**
- **Does anyone else testify of your faith and love or are you the only person doing so?**
- **Three times the apostle say “we heard or I heard”**
- **What is it that characterises you as a person?**
- **Faith and love in action will definitely speak for themselves with the same voice.**
- **They sing from the same hymn sheet**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:8**

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

- **A breastplate is a shield that covers the vital organs of the torso area – the heart in particular**
- **Therefore one can say that we guard our hearts through the operation of faith and love**
- **We know of the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith in Ephesians 6:14 and 16 respectively but now we hear of the breastplate of faith and love**
- **Is it possible that when faith and love are in operation they produce outworked righteousness?**

- I find something interesting in what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians.
- In chapter one he speaks of what he had heard regarding their faith and love and this causes him to pray a tremendous prayer for them.
- In chapter 6 he prays or invokes love and faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ on them.
- Listen to this:
- Ephesians 1:15
15 ¶ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,
16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

- **Ephesians 6:23**

Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **In the one instance faith and love provokes a deep and profound prayer for the Ephesians**
- **Coming to the conclusion of his letter, the apostle then pronounces or invokes more faith and love to the Ephesians**
- **Is there a lesson here for us?**
- **Perhaps we should be pronouncing or praying for love with faith for each other.**

- **Philemon 1:4 - 7**

4 I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,

5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,

6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

- **This is the practical working of faith and love; “the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.”**

- **1 Corinthians 13:1 - 8**

1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

- **I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal**
 - **Noise in the ears**
 - **A nuisance**
 - **undesirable**
- **I am nothing**
 - **Might as well not exist**
 - **Might as well not have done it**
- **It profits me nothing**
 - **Worthless labour**

- **1 Corinthians 13:1 - 8**

4 ¶ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- **It is important to note that the apostles description of the conduct of love is set in adverse conditions.**
- **Perhaps it is because anyone can love in favourable conditions; fair-weather friends is the expression!**

- **Pressure, heat or severe conditions reveal the true or genuine nature of most things**
- **How do we know that we love?**
- **How do we know that others love?**
- **We know one loves when one:**
 - **suffers long and is kind;**
 - **does not envy;**
 - **does not parade one's self,**
 - **is not puffed up;**
 - **does not behave rudely,**
 - **does not seek one's own,**
 - **is not provoked, thinks no evil;**
 - **does not rejoice in iniquity,**

- **We know one loves when one:**
 - rejoices in the truth;
 - bears all things,
 - believes all things,
 - hopes all things,
 - endures all things.
- **Love is not a feeling**
- **Love is not just a desire**
- **Love is never abstract**
- **Love is concrete, tangible, visible**

**Love without faith is
impotence.**

**Faith without love is
dangerous**

**By faith we receive
from God and
through love we
dispense what God
gives to us**

- **This subject is about our beliefs and our practice**
- **Faith is primarily to do with the one in whom we believe and secondarily what we believe - dogma**
- **Love relates to how we conduct ourselves; how we practice our faith – praxis or practice**
- **What or whom one believes in determines or informs one's conduct or behaviour**

- **At this juncture a legitimate question for the careful listener would be: how do I acquire faith and love?**
- **These are the scriptural answers:**
- **Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5)**
- **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)**
- **But we must grow in our faith**
- **And we must grow in our love**
- **The more we live in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ the more will our love and faith grow**

- **Enoch walked with God**
- **He had more than a passing acquaintance with God**
- **He lived where God lived**
- **We have a promise that the Father and the Son will come and make their dwelling in us**
- **We fellowship or live in God's presence through obedience, reading His word and fellowshiping with His saints to mention but a few**
- **Pray for faith and love. These are graces from God**
- **It is God who supplies us with both love and faith**
- **The more we get to know our God the more will our faith in him grow**

- **We get to know of His character, attributes, characteristics and nature**
- **As genuine faith grows so will our love for God and for his people**
- **We cannot love God without loving his people and His creation**
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- **The scriptures say that we walk by faith and not by sight**
- **Examples of the language of the work of faith are:**
- **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)**
- **Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies. (Psalms 108:13)**
- **"Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." (1 Samuel 17:36)**
- **Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30)**

- **We are commanded to put on faith and love**
- **That means it is within our capabilities to acquire and adorn ourselves with this twin pair**
- **We do so for our own protection**
- **We need the breastplate of faith and love**
- **How protected are you?**
- **Is your faith going to yield dividends for you?**
- **If faith and love were good enough for Timothy and Philemon then they must be good for you and I**
- **If faith and love were good enough for the Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians then they must be good enough for Kennington**

- **In our journey from good to great let us seek to add the twin pair of faith and love to our armoury**
- **We must seek to make the transition from good to great in our conduct, character, worship, relationships and service to both God and man**
- **We are created to serve and glorify God our maker**
- **Let us conclude with the benediction of Paul in Ephesians 6:23 - 24**

23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

- **2 Corinthians 8:7**

¶ But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

- **Galatians 5:6**

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

- **Galatians 5:22**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

- **Ephesians 3:17**

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- **1 Timothy 1:14**

And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

- **1 Timothy 6:11**

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

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And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

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But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

- **2 Timothy 1:13**

Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.