

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Living by Faith

Putting Actions to Our Beliefs

What is faith? How does YHWH expect us to live by this thing called “faith”? The answers to these questions (and others like them) will in large part determine what one's life will be like.

One good working definition of faith that this writer especially likes is:

*Faith is the capacity to believe
YHWH will do as He says He will do,
And to act upon that belief.¹*

In this, it can easily be seen that faith is two-fold. One is the believing with the mind, the mental assent. However, this must be joined with appropriate action on the part of the one doing the believing. Why? Scripture says that even the demons of hell believe.

Ya’aqov [James] 2:19

You believe that Elohim is one; you do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

However, this belief that the demons have, does not bring them any benefit whatsoever! They have knowledge, but this knowledge does not rightly affect their actions; they still act like demons. This knowledge will never be enough for them to have eternal life. One's belief in Yeshua, the Son of YHWH, must result in right action, right living. Please consider these other verses from Ya’aqov chapter two.

Ya’aqov [James] 2:17, 20, 22, 26

17 Even so faith, if it does have not works, is dead by itself.

To have a vital, living faith one must have works along with his faith, otherwise his faith is dead.

20 But will you know, vain man, that faith apart from works is useless?

What good does it do for a person to have faith if he does not have works to go along with the faith? It does him no good at all. In fact, it is actually a great hindrance to proper life-giving faith.

22 You see that was faith working along with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect;

Wouldn't it be great to see a lot more perfect faith in our world today?

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

Let us consider Noah. YHWH came to him and told him that He was going to cover the earth with a great flood. So in order to prepare for this coming flood, Noah was instructed to build an ark. So here is a question for us to consider. Does it take more faith to just believe; and not build an ark, but just sit around believing that YHWH will somehow provide for the way of salvation? Or, does it take more faith to build an ark in the face of great opposition, the whole world ridiculing and nay-saying the whole time that one is building the ark? To be sure, it takes more faith to obey His commandments, particularly in the face of opposition.

YHWH is an Elohim who loves and cares for His creation, especially those who believe upon His Son Yeshua. So much so, that He will shake them out of their comfortable little lives at times to remind them Who it is that they must be dependent upon for all of life's necessities.

It is quite easy for one in his humanness to depend upon the seen rather than the unseen. This seems to take the form of material possessions more than anything else, in particular, one's bank account. When we are about to make a purchase, where do we go first for guidance? To our bank account to see if we have enough to make the purchase? If that is the case, then I submit to you that, for the one who does this, his money is his god. For if that is one's normal action, where is the trust and dependence upon an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Ever Present Elohim? Who is it that really controls his life? Who is it that really controls his purse strings?

The determining factor in any given situation should not be, "Can I afford it?" But rather, "Is this YHWH's will for me at this time?" It is quite evident from Scripture that YHWH regularly leads His people to do things that are beyond their abilities. In one sense His people did not have the resources to do that which He was leading them to do. The only way that His people could accomplish that which He was directing them to

do, was to depend upon Him. If we are never doing things that are beyond our abilities, then we are not living by faith. And anything that is not by faith is sin.

Romans 14:23b

Whatever is not of faith is sin.

Does this seem harsh or unrealistic? YHWH simply wants our undivided dependence upon Him for everything. This is where true worship springs from, by faith.

Look at the children of Israel as YHWH was leading them out of the land of Egypt. Did not YHWH Himself, in the fire by night and the cloud by day, lead them into a completely humanly hopeless and impossible situation with the Red Sea in front, the mountains on both sides, and Pharaoh and his army behind with murderous intent? YHWH still does this in the lives of those who would serve Him. He does this so that He can be glorified and honored and worshipped. He does this so His people will know Who He is, and depend completely upon His mercy and grace, not upon their own paltry and meager abilities.

Matityah [Matthew] 6:33

“But you seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Scripture teaches us that if one seeks first YHWH's kingdom and His righteousness, then He will provide all the necessities of life, clothes, shelter, and food. But the question is, do I really believe what Yeshua says in this instance? Or do I just give Him lip service?

Where does my job fit into all this? Doesn't the Scripture teach that if a man does not work, neither let him eat? Yes it does.

2nd Thessalonians 3:10

***For even when we were with you, this we commanded you,
“If any will not work, neither let him eat.”***

But the question is, "Why am I at my place of employment?" To earn a living? If that is the answer one gives, then he missed it. He is not serving YHWH with a whole heart. He is double-minded, and unstable in His kingdom.

We should be there because that is His will for us and that is where He wants us to be a witness for Him. In YHWH's kingdom that is the primary duty of the believer, to walk in obedient love to the guidance of the Set-apart Spirit. As such we must acknowledge that we are all called to be witnesses. The truth is that we ARE all witnesses, either for YHWH or against YHWH.

Which kind of witness are you?

Am I of the mindset that I earn my daily sustenance? Scripture teaches that every good and perfect gift is from our Father above. This surely includes my daily needs.

Ya'aqov [James] 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

Do I act as though this is true? Or do I depend upon myself? If the latter, I am taking glory for myself that is due to YHWH alone.

YHWH gave us the ability to work so we would be out amongst the people of the world as an opportunity to witness for Him. It just so happens, that He has chosen in some cases to have those whom we have been sent to witness to, to pay us for doing His business.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work heartily, as unto YHWH, and not unto men;

While we are at work, we must realize that YHWH expects us to do the very best that we can, as if we were working for YHWH Himself; for in reality, we are. All the while, we should give YHWH all the honor and glory.

Is it not YHWH that has given us the talents and abilities we have? Is it not YHWH Who has given us a good mind to be able to learn and teach and do?

1st Corinthians 4:7

Brother, what do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

When was the last time that you said that you were proud of your job? Or, when was the last time that you said that you were proud of your education? Or, when was the last time that you said that you were proud of your house? Or, when was the last time that you said that you were proud of your children? Do you not realize that these things are a blessing from the Almighty? And, do you realize that when you boast about something, that you are robbing YHWH?

When we get into an uncomfortable place in life, do we try to ease the discomfort in any way possible? Do we look for the shortest route back to our life of ease? What of YHWH's will? Perhaps YHWH has placed us in that position because He has not been able to get our attention.

YHWH wants us to learn of Him and His ways, the way of faith and trust and complete dependence upon Him. He does not want us to try to do things in our own power or strength. YHWH has a purpose in having us in that tough place. Don't squirm out of

the difficulty, or you will not be able to learn that which YHWH is trying to teach you; and as a result of that, you will have to go through similar circumstances again and again and again, until you finally submit to His Kingship in all areas of your life, and ask Him what it is He is trying to teach you.

One of those things that He is trying to teach you (and there may be more than one), will have to do with living by faith, and trusting Him.

1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is YHWH's will for you in Mashiach Yeshua.

This can be a pretty tall order to accomplish on a daily basis. Read that passage again. Memorize it, and let it become a part of who you are in Mashiach.

“Rejoicing always”, speaks of a life of worship. “Praying without ceasing”, speaks of a constant companionship and communion with YHWH. “In everything give thanks”, speaks of an attitude and acknowledgement we have received everything we have from YHWH; and we have nothing that we have not received from YHWH.

Here Shaul says "in everything" give thanks, however, he speaks in different words in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:20

Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Master Yeshua Mashiach to Elohim, even the Father;

Here he says that we are to give thanks "for everything". It is much more difficult to do that; and in fact, only when a person walks in the Spirit day by day, moment by moment, is it even possible.

Matityah 17:20

And He says to them, "Because of your little faith; for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there'; and it shall be moved; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

One day a man came and asked Yeshua's disciples to cast out a demon. They could not do it. They came to Yeshua and He cast out the demon and then they asked Him why they could not do it. He responded with the above passage. They could not do it because of the "littleness" of their faith. Yeshua then talks about faith as the grain of a mustard seed; nothing shall be impossible to us. Hmmm....

So what are some things that are true about mustard seeds? Well, they are quite small and the variety that grew in that region during that time apparently was a very large

plant at maturity. So large that it was called a tree. So from the smallest of beginnings, it grows and matures into a great tree. As significant as that is, it is not the most significant thing about a mustard seed.

Yochanan [John] 12:24

“Amein, amein, I say to you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abides by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

Here is a truth about the physical world in which we live. In order for a seed to grow, first it must die. If it does not die, then it will never grow. Every time a seed germinates, it is a type of resurrection. This truth also applies to the mustard seed. The mustard seed faith that He plants in each and every one of us is dead. So here is the question that we need to ask ourselves. How do I make this mustard seed faith grow?

Ya’aqov [James] 2:17

Even so faith, if it does have not works, is dead by itself.

Now that sounds kind of familiar, doesn’t it? So, this mustard seed faith that YHWH has planted in us is dead, but He wants us to make it grow. And how do we do that? It is by what we do; specifically, by obeying His commandments. You know...

Yochanan [John] 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

When we step out in faith and actually do what YHWH has commanded us to do in His Scriptures, then our faith grows. And if we obey with love, which is the proper way to obey His commandments, then our faith will grow strong and healthy.

Those of us who have been around for a while need to watch over those that are just beginning in their walk of faith. We need to protect them. It is our duty and our responsibility to help the young in the faith to grow strong and let nothing hinder their growth. And Elohim forbid, that we ourselves should do something that would hinder one of His little ones!

May YHWH open our eyes and give us wisdom that we may grow our faith continually with a growth that is well pleasing in His sight.

Amein and Amein

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ⁱ Dynamics of Discipleship, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1984.