

# Faith

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## Objectives

- q Instill faith into the hearts of the missionaries that they will draw upon the powers of heaven to accomplish the work and reap great success
- q Help them overcome discouragement through faith on the Lord
- q Help them have faith in themselves and their ability to access the powers of heaven

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## Introduction

Write down on paper, right now, one or two seemingly insurmountable obstacles you face.

What is the first principle of the Gospel? Why is it the FIRST principle?

Favorite scriptures on faith:

*Mark 11:23-24* For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

*Moroni 7:33* And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.

*Ether 12:18* And neither at any time hath any wrought miracles until after their faith; wherefore they first believed in the Son of God.

*Ether 12:12* For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them...

*Ether 12:6* ...for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith

*1 Nephi 7:12* Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him? Wherefore, let us be faithful to him.

*DC 8:10* Remember that without faith you can do nothing...

## Questions I hope the Lord will personally answer for you during my lesson...

What really is faith?

How do I obtain it?

How do I exercise it and use it in my life?

If by faith God organized His creations, how can I tap into this same power in my life to accomplish great things?

Does it always work, or only sometimes? When does it work?

What does the Lord say I must do to obtain my righteous desires?

What "cost" is required of me for the blessings I gain through faith?

What do I have to do to receive that one big blessing I seek, or to overcome that one big challenge I face?

What blessings do I see as a result of the things I am doing to exercise my faith?

What is the difference between a positive mental attitude and faith?

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## What is Faith?

### Three levels of Faith

- ◆ Hope
- ◆ Action
- ◆ Power

### Faith is the Assurance of Things Hoped For...

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the ~~substance~~ assurance (JST) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

In modern terms, what does this mean to us?

### Faith is the principle of action in all intelligent beings

Lectures on Faith, 1:9-10 *Faith is the assurance which men have of the existence of things which they have not seen, and the principle of action in all intelligent beings. If men were duly to consider themselves, and turn their thoughts and reflections to the operations of their own minds, they would readily discover that it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them; that without it both mind and body would be in a state of inactivity, and all their exertions would cease, both physical and mental.*

Examples: baby learning to walk and talk; farmer planting his crops; your going on a mission; cooking your dinner; taking a shower

Everything we do, every action we take, is the result of faith – we do everything we do because we have an “assurance of things hoped for” of an expected result. Without this assurance, we simply would not act. A baby would not learn to walk or talk, a farmer would cease to plant seeds to harvest later.

==> faith is the moving cause to all action in life

Lectures on Faith 1:11 *Would you have ever sown, if you had not believed that you would reap? Would you have ever planted, if you had not believed that you would gather? Would you have ever asked, unless you had believed that you would receive? Would you have ever sought, unless you had believed that you would have found? Or, would you have ever knocked, unless you had believed that it would have been opened unto you? In a word, is there anything that you would have done, either physical or mental, if you had not previously believed? Are not all your exertions of every kind, dependent on your faith? Or, may we not ask, what have you, or what do you possess, which you have not obtained by reason of your faith?*

==> faith is the moving cause to all action in life

### Faith is Power

Faith in the Lord is different from any other kind of faith because faith in Him connects us to His power, rather than leaving us to depend upon our own.

Lectures on Faith 1:12-14 *But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth.*

3 Nephi 7:18 *And it came to pass that they were angry with him, even because he had greater power than they, for it were not possible that they could disbelieve his words, for so great*

*was his faith on the Lord Jesus Christ that angels did minister unto him daily. 19 And in the name of Jesus did he cast out devils and unclean spirits; and even his brother did he raise from the dead, after he had been stoned and suffered death by the people. 20 And the people saw it, and did witness of it, and were angry with him because of his power; and he did also do many more miracles, in the sight of the people, in the name of Jesus.*

Faith, therefore, is not a mental game we play. It is not an exercise in positive mental attitude. It is not a personal resolve that enables us to will some difficult situation into existence. It is not a way of pretending that everything will work out while we ignore the problems around us. Instead, faith is the way we connect ourselves to God's power. It is the power behind all action, achievement, and miracles.

**What is the difference between a positive mental attitude and faith?**

It is that faith is a source of God's power, while a positive mental attitude is way of responding to our present circumstances. They are very different. A person with faith will always have a positive mental attitude, but a person with a positive mental attitude may not always have faith.

Lectures on Faith 1:24 *Faith, then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeable to the will of God. Without it there is no power, and without power there could be no creation nor existence.*

Lectures on Faith 1:16 *Had it not been for the principle of faith the worlds would never have been framed, neither would man have been formed of the dust. It is the principle by which Jehovah works, and through which he exercises power over all temporal as well as eternal things. Take this principle or attribute—for it is an attribute—from the Deity, and he would cease to exist.*

**?? Story of the Elder full of faith (Side 3, beginning, tape, Elder Cook's Faith tape)**

### **Questions**

How was the Spanish Elder able to baptize so many people?

How did he react to the negative things he had heard about Paraguay?

What can you do to eliminate negative thoughts about your goals and your life?

What did the Elder actually do in his mind to be able to exercise faith? What can you do to do the same thing?

In what things can you begin to exercise your faith, today?

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## **Foundations of Developing Faith**

How do we gain a faith sufficient to exercise true faith in God and allow His power to be exercised through us?

Joseph Smith taught that *“Three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.*

1. *First, the idea that he actually exists.*
2. *Secondly, a correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.*
3. *Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will.” (Lectures on Faith 3:2-5.)*

*“For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become*

*perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

## 1. The Idea that He Actually Exists

How do we gain an idea that He actually exists?

*Alma 30:44 But Alma said unto him: Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator.*

Scriptures – testimony of the prophets

*Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Testimony of others – how did Adam teach his children about God?

*Moses 5:12 And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.*

*“We have . . . clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based which excited the inquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God; and we have seen that it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this inquiry, in the first instance, in their minds. It was the credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers, this testimony having aroused their minds to inquire after the knowledge of God; the inquiry frequently terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty.” (Lectures on Faith 2:56; italics added.)*

How do we apply this knowledge? This is why we are called to bear frequent testimony of God and His Son, Jesus Christ – that others may gain greater faith that He exists and that He is God.

## 2. A correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes

Tell me about God’s nature, character, and attributes...

Do you believe it?

*“20. But secondly; unless he was merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and full of goodness, such is the weakness of human nature, and so great the frailties and imperfections of men, that unless they believed that these excellencies existed in the divine character, the faith necessary to salvation could not exist; for doubt would take the place of faith, and those who know their weakness and liability to sin would be in constant doubt of salvation if it were not for the idea which they have of the excellency of the character of God, that he is slow to anger and long-suffering, and of a forgiving disposition, and does forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. An idea of these facts does away doubt, and makes faith exceedingly strong.” (Lectures on Faith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 3:20.)*

*How do we come to know about Him?*

Prayer & Revelation

*Jacob 4:8 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways.*

*And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.*

What does this say for those seeking truth through intellectual reasoning and philosophy? – they will never find it!

#### Scriptures

*Helaman 15:7 And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to know of the wicked and abominable traditions of their fathers, and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—*

Sincere observation of others and events all around us

### **3. An actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will**

*BRM, Mormon Doctrine: “Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness. It is always given when righteousness is present, and the greater the measure of obedience to God's laws the greater will be the endowment of faith. Hence the Prophet says that to acquire faith men must gain the actual knowledge "that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, in order that they may be enabled to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation...*

*An actual knowledge to any person, that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance.” (Lectures on Faith, p. 57; Heb. 10:34.)”*

*3 Nephi 8:1 And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record—for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity—*

*Lectures on Faith: “7. Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.”*

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## **The Relationship between Doubt or Fear and Faith**

*Such is the weakness of man, and such his frailties, that he is liable to sin continually, and if God were not long-suffering, and full of compassion, gracious and merciful, and of a forgiving disposition, man would be cut off from before him, in consequence of which he*

would be in continual doubt and could not exercise faith; for where doubt is, there faith has no power; but by man's believing that God is full of compassion and forgiveness, long-suffering and slow to anger, he can exercise faith in him and overcome doubt, so as to be exceedingly strong. (Questions and answers on Lecture 3.)

Repeat: for where doubt is, there faith has no power.

*DC 67:1-3 I Behold and hearken, O ye elders of my church, who have assembled yourselves together, whose prayers I have heard, and whose hearts I know, and whose desires have come up before me.*

*3 Ye endeavored to believe that ye should receive the blessing which was offered unto you; but behold, verily I say unto you there were fears in your hearts, and verily this is the reason that ye did not receive.*

### But how can we rid ourselves of our doubts?

If faith is a gift of God bestowed as a gift for personal righteousness, we see that the force that destroys faith is personal unrighteousness. How does it destroy faith? By creating doubt. “Where doubt is, there faith has no power”. In other words, where unrighteousness is, there is doubt, and there faith has no power.

The Lord gives us other clues as to how to eliminate doubt:

*DC 6:34, 36 Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.*

The answer is to look upon the Lord in every thought. Perhaps this is why He asks us to “always remember Him” in our weekly ordinance of the sacrament.

This is also why we must govern and manage our thoughts – to keep them clean.

*DC 121:45 let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.*

As servants of God, we have a sacred responsibility to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. **Why?**

1. To be an example to others – a light set upon a hill, the salt of the earth
2. That our faith might be strong to connect with His power in our work. For without this, our confidence, our faith, will not be strong enough to draw upon the powers of heaven in our work – instead, we will be filled with doubt and fear.

We see this in the account of Peter and Jesus walking on the water...

*Matt 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

*James 1:5-7 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*

*For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

What does the Lord try to teach us here?

If we will believe without doubting, we will receive what we ask for

We must strive to rid ourselves of our doubts and fears for they drive away our faith

- ◆ Faith is very fragile and must be protected. How? By how we live and how we think – by our hearts.

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## 1 Nephi 3 and 4:1-7 – Nephi’s experience with the plates of brass

What principles do we learn about faith from Nephi’s story?

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### How do we obtain faith?

*Apply this to our work, to our daily goals of faith!!*

#### 1. Desire to believe (where our investigators start)

*Alma 32:26-27 Now, as I said concerning faith—that it was not a perfect knowledge—even so it is with my words. Ye cannot know of their surety at first, unto perfection, any more than faith is a perfect knowledge. 27 But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.*

The Lord does not expect people to start without any evidence. As our faith grows, however, we require less and less evidence. But even with evidence, you must start with a desire.

#### 2. Be believing (where faithful members start)

- Envision it in your mind – a spiritual creation in your mind. You do not need a detailed plan – you need to envision the result!
- You have to see it and feel it in your mind and heart – an eye of faith
- Persist in it – do not waiver – do not doubt
- ◆ How do you gain this belief?
  - ◆ By learning what the will of God is
  - ◆ If faith is God’s power, it can only be used according to His will

Brigham Young once said:

*“If I do not know the will of my Father, and what He requires of me in a certain transaction, if I ask Him to give me wisdom concerning any requirement in life, or in regard to my own course, or that of my friends, my family, my children, or those that I preside over, and get no answer from Him, and then do the very best that my judgment will teach me, He is bound to own and honor that transaction, and He will do so to all intents and purposes.” (Journal of Discourses, 3:205.)*

- ◆ 1 Nephi 3:7 – I will go and do... for I know that He giveth no commandment...
- ◆ What if an angel told you what goals to set tomorrow? Could you do it? Would you have the faith of Nephi despite a few failures before success?
- ◆ How much evidence do you require before you are able to act in faith? Do you believe inspired words or do you insist on seeing before you believe?
  - ◆ Do you believe you could have 10 people with baptismal dates in your font?
  - ◆ Do you believe you could baptize every week? Every month?
    - ◆ Or do you think, maybe it is the Lord's will that I DON'T baptize every week or every month? (Doubt)
- ◆ You will receive evidence only AFTER you exercise your faith – not before!

*Orson Pratt said this: [The mind] is the agent of the Almighty, clothed with mortal tabernacles and we must learn to discipline it, bring it to bear on one point and not allow the Devil to interfere or confuse it nor divert it from the great object that we have in view. If a person trains his mind to walk in the Spirit and brings his whole mind to bear upon its operations and upon the principles of faith, which are calculated to put him in possession of the Power of God, how much greater will be his faculties for attaining knowledge. (Journal of Discourses, Vol 7, pp 155-156)*

*Brigham Young: The greatest mystery a man ever learned, is to know how to control the human mind, and bring every faculty and power of the same in subjection to Jesus Christ; this is the greatest mystery we have to learn while in these tabernacles of clay. (Journal of Discourses, 1854-1886], 1: 47.)*

### **3. Commit and discipline yourself to do what must be done**

*1 Nephi 3:15 But behold I said unto them that: As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us.*

Nephi was 100% committed! NOTHING was going to keep him from his task

Nephi was willing to pay whatever price needed to be paid. Are you?

*Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

- q There's a price to be paid (DC 130:20-21)
- q For any blessing you seek, ask yourself, *what price is attached? How much must I pay and how must I pay it?* If you are unwilling to pay the price, your faith will be in vain.
- q If you fail to make your daily goals of faith, how committed are you? How much faith do you show by not doing them? The results these goals represent are the object of your faith!
- q What does it show about our faith when we fail to set daily goals?

*Lectures on Faith: "7. Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake,*

*not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.”*

#### **4. Pray as if all depended upon the Lord**

Will He not respond if you pray to him in faith?

What is the most common message of the scriptures?

*DC 4:7 Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Amen.*

*DC 10:47 And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;*

Pray for faith!

*How do men obtain a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes? By devoting themselves to his service, through prayer and supplication incessantly strengthening their faith in him, until, like Enoch, the brother of Jared, and Moses, they obtain a manifestation of God to themselves. (Lectures on Faith, from questions and answers following lecture 2.)*

#### **5. Do all in your power to fulfill your part – work**

*DC 82:10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.*

q Do not expect the Lord to do more than His part.

q Do not expect the Lord to do His part, first.

What is the Lord after?

The price is often our sins

What if we are unwilling to repent?

What if we have a favorite sin of some kind?

By grace we are saved AFTER all we can do – the power of the atonement is available to us only AFTER we all we can do. If we are unwilling, this power is withheld.

*The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "Faith is the foundation of all righteousness. You will not attain anything from the Lord lest you are keeping the commandments and to the degree that you are keeping the commandments is the degree that you will collect the blessings." (Gene R. Cook, Living by the Power of Faith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 88.)*

If you want to learn how to exercise your faith, you must start with yourself, putting yourself square in the middle of the road that leads to the Celestial Kingdom. The Lord does not expect us to be perfect. He expects us to be repentant with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, seeking after righteousness every hour of every day. He expects us to be willing to lay our sins on the altar of sacrifice, even if it hurts. Faith is a reward for righteousness.

#### **6. Prepare for constant and intense trials of your faith**

Tribulation is a refiner of faith (DC 58:4 – “for after much tribulation, cometh the blessings”)

*Ether 12:6 And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.*

Do you expect it to be easy because you are obedient? Is that how you think the plan works?

Know that when the night gets the darkest and the storm gets the strongest, it is always just before the dawn.

Faith does NOT mean you will avoid some failures before you gain the blessing.

## **7. Expect the Lord to perform according to His holy will and your faith**

Remember that when you exercise your faith, his will must be the center of your desires

The real test is what happens when you it doesn't happen as you have asked. Will you turn on God, upset, angry, mad? Or will you come to Him in humility and trust and bow yourself down before Him and ask for understanding, then going forward again, doubling your faith, still believing.

*DC 123:16-17      You know, brethren, that a very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept workways with the wind and the waves. 17 Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.*

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## **How can we learn to apply this knowledge?**

### **What do you do when you don't succeed?**

#### ***Why do we fall short of our goals of faith?***

It is not the Lord's will

*Mormon 3:12      Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts.*

- ◆ Why? (God forces no person to choose righteousness)
- ◆ What can God do, however, to prepare or soften hearts?

You did not follow the promptings of the Spirit

Because you did not do all that you could do. You didn't pay the price.

You doubted

The Lord is giving you a trial to strengthen you

Your faith was placed in something that is untrue – the wrong object

Agency is always respected – if you have faith that your contact will choose to be baptized and isn't, who failed? Whose choice is it?

Instead, have faith that you will find those who will choose to repent and be baptized

#### ***So what should we do?***

Never, never, never give up. Double your faith, get up and keep going. The blessings will only come after the trial of your faith – after your failures, your discouragement, your heartache. Stay the course. Be as Nephi, not as Laman and Lemuel.

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## Conclusion

Brigham Young: *“If we speak of faith in the abstract, it is the power of God by which the worlds are and were made, and is a gift of God to those who believe and obey his commandments. On the other hand, no living, intelligent being, whether serving God or not, acts without belief. He might as well undertake to live without breathing as to live without the principle of belief. But he must believe the truth, obey the truth, and practice the truth, to obtain the power of God called faith.”* (*Discourses of Brigham Young, compiled by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 153; italics added.*)

*1 John 3:21-22      21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*