

GROWING YOUR FAITH

Are you growing in your faith or do you find yourself weak in the faith? Paul in Romans 14:1 stated: “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.” Notice that Paul used the phrase “weak in the faith.” According to Paul individuals in the church can be weak in their faith.[Read all of Romans chapter 14] We need to understand what Paul means by the word “faith.” What is he referring to in this verse of scripture? There are several Greek words in the New Testament which are translated as “faith” in our English translations. Looking at the Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible I see three Greek words which are translated as “faith” in the New Testament with the most common one being “pistis” which is the word used in Romans 14:1. The Lexical Aids to the New Testament from the King James Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bibles states: “Pistis...to persuade. Being persuaded, faith, belief. In general it implies such a knowledge of assent to, and confidence in certain divine truths, especially those of the gospel, as produces good works (Matt. 8:10; 15:28; Acts 3:16; Rom. 1:17; 3:22, 25, 28; Gal. 5:6; Heb. 11:1ff).” The Complete Word Study Dictionary - New Testament defines faith as: “to win over, persuade. Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively meaning that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith.” From this definition we see that individuals can be weak in the truth and doctrines [teachings] of the Word of God. On one occasion Paul warned the believers not to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. As believers we need to be rooted and grounded in the truth of God’s Word. 2 Corinthians 10:15 states that we should grow in the faith. Matter of fact Paul told the church at Corinth due to them not growing in the faith he was not able to go else where to proclaim the gospel because he needed to remain with them until they had grown more in their faith. “Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended.”[2 Cor. 10:15 New Living Translation] A more literal translation states: “not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you...”[New American Standard Version] Some commentators state that Paul was expecting the faith of the Corinthians to grow so they in return could support the expansion of his ministry. At any rate Paul was anticipating the faith of the Corinthian believers to grow.

What does it mean to grow? Once again the Greek definition of the word “increased” as translated in the King James Version means: “To grow, increase, to augment...To grow, increase, add to something.”[The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament] This is reflected in most modern translations such as the New Living Translation which states: “Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith **will grow** so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended.” The New International Version translates this verse in the following manner: “Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith **continues to grow**, our area of activity among you will greatly expand,” As believers in Jesus Christ our faith is to continue to grow, increase, be added to. No wonder the apostle Peter tells us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.[2 Peter 3:18] Note that the word “grow” in 2 Peter 3:18 is the same Greek word “auxano” [Strong’s number 837] which is translated as “increase” in 2 Corinthians 10:15. In the King James Version 12 times this word is translated “grow,” 7 times it is translated “increase,” twice it is translated “give the increase” and once it is translated “grow up.” According to Ephesians 4:15 believers are to “grow up into him in all things.” May you be blessed with a growing faith like our father Abraham who was not weak in his faith but was strong.

“And Abraham’s faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah’s womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his **faith grew stronger**, and in this he brought glory to God.”[Romans 4:19-20 NLT]

Grow stronger in your faith so that you too will bring glory to God.

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