

Faith - by Stephanie

... Check out the great size of those periods. It makes me think of the verse "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you". (Matt. 17:20). FAITH. It must be easy to live by if you just need a little bit. ...Nope. I have been moved in asking the Lord to "increase my faith"; (Luke 17:5). The last several weeks, I have become frustrated in certain areas of my life where I thought that if I did everything just so, I would get my desired results. Right? Isn't there a "magic pill" that will make my life more convenient and easy if I follow some easy 1-2-3 steps? In the midst of parenting Ella and realizing that I have the selfish desire to be the perfect mom that produces the perfect child, I've ended up becoming somewhat frustrated. The desire to have a perfect marriage without problems. The desire to have a smooth and certain future. But alas, this is not the case...either the consistent mom, the angelic cherub of a child, the perfect marriage, or the concrete future. I thought that if I tried to do everything that the books say and follow the advice of all of those that had gone before, that things would turn out the way that I had planned. Isn't that how it's supposed to work? If I am asking God for wisdom in training Ella, and yet I still wonder if I am doing the right thing, am I really believing that God is granting my request?

I have struggled through these thoughts recently. It all sort of peaked last week. After a long day of frustration, attempting to produce an obedient and pleasant child, thinking about the "what ifs" of the future, and wanting to meet Aaron's needs as a good wife, I sat on the couch and poured out my heart to my husband Aaron. After I finished spewing, it was quiet. Aaron wisely answered me. "Stephanie, you are resisting what God is wanting to do in your heart. He didn't design your life to be lived in frustration. He wants you to live by faith. We have to live a faith walk...in our parenting, in our marriage, in our ministry, in our future. As we walk with the Lord, He will show us what we need to do/change. As we ask for wisdom, we have to believe that we are receiving it from the Lord...abundantly at that! (James 1:5) I sat there and thought about it. He was very right.

Christy and I had just attended a conference where the speaker did a three-session topic on 1 Corinthians—Jesus as our Cornerstone. It was exactly what I needed. The speaker pointed out that people were pointing to Paul and Apollos as the ones that were attributed to their spiritual growth (1 Cor. 3:4:5). People were divided and their allegiance turned to man instead of Jesus Christ. Paul turns it around and points it all back to the Lord. We just plant and water and God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6-7). We are to obey in all areas of our life, but the results are left up to God. Oh what a thought for me to meditate on. Trust and Obey. It's not up to me to make the perfect marriage by looking this way or making Aaron's coffee just right. Even if I was the perfect mom (which I will never be), and provided my children with all kinds of enlightening experiences, exposed them to spiritual teaching, and consistently trained them, the results are left to the Lord. I have to believe that God's Word is true and that He is at work both in us and through us to do what pleases Him (Phil. 2:13). My job is just to obey.

What a freeing meditation that this has been for me. FAITH. I need it so badly. But without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb. 11:6a). So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). As I rely on the Scripture to ground my faltering heart in truth, I can believe that God is true and faithful...He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). I can please God by trusting Him and obeying Him. I can do what God has called me to as a wife,

mother, ministry participant, and servant of Christ because HALLELUJAH! I am saved. Yet the results are not up to my
“perfect pill” method of producing perfection or correct behavior if I do _____ just right. I can rest in the goodness of my God. He is conforming me to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29) as I place my faith in Him and what He has done for me, regardless if people change or my circumstances stay the same.

FAITH. The word means more than a mere wall décor plaque, words on a wrist band or a witty saying inscribed on a lawn ornament. It’s a way of life. It’s the sum total of the life of a pilgrim (Heb. 11:13). Lord, keep my heart fixed upon you and help me to live by what I can’t see (Heb. 11:1). Help me to believe that you ARE and that you are a Rewarder of those who diligently seek you (Heb. 11:6b). For we walk by faith and not by sight… (2 Cor. 5:7).