

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Words or Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Topic This Month: Romans 4

Has God Proved to us 'He is Able' to Keep His Word?

Can God be trusted to keep His Word? This question is the foundation of the Christian life. For if God is not trustworthy, then we will also not know for sure if He is powerful or wise enough to keep us saved from the penalty of sin. It calls into question the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus' blood sacrifice on the cross. Is He really able to pay for all our sins and keep us eternally secure? So many questions come to mind if we are unsure that God is able to follow through with what He says.

However, even a brief look through the Bible demonstrates the Almighty God is always faithful. Notice what Paul relays in *II Corinthians 9:8*: "And **God is able** to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." In time past, many of the promises God made to Israel have already been fulfilled. For example:

Genesis 12:2: Prophecy: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." **Fulfillment:** Deuteronomy 1:10: "The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude."

Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6: Prophecy: "Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." and "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." **Fulfillment:** Matthew 1:21-23. The Lord Jesus is born unto a virgin.

Isaiah 40:3: Prophecy: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." **Fulfillment:** Matthew 3:3. John the Baptist and His ministry.

But we know many prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. Jeremiah 33:14 relays: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah." Paul also stated that God fully plans to reestablish His program and purpose with Israel after the Gentile mystery program: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11:25)

God is trustworthy and has great love for us. He will follow through with what He says in His Word. We can have full confidence as did Abraham: "And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 4:21)

When Do We Live Like 'We Are Able?'

If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that at least sometimes we try to live life by our own effort. We may wake up each day and have no thought to yield to God. There is no major problem, surely 'we are able' to handle the day-to-day things without Him.

However, this can set a bad life pattern. For problems often pop up unexpectedly and with a powerful impact. If we depend on ourselves to handle the little things, we won't have the mindset to trust God in the big things. We will push through problems on our own as did Israel: "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken **we will do...**" (Ex. 19:8) They were not able.

Why did Israel do this? "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law..." (Rom. 9:32) We also believe our works are acceptable and 'we are able.' Even though we have free access to God's wisdom and power, we still trust ourselves and can be high minded.

God desires us to walk by faith even in the little things to develop reliance on Him. Reading, praying, and discussing desires/frustrations with Him, our Father, is important. It renews the mind, enabling us to gain confidence and wisdom.

"For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." (II Corinth. 13:4)



Search it out!

Romans 4: Questions Are a Key Study Tool

Examine verses!



This month we will use a new tool to help us examine *Romans, Chapter 4*. It's taken from, *Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools, Page 15*.

Ask yourself questions: As you progress through a passage or chapter, make time to think, meditate, and pray about what it is teaching. Use the 'Who, what, when, where, why, and how approach' in analyzing the verse: "To whom is it referring?" "What is the topic in this section?" "Why is that being said here?" Learning the process of asking questions can make Scripture come alive.

1. Read *Romans 4:1-8*: Ask yourself a few questions to determine if you understand. How were Abraham and David our examples in Chapter 4? Were other faithful Jewish believers also given imputed righteousness when they believed? Do any Bible characters come to

mind? What does this teach us about faith & works?

2. Read *Romans 4:9-12*: Continue the process of asking questions to expand understanding. What does blessedness refer to? Could it refer back to *Verse 8*? *Verse 11* seems to explain how Gentiles could receive imputed righteousness. What does it teach?

3. Read *Romans 4:13-18*: To find more about how Abraham's faith relates to ours, keep thinking about questions to gain insight into the details. How does faith relate to grace in *Verse 16*? Describe how Abraham can be the father of us all. What does it mean, "*Who against hope, believed in hope...*"?

4. Read *Romans 4:19-25*: In this last section look at the verses for yourself and come up with some questions to help you understand what it is teaching. Use the who, what, when, where, why questions to help.

Were Old Testament Saints Saved by Faith or Works?

Could man's fleshly works ever be acceptable with God? The answer is NO! Man's ways are not God's and we will always lack God's perfect righteousness: "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" (*Romans 3:23*). Paul knew that even his best efforts were unacceptable: "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*" (*Philippians 3:8*)

The Old Testament taught this also, God never wanted 'man's' works. This is exactly what He taught Abram as He started His Nation Israel. The LORD proved Abram, saying: "...walk before me, and be thou perfect." Abram immediately realized (*Gen. 17:1-4*) his fleshly works could never be perfect, so he was humbled. This was exactly what God desired in order to give him the covenant: "*And Abram fell on his face...*" God immediately instituted circumcision (cutting away the flesh) to put an exclamation point on what He had taught Abram, to be a witness to generations to come. "*And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*" (*Gen. 17:11*)

God desired for Israel (and us) that He would be their total provision. This was a grace gift, as they did not work to earn it. As a saint desires to please God in grace once they are saved (justified), it produces a holy sanctified walk, humbly obeying God's Word: "*But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*" (*Rom. 2:29*) We can learn from this teaching today. God does NOT want our best effort or works!

In *Romans 4*, Paul highlights the fact that God's gift of righteousness was always obtained by faith, by using two key Old Testament Bible characters: **David**: "*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto who God imputeth righteousness without works.*" (*Verse 6*) **Abraham**: "*And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*" (*Verse 22*) Clearly, we also receive His imputed righteousness by faith: "*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to who it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.*" (*Verses 24-25*)

Yes, the Old Testament saints were saved by faith alone and this would have prompted them to keep God's Law, walking by faith. God desired a humble, circumcised heart of faith, just as He does today.

Walking by Faith in Relationships

How is Faith Different Than Trust?

To understand the difference between these terms, let's define them using a Bible dictionary, but also examine verses to clarify meanings.

1. Faith: Complete confidence; belief based on sound doctrine. Taking God at His Word.

Romans 3:27: Does not include works. *"Where is the boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."* (Also Romans 4:5, 7:6, 11:6; Galatians 3:1-3, 5:1-4)

Romans 4:20: Having no doubt in God's Word. *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."*

Romans 10:17: Faith is developed by the Word. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

I Corinthians 2:5: Faith is to be based on God's power. *"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."*

Galatians 2:20: We're to live by the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

2. Trust: account as reliable; confident; depend on something; live/rest on something as Truth.

Romans 4:21: Completely convinced. *"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."*

II Corinthians 1:9: Relying on God not our efforts *"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."*

II Corinthians 3:4: Confident reliance through Christ. *"And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."*

Faith is simple belief in what God says as being Truth, whereas trust relies on it to live in the details of life. While the terms are closely linked, notice how they differ. Faith is 'knowing' something to be true, while Trust focuses on 'putting something into action,' like living one's belief i.e. Abraham trusted God to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. **To Do:** Study it further: Look at other Bible characters who had trust.

One of the more important issues in a relationship is to live by faith in what God teaches. This does not always automatically happen. The flesh is strong and unable to produce anything acceptable to God. We can default to living in the flesh if we're unaware or don't renew our mind.

Paul even instructs the saints in a mature Church to set aside their fleshly ways: *"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."* He provides the way to do this as he continues to teach: *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* (Ephesians 4:22-24) This is to be a thoughtful and purposeful living out of the Word of God.

To Do:

- 1) Make the decision to take in the Word daily.
- 2) Meditate on verses to have a heart faith/trust.
- 3) Yield and believe as you decide to apply it in life.
- 4) Live what the Scripture teaches, putting on the new man (Christ living His life within you).

What it looks like in a real life situation: A husband has a sickly wife, who has been tired, cranky and sometimes unkind. She is short-tempered, quick to judge, and complains, always needing something.

1) In the Word: The husband ought to pray through the day and regularly read and meditate on the Word for how to respond in Christ's love and to be patient, slow to anger..

2) Reflect: Evaluate/think on key verses about specific ways to live in love, from God's instructions to us, the Body of Christ (Rom.-Phile.). Plan to adjust your fleshly reactions.

3. Yield: Do you believe what the Word says and are you willing to live it? When your flesh rises up, stop and think.

4. Walk by faith: Apply love to the situation, recalling the verses. After a situation, evaluate how it went, without condemnation. Learn what you can and use it for the next opportunity, praising God in you. Purpose to continue & grow.

There's no quick fix to make situations better. It's by slowly applying the Word and learning. Other ideas: The husband could offer to do a Bible study or read the Word to his wife, or ask her how he could help her through this challenging time, keeping open dialog. Maybe she could benefit from a visit from a sister-in-Christ as an outlet to vent and learn godly ways to cope and apply the Word. **Food for Thought!**

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...”. (Romans 3:24)

Being Ignorant of the Devil's Devices By Jill Nelson

Romans is the foundational base of the believer today. It's in this book we learn the key principles of the dispensation of grace, what Christ has done for us, the Body of Christ, our identity in Christ and so much more. In the very first chapter of Romans, Paul warns the saints at Rome not to be ignorant, *Romans 1:13* "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren..." There are many things to be ignorant of in the Bible, but let's focus on what *II Corinthians 2:11* states in relation to the devil and our ignorance, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." Listed below are a couple of examples of the devil's devices:

- *Colossians 3:2* "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Every day you will be tempted with something desirable in this world to lust after or covet (good looks, athletic abilities, lifestyle status, etc.). Be careful what you fill your mind with and put in front of you. *Philippians 4:8* is a great complement to this verse, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

- *Romans 13:14* "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." One of the ways to make provision for the flesh is to operate under the law instead of under grace. It's very easy to slip back into the flesh and begin comparing yourself to others and having self-righteous actions and thoughts. Reminding ourselves that anything good that comes from us is Christ in us and has nothing to do with our own performance. *Philippians 2:13* "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

These are just a couple of the devices out there that the devil looks to entrap us with. We must always be on guard, but take comfort that the Lord is a constant resource to us. *Ephesians 4:23-24* "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

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