

LOVE EMPOWERS FAITH

Recently I was reading an article and I came to a place where Galatians 5:6 was referenced. It jumped off the page at me. I began to see something I had not seen before, at least not in this context.

Let me begin by quoting Galatians 5:6 from several different Bible translations.

KJV: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love.

Amplified: For {if we are} in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

NLT: For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

The Message: For in Christ neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior; faith expressed in love.

What jumped off the page at me was the last part of the verse, faith works by love! Now for me another way to say that is, "love is the power source of our faith!" Wow! OK? Whose love? What love? How do I get this love? Is this why I have continued to struggle in my faith? Could it be? Yes, I believe that to the degree love has been absent or lacking in our lives, to that same degree walking by faith, exercising our faith, growing our faith will be a struggle. By the same token, to the degree that love is present in our lives, to that same degree we will be able to exercise our faith. As I have said on previous occasions, I believe love is the fuel we are designed to run on. I believe the source of that love is Father God Himself. When we are born again we not only receive our personal measure of faith, but we are also introduced to Father's unconditional love for us through Jesus Christ. As we press into relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, His love grows in us and our love grows for Him. The deeper our love relationship grows the more our faith grows. I also feel comfortable in using the word 'trust' as being synonymous with faith here. So the more we press in to develop an intimate relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the more love we will experience, which in turn empowers our faith and builds our trust in Him.

Now, I realize that where I am about to go will be difficult for some, but nonetheless essential. We are to learn to love, trust and have faith in our family of origin. Father intended that parents would know Him intimately and therefore be experienced in love and faith so that when children came along parents could truly love their children to life and eventually lead them to Jesus and ultimately to Father Himself. To the degree that did not happen we have not experienced life as Father intended. We have not experienced love as Father intended, and we may not have developed faith as Father intended. Think about it. It is expressed love that develops our ability to trust and have faith in other people. Let's put to rest the issue of honoring our parents. This discussion is not about dishonoring or blaming our parents for anything, but it is about understanding the source of some of our struggles. Typically our parents gave us

what they had to give. That is all we should expect, isn't it? Also usually what we received was dramatically less than what Father intended, especially when He was left out of the equation.

Love is not love unless it is expressed in the form of holding, tender voice and touch, caressing, kissing, feeding, spending time with, encouraging, teaching, disciplining, providing necessities of life, providing a safe environment, encouraging purpose and destiny, encouraging and demonstrating faith in God and an intimate love relationship with Him. Obviously there is much more I could say here, but I'm sure you get my point. This is the atmosphere of love that produces trust in children and that trust is the fertile soil that faith requires for proper growth. Love empowers our faith!

Romans 1:17 says "*The just shall live by faith.*"

What does that mean? Obviously you can get a tremendous amount of differing opinions on the subject. To reference Pastor Bill Johnson, he believes that when we get born again, it becomes illegal for us to continue to live just naturally. We must, by faith, begin to live supernaturally; that is, beyond the realm of the natural man. The supernatural is the proof text to God's existence. It is the supernatural that touches that inherent God inspired desire in man to believe there is a God.

Example: Now consider Romans 12:3. It says that when we are born again we are all given the measure of faith required to live a successful Christian life (my understanding). We also read in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. But also consider Matthew 8:5-10. Jesus was entering Capernaum and He was approached by a centurion. The centurion begged Jesus to speak a word and heal his servant. Jesus' response was to express to His disciples that He (Jesus) had not seen this much faith with anyone even in Israel! Where did the centurion get his faith? There is no record of his salvation. Had he seen Jesus heal other people? Had he heard testimony regarding people who had been healed? Obviously something happened to him that caused his faith in Jesus to grow to the place where he believed that if Jesus simply spoke a word his servant would be healed! Jesus saw his faith and called it faith and responded to his faith and his servant was healed! I believe that no matter what caused his faith to grow, whether personal experience or the testimony of others, it was the love and compassion of Jesus to heal the sick and infirmed that empowered this centurion to believe for the healing of his servant. Love demonstrated can empower the faith of others. Revelation 19:10.

Living in the supernatural requires a growing faith and if faith is empowered by love then our love experience must be growing also. This requires intimacy with Father. Remember we were created by love (Father) for the purpose of love and intimate relationship with Father and each other. Life is all about relationship rooted in love. Love is the most powerful weapon Father has given us.

Romans 10:17 says, "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*" The word '**word**' here is "rhema" or as Strong's Concordance says, "an utterance or something spoken." The written word is "logos" but the **word** spoken of here in Romans is "rhema". The written word or 'logos' is what God has said and 'rhema' is what God is saying now. That is not to in any way demean or take anything away from the Bible because it is holy. Also the Holy Spirit can cause 'logos' to jump off the page for us and it can become 'rhema' from the Lord and bless our socks off! However, there is also 'rhema' directly from the Holy Spirit, a word spoken to us fresh from the Father now. This 'rhema' word comes out of our personal relationship with Him. We talk to Him and He listens. Then we shut up and He talks to us and we listen; at least we should. This builds our faith and our love grows stronger.

So it is not difficult to see the connection between faith and love and the obvious fact that both are essential to our Christian experience. But also note that 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “*There is faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*”

Here the word of God says that the proper kind of love is more important than faith. To me, this again supports my statement, that love empowers faith. This really excites me because I believe that this revelation will help many find Father’s unconditional love for them which in turn will dramatically empower their faith in Him and in themselves to live the kind of supernatural life Father has intended for us.

Just as love empowers faith, love hunger empowers sin and unbelief. Just as God’s love is a driving force within us that must be expressed to others, love hunger is a driving force within us that demands satisfaction. Because of this driving force within us if we cannot get the real love that satisfies our God given need for His unconditional love, then we will substitute counterfeits. These counterfeits usually fall into four main categories of *passion, possessions, position or power*. The ability of these counterfeits to satisfy the demand of the love hunger monster is temporary at best and usually leads to an unhappy life and the real possibility of addictions. The root cause of an addictive nature is usually love hunger. Love hunger has a dramatic overall negative impact on our life experience. Love hunger can lead us to become slaves for God instead of being sons and daughters of God. As slaves we would typically be distant from Him and subservient to His law and rules striving to please Him, fearing His displeasure with our performance. Burnout is usually the result of slavery. Frustration, discouragement, depression, fear, anger, shame, and fear of failure are typical fruits of this slavery. Slavery rooted in fear will never produce the kind of faith we need to live a successful Christian life. Love is much more powerful than fear. Obeying God’s law and rules out of fear will produce a life of bondage and religion. But an experiential love relationship with Father will produce more faith and greater desire to live a powerful life of love according to His law and rules simply because we want to.

Sharing this revelation that love empowers faith is in no way intended to demean or take away from other ways we build our faith. After all, God designed the package we call life and even though our individual experiences may differ, the package does not change. We should all eventually experience growing our faith by personal study of the word of God; by church attendance; by true worship and obedience to God; by availing ourselves to the five-fold ministry and listening to other teachers along with apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors whenever possible; by fellowship because corporate faith is very important to our growth; by sharing and or hearing testimony of supernatural events of God’s provision and intervention in our lives; and also according to Jude 1:20 and I Corinthians 14:3 we build our faith by praying in tongues of the Holy Spirit. I am sure you can add to my incomplete list.

Now, let’s look at the other side of the coin. Our faith also grows because of what Father does for us. When He speaks to us it builds our faith’ when He provides for us it builds our faith; when He loves on us it really builds our faith! So He not only freely gives us our initial measure of faith, but from that point on, He wants to interact with us so that our faith in Him grows and we become closer and closer in relationship and our faith responds.

Many things are important to our growth and maturing as a child of God, but we must now allow anything to become a substitute for our own personal, intimate relationship with Father God, I mean absolutely nothing. He is much bigger than what any person or any church or any denomination knows about Him or His word. When I hear people say I am a certain denomination or belief, I realize that they have found a comfort zone and have limited God’s expression in their lives to the boundaries of their belief. This is sad for them and their world of influence because God is much bigger than our beliefs and boundaries and He wants the church and the world to experience Him at His greatest potential. Instead, the

church binds Him by our belief or unbelief, and both the church and the world experience a very limited version of Who God really is and Who He wants to be for us and through us to the world.

Another sad note and dramatic barrier to living the life of love Father intended for us to experience is head knowledge versus personal experiential knowledge. In other words, head knowledge instead of personal relationship with Father Himself. Head knowledge is believing Father loves you because the Bible says so and/or because you heard someone teach the subject. Is it true? Yes, absolutely. But that revelation is not the end of the subject. It is only the beginning. The revelation itself should prompt us to pursue and develop our own relationship with the Person of Father God. Please don't be satisfied with the truth that Father loves you (the head knowledge) when He is available to wrap His arms around you and love you to life like you never thought possible. Head knowledge that God loves you will not build your faith like receiving His love by personal experience will. When you experience His love touching those deep places of your heart that have not known love before, your faith in Him will skyrocket. Thus your faith in yourself will grow and Father Himself will give you more opportunity to exercise your growing faith; more opportunity to live in the supernatural where He is rather than being satisfied with a natural existence. Our new life of love will bring Him much more glory and honor and bring us much more peace and rest than we have ever known. Father is available to everyone of us just like we are at this moment. That is what Jesus died for. His work was complete. By the blood of Jesus we have total access to our Heavenly Father. Hebrews 10:19. This is His gift to us. You need Him. How do I know? I know because He designed us to need Him, not just by belief of knowledge but by experience. You may say, well I feel loved and I have a strong faith, so this doesn't apply to me.

EXCUSE ME? Could you or would you possibly compare the love you have experienced to the immensity of Father's love and say you have enough? Could you or would you possibly compare the faith you have today with the faith that Father intended we walk in and say I have enough? Since we have no comprehension of the magnitude of the depth of God's love nor His unlimited power to produce faith we must remove any and all self-imposed restrictions or boundaries we have placed on love and faith and Father Himself.

Are you walking on water? Are you healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, cleansing the lepers? Are you moving mountains? I believe these examples only represent what should be a normal, supernatural life for all Christians. Even if someone is doing all of the above, I don't believe this represents maximum potential. I believe there is much more possible.

So in closing, I hope you have been encouraged and as a result have a new ray of hope for your potential to walk in faith. Even more importantly, I hope you have a new hunger birthed in you for your personal, intimate love relationship with your Heavenly Father. If so, then please pursue Him. If you do, He will pursue you. James 4:8.

In Father's love,
Roger