

FAITH-FILLED EXPECTATION

Moving from "Bless Me" to "Transform Me"

Hebrews 11:6 NIV *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

Scripture References: Exodus 20:24; Matthew 18:20; **Romans 4:20**; Matthew 6:33; James 4:3; **Isaiah 55:11**; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; **Ephesians 4:11-16**; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; Matthew 5:16

INTRODUCTION

Whenever we come together—whether in Sunday school, Bible study, prayer, worship, or another ministry gathering—God longs for us to come with great **expectation** that He will meet us through His Word and work among us by His Spirit.

This expectation is not emotional excitement, positive thinking, or our attempt to manufacture experiences, or our personal agendas to get our way. It is **faith**. And faith, when it is true, doesn't come with a list of things for God to give but instead, says: *I surrender myself to whatever God wants to accomplish.*

Romans 4:20 tells us that Abraham "**was strong in faith, giving glory to God.**" He believed God **before** the promise was manifested. Abraham's faith honored God because it acknowledged that God was truthful, faithful, and able to perform what He had promised.

NOTE: When we gather expecting God to speak, our faith declares that He is still **faithful**, His Word is still powerful, and He is still working.

EXPECTATION VS. ENTITLEMENT

Many gather with a list of demands concerning what God must do, how He must move, or how the gathering must make us feel. Entitlement means walking into church with the attitude that God owes us something. We must move from a "bless me" mindset to a **posture of humility and surrender**.

- **James 4:2b-3:** NIV - *...you do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.* Scripture rebukes asking God for things simply to spend them on our own **pleasures**. Coming to church just to ask for "stuff" shows a heart that is misaligned.
- **Matthew 6:33:** We are to *seek first His **kingdom** and His righteousness.*

NOTE: Biblical expectation does not attempt to dictate to God. Faith does not attempt to pull God into our plans. Faith positions us to **participate** in His plan because what He says and does deserves my obedient response. [*inward work by the Holy Ghost produces outward response*]

THE PURPOSE AND COUNSEL OF THE WORD

When God speaks, it will not always be an encouraging pat on the back. True expectation means being wide open to correction, instruction, and deep (heart) transformation that leads to: **attentiveness; service; preparation; surrender; reception; obedience; service; perseverance.**

- **Isaiah 55:11:** *"...it shall accomplish that which I **please**, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* The Word accomplishes what pleases God, not what satisfies our immediate comforts or desires.

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- **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All scripture is profitable for doctrine, **reproof**, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Putting Our Belief into Action.

When we come with (spiritual) expectation, we know He is with us, therefore, we **expect**:

- Him to speak – so we *prepare our heart* to receive from Him.
- His Word to matter, so we bring our Bibles and set our minds to pay close attention.
- the Holy Spirit to work within and among us, so we *open our ears, hearts, and mind* to hear and discern.
- God’s purpose to be accomplished in our church services: Sunday school, Bible study, worship services; so, we surrender our (personal) preferences.
- the truth to be taught, so we *prepare to obey it*.
- the word to correct our thinking, expose our motives, increase our understanding, strengthen our faith, or move us toward obedience – we *continue in the word (daily)*.

THE MOTIVE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Church growth is more than an increase in attendance. Numerical growth brings new people into the building, but spiritual growth develops disciples.

- **Ephesians 4:11-12:** Ministry leaders are given to equip the saints, and the saints are equipped to participate in the **work** of the ministry.
- **1 Corinthians 12:7, 11:** The Holy Ghost distributes spiritual gifts to every member for the **profit** of the *entire* church. Gifts are for serving others, not for personal status, recognition, or titles.

NOTE: Giftedness and **maturity** are not the same. We may possess genuine ability while still needing development in character, doctrine, humility, faithfulness, accountability, and self-control.

GOING BEYOND THE WALLS

We gather to receive, but receiving is not the end.

We receive the word of God so that we can **grow**. We grow so that we can **serve**. As each of us grows and serves, the entire body is strengthened. When the entire body is strong, we carry it into the community.

- **Ephesians 4:16:** The health of the church is affected by whether each member is growing, serving, and **contributing** according to the grace God has given.
- **Matthew 5:16:** What we learn inside the church must transform how we live **outside** the church. The community needs to see the gospel demonstrated through our compassion, integrity, and witness.

Final Thought:

Do not limit a “move of God” to what excites the room. Come to the house of God expecting His presence, surrendered to His will, and ready to move from a seat-filler to a **servant**. Seek God first – with an expectation that he will reveal the gift he has given and purpose for which he has called you.