



# MULTIPLYING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## Study Notes by Thomas Hale

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This document comprises a collection of personal reflections and carefully chosen excerpts from biblical and theological literature, dictionaries, commentaries, and articles. It aims to facilitate and enhance the personal studies of others by providing a well-organized guide.

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## “THE CHALLENGE OF FAITH”

*19 He (Abraham) did not weaken in faith when he considered the [utter] impotence of his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or [when he considered] the barrenness of Sarah’s [deadened] womb. [Gen. 17:17; 18:11.] 20 No unbelief or distrust made him waver (doubtingly question) concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God, 21 Fully satisfied and assured that God was able and mighty to keep His word and to do what He had promised.* The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Ro 4:19–21.

### 1. FAITH

- a. *pistis* (πίστις, 4102), primarily, “firm persuasion,” a **conviction based upon hearing** (Romans 10:17) (akin to *peitho*, “to persuade”), is used in the NT always of “faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.” Vine, W. E., et al. *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, vol. 2, T. Nelson, 1996, p. 222.
- b. The noun *πίστις* (*pistis*) occurs 243 times in the NT. The most frequent use of *pistis* in the NT refers to the state of believing and is usually directed toward God (1 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 1:21) or Christ (Rom 3:22; Eph 1:15). *Pistis* is often used to indicate the appropriate response to God’s promise (Rom 4:13–16; Gal 3:14, 22; Heb 6:12; 11:13). With this relationship between promise and faith in mind, **Paul defines *pistis* as a full conviction of God’s ability to do what he has promised (Rom 4:21).** Fenlason, Aaron C. “Belief.” *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, edited by Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Press, 2014.

## 2. THE CHALLENGE OF FAITH

*...for the Scripture says, The man in right standing with God [the just, the righteous] shall live by and out of faith....* The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Ga 3:11.

- a. As Christians, we are called to "live by faith and out of faith." When asked about the main obstacle to a life of faith, many believers often say, "I struggle with having sufficient faith. I know that the promises are in the Bible, but I rarely experience anything from God. I have prayed for faith, but I'm uncertain about how to obtain it!"
- b. Unanswered prayers can be one of the most difficult aspects of living a life of faith. Many people question why their prayers go seemingly "unanswered," and when they do not get an answer, it can shake their faith. This is a straightforward question with a complicated answer. Nevertheless, I would like to share my thoughts on what I consider a frequent obstacle to receiving from God.

## 3. THE DOUBLE-SOULED PERSON

*6 Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind. 7 For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the Lord, 8 [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].* The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Jas 1:6–8.

- a. Faith received from God must remain unwavering. James unequivocally warns that any hint of hesitation, **doubt, or wavering in faith** will result in receiving nothing from God.
  - i. **DOUBT (WAVERING):** To be in strife with oneself, i.e., to doubt, hesitate, waver (Matt. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Rom. 4:20; 14:23; James 1:6; 2:4 without taking it as a question, "and if you do this without hesitation"). Zodhiates, Spiros. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, Electronic ed., AMG Publishers, 2000.
  - ii. When they ask, they "must believe and not doubt." Their faith must be more than mere acceptance of a creed. To believe is to be confident that God will give what is requested. The extent of faith that God looks for is emphasized by the words "not doubt" (GK 1359). "Doubt" describes one who is divided in the mind and who wavers between two opinions. **One moment he voices the yes of faith; the next moment it is the no of disbelief.** Such an attitude is graphically

illustrated by “a wave of the sea.” Completely lacking in stability, it is “blown and tossed by the wind.” First there is the crest, then the trough. **Instead, prayer that moves God to respond must be marked by the constancy of unwavering faith.** Barker, Kenneth L. Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition: New Testament). Zondervan Publishing House, 1994, p. 1020.

### iii. **DOUBLE-MINDED: HAVING TWO SOULS**

1. #1374. δίψυχος *dípsuchos*; gen. *dipsúchou*, masc.–fem., neut. *dípsuchon*, adj. from *dís* (1364), twice, and *psuché* (5590), soul, mind. **Double-minded**, doubtful. In James 1:8, referring to the doubter or waverer which corresponds to *diakrínō* (1252); in the pl., in a general sense as an unstable person (James 4:8). Such a person suffers from divided loyalties. On the one hand, he wishes to maintain a religious confession and desires the presence of God in his life; on the other hand, he loves the ways of the world and prefers to live according to its mores and ethics. Zodhiates, Spiros. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, Electronic ed., AMG Publishers, 2000.

4. **NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, <sup>o</sup>the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].** <sup>o</sup>James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament. The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Heb 11:1.

- a. Unwavering and single-minded faith firmly believes and trusts in the truth of God's Word, regardless of any conflicting circumstances or outward appearances. Doubt, or being double-minded, says, “When I see it, when I feel it, I will know that I have it.”
- b. Genuine faith declares, “If God says it is true, it is. If He says, ‘By His stripes I am healed,’ then I am. If He says that God shall supply every need of mine, He will do it. If God says He is the strength of my life, He is. Jesus is who He says He is, and I am who He says I am.”
- c. To strengthen your faith and grow in spiritual resilience, immerse yourself in the Word, digest its teachings, and contemplate them until they are ingrained within you. Discover your identity in Christ, your entitlements, His perspective of you, and His affirmations about you!