

Faith Lesson Three

Focal Texts: Proverbs 3:5-6; Galatians 2:15-21; Ephesians 2:8-10

Background: Proverbs 3:5-6; Galatians 2:15-21; Ephesians 2:8-10

Teaching Aim: To lead members to identify three primary aspects of faith and apply these to their own experience with faith.

Connect with Life: Ask members to suggest some possible definitions of, or descriptions of faith. Allow time for several suggestions before sharing the following from Oswald Chambers: “Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading.” “The great thing about faith in God is that it keeps a man undisturbed in the midst of disturbance.” “Faith is the heroic effort of your life; you fling yourself in reckless confidence on God. God has ventured all in Jesus Christ to save us; now He wants us to venture our all in abandoned confidence in Him.”

Repeat the last statement about faith and share with members that this statement is very similar to the statements about faith found in Proverbs 3:5-6. We will examine these verses in search of three primary aspects of faith and relate these to the other focal verses.

Guide Bible Study: Before reading Proverbs 3:5-6 ask members to listen for the three primary aspects of faith as found in these verses. Write these on the board as they are mentioned. Ask members to suggest additional ways to state each aspect during the time of discussion. For example:

1. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. This relates to our salvation experience which cannot be earned, only received in faith. “Used here, ‘trust’ means to fully and completely put our whole weight on God’s wisdom, care, and compassion. Faith is learning to put our full weight on God’s superior wisdom and unlimited love.”
2. Lean not on your own understanding. This has to do with the Lordship of Christ. We take ourselves off the throne of our lives and allow Christ to be on the throne. The Message reads, “don’t try to figure everything out on your own.” “God is inviting us to enjoy his wisdom and direction for our lives rather than having to rely on our limited perspective. Our understanding of any situation is limited by our human condition.”
3. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. This speaks to living the abundant life that God intends for each of us. As we follow God’s leading we can grow in His likeness and fulfill His will for our lives. “This means we are to submit our plans, ideas, challenges, decisions, and hearts to him. We are to place our will on the altar to be exchanged for his will.” “He will guide us. He will lead us. He will oversee our decisions. He will give us promptings. He will bring the right circumstances to us so we can sense his will. He will surround us with the

right influences to assist us. He will make himself known to us so we will understand his purposes.”

Then lead members to see that the remaining focal verses relate to each of these aspects as follows:

1. Galatians 2:15-16 relate to the first aspect, which deals with our salvation experience. Our salvation is a faith experience that has nothing to do with fulfilling the law. “There were leaders in some of the Galatian churches who sought to participate in their own salvation. The idea that human effort was necessary seemed to make sense to them.” “Paul led the effort in the early church to define salvation. He argued that Jesus had fulfilled the requirements of the Jewish law and that his followers had been set free from religious regulations.” “Placing faith in Jesus would lead to being justified in God’s eyes.”
2. Galatians 2:17-Ephesians 2:9 relate to the second aspect, which deals with living according to God’s wisdom, not our own. In these verses we see some examples of what would happen if we leaned on our own understanding. Can Christ actually promote sin? Of course not! Can we be saved by observing the law? Absolutely not! Can we replace God’s grace as the source of our righteousness? No! “The first step to pleasing God is to place your faith in Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul! Observing religious rituals will not accomplish eternal salvation. Only by placing faith in Jesus can one experience eternal life.” “What is grace? It is the unmerited favor of God. It is a gift from God. We cannot earn his grace, nor do we deserve his grace. What is our role in salvation? We are to accept the gift by faith.”
3. Ephesians 2:10 relates to the third aspect of faith, which is following God’s leadership in order to accomplish his will for our lives. We have been created to do good works according to God’s pre-planned will for our lives. “God has provided us a lifetime of usefulness and purpose. He has uniquely transformed us by his grace to live a life of faith. As we serve him daily, we are walking in the life of works he has custom-designed for us. We are not saved by works, we are saved for works. He hasn’t redeemed us just for eternity-he has redeemed us to live purposefully here on the earth!”

Encourage Application: Lead members to review the three primary aspects of faith as discussed at the beginning of this study. Ask them to review their own faith experience in light of these aspects.

Also ask members to share how they might use Proverbs 3:5-6 in a witnessing encounter. Help them to see how these three aspects of faith provide a wonderful summary of the entire salvation experience. Close with prayer that members might take advantage of any witnessing opportunities they may have this next week.