

Brilliant Faith

Study Guide

By

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Prologue

Two or Three Witnesses

1. Please read Deuteronomy 19:15, John 15:26-27, Hebrews 10:15, and Acts 5:32. The two witnesses are the Holy Spirit and the apostles. (Remember, the New Testament was written from the testimony of those twelve apostles, and it was inspired by the Holy Spirit.) Please describe what role those two witnesses have played convincing you who Jesus is.

2. Please describe how we modern day believers can be that third witness of Jesus to others.

Section 1

The Five Facets of Brilliant Faith

1. Please describe how you've seen faith – either yours or others – serve as a shining light for Jesus.

2. Please try to name from memory each of the five facets and its defining statement.

Chapter 1

Familiar

1. Do you see faith as something separate from logic or itself being logical? (please explain)
2. Name and explain the characteristics of God that you most depend upon as the basis for your faith.
3. What's something you've learned about God recently that has increased your familiarity with Him?

Chapter 2

Aware

1. Please watch The Chosen S1 E4 and read Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:1-12.
2. Describe the difference in Simon Peter's responses to Jesus in the Luke 5 experience and the John 21 experience, including the reason for the difference.
3. Please read 2 Kings 6:8-23.
4. What characteristics of God was Elisha familiar with that he sensed being present in his current situation at his home in Dothan that morning?
5. Describe the change in Elisha's servant's awareness once his eyes were opened to see what he hadn't seen before.

Chapter 3

Invoke

1. Please describe a time in your life when you invoked God, calling out to Him for help, the circumstances leading up to it, and His response.
2. Over the course of your life of walking with God, have you grown to more quickly turn to Him in times of trouble? Is there still room for growth in that way?
3. Psalms 28:7 says *The Lord is my strength and shield. I trusted Him with all my heart. He helps me and my heart is filled with joy.* Do you see God as your helper, the one who can help when none other can? Please explain what that looks like in your life.
4. Please describe what opportunity there is for improvement in your life of invoking the Lord?

Chapter 4

Trust

1. Please describe the role of trust in your life of faith.
2. Luke 17:3-6 (please read that passage) implies that the apostles may have been intimidated by Jesus' standard that they forgive so consistently, and they recognized that they needed great faith in order to meet that standard. What challenges do you feel God has issued to you for which you will need strong faith?
3. When we truly trust God, it shows somehow. What is a way you've seen trust manifest in your life?
4. In this chapter, the fruit of trust named are commitment, patience and miracle. What other fruit do you think of that come from trusting God?

5. Please share your experience of placing your trust in Jesus for your salvation into an everlasting relationship with Him.

6. What's something for which you're currently trusting God?

Chapter 5

Heed

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer implied (at the head of the chapter) that the presence or absence of obedience in our lives indicates whether we do or don't have faith. Please describe your view of this, whether obedience is the evidence of our faith.
2. Please describe your approach to observing God. What do you do to help you perceive His desires more keenly?
3. The two types of response to God are strict obedience and freewill offering. We should strictly obey God's directive to believe in His Son. Please share some ways you respond to Him creatively from your own will and desires.
4. Please share what you consider the fruit that best identifies someone as belonging to Christ, what that really looks like in someone's life.

Chapter 6

Substance and Evidence

1. Substance means “stand under.” What is something you see as resting upon your faith?
2. The distinctive characteristic of hope in Christ is that it’s certain. What is something future that your faith in Jesus assures is certain and not merely desirable?
3. Please describe a difficult situation in which you relied on the hope you have in Christ to help you through it.
4. Please describe a time when your faith served as evidence that God was doing unseen things or a time your faith was lacking and, therefore, the evidence was missing. Please don’t be discouraged if your story is that your faith was lacking; we’re all human and everyone’s faith has been lacking at some point. Besides, we’re in pretty good company; remember Simon Peter walking on the water – or sinking down into it – and the night when three times he denied Christ.)

Chapter 7

Comes and Grows

1. Please read Psalms 119. Which verse would you hide in your heart to help keep your faith strong?
2. What's a passage of Scripture you've put your faith in through which God has worked powerfully in your life?
3. In Luke 17 we read of the disciples asking for more faith so they could forgive those who sinned against them. What challenge do you need an increase in faith in order to overcome?
4. Please convey a time when you were tempted to take credit (even if just in your own heart) for something God did through your faith. Did you give into the temptation or resist it?

Chapter 8

Seed

1. We sow seed in our gardens, fields and yards, not because the seed look impressive, but because we envision what they will yield. What vision have you had that motivated you to sow faith seed?

2. What Scriptural promise (like Psalms 1:1-3 on page 50) have you used to motivate yourself to sow a seed of faith?

Chapter 9

Puny

1. Of these four stories in the book of Matthew, with which one do you most identify, and why?
2. Of the four “punifiers” named in this chapter (worry, fear, doubt and confusion), which has been the greatest challenge to your faith?
3. Please share a story about a time when your faith was a factor – positive or negative – with one of the four prizes named in this chapter (provision, protection, performance and perception).
4. Please read Matthew 16:5-12. The disciples were confused about what Jesus said regarding “the leaven of the Pharisees and Saducees.” In that case, what should they have remembered in order to prevent confusion and perceive His meaning?

Chapter 10

Great

1. One significant factor that made these two people “great faiths” (that we read about in Matthew chapters 8 and 15) was their unlikeliness. They were both Gentiles, yet they believed Jesus to meet their needs even though His ministry at that time was to the Jews. Have you ever felt you were an unlikely candidate to receive one of God’s miraculous gifts? Please explain your answer.
2. Believing that Jesus could perform, not only a miracle, but a miracle outside the scope of the miracles He’d been performing, required great faith. Please discuss how you would define the scope of the miracles He performs in our day and what it might look like for Him to work outside that scope.
3. Sometimes there’s peer pressure to not believe for God to do something miraculous. Has there been a time when you felt that pressure? Please explain.
4. In “great faith,” all five facets of brilliant faith need to be working. Please describe times when you feel all five facets were at work in your faith.

Chapter 11

Saving

1. Please read the following verses that show the priority of eternity over this age: Matthew 18:8-9; Colossians 3:2-3). Please share your approach to keeping eternal things in their rightful higher place than earthly things.

2. Please share your story of when you accepted the salvation Jesus offers by placing your faith in Him.

Chapter 12

Shield

1. Please read Ephesians 6:10-16. The phrase “above all” in verse 16 shows the priority of faith in our defense against our enemy. Please describe what it looks like in your life to use your faith as a shield against Satan’s fiery darts.

Chapter 13

Faithful

1. Faithfulness, like love and grace, come from God to us, allowing us to also be faithful. Please describe how you've seen your faithfulness grow as you've matured in Christ.

2. Please share your experience of maintaining or relinquishing your faith in difficult trials.

Chapter 14

Beyond

1. Please describe something God has done in your life for which you never really asked.
2. Please describe an experience you've had when someone emphasized faith but was lacking in love.

Section 3

TED EESTER

1. Please share your thoughts on the TED EESTER way of dividing your life into categories.

Chapter 15

Thoughts

1. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a person thinks in their heart, so are they.” Please describe what that verse means to you.
2. Roman 12:2 says, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Please share your understanding of renewing our minds.
3. Please read Philippians 4:8 and explain why the content of our thoughts is important.
4. Of the five thought processes (reasoning, learning, remembering, imagining and deciding), which do you feel are your strengths? Please describe how faith plays into those processes for you.

5. The author wrote about the multiple exposures to a lesson God often uses to teach him something. Please describe the process you've seen God use to teach you something He wants you to understand.

6. What are some of your past experiences that you know God wants you to remember, things that strengthen your faith?

7. Please describe a time when God used your imagination to bring about something good.

8. Please describe your typical decision-making process.

Chapter 16

Emotions

1. Please share about a time when you had very strong emotions and you either did or didn't trust God to help you manage them.
2. Please describe how your faith has impacted your emotional life since you became a believer and follower of Jesus.
3. Of the S-A-F-E emotions (sadness, anger, fear and elation), which are the most challenging and least challenging to you? Please explain.

Chapter 17

Desires

1. As it is Satan's strategy to separate us from God's Word in order to lure us into something destructive, please describe your strategy and practice of keeping yourself adhered to God's Word.
2. Please share about the change you noticed in your desires after coming to Christ.
3. Please share about the challenges related to desires you face in this season of life. (**Remember to use discretion and hold others' comments in confidence. No judgment of one another; only prayer for one another.)
4. Please share your thoughts and experience regarding the three Eds (Yielded, Delighted and Filled).

Chapter 18

Eyes

1. Have you had an experience of God revealing something to you personally? If so, please share it.
2. Please share your practice of spending time in God's presence, what that usually entails (like prayer, Scripture, worship) and please also share some of the ways God has moved in those times.
3. Please share your approach to protecting your heart by guarding your eyes.

Chapter 19

Ears

1. Please read Matthew 11:16-19. Please share your experience concerning people's advice to, or criticism of, you, how you've discerned what to ignore and what to take to heart.
2. Please share your view of some of the messages in the world that are very much in conflict with the truth of God's Word and what our response should be in that conflict.
3. Please speak to your audio diet (music, podcasts, friends, etc.), what you include and exclude, as well as what tweaks you'd like to make to it, to protect your faith and keep it strong.

Chapter 20

Systems

1. Tony Evans defines world (when the New Testament uses it in a negative sense) as “that system, headed by Satan, that leaves God out.” Please convey your thoughts on the world with that connotation.
2. Like the word “world,” the word “flesh” also has both positive and negative uses in the New Testament, which are made obvious only by their contexts. (Please see Romans 8:1-8; note that “flesh and carnality are synonyms.) In keeping with Tony Evans’ definition of “world” we can define “flesh” as that part of us that wants to leave God out.” Please share your strategy and experience of walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh – how we can succeed in it and what the outcome will be.
3. Please expound upon (perhaps from personal experience) how we can apply the five faith facets to a Spirit-led life.

Chapter 21

Tongue

1. I was once preaching a sermon on the Power of the Tongue. At one point, I asked the congregation a question. One lady shouted out her answer but it wasn't the correct answer. I said, "I'm sorry, but that's not it." In response, she blurted out "Damn!" She was embarrassed and everyone laughed because she cussed in church. I took advantage of this perfect opportunity by saying, "You know why that word came out? Because it was in you. It could happen to any of us because I'm sure we've all allowed things in that we shouldn't have." How about you? Have you ever surprised yourself with something you blurted out, then realized where it came from? If you're willing, please share that story.
2. Regarding the five types of listeners in your audience (God & Heaven, other people, yourself, Satan & Hell and things) which do you most often and least often speak to? After reading this chapter, what, if any, adjustments will you make?
3. Please read James 3:1-12 and share your takeaways from this passage.

Chapter 22

Extremities

1. As you think back through the places you frequent on a regular basis, ask yourself the purpose of going to each one. Are there any that you don't visit for the purpose of pleasing and glorifying God? If so, what changes will you make concerning them? (Remember, you can change to [place or your mentality about the place.
2. Locations aren't as important as whether the presence of God is accommodated at a particular place. How can you assure that the Spirit of God is welcome to accompany you wherever you go?
3. What's the best way to assure that you do all that you do for God's glory?

Chapter 23

Resources

1. Please name the resources in your life for which you are most thankful.
2. What are some the resources in your life that you own, the way the world sees it, but that you must remember that you merely steward and don't really own, in God's economy?
3. Which of these mentalities – awareness of God's ownership, sense of purpose, sense of responsibility, gratitude or generosity – is your greatest area for improvement? Please elaborate, if you're willing.

Final Chapter

Shine Forth

1. Please read Matthew 5:14-16. Please describe what it looks like in your life to be a lamp on a lampstand or a city on a hill.
2. Please share a story of how either you or someone else shined the light of Christ in a dark world.
3. What's one key change you can make in your life to shine more effectively for Jesus?