

H Y M N S T U D Y

SONGS OF FAITH

Student Workbook

*13 lessons to help your
congregation sing more
effectively.*

*Rick Brown
Jason Miller*

Hymn Study: Songs of Faith

By
Rick Brown and Jason Miller

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in *Hymn Study: Songs of Faith*. We would like to share with you the reason we began this endeavor. When planning our classes for 2018 where we worship, we realized that none of us remembered ever having a class devoted to the study and appreciation of the hymns we sing. We have studied singing before. We had probably even studied the occasional song, but we could not remember a class focused on the words, meanings, themes, and encouragements in the songs we sing.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, Colossians 3.16.

To teach and admonish one another and sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, we decided to study some of the hymns we sing more effectively. The classes were well received, and all seemed to benefit. We thought others might benefit from a similar study, but we did not see a wide variety of material available to simply study some hymns and their meanings and what could be gained from singing them.

This workbook is an effort to provide something to fulfill this purpose.

Our hope is that you will use this material to initiate discussion, and that this discussion will lead to a deeper appreciation for the songs you sing to encourage one another and to praise our God.

It is our prayer that you will gain a better understanding of the words you say; that you will better connect the words to Scripture and biblical ideas and themes; and that you will better praise God as you do it with your hearts and minds engaged, in spirit and in truth.

Rick Brown & Jason Miller

Lesson One:

Faith Is the Victory

“Faith Is the Victory” is a powerful song that encourages both the singer and the hearer, as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The lyrics were written in 1891 by John Henry Yates. The music was composed by Ira David Sankey, also in 1891.

The song challenges Christians to rise to our calling... to rise up and overcome through faith. It speaks of being brave and strong as worldly challenges and battles are met head on in Jesus. It declares God’s love and the power of His Word.

It reminds the Christian of the wonderful blessings available in Christ, and the importance of taking up the whole armor of God as we charge forward through this life with our sights set on the life to come.

The chorus cannot be sung without enthusiasm and hope as Christians join voices and declare:

*“Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.”*

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.
Chorus

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above
With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith, they like a whirlwind's breath,
Swept on o'er every field;
The faith by which they conquered death
Is still our shining shield.

Chorus

On every hand the foe we find
Drawn up in dread array;
Let tents of ease be left behind,
And onward to the fray.
Salvation's helmet on each head,
With truth all girt about,
The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread,
And echo with our shout.

Chorus

Questions

1. Make note of any information, anecdotal, historical, or biographical, concerning this song or its author.
2. What is (are) the challenge(s) of verse 1? What passages of Scripture come to mind that might help meet those challenges?
3. What battles do Christians face today?

4. What are banners used for and how does this relate to the words in this song?
5. What tools are referenced in verses 2 and 3 to help us in the battle to overcome the world? What Bible passages come to mind?
6. How do we prepare and equip ourselves for battle with Satan? What weapons do we use?
7. What warnings are given in verse 3?
8. Should the Christian be worried about these warnings? Why or why not?
9. How did Christ's sacrifice provide victory?
10. How is faith the victory that overcomes the world?

Lesson Two: Amazing Grace

“Amazing Grace” is an emotional song that connects the singer and the hearer to God’s love. The lyrics were written in 1779 by John Newton. The music was composed by Edwin O. Excell in 1829. The song reminds Christians of our lost state prior to Jesus’ grace. The song reminds Christians of our glorious condition as believers. We are found. We are no longer blind. Our fears are relieved. Because of God’s amazing grace, we have protection, direction, and hope. Because of God’s amazing grace, we will praise God forever:

*“When we’ve been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we’d first begun.”*

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
‘Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far
And Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His Word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Questions

1. Make note of any information, anecdotal, historical, or biographical, concerning this song or its author.
2. Grace is declared to be “amazing” in verse one. Why? How does that make you feel?
3. Define wretch.
4. Does God's grace prevent man from changing his spiritual condition? Explain.
5. What are works of faith/righteousness, and what is their relationship to grace?
6. The value of grace (the fact that it is “precious”) should be very personal. What are some ways that grace is personally precious?
7. How does grace teach our hearts to fear? What is that fear?

8. How does grace help us to overcome? How does it lead us to our heavenly home?

9. How is God our shield? From what does He shield us?

10. What aspect(s) of God's grace and promises does verse five emphasize?

Lesson Three:

Count Your Blessings

“Count Your Blessings” is an uplifting song that offers reassurance to the singer and the hearer, no matter the circumstance. The lyrics were written by Johnson Oatman, Jr. in 1897. The music was composed by Edwin O. Excell, also in 1897.

The song lets Christians know that whether in a major storm of life or loaded down with challenging burdens or in the middle of conflicts of any degree, God is there.

We are to be encouraged by the innumerable ways that God’s blessings appear in our lives. The Lord and His angels are at work. If we look for God’s blessings, we will see them everywhere. God will be blessing the faithful until the end of our journey.

*“So amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey’s end.”*

When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Chorus:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing as the days go by.

Chorus

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
Chorus

Questions

1. Make note of any information, anecdotal, historical, or biographical, concerning this song or its author.
2. Define “billows” and “tempest”.
3. What do trials do for Christians, and in what ways can they respond?
4. Discuss some Bible characters, stories, or passages that offer insight into the universal nature of trials and discouragement.
5. What is cross bearing today?
6. From verse two, Philippians 4, James 1, and other Bible passages, how should we approach trials? What are some attitudes we should employ? What are some ways to demonstrate a proper attitude?

