



**“WOMAN,” JESUS TOLD HER,
“YOUR FAITH IS LARGE, AND
YOUR REQUEST IS GRANTED.”
AND HER DAUGHTER WAS
HEALED RIGHT THEN.**

(Matthew 15:28 TLB)

BELIEVE
BIG

MARILYN HICKEY'S
COMPLETE GUIDE TO FAITH

BY: MARILYN HICKEY

Believe Big: Marilyn Hickey's Complete Guide to Faith

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend,

Often, when we are experiencing hard times, people will encourage us to “just have faith.” That’s good advice—if we understand what faith really is. Some think that having faith means sitting back and doing nothing, but true faith is alive and active.

Developing an active faith—that gets results—is a journey, and I have written *Believe Big: Marilyn Hickey’s Complete Guide to Faith* as a guidebook to lead you on that path. I am thrilled that you have chosen to walk this road with me to a more dynamic and rewarding faith, and I know you will be greatly blessed with each step you take.

God has given us the “*measure of faith*” (Romans 12:3) to sustain us: “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1). To have faith in God, we must believe in and believe for things we cannot see. This can be very difficult when we are surrounded and even overwhelmed by the visible world pressing in from all sides—demanding our attention.

The enemy would have us believe only in the troubles of this world, but true faith is living successfully in the visible world by trusting in the goodness of a God we cannot see. This world can weaken, even defeat us; faith gives us vitality and victory. Throughout the chapters of this book, you will find stories of real people whose faith carried them through seemingly impossible circumstances. Your faith can do the same for you!

Here, you will find the secrets to building a strong and active faith. You will learn the definition, fundamentals, and sources of

an enduring faith. You will also learn how to guard against the greatest destroyers of faith including your own tongue. Discover how faith can overcome your trials and help you get answers to your prayers. See faith in action in the lives of some well-known (and not-so-well-known) heroes and heroines in the Bible.

This book springs from my prayer for you to experience the joy of living out a vigorous faith in all aspects of your life. I believe that as you read and practice the action plans at the end of each chapter, your faith will grow and grow, and you will be rewarded with confidence and prosperity. Burdens will be lighter, fears will evaporate, and *your every need will be met*.

In His love and mine,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marilyn". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

CHAPTER

1

DISCOVER FAITH— THE UNSEEN REALM

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for
the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

To fully understand faith, you must realize that the world you can't see (the invisible) is as real as the one you can see (the visible). You can't see oxygen, but you breathe it for life—it is vital to our existence. How silly it would be to say that oxygen doesn't exist just because you can't see it. The invisible is given form and substance by your faith: "*For we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

God will reveal a truth from His Word, but you may not see an immediate, physical manifestation of it! This doesn't mean that His Word is false; it only means that we are not able to see the

truth *with our eyes* or recognize it *with our senses*. When you put your trust in God, you believe in something you can't touch or see:

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

(2 Corinthians 4:18 KJV)

Faith is vital to your life; without it, you can't please God. You may truly want to please God and be like Him yet feel that you can't pull one more ounce of faith out of the hat! Let's be honest—we aren't capable of producing God-pleasing faith in our own strength. In order to please Him and be like Him, we must have His kind of faith, not faith built on our level of education, how much money we make, or how holy we appear to be:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

(Hebrews 11:6 KJV)

How can you grasp and gain this special faith for your own life? You must go to God's Word to learn what God-kind-of-faith is and how to attain it:

But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in Him. (Hebrews 10:38)

FAITH IS . . .

Webster's dictionary says faith is:

- Allegiance to duty or a person: LOYALTY
- Fidelity to one's promises
- Belief and trust in and loyalty to God
- Firm belief in something for which there is no proof
- A system of religious beliefs

You Can't Cope Without Hope

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

A closer look at the classical definition of faith found in Hebrews shows us two major components: first, the assurance (or confirmation) of things hoped for; second, the proof or evidence of what we cannot see.

Hope is more than wishful thinking—it is the *vision in faith* of your *desire*. It is true that hoping cannot make something happen, but when hope is joined with your faith—and intertwined as partners—hope and faith are very powerful.

One good definition of hope is “to anticipate, usually with pleasure and confidence.” Faith will feed hope and cause you to take the actions necessary to bring to pass the things hoped for.

What are you hoping and needing faith for? You may have a need for finances, a desire for healing, or resolution of a difficult circumstance. You can cultivate your faith by first, keeping the

hope—your desire—in front of you; and secondly, continuously exercising your faith by acting like God’s Word is true and real, even if you cannot see the results. Say, “I have it, although I can’t see it, because *I know God’s Word is true and He cannot lie.*”

Hope is a good thing—we need hope! Faith gives substance to the thing(s) *hoped for*, and we can be sure that our hope will not be disappointed if it is in God. If we have hope, we can cope with anything the devil sends our way.

Sometimes we have to keep on hoping even though it looks like all hope is gone. This was certainly the case with Abraham as he and Sarah were awaiting the birth of their promised son, Isaac:

In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” (Romans 4:18)

If Abraham’s faith had been based solely upon his circumstances, his hope probably would have been shattered. However, Abraham’s hope was in God—and he received his promise!

The Word—Breakfast of Champions

You may be thinking, “Marilyn, hope is either there or it isn’t. I can’t just manufacture it.” It’s true that you can’t create hope, but God’s Word can! By feeding on His Word daily we can become saturated in the Word, and God’s Word develops hope:

But we do [strongly and earnestly] desire for each of you to show the same diligence and sincerity [all the way through]

in realizing and enjoying the full assurance and development of [your] hope until the end. (Hebrews 6:11 AMPC)

The more Word you receive into your spirit, the more your hope will grow, and the greater your faith will be.

Hatching Your Faith

In his book, *The Fourth Dimension*, Dr. David Yonggi Cho says faith goes through an incubation period before the answer can be seen or felt. He uses the word “incubation” to describe waiting, such as “sitting on (eggs) to hatch” or “causing something to develop (such as an idea).”

First, visualize a clear-cut picture of the objective of your faith. As you meditate on God’s Word, visualize your objective coming to pass. If you are meditating on healing, visualize your body well. Get a clear-cut picture in mind—and be specific!

Dr. Cho recounts that during his early ministry, he was without a desk, a chair, and a bicycle—so He asked the Lord for them. He expected these items to arrive at any time; however, one, two, three, six months passed, and nothing happened. Since he felt the responsibility to be an example of faith for those around him, he became discouraged.

Dr. Cho cried out: “What’s wrong, Lord?” God spoke and told him to be more specific in his requests; he had not expressed a clear-cut vision. He immediately spelled out his request to the Lord, “Please, Lord, send me a Philippine mahogany desk (of a certain size), an

**Put in your
heart the
assurance of
the answer!**

iron-frame chair with rollers, and an American-made bicycle.” The Lord quickened a scripture in his heart to help him maintain his faith until he received his answer: “*God . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were*” (Romans 4:17 KJV).

Dr. Cho explained to his congregation that just as a baby is in the mother’s womb nine months before its birth, so he had “conceived” a desk, a chair, and a bicycle, and soon he received exactly what he had requested.

Second, you must have a burning desire for the thing you request. God rewards the earnest seeker, not the casual inquirer. You can’t be laid-back and nonchalant in your requests and expect to get answers. Red-hot desire gets results: “*Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart*” (Psalm 37:4).

Third, pray for assurance of the answer. Since faith is the “assurance of things hoped for,” you need to put in your heart the assurance of the answer. Your assurance, or guarantee, is like the title deed to “the thing hoped for.”

Finally, speak the Word into your situation. Speak the Word during the “incubation period”—and speak it boldly!

When Joshua and Caleb returned from spying out the land of Canaan, they spoke boldly about what they believed. Remember they were in the minority, but they did not allow themselves to be influenced by others.

They declared their faith. Faith in your heart is not enough—faith must be released by your mouth: “*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*” (Romans 10:8 NKJV).

What Type of Faith are You Using?

Let's look at some different kinds of faith. Maybe you know someone who operates in one of the types of faith described below.

Human Faith

Even unbelievers talk about faith—faith that their business will succeed, faith in their mates or family, faith in their career efforts, or faith in their doctors. This is human faith that works for some people in natural ways. They believe in human achievements and many times attain them.

Religious Faith

People who believe in a creed, an organization, or a church, may look and sound good, but their faith is in what they are doing—man-made ordinances, rituals, or an order of service.

Experiential Faith

By his own admission, the faith of the Apostle Thomas was based on what he could see and touch:

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

(John 20:25 KJV)

Many people today are just like Thomas, believing only what they can prove with their senses, what they experience.

Intellectual Faith

Giving mental assent to the idea of faith without putting your heart in it is merely “intellectual faith.” This type of faith will not cause anything to change. The rich young ruler believed the right things and lived a good life, but he was not willing to involve his heart, make Jesus the Lord of his life, and follow and obey Him (see Luke 18:18–25).

Temporary Faith

This is the rocky ground in the parable of the “sower and the seed.” Many hear the Word and receive it joyfully, but later they doubt and let their faith slip away:

“The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.”

(Matthew 13:20–21)

Revelation Faith

This kind of faith is the result of God’s Word being illuminated by the Holy Spirit. It is a gift from Him. We can believe and act on it without confirmation or proof. Revelation faith affects the visible world, but it comes from the invisible one.

Revelation faith is the good ground in the parable of the sower and the seed: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). This faith expects the miracle-working power of God to operate;

therefore, it is not surprised when miracles happen!

Revelation faith is powerful; it commands the situation. We see this kind of faith in Jesus when He commanded winds to obey, diseases to flee, and the dead to be raised. This faith is amazingly creative; God used it to create the worlds:

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

Who Is Your Foundation?

God, your heavenly Father, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, is the Author of your faith. He created everything, including human beings, and in doing so, *He chose you* to be His own. “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you . . .*” (John 15:16).

God has wonderful plans for you—His chosen creation—and He wants you to grow in maturity and wisdom. Because He loves you, He makes all things work together for your good! Of course, because the world is dominated by sin and Satan, bad things happen, but God takes care of His own:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

How can you have faith that God loves you and will always take care of you? Look at what the Word says about Him: God is

all-powerful, all-knowing, always present, just, faithful, and true. He is *worthy* of your trust.

God Is Supreme

When I say that God is “supreme,” I mean that He is “the best, the greatest, the utmost!” We have all heard God referred to as *omnipotent*, or “having all power.” He also has other descriptions and attributes, such as *omniscient*, “knowing all things.” God is certainly aware of everything that happens to you and me.

God is also *omnipresent*, “present in all places at all times,” always close to you. God is just, doing only what is right. He can never be accused of evil or unfairness.

This is the God in whom you can trust! He is the foundation of your faith, the one who will never fail you: “*For nothing will be impossible with God*” (Luke 1:37).

God Keeps His Word

We can trust God to mean what He says and to carry out what He promises. He keeps His Word and the Word will accomplish what it is sent to do:

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:11)

Your faith is based on the promises of God, a God who has shown Himself to be totally reliable. Your faith is not “blind”; you can rely on the one who is righteous, trustworthy, and faithful.

God Is Faithful

God, Himself, operates by faith, and as His child you should imitate Him: *“The just shall live by his faith”* (Habakkuk 2:4 KJV). God desires for us to be full of faith because His very character is faithfulness: *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself”* (2 Timothy 2:13).

An exciting aspect of God’s faithfulness is that when you walk in the truth of His Word, He will watch over your children and your children’s children!

Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loving kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

A Covenant for Your Family

My family is my priority; when I travel, I think of them often. It is easy to worry: “How are they doing? Are they all right?” However, I bring my mind back into line, “Wait a minute! Early this morning I spoke God’s Word into every situation at home and I rest in that.”

The Word of God will not let you down! The Word will work in your situation. The Word is the most powerful thing in the

world. If God can hold up the world, He can take care of my loved ones and yours.

This truth was demonstrated in a dramatic way when our daughter Sarah was in kindergarten. The church had arranged a special luncheon for ladies and great care had been taken to plan the event well. As the pastor's wife, I had to be there, but normally I picked Sarah up at the bus stop at that time. So, I asked a woman from our church to meet Sarah for me. I gave the woman specific, detailed directions about where Sarah would get off the bus.

I repeated the instructions so they would be clear and put my mind at rest so I could concentrate on the luncheon. Eighteen hundred people attended, and many souls were saved. People even got saved out in the parking lot! It was a wonderful, victorious day.

In the meantime, five-year-old Sarah had an adventure! She got off her bus, looked around for someone to meet her, then sat down on the grass and waited—and waited and waited. The woman who was to meet her had gotten the directions confused and was waiting two blocks away. She waited for an hour, then panicked and returned to the church.

Sarah remembered to pray. “God, I need to get home, so you show me how to go. Thank you, God.”

Near our house was a canal that Sarah had to cross to get home. She didn't want to get her shoes muddy, so she prayed again, “Dear God, please show me how to cross the canal so I won't get my feet wet and muddy.” She told us the Lord led her to a place where there were rocks and she could cross the canal safely “on dry land.”

Her next hurdle was getting inside the house. We had put an “emergency key” in a safe place that she could reach. She found it, but she had never unlocked the door by herself. However, she

was able to let herself in the house, where she called the church office, and reached my administrative assistant.

“Sarah, where are you? Are you all right?”

Sarah told her she was at home and my administrative assistant quickly went and picked her up. So, all ended well.

God’s Faithfulness to Us

*Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your **faithfulness** continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands. (Psalm 119:89–90)*

*The LORD’s loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your **faithfulness**. (Lamentations 3:22–23)*

*God is **faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)*

***Faithful** is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)*

However, it hadn’t yet ended for me. “God, this is terrible, absolutely terrible! I’m never going to do this kind of thing again. I can’t be running around trying to have a big event when my children need me. Never again!”

The Lord spoke very directly to me, “Isn’t Sarah all right?”

“Yes, Lord, she is.”

“Did I take care of her?”

“Yes, Lord, you did.”

I suddenly knew where He was going with this. “When you’re about my business, I’m about your business.” That does not mean that if I neglect my family, He will intervene, but God is faithful when we are faithful. There are countless scriptures that describe God’s undeniable and unquestionable faithfulness, His total reliability. You can count on God!

A Lifetime Guarantee!

Our heavenly Father guarantees His promise by swearing upon His own integrity:

For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself. (Hebrews 6:13)

God’s Word is full of promises to touch every part of your life: “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). His Word endures, and it will never pass away. “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

“And as for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from now and forever.” (Isaiah 59:21)

We can fail to realize the significance of speaking faith-filled words in front of our children—the next generation. One evening

when Sarah and I were driving home from church, I said something really negative.

Sarah corrected me: “Mother, watch the words of your mouth; you know you’ll get what you say!”

God pledges His Word is valid and true: “*As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tested*” (2 Samuel 22:31). God’s Word is refined and pure as gold. When you read the Word, you never have to wonder if it has been watered down:

The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. (Psalm 12:6)

God’s Word is righteous: “*For the word of the LORD is upright; and all His work is done in faithfulness*” (Psalm 33:4). The Word is truth and the promises of God were confirmed in Christ Jesus: “*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth*” (John 17:17).

Jesus went about healing all who were sick, so we know that God’s Word has healing power: “*He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions*” (Psalm 107:20).

Whatever struggle you are in, whether it be grief, stress, financial, or physical problems, the promises of the Word are your strength: “*My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Your word*” (Psalm 119:28). When you need light and understanding, wisdom and guidance, turn to His Word: “*The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple*” (Psalm 119:130).

God’s Word brings salvation and then becomes your textbook for life. That is why it is vitally important to know the Word—its promises—and to understand they belong to you, now:

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Just hearing or reading the Word is not enough; you must meditate on it and let the Holy Spirit make it real so that you can apply it to your life. Many people, even unbelievers, know something about the Word of God, but they don't know the *power* of His Word and how it can change their lives.

The Word of God brings forth fruit in your life, whether you realize it or not. It is impossible for God's Word to lie dormant, inactive, and unproductive. When you plant seeds in good soil in your garden—water, fertilize, and carefully tend the garden—it will bear fruit! This is a law of nature, and a law of God:

And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit. (Matthew 13:23)

Our heavenly Father says, "Yes," to His promises. When you rely on the Word of God, He will honor it. Doesn't that give you peace and confidence? When your confidence is in Him, He will reward your trust:

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

As you begin to “personalize” the Word by reading, meditating, and speaking it, the character of Christ begins to develop in you:

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

How do God’s promises affect our study on faith? The Word must be mixed with faith to operate in our lives. The power is in the Word, but it’s *activated* by your faith:

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. (Hebrews 4:2)

Remember it was through faith that Abraham and Sarah received God’s promise:

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:13)

Even Jesus, the Son of God, could not use the healing promises of God where there was not an atmosphere of faith and belief:

And He was not able to do even one work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sickly people [and] cured them. And He marveled because of their unbelief (their lack of faith in Him). (Mark 6:5–6 AMPC)

THE PROMISES OF GOD

HIS WORD ENDURES

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” (Matthew 24:35)

HIS WORD IS VALID

Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. (Proverbs 30:5)

HIS WORD IS POWERFUL

“For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment.” (Luke 1:37 AMPC)

HIS WORD IS FOR YOU NOW

My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life. (Proverbs 6:20–23)

HIS PROMISES ARE CONDITIONAL

*For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.
(Hebrews 4:2)*

Walk Your Talk

Faith without works is useless because if we talk about our faith, but don't act on what we believe, nothing is accomplished. "*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*" (James 2:17 KJV).

Rahab, the harlot, is a perfect example of someone who heard the Word of the Lord, accepted God to be the Lord of heaven and earth, then followed through with her actions. She heard a rumor about the things God had done for the Israelites, and she knew she had to take action:

But the woman [Rahab] had taken the two men [the spies] and hidden them . . . [And she spoke to them:] Now then, I pray you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a sure sign, And save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all they have, and deliver us from death.

(Joshua 2:4, 12–13 AMPC)

Rahab was concerned not only with her own safety, but that of her immediate family. She pleaded that they also be spared when the Israelites took the city. Before the spies left, they helped her devise a plan. They told her to gather her family in her house and hang a scarlet cord from her window as a marker, and that red cord became her hope! She hung the cord out the window knowing that the situation was not hopeless for her and her family.

Rahab put her hope in her newfound God, and the action she took, coupled with her faith, resulted in the salvation of her entire household. As an added blessing, she married an Israelite and

became a “blessed one.” Rahab had a son named Boaz who was an ancestor in the lineage of David and the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith plus action will put you over!

Undeniably, the Word of God demonstrates that, without action, faith—and the promises—lie dormant. If we are believers, then we believe—and our actions reflect our trust.

When physical evidence is lacking, press on. When your faith is in the “incubation” period, continue to patiently nurture its seed, and you will reap the promised harvest. Continue to walk, talk, and live by faith—no matter if you see anything happening or not—knowing that the foundation of your faith, God Himself, is infinitely trustworthy.

STEPS TO BELIEVING BIG

1.

Write down examples of when your faith
may have been categorized as:

Human _____

Religious _____

Experiential _____

Intellectual _____

Temporary _____

Revelation _____

2.

After you have searched the Word for promises concerning your situation, fuse your hope with faith! Share your hope with another person.

3.

If you have been praying for a long time for something and haven't seen the answer, apply God's Word to the situation until you see it change!

4.

Ask God to help you speak only positive, faith-filled words. Record these words in a journal or notebook.

5.

List some of God's promises and ask Him to help you understand their place in your personal "faith walk."
