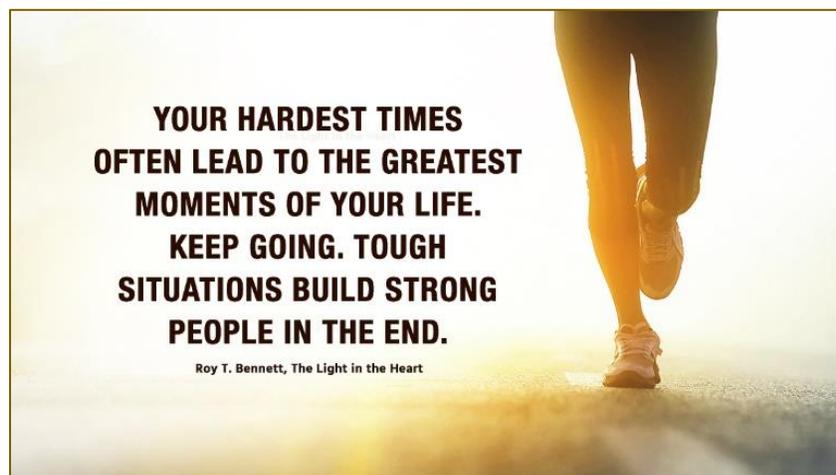


Increase of Faith

Who doesn't want more faith? We might even pray like the disciples did in Luke 17:5, asking Jesus to "Increase our faith." Context is everything. What are they asking and why? Jesus has been talking about being careful not to cause someone to sin and being willing to forgive the same brother seven times in one day, perhaps for the same offense. This requires some pretty heavy faith, right? They thought so. They could not see how they could live their lives in such a way as to never cause someone else to sin. They surely needed more faith to be able to forgive someone seven times in the same day. In Matthew 18:21ff Jesus tells Peter it should be 70 times 7 times in one day. This is a considerable feat even for the body builders of faith, right? Notice how Jesus replies. He speaks of mustard seed--sized faith that can pluck up mulberry trees and replant them in the sea. He then speaks of an unworthy servant who simply does his duty, one task at a time, daily. What is Jesus telling us about "increasing faith"? It seems there are two lessons. The first is for us to use the faith we have even if it is the size of a small mustard seed. We might be surprised by what even this amount of faith can accomplish since the outcome depends on the God and not the size of our faith. Secondly, like the servant, we should simply apply our faith to the task at hand and do what we can. We learn to move from one task to another when relying on God for the outcomes. At the end of the day whatever we accomplish by faith should be directed to the glory of One who did the work, God, and not the size of my faith-muscle. Imagine a little boy helping his daddy lift a heavy load and telling everyone while flexing his muscle, "Look at my muscle." Perhaps if we merely use the faith, we have by putting it to work "in a few things," God will increase our faith to be able to be faithful "in many things."



Reflection and Discussion



Read Luke 17:1-10. What do you see in this passage?

Why do the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith? What does that mean?

Contextually, what is Jesus challenging them to do?

What size faith does Jesus say is required? What happens when I merely use the amount of faith I already have?

Why is faith more about the size of the God we believe in than it is about the size of our faith?

Memory Verse: Rev.2:19

“I know your deeds and your love and faith and service and perseverance and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.”