

PRESSING
the TOWARD
MARK

A 12-LESSON BIBLE STUDY FOR NEW AND
GROWING BELIEVERS ON THE *PRACTICAL* TEACHINGS
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

DR. RICHARD BOOKER

Scripture quotations are taken from The New King James Bible, copyright, © 1979, 1980, 1982, 1991, Thomas Nelson, Inc. Nashville, Ten.

Pressing Toward the Mark

Copyright © 1994 by Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc.

All Rights Reserved

Printed in the United States of America

International Standard Book Number: 0-9615302-8-6

For additional copies of this manual contact:

Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc.

4747 Research Forest Dr. #180-330

The Woodlands, TX 77381

For a complete list of Books

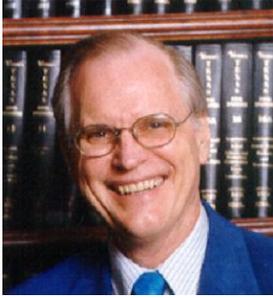
by Dr. Richard Booker

Go to www.rbooker.com

or see list in back of manual:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews. 12:1)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Richard Booker, MBA, PH.D., is an ordained Christian minister and Founder/Director of Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc., and the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies. Prior to entering the ministry, Richard had a successful business career. He is the author of over 36 books including the world-wide bestselling classic *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread*. His books are used by churches and Bible schools around the world. He has also developed numerous courses and seminars on Christian living.

In ministry for over thirty years, Richard traveled extensively for fifteen years teaching in churches and at conferences. He and his wife, Peggy, lead yearly tour groups to Israel where, for eighteen years, Richard was a speaker at the International Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. This gathering is attended by 5,000 Christians from 100 nations.

Dr. Richard and Peggy Booker founded the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies (IHCS) in 1997 as a ministry to educate Christians in the Hebraic culture and background of the Bible, build relationships between Christians and Jews, and give comfort and support to the people of Israel. Through this ministry, they have conducted a monthly celebration event in Houston, a formal school on the Biblical Hebraic roots of Christianity, and work with the Jewish community and the government of Israel to stand against anti-Semitism and give comfort and support to the people

of Israel. Their tireless work on behalf of Christians and Jews has been recognized around the world.

Richard has a daily television program (over 500 programs) which can be seen on the internet and around the world via satellite. He also has produced study material on the Biblical Hebraic roots of Christianity for homeschoolers and family and group study.

If you would like to schedule Dr. Booker to speak at your congregation and/or conference, contact him at (936) 441-2171 or by email at shofarprb@aol.com

If you want more information about his ministry and study materials you may write him at:

Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc.

4747 Research Forest Dr. #180-330

The Woodlands, TX 77381

Website: www.rbooker.com

Email: shofarprb@aol.com

Ph: 936-441-2171 Fax: 936-494-1999

INTRODUCTION

When the apostle Paul wrote to the believers at the church in Philippi, he compared the Christian life to running in a race. The word picture he used was that of a runner on the course straining every muscle as he runs toward the mark with his whole body stretched out to reach the finish line.

Paul considered himself part of this great race of faith with one goal in mind. That goal was to know God more intimately and be more and more transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the believers at Philippi to have the same purpose in life.

Here are his words:

“I press toward the goal (mark) for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you”. (Phil 3: 14-15)

Running the Race

It is exciting to run the Christian race of faith. But just like in a literal race, there are many things to learn and much training is required.

First, we must learn the basic teachings of Christianity so that we can get prepared for the race. *Fast Start in Christian Living* is a Bible study manual that will help you with this basic training. It is a 12-lesson Bible study for new believers on the basic teachings of Christianity. It is used by many churches in their new believer’s class.

Pressing Toward the Mark

Once a Christian completes the new believer’s class, they are often left to run the race by themselves with little further assistance to help them reach the finish line. As a result, many drop out of the race, injure themselves, or even run the wrong way.

The purpose of *Pressing Toward the Mark* is to help new and growing believers actually run the race so they can reach the prize of their upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Pressing Toward the Mark follows the same format as the *Fast Start in Christian Living* manual.

1. Easy-to-Understand - The information is presented in a question and answer format. The manual is divided into twelve lessons with five important questions for each lesson making a total of sixty questions.
2. Speed-Learning - Each question is answered twice on one page. The first answer is in a short statement found in a gray-screened box which immediately follows the question. A more detailed answer follows and is limited to the one page which you can read in a few minutes. This is a unique speed-learning technique.
3. Personal Study Guides - A Personal Study Guide is included at the end of each lesson. You can complete them by writing your responses in the spaces provided.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author _____	iii
Introduction _____	iv

LESSON 1 - LIVING BY FAITH

1. What Is Faith? _____	1
2. How Do We Obtain Faith? _____	2
3. What Does It Mean To Live By Faith? _____	3
4. How Do We Live By Faith? _____	4
5. How Do We Pray In Faith? _____	5
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	6

LESSON 2 - HEARING GOD'S VOICE (DIVINE GUIDANCE)

6. Does God Still Guide Us Today? _____	7
7. How Does God Guide Us From The Bible? _____	8
8. How Does God Guide Us From The Holy Spirit? _____	9
9. How Does God Guide Us Through Circumstances? _____	10
10. How Do We Test Guidance To Know It Is From God? _____	11
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE? _____	12

LESSON 3 – PRAYER

11. What Is Prayer? _____	13
12. What Is The Purpose Of Prayer? _____	14
13. What Is The Pattern Of Prayer? _____	15
14. Why Aren't Prayers Answered? _____	16
15. Why Is Persistence Necessary In Prayer? _____	17
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE? _____	18

LESSON 4 – FASTING

16. What Is Fasting? _____	19
17. What Is The Purpose Of Fasting? _____	20
18. Who Fasted In The Old Testament? _____	21
19. Who Fasted In The New Testament? _____	22
20. How Does A Person Fast? _____	23
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	24

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON 5 – MEDITATION

21. What Is Meditation _____	25
22. What Is The Purpose Of Meditation _____	26
23. What Is The Process Of Meditation? _____	27
24. What Are The Steps To Meaningful Meditation? _____	28
25. How Do We Learn To Meditate? _____	29
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	30

LESSON 6 – STEWARDSHIP

26. What Is A Steward? _____	31
27. What Are The Qualities Of A Good Steward? _____	32
28. How Did People Give In The Old Testament? _____	33
29. How Did People Give In The New Testament? _____	34
30. What Are The Principles Of Christian Giving? _____	35
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	36

LESSON 7 - HANDLING TRIALS

31. What Are Trials? _____	37
32. Should Christians Expect Trials? _____	38
33. What Is The Purpose Of Trials? _____	39
34. How Should Christians Respond To Trials? _____	40
35. What Is The Difference Between Trials And Temptation? _____	41
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	42

LESSON 8 - SHARING YOUR FAITH

36. What Is The Great Commission? _____	43
37. What Is The Gospel? _____	44
38. How Do We Become A Disciple Of Jesus? _____	45
39. How Do We Share Our Faith With Others? _____	46
40. Is Jesus The Only Way To God? _____	47
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	48

LESSON 9 – WORSHIP

41. What Is The Meaning Of Worship? _____	49
42. What Is The Purpose Of Worship? _____	50
43. What Is The Reason For Worship? _____	51
44. Where Do We Worship God? _____	52
45. How Do We Express Our Worship To God? _____	53
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	54

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON 10 – PRAISE

46. What Is The Meaning Of Praise? _____	55
47. What Is The Purpose Of Praise? _____	56
48. What Is The Reason For Praise? _____	57
49. How Do We Praise God? _____	58
50. When Do We Praise God? _____	59
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	60

LESSON 11 - DIVINE HEALING

51. Does God Still Heal Today? _____	61
52. What Is The Basis For Claiming Our Healing? _____	62
53. How Do We Receive Healing? _____	63
54. Why Isn't Everyone Healed? _____	64
55. Can Sickness Be Caused By Demons? _____	65
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	66

LESSON 12 - THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

56. What Is God's Purpose For The Family? _____	67
57. What Is The Husband's Role In Marriage? _____	68
58. What Is The Wife's Role In Marriage? _____	69
59. What Are Parent And Children Roles In Marriage? _____	70
60. What Are The Keys To A Successful Christian Marriage? _____	71
PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE _____	72

LESSON 1 - LIVING BY FAITH

1. WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is a knowing, confidence and assurance in your heart, without any doubt, that something hoped for, but not yet seen, will take place.

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives the following definition of faith:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

Faith - God's Title Deed

From these definitions we learn that faith is not blind wishful thinking. Faith is a gift from God that gives an assurance to our heart that the thing we are hoping for is going to take place. This is why the Bible calls faith "the substance and evidence" of things not seen.

The New Testament was written in the Greek language. The Greek word that has been translated as substance means to "stand under." It was used to refer to the title deed to property. When a person needed to claim a piece of property as their own, they would "stand under" the title deed to validate their rightful claim on the property.

When trying to explain faith, the writer of Hebrews uses this ancient idea to help us understand that faith gives us a rightful claim on God's promises for our life. Faith is the

"title deed" to those promises. We can claim those promises by "standing under" the faith God gives us to believe that the thing hoped for will come to pass.

Faith - God's Assurance

Faith is not only God's substance written on our heart, it is also His evidence or assurance.

True faith that comes from God provides a settled assurance, confidence and expectation in our heart that the thing hoped for will come to pass no matter how impossible it might seem.

In our modern language, the word "hope" often means nothing more than wishful thinking. We sometimes say, "I hope something will happen", but we really don't expect it to happen. Maybe it will and maybe it won't.

In the Bible, the word "hope" does not mean wishful thinking. It is a joyous expectation and anticipation of the good that God has promised. Faith produces this hope and enables us to believe without doubting.

Faith is so important, the Bible says we cannot please God without it:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

LESSON 1 - LIVING BY FAITH

2. HOW DO WE OBTAIN FAITH?

Faith is a gift from God that comes to us by His spoken Word as we seek Him with all our heart.

Faith is a Gift

God Himself is the origin and source of all true faith. He gives this faith to us to enable us to believe Him beyond our own natural abilities.

Paul wrote about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and included faith as one of these gifts. He said:

To another faith by the same Spirit. (1Cor. 12:9)

God gives a measure of His divine supernatural faith to all Christians. This measure of faith enables us to believe the basic gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote these words to the Christians in Rome:

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Rom. 12:3)

God's Faith Comes Through Jesus

God gives His faith to us when we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The

more we seek God through Jesus Christ, the more we are able to receive supernatural faith for our lives.

The writer of Hebrews says:

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.... (Heb. 12:2)

Faith Comes From God's Word

Paul writes:

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom.10:17)

The Greek language used to write the New Testament has two words for our one English word. These are *logos* and *rhema*. The *logos* refers to a general word that is written for everyone. The Bible is the *logos* of God. It is God's general word for all of us to read and study. The *rhema* is a spoken word that is specific and personal. It is not for everyone; it's to an individual.

When Paul said faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, he used the word *rhema*. This means that God Himself plants a supernatural faith in our heart by speaking to us a specific personal word - a *rhema*.

God does not normally speak this word to us audibly, but by the Holy Spirit giving an inner witness or knowing in our heart that we have received a word from God. God plants His own supernatural faith in our heart, enabling us to believe Him.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE BY FAITH?

Living by faith means to realize that God has a plan for our life and wants us to order our life in such a way that He can accomplish His purposes through us. It includes the following three steps:

1. Realize God has a plan for your life.
2. Order your life around that plan.
3. Trust God to meet your needs.

1. Realize God has a Plan for Your Life

It is so tragic that most people live their entire life and never realize that God has a wonderful plan for their life.

God has uniquely made all of us with a special purpose or calling in life. This special purpose or calling is God's vision or plan for our life. We will never be fulfilled in this life until we discover His special plan for us. This gives purpose and direction to our life.

When the prophet Jeremiah was born, God spoke these words to him:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. (Jer. 1:5)

The apostle Paul expressed the same truth with these words:

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace. (Gal.1:15)

2. Order Your Life Around that Plan

Once we discover God's plan for our life, we then order our life around that plan. We make whatever adjustments that are necessary in our lifestyle and priorities.

Paul wrote these words for all of us:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, and holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1-2)

3. Trust God to Meet Your Needs

When we walk in God's divine plan for our life, He takes the responsibility for meeting all of our needs. We become accountable to God for obeying His will, but He commits Himself to give us all the resources we need to do so.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding; in all of your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5-6)

LESSON 1 - LIVING BY FAITH

4. HOW DO WE LIVE BY FAITH?

Living by faith is a way of life that includes the following five steps:

1. Put God first in everything
2. Give God your burdens
3. Pray with thanksgiving
4. Rejoice in the Lord
5. Praise God above all things

1. Put God First in Everything

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' 'Or 'what shall we wear?' ... For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matt. 6:31-33)

2. Give God Your Burdens

Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5: 7)

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matt. 10:29-31)

3. Pray with Thanksgiving

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. (Phil. 4:6)

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess. 5:17-18)

4. Rejoice in the Lord

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Phil. 4:4)

Rejoice always. (1 Thess. 5:16)

5. Praise God Above all Things

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 5:19-20)

The Result of Living by Faith

The result of living a life of faith is the supernatural peace of God in your life.

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Is. 26:3)

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John14:27)

LESSON 1 - LIVING BY FAITH

5. HOW DO WE PRAY IN FAITH?

We pray in faith by claiming the promises God has made to us as we seek Him with all our heart.

Seeking God

God desires that we live a life of faith that is based on His promises for our life. What God promises, God provides. When we pray in faith, we are praying with complete expectation and anticipation of the provision that God has promised. When we diligently seek God in faith, He responds by giving us the provision He promised.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

The Prayer of Faith

Jesus made an incredible statement regarding the power of the prayer of faith. He said:

Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things said will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:22b-24)

We learn from these words of Jesus that true faith is not blind faith; it is Bible faith. It is faith in the God of the Bible to answer our prayers.

Jesus boldly declared that God would answer "whatever things you ask." But He was clear to point out that our asking must be without doubt and from the heart. The only way we can pray the prayer of faith from our heart, without doubting, is by God Himself putting the faith in our heart.

The kind of faith Jesus is talking about is a supernatural faith that comes from God (1 Cor. 12:9). It doesn't take a lot of faith to help us pray the prayer of faith. It's not the amount of faith that matters, but the source of it. It's the faith that comes from God Himself planted in our heart.

Prayer from the Heart

Our believing must come from our heart, not just our head. Many people believe they do act in faith—yet, the promise they are believing God for often does not happen. Naturally this leaves the person confused and disappointed. When this happens, they often blame God for not answering their prayers. Instead it may be unanswered because they are believing with their mind but not with their heart. They are acting out of presumption rather than Bible faith.

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

1. Write out your own definition of faith.

2. According to Romans 10:17, how do we get faith?

3. According to Matthew 6:33, what is the first step in living a life of faith?

4. How can you apply what you have learned in this lesson to your life?
