

A. FAITH REQUIRED

- In the Upper Room, Jesus prepares His people to be believers who are fruitful by abiding in Him and in His Living & Active Word. (John 14 – John 16)
- Up until then, they trusted a Jesus they could see. Jesus tells them that they need to know how to depend on His Word and His Spirit by faith: John 14:1; 16:33 JBP -- You must not let yourselves be distressed—you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me...³³ I have told you all this so that you may find your peace in me. You will find trouble in the world—but, never lose heart, I have conquered the world!
- Jesus begins His instructions with an exhortation to believe. He repeats it twice.
- Having faith in Jesus and His words sometimes came easy for the disciples. It wasn't that hard after seeing someone healed or bread being multiplied.
- After His resurrection Jesus spoke about believing by seeing vs. not seeing: John 20:29 -- Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed
- We live in the times that Jesus was teaching about in the Upper Room – times that require faith even when we cannot see Him or what He is doing: 2 Cor 5:7 -- For we walk by faith, not by sight.
- When we abide in Jesus and in His Word, we sometimes get glimpses of what He is doing in us and around us. These are the times that our faith soars.
- But when nothing we see in our external circumstances seems to agree with the Word of God, we find our ability to stay in faith much more difficult.
- Jesus went to great lengths to make sure we know that we can live in fruitfulness and victory even when He is out of sight.
- He tells us that troubles are an expected part of life in this world. But we can expect to overcome as we stay connected to His life and Word by faith.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Lord, as I still myself before You, I ask that You show me:
 - *Areas where my faith is strong and beneficial:*

 - *Places where I am having trouble holding onto faith:*
- Insights:

B. FAITH UPGRADE

- Being well connected to Jesus by abiding in Him and in His Word will produce the fruits of internal wellbeing and faith: Heb 11:1 AMP -- Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses].
- Troubles come and then we often see that we need a faith upgrade. Our trust in God needs strengthening or there's an aspect of Him that we need to know more deeply.
- The Greek word for trouble literally means "pressure." (G2347)
- The pressure of hard situations can grab our attention so intensely that we fail to believe in God's love and truth.
- Being weak in faith/unbelieving leaves us vulnerable to all kinds of erroneous thinking and temptation to sin: Ps 73:1-3a NLT -- Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure. But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone. For I envied the proud...
- Here are some other characteristics of unbelief or weak faith:
 - Thinking and emotions that are louder or more real to us than God's Word
 - Falling prey to temptation and sin
 - Sense of condemnation, guilt or shame that cause us to avoid the Lord
 - Out of sync with what we know and have experienced in Christ
 - Double-minded: the flesh is at war with the spirit
 - Diminished hunger and thirst for God and the things of God
 - Disconnection from Holy Spirit leaving us spiritually withered and dry
 - Getting stuck in unhealthy or unfruitful habit patterns
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
*Holy Spirit, guide me as I read back over this list of traits that identify weak faith.
Please reveal any part of me that is harboring low-grade or full-blown faithlessness:*

- We need faith to renew our connection with Jesus and to deal with our sin, pain, or unprocessed circumstances. No matter what we're feeling, God says He is good.
- Coming into the Lord's presence to reestablish connection is what we need to get our faith upgrade: Ps 73:16-17 -- When I thought *how* to understand this, It was too painful for me — Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* I understood
- [Like my computer needed upgraded operating system so I could get benefit of more websites and better software. Painful! But temporary pain was "Good Pain."]
- Insights:

C. FAITHFUL GOD

- Our God loves us unconditionally. He remains faithful to us even when we doubt Him and stray from His presence: 2 Tim 2:13 JBP -- If we are faithless he always remains faithful. He cannot deny his own nature.
- This means that He continues to be faithful to keep His Word because He is the God of truth. (Deuteronomy 32:4)
- Likewise, He is committed to us and our relationship with Him: Heb 13:5 AMP -- [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you *nor* give you up *nor* leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless *nor* forsake *nor* let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]
- Though we may feel reluctant, let's make the choice to seek His face. We will find His love and wise counsel when we do: Ps 73:21-28 NLT -- Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside. I was so foolish and ignorant — I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you. Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever. Those who desert him will perish, for you destroy those who abandon you. But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.
- When we seek Him by faith, we will find Him faithful: Heb 11:6 NLT -- It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.
- He Himself is our reward! He welcomes us, comforts us, cleanses us, and counsels us from His Living and Active Word.
- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

- PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He is calling you to take. Write down your insights.