

Everything is Possible The Six Phases of Faith to Reach Your Dream

How's your faith? Is it strong or weak? Is it growing or shrinking? This is an important question because Jesus says in Mark 9.23 **Everything is possible for one who believes** and in Matthew 9.29 He affirms that **according to your faith let it be done to you**. This means that you can determine if God is going to bless your life.

God says that if you believe in Him, if you trust Him, if you have faith in Him, He will bless you. The Bible says that without faith, it is impossible to please Him-thus our faith matters. Faith is like a muscle. It needs to be exercised and developed. And God uses a predictable pattern and process to build your faith in what we'll call the Six Phases of Faith.

Often you don't understand why certain things happen to you, but this sermon will help you understand what you haven't understood until now, and will show you how to cooperate with God in what He is doing in your life. Because we all go through the same six steps, we can understand what God is doing, and we'll know what stage we are in and can have an idea of what will happen next. Once you understand these six phases, you can cooperate with God in the process of strengthening your faith.

Today we have an overview of the Six Stages of Faith and the following Sundays we'll see each one in more detail.

1. To the **first phase we call Dream** - God always starts with a dream and nothing happens until someone starts dreaming. You must have a dream, an idea, an ambition, a goal. God wants to work in your life and He does so by giving you a dream.

There are many examples of this in the scriptures. God gave Noah the dream of building an ark. He gave Abraham the dream of being the father of a great nation. He gave Joseph the dream to become the leader who saved his people. He gave David the dream of building a temple to God. Nehemiah dreamed to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and Paul had the dream to go to Rome. Likewise, nothing happens before you have a dream.

How do you know if a dream is from God or your own invention? How do you know if God is speaking to you? Here's how to tell if the dreams are from God:

a. God's dream always **requires Faith**. If a dream comes from God, you cannot do it on your own. You can only do it by Faith, with His help. If you could do it on your own you wouldn't need faith and Hebrews 11.6 states that **without faith it is impossible to please God**.

b. The second way to know if a dream is from God is the fact that God's dreams will never **contradict His Word**. God will never contradict his written word. Luke 21:33 says, "**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away**". God's truth is consistent. He is not going to tell you one thing in the Bible and then tell you to do something different. God will never give you a dream for you to abandon your spouse so that you can marry another person, or leave your family to go to Hollywood and become a star,

etc. God's dream never contradicts what He said in His word and won't separate you from Him or the things of His kingdom. If you are following a dream that distances you from the Lord, then that dream wasn't given by God.

2. Although everything starts with a dream, this is only the first phase in the line of faith. Once God gives you a dream, **the second phase is the Decision**. It's when you make the decision to accept, follow, embrace, and act on that dream. Nothing will happen until you make the decision to follow your dream and begin to put it into action. A dream without a decision has no value. Many people have dreams but never do anything about them, to carry out the dream.

During this phase you must do two things:

a. **Invest**. You must decide to invest your time, money, reputation, and your energy in the fulfillment of that dream. It's when you say, "*Lord, you gave me a dream and by faith I'm willing to do what's necessary to see that dream come true*".

b. The second thing to do in this phase is **to risk**. All of God's dreams involve risks, meaning that you have to give some sort of leap of faith.

Abraham had to leave his home and go to a place where he had never been. He took a risk because he didn't know where he was going. Peter had to leave the boat to walk on water. You have to hold on to the vision God gave you and take the risk to follow. God gives you a dream and you have to make the decision to carry it out. You can't cling to the past and move forward at the same time.

3. You then will get to **one of the most difficult phases, the Delay**. God won't fulfill your dream immediately because that wouldn't require faith. There is always a delay, a waiting time between dreaming and its fulfillment. We read in Habakkuk 2.3 **This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed**. The Lord tells His servant that the vision would be fulfilled but that he needed to be patient.

The third phase is when you ask, "When are you going to answer Lord? When are you going to remove this barrier? When will things fall in place?" It is the phase of waiting. And even though you might think that you are ready, God says wait. There is always a delay before that dream comes true because He wants to work on you, make some changes, and wants you to grow while you wait.

We find this principle in the scriptures. For example, Noah waited 120 years between beginning construction on the ark until it rained. Abraham knew he would be the father of a great nation but his first child was born only when he was already 99 years old. Jesus waited 30 years working as a carpenter before starting his ministry. And if they have to wait a while why won't it be the same with us? We all go through the third phase, the delay. The waiting teaches us to trust in God and teaches us that His timing is perfect.

The most common response in this phase is doubt. We question if we did something wrong, but a delay is not a denial. The delay is part of the plan to teach you that you can trust God. Some of you are currently in God's waiting room. Don't worry and don't doubt God's faithfulness.

4. After the delay you'll step into **the fourth phase, Difficulties**. God doesn't just make you wait, but while you wait you'll face some problems. There are two kinds of problems: Circumstances and criticisms. Both things will produce delays and difficulties in your dream.

When God gives you a dream you'll always face difficulties and criticisms. Imagine how difficult it was for Noah listening to people saying that he was crazy. Joseph was sold by his brothers because they were jealous of his dream. He was falsely accused, locked up in prison and forgotten by all. Moses led the people to the promised land but when they got there they found giants. Difficulties are part of the fulfillment of your dream because God is working in your faith and in you.

Why does God allow it? 1 Peter 1.7 explains: **These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.** God uses difficulties to work on your faith and your character.

5. The difficulties are followed by the **hardest phase when you might reach your limits: Dead End**. At this phase, things go from bad to worse and you might think that the dream becomes impossible to fulfill, it seems to be hopeless, there's no exit, no alternative and if you are in this stage, congratulations, because you're in good company. Paul went through "Dead End" experiences. 2 Corinthians 1.8-9 **you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through... We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.** If God can raise the dead physically, He can also raise the emotionally dead, He can resurrect a dead marriage, a dead career, our health. God can do anything.

At this stage, the dead end, you'll ask: *what's happening Lord? Did I understand your vision, your will? Is this my dream and not yours?*

The best example of this is when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. After 10 plagues Pharaoh allowed them to leave Egypt. But just a day later he changed his mind and began to pursue them. They had the Red Sea before them and behind an enemy ready to kill them. This is what we call a "Dead End". You'll find yourself many times in this situation where there seems to be no way out.

The Bible says that the people were terrified and began to complain: "we should have remained as slaves in Egypt." The "Dead End" is when many lose their dream and quit. Some people prefer to live in submission to something they know rather than take the risk of something not known. They prefer to live in a bad situation in their career, in the church, at work, whatever it is, instead of taking a step of faith, accepting the risk and trusting God for a miracle.

The People of God faced a "Dead End" but they were exactly where God wanted them to be. You have to learn to accept that these situations are part of God's plan for your life. The answer to "Dead Ends" is hope and faith. This is why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1.10 **he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us.** You should expect that God will rescue and save you when you are faced with a Dead End.

6. The best response to a dead end is to keep the confidence that God will save you and help you reach **the Sixth Phase: Deliverance**. In the end God comes and delivers us. He makes a miracle, offers the solution, provides the answer, and fulfills the dream even when you may no longer expect it to happen.

In Moses' case God opened the Red Sea. Abraham and Sara miraculously conceived a child. In the case of Joseph, his dream comes true and in a single day he is released from prison and becomes the prime minister of Egypt. In the case of Jesus it was when He rose from the dead.

God loves to turn "crucifixions" into resurrections, death into life, sorrow into joy, poverty into wealth, hopeless situations in deliverances because He gets the credit.

This message is very important because God's Word says in Matthew 9.29 **According to your faith will it be done to you**. Knowing what you're going through right now, what are you waiting for God to do in your life? Whenever God does a miracle is because someone believed.

God is faithful and where He guides He provides, but it doesn't happen overnight, you have to go through all these 6 phases: **Dream; Decision; Delay; Difficulties; Dead Ends; and then comes Deliverance**. And it requires faith because **without faith it is impossible to please God**.

1. What is the dream that God has given you? That's phase one. If you don't have a dream you should start praying because God has one for your life, you just need to connect with Him and ask. Do not create your own dreams, ask God. He wants you to live the dream for your life and fulfill the purpose for which you were created.

2. When you find it, make the decision to pursue the dream. Some are in this phase, you have a dream from God but you haven't yet taken the steps to embrace it. It's time to do it.

3. Others are in the third phase. You have a dream and have decided to follow it, but there is a long delay and you are asking God: When Lord? When will it happen? Why I have not seen progress? Why I haven't seen answers to my prayers? It is important for you to know that all is well. You are in the waiting room of God. Don't take any detours or shortcuts; don't get ahead of God but wait for the door to open.

4. Others are in the fourth phase, experiencing many difficulties. The difficulties are a test. God is watching and hasn't forgotten you, it's just part of the plan.

5. Some are in phase 5 and don't see a way out and maybe are ready to quit. You are right where God wants and you must keep believing until the deliverance comes, don't give up. You have to trust that God will deliver you. Do not forget that **it will be done to you according to your faith**.