

# 14 - Living on Faith: Faith Missions

by Ben Torrey

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*Living on faith means trusting God to supply all your needs, regardless of your profession or situation.*

**Duration:** 8:01

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:9, Matthew 6:33, James 1:17

**Topics:** "Faith Missions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker challenges the audience to consider who is the Lord of their finances. They emphasize the importance of trusting God with provision, whether it comes from a salary, family support, scholarships, or living by faith in ministry. The speaker references John Wesley's belief that true conversion includes a transformation of one's finances. They also highlight the idea that everything we have is a gift from God, whether it comes through our own efforts or from others whom God has touched. The sermon concludes by promising to explore the concept of faith financing in the next week's sermon.

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## Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey back with you once again. Tonight I would like to talk about living on faith and some of the different things that this means to different people. I think that the commonest meaning to people, at least those whom I have known through the years, is trusting God to supply all your needs, especially in answer to prayer while engaged in ministry of one sort or another.

Perhaps the most famous proponent of this might be the German evangelist George Muller, who lived from 1805 to 1898. As a young man he moved to England where he pastored several churches, cared for up to 2,000 orphans in five orphan homes, and supported other works including sending funds to Hudson Taylor in China. He accomplished all of this without ever asking anyone for money or ever going into debt.

He looked to God alone to provide for all the needs of both his family and his ministry. He declined to receive salaries from any of the churches that he led. Hudson Taylor was also a strong proponent of living by faith.

The founder of the China Inland Mission, now the Overseas Mission Fellowship or OMF, he never let others know of his financial need. He began what came to be known as faith missions, the sending of missionaries with no promises of temporal support, but instead a reliance through prayer to move men by God. These men demonstrated by their own lives and ministries that God could and would provide, often miraculously, for those whom he calls into ministry for himself.

Now at this point I want to point out that God calls everyone into work of one sort or another. All callings, all vocations, that word means calling, it's from the Latin, are from God. There is no one who accepts Christ's salvation who can neglect his lordship and his calling.

But not everyone is called into what we commonly refer to as ministry, things like pastor, evangelist, missionary, and so forth. We'll come back to this later, but for now we'll just focus on those with a particular call to ministry, usually mission work. Many of you may know of my great-grandfather R.A. Torrey, who lived from 1856 to 1924.

He was a well-known evangelist and author as well as pastor and educator. Early in his ministry he read George Mueller's autobiography. He was so profoundly moved by Mueller's direct and total reliance on God's provision through prayer and complete avoidance of debt that he resolved to live the same way.

He had accumulated some debts to that point and he determined that he would pay them off as soon as possible and not incur any more. At the same time he also gave up his pastor's salary and looked to the Lord to provide for his and his family's needs. In a short time he did pay off his debts and saw the Lord's provision throughout his life.

This basic reliance on God for provision and avoidance of debt, especially personal debt, has been a heritage passed down in our family for four generations. It's the way that I was raised. In the early fifties my father pastored a small Episcopal church in Massachusetts in the U.S. That was where I was born and lived as a young child.

My father had wanted to be a faith missionary but none of the mission boards would accept him on that basis. They all required that he raise support. However, in 1956 he received an invitation from the Anglican bishop in Korea.

The Episcopal church in the USA and the Anglican church in Korea are both part of the worldwide Anglican communion. The bishop asked him to come and re-establish the seminary which had been disrupted by the Korean War. He said that he could fund my father's salary for only two years and that after that he would have to trust the Lord.

My father was delighted. He would be able to live as a faith missionary and so we came to Korea in 1957. Eight years later we started Jesus Abbey.

From the beginning my father set the policy for Jesus Abbey that the community and its members would live by the principles of faith. There would be no debt and support would come either from the labor of the members producing products for sale or through praying to God to meet the needs. In no case would the Abbey ask others for help or do any fundraising.

This has come to be known as Jesus Abbey's faith financing or Midam Jejong in Korean. It has served the Abbey very well for over forty years now. A visit to Jesus Abbey will show what God can do in answer to prayer and through the hearts that he moves to provide support.

But this now takes us to another thought. God has provided for the Abbey through the years as he did for George Mueller in England, Hudson Taylor in China and R.A. Torrey in America. He provided through the generosity, the wealth of other Christians.

People who had money that they had acquired through business received as inheritance or that came from other sources. Were these men and women of God somehow not as holy as those whom they supported? Did they have less faith than those who are living by faith? I think not. We cannot speak about any individual's faith.

That is always a matter between that person and God. What we can ask however is whether one way of life or another requires more faith than the other. I don't think it does.

I believe that you'll have men and women of deep faith and total dependence on God engaged in manufacturing and commerce while you'll find people struggling with their doubts and temptations as they devolve to living off the charity of others. You'll also find those who just won't trust God as much as their own abilities to meet their needs or who lust after wealth while more often than not those who are caught up in direct ministry enjoy God's rich supply through his other servants. In the final analysis it is all about each individual's faith and obedience and God's strategy for using people as he sees fit.

Who are we to argue with the master if he helps one person to amass wealth through trade so that that person can give it to the missionary on the field or the brother and sister at Jesus Abbey? The bottom line here is that none of us can claim anything for our own. It is all a gift of God. Whether God provides for us and others through our skills and efforts in the marketplace or through the abundance that comes to us from others whom God has touched it is all from him.

One of my favorite verses in this context is James 1, 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. It is all from him. Let me leave you with this challenge tonight.

Who is the Lord of your finances? Do you trust God with your provision whether you work for a salary, receive provision from your family or scholarships and school or are quote living by faith while serving in the ministry? If you are doing what God has called you to do, if you are obeying him you are serving him regardless of whether you are in school, business or a missionary. The question still remains though is God the Lord of your finances as well? John Wesley was known to say that a man was not really converted until his pocketbook was converted. How do you use God's money? It all came from him and all belongs to him.

With those thoughts in mind stay tuned for next week when I turn faith financing on its head. Good night.

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