

"Jesus Does The Greatest Stretch That Any Man Had Ever Made"



"Father, If You Are Willing, Remove This Cup From Me; Yet, Not My Will But Yours Be Done."

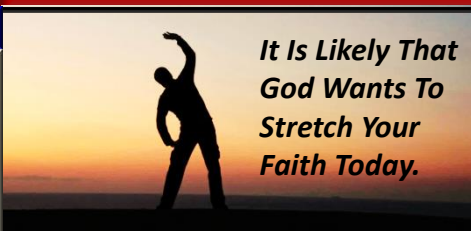
(Luke 22:42)

And When Out With A He Said, "Father, I Commit My Said This, His Last. Jesus Had Cried Loud Voice, 'Into Your Hands Spirit.'" Having He Breathed

(Luke 23:46)

(Luke 22:44) "And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." I take this to mean that it was pouring off of Him. If you do physical stretches and you really do them and stay in them, you will sweat. Well, Jesus here does the greatest stretch that any man had ever made. Jesus is stretching with everything in Him, and He reached to touch the hand of God. God sustained Him with the Angel. Jesus left the Garden of Gethsemane and went to the cross for you and for me. They nailed Him on that tree, and He was hanging there on that tree for you and me, and even in the midst of the incredible pain and temptation to be shamed and the ridicule and the

abuse that was being heaped upon Him, He was focused on obeying the Word of God. At the right moment, He spoke the words, "It is finished," and He stepped into the chasm of death. The biggest stretch that any human being has ever been asked to make and the hand of God was there for Him because three days and three nights later, God raised Him from the dead. This is the principle that when we stretch in obedience to the Word of God, we touch His hand. God our Father and His Son Jesus are going to ask you to stretch as He Himself was stretched when He lived on this earth. They will always be clear about the stretching exercise. They will never ask you to stretch farther than you can stretch, but they will ask you to stretch as far as you can stretch. That is going to often mean that you are going to be uncomfortable, but if you will refuse to allow your discomfort, if you will have no fear: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear;" (1 John 4:18) that you allow stopping you from obeying God, and if you stretch, you will touch the power of God. God has given you your very own personal trainer Who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will be giving you your set of stretches on a daily basis. Remember; "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) God bless you, and I will be stretching with you for God and our Lord Jesus!



It Is Likely That God Wants To Stretch Your Faith Today.

We've all heard about the stretch. To 'stretch' means to lengthen, extend, or spread; to make demands on one's capacity or resources, or to make the maximum use of something. We stretch when we get up in the

morning. We stretch when we've been sitting a long time. Stretching is also something God wants to do in life as He stretches us, stretches our faith. What this means is that we need to learn in the spiritual how to be flexible, subtle and bendable in the hands of the Lord.

"God Will Stretch Us In Different Ways"

- If we want to grow in our patience, what happens is that trails and testing's happen in our lives that stretch our patience.
- If we want to grow in our leadership, God is going to bring times that puts our leadership to the test.
- God wants us to grow in our love for one another so He places in our paths some of the most unlovable people we can think of.

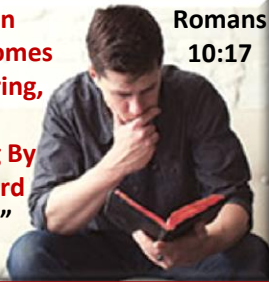
"When God Bends You He'll Not Break You"

If God is stretching some part of our life it's best to cooperate with Him, because He is up to something. But also there is that old saying, or what some have called a modern day beatitude; "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken." When God bends you He'll not break you. When God stretches you He'll not snap you. God also stretches our trust because He knows the challenges that are coming. We wonder, "Why did my computer go down? Why did my car stop? Why did I get a flat tire? Why did that relationship end? These are not the real challenges, however. These are God's tests to see how we'll handle the real challenges, the major issues of life. These are merely tune-ups because God knows there are greater challenges not far off. Something is around the corner, and God knows it and He wants to stretch us now so that we don't injure our faith, our devotion, our marriages, our relationships, or our families.

"The Soul Is Where Faith Resides"

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6) Our standard of living is tied directly to how our soul is doing. The soul is where faith resides and faith is something that has to be fed daily. Not only do we live by faith according to Hebrews 10:38, but without it we cannot please God nor can we whip the enemy.

"So Then Faith Comes By Hearing, And Hearing By The Word Of God."



Romans
10:17

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." (1 Peter 5:8-9) We should be in a constant state of believing God for something, if not for

ourselves then certainly for others. We all know that **"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"** (Romans 10:17). That means for us to stretch our faith the Word has to grow in us daily.

"What The Word Says"

1. **The Word Of God Increased** (Acts 6:7) **"Then the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."**
2. **The Word Of God Grew And Multiplied** (Acts 12:24) **"But the Word of God grew and multiplied."**
3. **The Word Of God Grew Mightily** (Acts 19:20) **"So the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.** From its infancy to a dominating force, our faith becomes something to be dealt with.

"An Increase In The Quality Of Our Life"

An increase in the quality of our life comes from an increase in the quality of our soul - and that only comes as we grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's important to speak the Word over your situation and life. Don't just talk circumstances — we've got to speak the truth and the truth is God's Word.

As We Grow We Can Experience

1. **An Increase In The Knowledge Of Scriptures.**
2. **An Ability To Multiply That Knowledge As We Share It With Others.**
3. **A Relationship With Jesus In Which His Word Becomes The Number One Motivating Factor In Our Life.** (The Word Became Flesh) **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."** (John 1:1-2)

"Faith Is A Big Deal!"

Faith is absolutely central to the Christian experience. We enter into a relationship with God through faith (Romans 10:9-10) **"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."**

"Faith Is Powerful!"

"Jesus said that if we will have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we can pray and see mountains cast into the ocean." (Luke 17:6) I wonder how small my faith must look in that type of comparison! As you read this, I'd like to suggest to you that it is likely that God wants to stretch your faith. And just like physical stretching, spiritual stretching is not easy. Stretching requires us to push beyond our normal level of comfort. God wants to stretch you beyond your normal comfort zone. And that is where you will begin to see growth and progress like never before.

"Stretch Of Faith"

It is very important that God asks you to stretch because that will make your stretch a stretch of faith. We do not want to make up our own stretching exercises because we are liable to pull something. We only want to stretch as God asks us to stretch. What is the biblical definition of faith? **Faith is simply trust, and it is trust in the Word of God.** When God asks us to do something, we stretch our faith to respond in obedience.



Perhaps one of the simplest illustrations of this is when Peter was standing in the boat on Sea of Galilee. He saw Jesus walking on the water and he said, **"Well, Lord if it is really You, then I want to walk,"** and Jesus gave him a stretching exercise—did He not? He gave Peter a one word sentence. Jesus spoke and said, **"Come."** Now, does Peter have the Word of the Lord? Absolutely he does. Now, it is up to Peter to decide whether or not to obey. Do you think Peter might have been uncomfortable? I think that it was possible that he was uncomfortable, but

he obeyed. He stepped out of the boat. Was that a stretch of faith? Certainly it was. Suppose Jesus had said, **"Aw forget it; you cannot do it,"** and Peter said, **"I am not going to forget it."** Peter stepped out of the boat—like a rock, he would have gone down. No, Jesus gave him the word, **"Come,"** which means—you can do it. Peter stretched, and he is the only other man that ever, as far as it is recorded in Scripture, walked on water.

"Yes, I Can!"

Our heavenly Father is going to ask us to stretch. God would not ask you to stretch farther than you can stretch. God would not ask you to do something that you cannot do. **If that is true, and I believe that it is, what is the first thing that you and I should know whenever God asks us to do something? I can do it!**