

# UNPICKING THE PANDEMIC THIEF'S POCKET

## Part 3 – What Happened to My Faith?

### WHAT IS FAITH & WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

- \* Faith (Pistis) = FIRM PERSUASION
  - \* Unshakeable CONVICTION, single-minded, deep-seated TRUST, founded on His PROMISES and rooted in His FAITHFULNESS.
- *How was your faith coming out of lockdown? What issues or situations did you find most challenging? How is the strength and depth of your faith now, as we gradually emerge?*

### WHY DO WE NEED STRONG FAITH?

1. Faith is the SOURCE of our CONFIDENCE in God.
  2. Faith is what DRAWS US TO GOD when 'life is happening' around us.
  3. Faith is our SHIELD / DEFENCE against the Enemy.
  4. Faith STRENGTHENS us during TRIALS.
  5. Faith MOVES God to act
  6. Without faith, it's IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE God (Heb 11:6).
  7. Our faith is an INSPIRATION & ENCOURAGEMENT to others.
- *Work your way through each of those, explaining what they mean and why they are indeed important.*

### ENEMIES OF FAITH

1. DOUBT
2. FEAR
  - \* FAITH comes when you hear the WORD of God; FEAR comes when you receive the LIES of the Enemy.
3. ANYTHING that DISTRACTS you from God or His Word
  - \* Might be BUSY-NESS ... WORLDLINESS ... PRIDE.
  - \* Could be becoming OVERWHELMED with the circumstances of life: grief, loss, pain, frustration, anger.
4. ISOLATION (1 Peter 5:8-9)
  - *What are the things that particularly threaten your faith? It might be situations or challenges or relationships. Any others not on this list?*
  - *What seeds of doubt does the Enemy try to sow in your mind? How did you cope with the pandemic 'fear offensive'?*
  - *What are the elements of busy-ness, worldliness and pride that potentially jeopardise your faith?*
  - *Why is isolation dangerous and how does church protect against that?*

### PROVERBS 4:20-23

1. The key to life & health = WHAT WE DO with God's Word?
2. Above all else, GUARD your HEART, the wellspring of life.

### WHAT GUARDS DO YOU HAVE ON YOUR HEART? (Proverbs 4:23)

1. SELF-AWARENESS (Psalm 139:23-24)
  2. AWARENESS of enemy's SCHEMES & STRATEGIES (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)
  3. The ARMOUR of God (Ephesians 6:11)
  4. ACCOUNTABILITY Partners (Ecclesiastes 4:10-13)
  5. Your Personal PRAYER LIFE (Ephesians 6:18)
  6. The WORD of God (Psalm 119:11)
- *If you had to score yourself out of 10 for each of those, what would you give yourself? What are the dangers of not being self-aware? What are the Enemy's schemes & strategies? Who are your accountability partners; what do they do for you and why is that so important?*

### ARE YOU ATTENTIVE TO GOD'S WORD? (Proverbs 4:20-22)

→ *Looking at the four verbs in Proverbs 4:20-22, how do you make sure you're doing each one?*

#### WHY? 3 REASONS

1. God's Word is crucial as part of that GUARD.
  2. God's Word is a vital source of LIFE & HEALTH.
  3. God's Word is your PRIMARY SOURCE of FAITH.
    - \* The strength of your FAITH is DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL to the strength of your RELATIONSHIP with God's Word (Romans 10:17).
- *Do you agree with that statement? If you map it back into your past, can you think of times when your relationship with the Word and thus your faith was particularly strong (or vice-versa)?*

### 4 PRIMARY SOURCES OF THE WORD FOR YOU

1. Your own personal DEVOTIONAL life
  - *How is your personal devotional life? What do you routinely do? Has it become a little too repetitive or does it still have life and freshness?*
2. The Sunday morning PREACH
3. Your CONNECT GROUP
4. BOOKS & PODCASTS
  - *Which podcasts would you recommend to your friends? What books or teaching series have had a notable influence of the way you think?*