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There once was a man named Frank. When Frank finished school, he got a nice desk job where he worked very hard. He was busy, but Frank made sure to regularly talk with his father. He enjoyed talking to his father, but it did get annoying sometimes. Frank's father never seemed to stop talking about was the importance of exercise. Frank knew all about it. He had heard it all before, but he found it difficult to find time to exercise with his busy schedule.

As time went on, Frank was starting to get a belly on him. That whole time, his father still kept talking about the importance of exercise. It got to the point that Frank could almost quote everything his father said along with him. "I know, dad! You don't need to keep telling me how important it is! I already know!" he would shout, completely annoyed at this dumb repetition. One day, Frank's father told him, "No! You don't know it, because if you really knew it, you would do it!"

Frank knew in his head that exercise was important, but he lived as if it wasn't. Frank's father and his mind kept telling him that he needed to take care of his body, but his actions said he did not believe he had to.

You ever notice how much of a disconnect there can be between what we know and what we do? How many people know texting and driving is dangerous, but keep doing it? How many people know budgeting is valuable, but don't do it?

What about when God himself tells us something is true? God tells us that we are totally dead in our sins, but God has brought us to spiritual life through Jesus. God tells us that our sins merit eternity in hell for us, but that Jesus has taken away our sins. God tells us that because of Christ, we will spend eternity in heaven. God tells us those things are all true, but do we live like we believe they are true?

Today, our God calls us to live in expectation of the glory we will receive in heaven. As 2 Corinthians 4:13-18 said, don't lose heart because outwardly you are wasting away. Do not lose heart because of your light and momentary troubles! Instead, live in the truth of God's Word, that inwardly we are being renewed day by day. Remember that our earthly troubles are not worth comparing to the eternal glory we have waiting for us in heaven. Today, our God calls us to Live Like You Believe!

Now, maybe you bristled a little bit when you heard Paul call our earthly troubles "light and momentary." How can anyone say this world's troubles are "light and momentary"? With the horrors of crime, the pain of disease, the loss of loved ones, the abuses of society against the weak and the poor, who could call all those things "light and momentary"?

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Hannah, from 1 Samuel, chapter 1, had a hard life. Her husband had another wife named Peninnah. Can you imagine what that must be like? To have a rival within that most sacred of relationships; within marriage? Can you imagine feeling you have to compete for the attention of your own spouse? Maybe some of you can. That's a hard life!

If that wasn't enough, Peninnah had children and Hannah did not. Some parents can understand the worry and struggle of not being able to have children, but Hannah lived in a culture that really valued having children, much more than our culture does. It was a sign of success, a sign of strength for a woman to have a lot of children. It was humiliating not to have children. Hannah felt like she was a failure.

In addition to all that, Peninnah would rub these facts in Hannah's face every chance she got. Peninnah would not let Hannah forget that she had no children. Hannah really sank deep into depression because this went on for years. It even got to the point that Hannah cried and refused to eat.

Who could call Hannah's troubles "light and momentary"? I think Hannah would. You see, hard as it was, depressed as Hannah became, she remembered what she believed. She believed in God, the Almighty, who made everything that is. She remembered that her God loves his people. She remembered that God promises to hear and answer the prayers of his people.

So she lived like she believed that. She prayed to her God. She asked him to give her a child, to solve this horrible problem in her life. And after being assured by Eli the priest, she brightened up. She recognized that the problem was now in God's hands. She stopped worrying about it. She forced herself to eat something again, maybe something that helped to calm her down, and she recovered from her depression.

In 1 Samuel, chapter 2, she praises God. She shows us that she recognized, the things she truly needed was not a child, she needed God. She sang, "She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has many sons pines away." She recognized that children were not the answer to her struggles, but God was. He alone could give children to the barren, and God could cause that depression to come to the woman who had many children. God was what she truly needed. She realized that, hard as her life had been, those were only light and momentary troubles. With God, she could find satisfaction. Hannah learned to live like she believed.

Do you live like you believe? Ephesians 1:22 says, "God placed all things under [Jesus'] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church."

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Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Do you believe that, but then worry about how out-of-control the world is? That’s not living like you believe.

Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” The Bible tells us that getting into God’s Word is the lifeline of our faith. If we avoid getting into the Word, we can easily fall from faith! Do you believe what the Bible says, but then live as though reading the Bible isn’t a priority? Do you feel that only 52 hours a year is sufficient for your faith to grow? That’s all you get if you only come to church once a week! Is that living like you believe?

God’s Word tells us that we all have a sinful nature. Sin is living right inside our hearts. And that sin is everything God is not. So long as we have that sin living in us, we will fail to live like we believe. We will naturally ignore God’s warnings about our sin. We will naturally ignore God’s help and power that he gives us in his Word. We will naturally live as if we were just like every unbeliever out there.

Romans 3:3-4 says, “What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar.” Sin causes us to live as if we did not believe, but our unfaithfulness will not stop God’s faithfulness. Whatever our sins are, God remains faithful to his Word. He will do everything that he promised us! He proved that by raising Jesus from the dead!

God always fulfills his Word. When God gave Hannah a son, she named him, Samuel, which means “God heard.” The name of her son would forever be a testament to the fact that God hears the prayers of his people, just like he promised. God always acts according to what he knows to be true. God knows that we are sinful, and so he confronts us about our sins! God knows that we cannot save ourselves, and so he sent us Jesus, just as he promised, to save us from our sins. Throughout Jesus’ life, and even as he was dying on the cross, Jesus fulfilled *every* prophecy of Scripture to *prove* to us that God is *always* faithful to his Word, even the minutest detail!

Sometimes, when I’m watching a recorded game, I’ll see that my team is starting to lose and I don’t really feel like just watching my team do worse and worse so I’ll just skip to the end and make sure they did lose. That way I don’t have to sit through the whole game. But sometimes, poorly as my team is doing, when I skip to the end, I find out they won! Suddenly, I want to go back and watch the

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whole game! I want to see how they pulled it off!

In the Bible, our God lets us skip to the end and see that Jesus wins. What an encouragement for us! As dark as our troubles may get, we know that in the end God will bring us to heaven. Doesn't that give you excitement? Doesn't that make you want to see how God can turn our hardships into eternal glories?

For example: One of God's promises is found in Ephesians 2:4-5, which says, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." We still have that sinful nature which tries to make us live like the dead unbelievers that fill this world. It tries to make us live like we don't believe. But God has raised us to spiritual life, so that we can live like we believe!

And so we do! We believe that the message of what God has done for us in Christ is what saves us from hell! So we come to church and Bible study and we read the Bible on our own! We believe that God is almighty and loves to answer prayer, so we, like Hannah, cast all our cares on him because he cares for us. We do that through prayer! We fix our eyes, not on the light and momentary earthly troubles, but we instead fix our eyes on the eternal glory waiting for us in heaven. We remember that heaven will be infinitely better than any hardship we may face on earth, and that comforts us, that gives us strength to get through the days. God does lead us to live like we believe, now let us do so more and more!

Dear friends, our God is always faithful to what is true. As God's children, we do not fall far from the tree. Get into the Word and learn to live like Hannah, who prayed to God about her troubles and was comforted. Get into the Word and learn to Live Like You Believe. Amen.