

Crazy Faith

What's in it for me? Take your faith to the next level.

Do you long for something bigger, better, or more meaningful in your life? Perhaps you want to start your own business, or find that special person, but something always seems to be holding you back. These blinks are here to show you how God can help you overcome the obstacles in your way. Whether you're struggling with self-doubt, a lack of resources, or just plain laziness, this is your go-to-guide for harnessing the unique power of faith. Packed with inspirational Bible stories and teachings, these blinks explore how the word of God can be applied to our crazy modern lives. You'll discover all the different ways you can reach out to God, and why His support is the secret ingredient for creating the life you truly want. In these blinks, you'll learn

how a pen and paper can invite a miracle into your life; what doubting Thomas can teach us about faith; and why you need to think more like an architect.

Crazy faith makes the impossible possible.

Imagine you've traveled back in time to the year 1899. You see people standing on a train station platform, and you tell them that in a few years, someone will develop the first prototype for a metal winged bird that will fly them wherever they want to go. It will be called an airplane, you say. How would they react? They'd probably say you were crazy. Now imagine you're in the year 1950, in the southern United States, when Black Americans weren't even allowed to eat at the same lunch counters as white people. You explain to some white people that, in a few decades time, Black and white children will attend the same schools and even marry each other. Not only would the people you're talking to call you crazy, but they might even try to hurt you. The key message here is: Crazy faith makes the impossible possible. But both of these things – air travel and the end of legally mandated racial segregation in America – happened. Ideas that once seemed crazy became a reality. This poses a question: How can you achieve the impossible in your life? The answer is by having crazy faith. The basic definition of faith is trusting that something is true without being able to prove it. In your daily life, you might believe you'll end up in a happy marriage, even though you've suffered years of unhealthy or abusive relationships. Or you might absolutely believe that you're going to pass on a legacy of wealth and prosperity to your future grandchildren, even though you were born into poverty. You can cultivate this incredible sense of faith by rethinking life's foundations. Sadly, many of us live on shaky foundations of self-doubt and second-rate principles. But if you're going to shoot for the stars, you need to start thinking like an architect. When architects design a skyscraper, they plan extremely deep foundations for the building – often extending several stories below ground! This depth means the building can be very tall, but will still stand against the wind, rain, and shifts in the earth around it. You can become an architect of your own life by basing your foundations in the word of God, and trusting His plan for you. In the following blinks, we'll explore how crazy faith can help you climb higher than ever before.

Reach crazy faith by taking baby steps.

We know we have to walk before we can run, but when it comes to faith, we must also crawl before we can walk. The author calls this crawling phase baby faith, and it refers to starting small and making steady progress. When you start lifting weights at the gym, you don't begin with the heaviest dumbbells. Similarly, when the author met his wife, he didn't declare his everlasting love for her right away. Instead, he took the time to get to know her, woo her, and make her laugh. Here's the key message: Reach crazy faith by taking baby steps. When you take small steps toward a big goal, you exercise the sort of patience and dedication you'll need to succeed. The only trouble is, most of us don't want to take baby steps – we want it all now. This might have something to do with our modern convenience culture. For instance, how many times have you impatiently microwaved takeout food rather than slowly cooking a good meal? But when it comes to achieving your innermost desires, there are no shortcuts. Think about Noah and his ark. Noah's quest to build the ark and save humankind from the flood didn't start with all of the animals going on board two by two. No, it started with his baby faith; it started when he took an axe and had the faith and the courage to cut down the very first tree. Many people want to be aboard the ark when the rain starts, but few of us are prepared to cut down a forest of trees first. We want to receive God's reward, but few of us have the patience to gradually work toward it. How do you have baby faith? It starts with being brave enough to imagine something better than you currently have, and trusting that God will eventually help you achieve it. So close your eyes and imagine that you're in your favorite vacation spot, with someone you truly love, sipping on your favorite drink. Now tell yourself that, wherever you are in the world, whether you're in poor health, or in a rundown home, or even in prison, you will make it to that special place.

God and faith can often feel like one big maybe.

As a pastor, the author is used to answering questions about faith from his congregation. Over the years, the same questions have cropped up again and again. People ask, How can I be sure that God really exists? And How can I be certain that I have a secure future to look forward to? The answers the author gives might surprise you. Instead of trying to reassure people about their doubts, he replies that, actually, we can't really be sure that God exists, or that our futures will look like we hope they will. The key message is this: God and faith can often feel like one big maybe. What does the word maybe mean to you? Many of us take maybe as meaning no. But the author doesn't see it like that; in fact, he believes that we all need to reframe the way we see maybe. The next time you think that maybe means no, open your mind to the possibility that it might mean yes; just maybe, a miracle will happen. Faith is so powerfully linked to maybe because belief in God starts where our own certainty stops. When we're certain about something, when we have no doubt, there's no room for faith. We don't have to place our trust in God because we already have all the answers. But in those situations in which we're unsure, we have to give ourselves over to God and his son Jesus, and accept that They move in mysterious ways that won't always make sense to us. Consider the passage from Isaiah 55:8-9, in which the Lord states, [M]y thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, and my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. So the next time you find yourself thinking that something amazing might happen for you, cherish that thought. If you're not certain that God will provide, that doesn't

compromise your faith. The path toward your individual destiny is often dark. But as you walk along it, God will gradually light the way. That's the beauty of having maybe faith. The author's maybe faith is reflected in his belief in what he calls the 51 percent rule. He believes that you only need to have 51 percent faith in something to commit to it 100 percent. Consider that, in a US presidential election, if one candidate gets 51 percent of the votes, then that's enough for that person to become the next president. In other words, progress can and does happen, even without a 100 percent vote of confidence. That's why the author's mantra is progression, not perfection.

When we act in lazy faith, we don't follow through on God's vision.

Sometimes even our best friends are too lazy to show up for us. On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus needed love and support; He knew one of His disciples was about to betray him. After dinner He asked His three closest friends, Peter, James, and John, to accompany Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. But when He began walking in the garden, He turned back and saw that His friends had all fallen asleep. This is a perfect example of what the author calls lazy faith. When Jesus's disciples fell asleep, it wasn't because they didn't care. It was just that, in that moment, they gave in to the weakness of their flesh. The key message here is: When we act in lazy faith, we don't follow through on God's vision. Of course, none of us is perfect, and we all get lazy sometimes. But lazy faith becomes a problem when it stops you from following the path that God has laid out for you. Imagine you have a dream of owning your own business, and you have faith in God that it's your destiny to make this dream a reality. The problem is, you can't seem to balance your finances. Instead of scrimping, saving, and working hard, you're sitting back and doing very little. When someone asks you why you're not making more of an effort, you have a convenient excuse. You say you're not sure whether you're really capable of achieving your dream, so you're waiting for God to give you a bit more motivation. The truth is that God has already given you all the motivation you'll ever need. Now you just need to undertake the work to make your dreams come true. However powerful He may be, God cannot do the hard work for you. That's why you need to turn your lazy faith into what the author calls active faith. When we engage in active faith, we demonstrate our love of God and His words through our actions. It might sound like it's easier to wait for God to give you a complete road map - but if you wait for that, your lazy faith will eventually become dead faith. When you fail to take action, you stagnate, and eventually your hopes and dreams die. Before long, your faith dies, too. So the next time you find yourself praying for something good to just fall into your lap, turn that prayer into positive action instead.

Help your prayers come true by committing them to paper.

All you might need to invite a miracle into your life is a pencil and paper. When the author was in middle school, his family was extremely poor, and he couldn't afford the cool Nike sneakers he desperately wanted. But what he could do, he realized, was draw them. With the help of a ruler and some nifty draftsmanship, he made precise drawings of the exact sneakers he wished to own. Somehow, within a few weeks, they had made it off the page and onto his feet. Here's the key message: Help your prayers come true by

committing them to paper. How did owning those expensive sneakers become a reality? Well, through the author's faith, his parents attracted the finances from the Lord. It really was that simple. When we articulate our wildest dreams and present them to God on a page, we invite Him in to do His work. By setting aside the time to draw his dream sneakers, the author was trusting that God would provide. In this sense, he was giving his faith muscle a workout. It might sound crazy, but you can attract the things you want into your life. The scripture in Habakkuk 2, for instance, instructs us to write the vision and make it plain. The author's experience of divine provision has stayed with him his entire life, and he continues to write down his deepest desires. When he took over as the new pastor of Transformation Church in Oklahoma, the church was housed in a former grocery store and had a small congregation mainly composed of young African Americans. Conventional wisdom told the author that, as a young African American man himself, he would struggle to attract a broader demographic to worship at Transformation. Experience also told him that he would struggle to boost attendance and financial donations from the congregation – people tend to hold back when someone new takes over. But none of this mattered to the author, because he had already written down his vision for Transformation Church. He wrote that it would become a huge, multi-ethnic, multigenerational church that would be capable of buying an enormous space inside a nearby mall. And guess what? God saw what he had written and set to work. These days, Transformation Church is even bigger and more prosperous than the author envisioned on that humble piece of paper.

Praying out loud gives your prayer an extra boost.

Take a moment to consider the wonder and beauty of the world around you. Let your mind linger on the majesty of the mountains, the depths of the oceans, and the birds singing in the morning. How did God bring all of this into creation? He simply used His words. The Bible story of the world's creation highlights the power of the spoken word. When God wanted to banish the darkness, He said, Let there be light. Throughout the creation of the earth, He said what He wanted to see manifest. This is the perfect example of what the author calls stating faith. The key message is this: Praying out loud gives your prayer an extra boost. You may wonder why you need to put your request into words. After all, doesn't God already know everything? The answer to that is yes, God is omniscient – but He still loves to hear our voices raised to Him in prayer. Why? Because he knows that speaking our faith makes it even stronger. Consider, for example, how we teach young children to communicate. Even though we might know what they want when they point to something and start crying or stamping their feet, we still tell them to use their words. We want them to develop their language skills so that, when they grow up, they won't still be pointing and stamping their feet to get what they want. In a similar sense, we are all God's children, and He wants us to develop the language of faith, so that we can communicate with Him in the most effective way. What does stating faith look like in practice? It starts with using your imagination. Picture something that you want God to manifest in your life in the future. For instance, the author's young son is autistic and has trouble talking. The author has faith that God will eventually enable him to put together full sentences. So he imagines his son confidently making a presentation to his classmates in school. Once you've visualized what you want to manifest, it's time to state your faith. You can do this by starting to speak as if the situation were actually materializing, right at that moment, in front of your eyes. Make comments on it; talk about how grateful you are that this is happening now. You

might look crazy to anyone who sees you, but that doesn't matter. You'll know that you're perfectly sane – you just have crazy faith.

Even the strongest believers struggle with fading faith.

It's a sad truth that we don't live in a fair world. We lose the people we love, our hard work can end in failure, and sometimes, we lose hope completely. Loss, in all its forms, is an inevitable part of life. In the midst of a time of crisis, our crazy faith can turn into fading faith. When our faith fades, we start to doubt whether God is really on our side. All of us experience fading faith at some point in our lives. For instance, when the author witnesses his autistic son struggling to thrive and communicate, he finds himself wondering whether God is really going to manifest the bright future for his son that he constantly prays for. The key message here is: Even the strongest believers struggle with fading faith. Consider the Bible story of doubting Thomas. When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He visited His disciples to show them His miraculous return. But when He dropped by for a visit, His disciple Thomas was somewhere else, and didn't get to see the proof of Jesus's resurrection with his own eyes. After Thomas learned what had happened, he felt hurt and brokenhearted. How could he believe that Jesus was really alive when Christ hadn't visited him? He felt overlooked and forsaken, and he felt his faith begin to fade. But what happened next shows us the remedy for fading faith. Even though Thomas had his doubts, he stayed with the rest of the disciples. He didn't give up and go home, or withdraw into solitude. This is important, because when you feel like giving up, it's easy to start spending more time alone. But this is a mistake; if you want to feel God's grace, your best bet is to keep surrounding yourself with other people who still have crazy faith, just like the rest of the disciples did. Eventually, Thomas's patience was rewarded, and Jesus showed up again in the midst of the disciples. This time Thomas was there, and Jesus spoke directly to him. If you're struggling with your faith, know that God understands how you feel. Just keep showing up, day after day, even if you feel doubt in your heart. Eventually, God will visit you, and restore the crazy faith that, deep down, you had all along.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: Nothing that's worth doing is easy, and that includes practicing faith. When you trust God's plan for you, amazing things can happen. But even when doubt and fear get in the way of your faith, you can still find your way back to Him. By taking small steps, getting comfortable with uncertainty, and prioritizing action, you can return to God, and draw strength from His love. Actionable advice: Give new situations a chance. The first time Jesus's disciples saw him walking on water, they weren't impressed – they were scared. Jesus had never appeared to them like this before, and they weren't even sure it was Him. This story teaches us that we can't always trust our first impressions. Sometimes you will face unfamiliar, even scary situations. But before you assume the worst, open your mind to the possibility that God is simply showing up in your life in a different way. Before you rush to dismiss the unknown, stay with it a while, and try to see the good in it.