

The Doctrine of Faith–Rest

This doctrine was taken from lessons #104–105 in the basic study of Genesis.

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R. B. Thieme Jr., the former pastor of Berachah Church in Houston, had 2 great general achievements in his career: he laid out and explained the mechanics of the Christian way of life; and he developed an updated theological vocabulary.¹

R. B. Thieme, Jr. developed the doctrine of the faith-rest drill early on in his ministry. The term *faith rest* describes the way of life of the believer in the Old Testament and *faith rest* is one of the spiritual mechanics in our lives as believers in the Church Age. Let me reemphasize that Abram is *not* living by faith-rest at this time.

1. Definition of faith-rest:
 - a. You place your trust in God, in His Word, in His promises or in Bible doctrine, and you step back and allow God to keep His Word, or fulfill His promises, or vindicate the doctrine which is in your soul.
 - b. The believer must be in fellowship and have a true object for his faith. That is, what he believes must be true. Believers are constantly placing their faith in things which are false and which are not promised by God.
 - c. Whether in the Old or New Testament, the believer must have no unconfessed sin in his life (when you name your sins to God, any unknown sins are forgiven as well—1John 1:9).
 - d. The believer has to know a promise or some of the promises of God; or they must know true and correct Bible doctrine toward which they can exercise faith. A baby believer can no more use the faith-rest technique than allow his spiritual gift to function properly.

¹ Some of this came from Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, where Thieme went to do graduate work in theology.

- i. As an aside, having been saved and then living for 10 or 20 years, does not mean you have gone from being an infant believer to being an adult believer.
 - ii. Spiritual growth is always a matter of time, grace and doctrine (2Peter 3:18).
 - iii. No one is born again spiritually mature, and no one reaches spiritual maturity simply because they believe in Jesus Christ, and then live for a few years (or, live for a few years and attend church).
 - iv. Although church is designed as the environment for our spiritual growth, attending a church does not guarantee spiritual growth.
 - v. You cannot grow in a church that does not teach spiritual mechanics.
 - vi. For most Christians, they think that spiritual growth is, sanding off the rough edges of their personality and improving their moral behavior. The former will often improve your relationship with other people and the latter will make your life better, but neither of these things are the means of spiritual growth. I am not saying that either of these things are bad or that you ought not to do them; they are simply not the means of spiritual growth.
 - vii. At best, your spiritual life will be mostly ineffective and hit or miss.
 - viii. In many churches, most Christians are simply taught to be moral. There is absolutely nothing wrong with morality—it is commendable—but it is not the Christian way of life. Morality will improve any person's life—believer and unbeliever alike.
 - e. You need to have enough doctrine in your soul to know whether or not you need to act. In a hopeless situation, you need to stand back and watch the deliverance of God. However, there are times when you must act. The example R. B. Thieme Jr. has used innumerable times is, if you need a job, you do not find a park bench and go sit there and wait for God to drop a job on your lap. That is not faith-rest. A soldier at war who is trusting in God does not rush the enemy head-on without cover, time after time after time. Nor will he sit in a fox hole and wait for God to destroy the enemy with a lightening bolt. The soldier functions as per his training, but with his full faith in Jesus Christ, his Deliverer. The key in faith-rest, when you must act, is that your trust is in God's faithfulness, not in your actions.
 - f. Most of the time, the application of the faith-rest technique occurs in a time of testing. God sends you problems or difficulties or testing, and you respond to these difficulties by applying the faith-rest technique. Again, you may be required to act or you may be required to sit still; but, if it is the former, you recognize that the results depend upon God, not upon the clever actions which you take.
2. Introductory verses:
- a. **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).**

- b. We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal (2Cor. 4:18).
 - c. Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5).
 - d. We walk by faith, not by sight (2Cor. 5:7).
- 3. Whether we like it or not, *faith* is an integral part of the Christian life. However, it is important to note that most of us have great faith. A learned scientist who knows some of the great intricacies of a single cell (no one knows all of the functions of a single cell), may simultaneously believe that this cell spontaneously generated from non-living matter, despite its great complexity. That requires tremendous faith on his part, and he may even try to pass off spontaneous generation as the only reasonable scientific theory for the existence of that cell. Since a biologist could write his doctoral dissertation on one single living cell (and still not tell us everything there is to know about that single, living cell), it takes tremendous faith to believe that cell just happened. My point is, *everyone* has faith, Christians and non-Christians alike.
- 4. Although this may seem elementary, faith must have an object. You cannot just have faith in some nebulous, undefined spiritual thing. In fact, you must have more than just *faith in some sort of God-entity*. Faith requires specific objects and specific promises to place our faith in. Furthermore, for your faith to have any spiritual impact, these things you place your faith in must be true.
 - a. This is related to one of the great spiritual problems in the United States. How many times have you heard someone say, “I am spiritual, but I am not religious”? This either means that they have some general feelings about some other, ethereal force out there—in some cases, this is *mother earth*—and in the few cases where such a person has some well-defined concepts of spirituality, it is often just plain weird.
 - b. Exactly Who and What God is, is undefined to those who claim to be spiritual but not religious; or they define God’s weirdly, based upon nothing in particular (a friend of mine used to see death as a melting pot, and that in death, he would just fall into this great universal melting pot of existence of some sort).
 - c. So, simply having faith is meaningless, since everyone has faith. Simply having faith in religious ideas or philosophical principles is equally meaningless, if these things are not true.
- 5. The principle of the faith-rest technique:
 - a. One description of the faith-rest technique is found in Heb. 4:1–3: **Therefore, while the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you should miss it [the opportunity to enter into God’s rest]. For, indeed, we have had the gospel proclaimed to us, even as they [in the Old Testament] [did]; but the Word did not profit those hearing it, not having been mixed with faith in the ones who heard. For we, the ones believing, enter into that rest—just as He said, As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter into My rest,—though the works had come into being from the foundation of the world.** Simply

- hearing truth is one thing, but the truth by itself does you no good. You have to hear it and believe it.
- b. The most fundamental promise of entering into God's rest is found in Matt. 11:28: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. In salvation, our faith has a specific object and that object is Truth ("I am the way, the Truth and the life; no man comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6).
 - c. However, we also have this same principle which is applied in our lives as those who have already believed in Jesus Christ. The example to which the writer of Hebrews refers back to is the Exodus generation who had believed in Jehovah Elohim, but every time that they faced a crisis situation, they did not mix the promises of God with faith (Heb. 3 gives us this context). Heb. 3:7–11 **Because of this, even as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, there where your fathers tempted Me, testing Me, and saw My works forty years. Because of this, I was angry with that generation and I said, 'They always go astray in their heart [thinking]; and they did not know My ways [they did not know and understand Bible doctrine];' so I swore in My wrath, They will not enter into My rest."** (Psalm 95:7–11). Heb. 4:2 **For, indeed, we have had the good news proclaimed to us, even as they did, but the Word [of God] did not profit those hearing it, because they did not mix [this Word] with faith in the ones who heard [the teaching of doctrine].** This all refers to Gen X of the Exodus generation. These were the adults who left Egypt. They would die in the desert before God took their children into the land of Canaan (**The Word of God did not profit those hearing it [Gen X], because they did not mix the Word with faith**).
 - d. Therefore, it takes two things: you must hear the teaching of the Word of God (truth) and then you must mix this teaching with faith—that is, you must actually believe it. This is true in the realm of salvation and in our daily Christian lives.
 - e. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. We also live our lives doing essentially the same thing—believing in divine truth. **For we walk by faith, not by sight** (2Cor. 5:7).
 - f. The principle of the faith-rest technique was a part of Old Testament mechanics: **You [God] keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in Jehovah forever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength** (Isaiah 26:3-4). **When I am afraid, I will trust in you** (Psalm 56:3).
6. The mechanics of the faith-rest technique:
 - a. Whether in the Old or New Testaments, the believer must be in fellowship for spiritual function of any sort; if you are out of fellowship by committing a sin, then you must first name this sin to God. 1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9 Psalm 51:4

- b. The believer must have something in which to believe. Therefore, we must know the promises of God, the essence of God and/or the doctrines of the Bible. Faith requires an object, and that object must be true and accurate.
 - c. When faced with a problem, a time of testing or some difficulty in life, the believer places his faith in an applicable promise of God or a doctrine from the Bible.
 - d. This may or may not require action on the part of the believer. Each situation is different. Let me illustrate this with you and your child:
 - i. You are teaching your son to swim, and, as a part of this, you want him to jump into the water where you are. He has to trust you as he jumps into the swimming pool where you are standing. That requires action on his part.
 - ii. That same child depends upon you for safety at home. In this case, the child does nothing. He doesn't add extra locks to his windows, nor does he set up motion detectors in his room or keep a loaded gun on his night stand next to his Barney books. His trust is in you to keep him safe (quite obviously, doing these things would never occur to most children, because their faith in you for their safety at home is so strong). In this illustration, the child does not act.
- 7. The key to faith-rest is moving towards being occupied with Jesus Christ. Being occupied with Christ means that you will automatically apply the faith-rest technique to any appropriate circumstance. Psalm 37:4–7a Eph. 4:11–16 Heb. 12:1–2 This comes from learning the Word of God and growing spiritually.
- 8. As you become occupied with Christ, you view your life and the circumstances of your life in the light of eternity. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has set eternity in their heart, without which man cannot find out the work that God makes from the beginning even to the end (Eccles. 3:11). Israel is delivered by Jehovah with everlasting salvation. You will not be ashamed nor disgraced to all eternity (Isa. 45:17). For so says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity, and His name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, even with the contrite and humble of spirit [= the grace orientated believer]; to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15). Spiritual growth leads to seeing life in the light of eternity: But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity (2Peter 3:18).
- 9. Faith-rest was the basic system of spirituality in the Old Testament. One used rebound in order to get back into fellowship and faith-rest to live their lives. The consistent use of faith-rest was associated with a believer becoming mature in the Old Testament. Abraham and Daniel are examples of this. Gen. 17:15–27 Rom. 4:18-21 Dan. 6:1-22 Heb. 11:33
- 10. In the Church Age, we use faith-rest, but we are given much more than Old Testament believers. We have the filling of the Holy Spirit and the complete Word of God.
- 11. The present application and Abram and his lack of faith rest:

- a. We are studying Abram and what God has given him *And Jehovah had said to Abram, Go out from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed* (Gen. 12:1–3).
 - b. Once Abram travels to the Land of Promise, God tells him, “*I will give this land to your seed.*” (Gen. 12:7b).
 - c. Here is how Abram has failed:
 - i. God has never told Abram, “You know, if times get tough, then you need to move over to Egypt until things are good again.” Yet, Abram goes to Egypt.
 - ii. In order for God’s promises to come to pass, Abram must survive long enough to have children with Sarai, his wife. Therefore, there is no reason for Abram to leave the land of Canaan and there is no reason for Abram to lie to the leaders of his host country about anything.
 - d. In other words, what Abram is *not* doing is applying faith-rest to his situation.
- 12. Positive examples of believers correctly applying the faith-rest technique in the Bible:
 - a. In Gen. 14, Abram will intentionally assault an army much larger than his own in order to rescue his nephew Lot. Although Abram faces a great army, he advances against this army because that is the right thing to do. He shows no concern for his personal safety.
 - b. In Gen. 15, God reiterates His promises to Abram and Abram *had believed Jehovah, and God credited his account with righteousness* (Gen. 15:6).
 - c. When God was laying judgments upon the Egyptians for not letting the Israelites leave, to go into the Land of Promise, one of the judgments was against the firstborn. In order to protect their own families, the Jews were instructed to kill a lamb at midnight, for each household, and apply the blood of that lamb to the top and sides of the entryways of their homes. The Jews believed God and they followed His instructions, and their families survived. Ex. 11:1–12:13. This function of faith-rest required the believers in Jehovah Elohim to act. For some of them, this was their initial trust in Jehovah Elohim.
 - d. Moses, Joshua and Caleb in Num. 13–14 (to be discussed in more detail below under the next main point).
- 13. Negative examples of believers applying the faith-rest technique in the Bible (i.e., they fail to mix the promises of God with faith):
 - a. With regards to God’s promises, Abram was not supposed to act on these promises in order to make them true. In Gen. 16, Abram will act in order to make God’s promise to him come true, and he had sex with his wife Sarai’s slave girl (encouraged by his wife, no less).
 - b. The Exodus generation is probably the greatest example of those who continually failed to trust God and His promises. Through the Abrahamic

Covenant, they knew that God had promised them the land of Canaan, even though they were living in slavery in Egypt. They called out to God to deliver them from this slavery, and God sent them Moses. God promised Israel (through Moses) that He would lead them out of slavery and into the Land of Promise (Ex. 3:15–22). Once this all came to pass, exactly as God had promised, the children of Israel found themselves in the desert following Moses, and facing many tests. The first is the bitter water test at Marah in Exodus 15. In order for the Israelites to travel from the desert to the Land of Promise, a land given them by God, they would have to survive the trip. This means that they would need a huge amount of drinkable water, even though they would travel in a desert. However, when faced with some undrinkable water (called bitter water), these Jews, who had just observed several tremendous acts of deliverance by God, fell apart and began to complain and fret over their situation.

- c. These same Jews faced a no food and a no water test at Meribah in Ex. 16–17. They failed again.
 - d. Literally a few months after they left Egypt, the Exodus generation stood at the entryway of the Land of Promise, and they could have taken the land. However, they did not, because they were afraid of the *giants in the land*. At least 3 men believed God and were ready to function according to His promises (Moses, Joshua and Caleb), and the rest of Israel did not believe God, despite all that He had done previous to this situation. Num. 13–14
 - e. God has these Jews cool their heels in the desert for the next 38 years, while He kills off the older generation (Gen X) and raises up a new generation of believers (the generation of promise). However, one of their first tests involves them facing another *no water* test, and even this new generation falls apart, and moans and complains, wishing that they had already perished in the desert (which reveals their lack of training by their parents). Num. 20
14. Examples of the promises of God which we may claim:
- a. **Cast all your anxieties [or, cares] on Him because He cares for you** (1Peter 5:7).
 - b. **Delight yourself in Y^ehowah, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Y^ehowah. Trust also in Him, and He will do this: He will make your righteousness go forth as the light, and your justice as the noon day sun. Rest in Y^ehowah, and wait patiently for Him** (Psalm 37:4–7a).
 - c. **Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all** (Psalm 34:19).
 - d. **Cast your burden on Yahweh, and he will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken** (Psalm 55:22).
 - e. **No temptation has taken you except what is common to man, but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able. But with the temptation, He will also make the way out, so that you may be able to endure it** (1Cor. 10:13).

- f. There are websites on the internet which specialize in the promises of God. Just google “promises of God.” There are hundreds of promises that God makes to us in the Bible.
 - g. The antithesis of faith-rest is panic, worry, anxiety, and fear.
15. A natural outgrowth of faith-rest are various doctrinal rationales. A doctrinal rationale is a general principle which is true.
- a. The essence of God rationale: We understand the attributes of God; that He is Righteousness, Justice, Sovereignty, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Veracity, Immutability, Love and Eternal Life. At any time, we can integrate our lives and our difficulties with God’s essence, and we are able to recognize that He must always function within the confines of His essence.
 - b. The plan of God rationale: God has an individual plan for every single one of us. We know that this plan is going to include difficulties. You might break up with your wife or girlfriend, you might lose your job, those near to you might die; you may contract a deadly disease; you might be forced to move to a new city where you know no one else. We all face a number of problems and difficulties in our lives. Sometimes these things seem to happen all at once, sometimes we go for months or years without dramatic difficulties; and sometimes, they just seem to happen, one right after another. The plan of God rationale tells us that God has a plan for our lives and during our lives, there will be difficulties, for which God has already made provision. Jesus teaches this in Matt. 6:25–33: “**Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**”
 - c. The policy of God rationale. God’s policy for the unbeliever is to provide them with salvation—if they believe in Jesus Christ, they will be saved. For the believer, God provides the means by which we may grow spiritually. Jesus said, “**If anyone desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine [i.e., what Jesus Christ was teaching], whether it is of God, or I speak from Myself.**” (John 7:17). When Peter tells us to grow in **grace and the knowledge** of God’s Word, that means that God has provided the means by

which to do this. God does not give us a mandate which we cannot perform (policy of God rationale).

- d. The “a fortiori” rationale: God has already done the most difficult thing on our behalf: He has provided us with eternal salvation. The *a fortiori* rationale means, if God has done the more difficult thing on our behalf, then we can trust Him to do that which is easier on our behalf. One specific example of a fortiori rationale is Rom. 5:8-9: **"But the God demonstrates His own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died instead of us. Much more, therefore, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be delivered from the wrath of God through Him."** Jesus Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; therefore, now that we are in Him, we know that we will be delivered from the wrath of God. If God provides the greater in justification (imputation of perfect righteousness), it follows, a fortiori, that the justice of God can provide the less, the imputation of special blessings at maturity and thereafter. These special blessings, sometimes called supergrace blessings, glorify God in time.
 - e. Of the 4 rationales which I have given here, there is certainly some overlapping. For example, when I said that God will not mandate us to do something which we cannot do, I put this under the *policy of God* rationale; however, that is also related to God's character.
16. Applying the faith-rest drill does not always result in the outcome we desire. The outcome of any difficulty in our life is going to be in accordance with the plan of God and the outcome will **always** be consistent with God's promises and the truth of the Word of God.
 17. To sum up:
 - a. Faith-rest is taking a promise of God, a divine principle or a divine rationale and placing our faith in that promise, principle or rationale.
 - b. We must be in fellowship in order for the application of faith-rest to have any spiritual impact.
 - c. Since all men have faith, there is no merit in having faith. The merit is in the object of faith. We must place our faith in that which is true.
 - d. At salvation, we used an elementary form of faith-rest: we placed our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - e. In using the faith-rest technique, we may or may not act. The serenity prayer (later adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous) comes to mind: “God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”
 - f. The faith-rest drill is both a mechanic in the spiritual life and a means of growth. That is, God tests us with some pressure or difficulty, we apply the faith-rest technique (which may or may not require action), and we often experience some spiritual growth as a result.

Many others have presented the Doctrine of Faith-rest online:

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/faithrest.html>

<http://www.prairieviewchristian.org/downloads/written/prep/basic/frd.pdf>

Online slide show on the faith-rest drill (with audio):

<http://www.slideboom.com/presentations/61875/Building-Your-Faith-01%2FIntroduction>

Abbreviated treatises of the Doctrine of the Faith-rest drill:

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/fr-tech.html>

http://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/Doctrine/html/FAITH_REST.htm

http://www.egracebiblechurch.org/faith_rest_life.htm

Here is a series of audio (MP3) lessons on faith-rest, which can be downloaded and listened to:

http://www.gdcmedia.org/MediaMins/archive_id.asp?seriesid=JSH&ClassIDStart=110&ClassIDEnd=117&Subject=Doctrine+of+Faith-Rest+Drill

A second series available online: <http://www.bibleframework.com/lessons/faith-rest-drill/>

The booklet on faith-rest can be ordered for free from R. B. Thieme Jr. Ministries:

<http://rbthieme.org/the7.htm> (or call 713-621-3740). They will also send a CD of mp3's on this same topic.

Faith-rest is another example where R. B. Thieme Jr. took a concept from the Word of God, gave it a name and then applied specific mechanics to this concept, mechanics taken from the Bible.

Other references:

www.jimbrettell.org/deeper/slmancom.doc

http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1112625

Many of these are references to pastors who have brick and mortar churches, and most of whom provide teaching online as well. It is always my recommendation that you find your proper pastor teacher and get under his teaching ministry regularly (I believe that once a day for an hour is about right).

A [list of brick and mortar churches](#) (and, if you are nowhere near any of these churches, may I recommend their MP3 ministry, which can either be downloaded online or accessed through the church directly (none of these churches should ever pester you for money).