

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings
A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject
Word-of-Faith Teachings”

Reason 8: It Teaches Confident Expectation in Prayer and The
Language of Faith

In her eighth reason to reject Word-of-Faith teachings, Tillin claims that faith teachers have replaced “prayer” with confessions. There are a number of problems with her claim. First, a perusal of the many books and teaching tapes from the faith teachers prove that they are the staunchest advocates of prayer.¹

Second, I must assume that Tillin does not understand exactly what *confession* is. The Assemblies of God, in a position paper that is opposed to faith teaching, gives an excellent definition of the word “confession:”

The Greek word translated "confess" means "to speak the same thing." When people confess Christ, it is to say the same thing as Scripture does concerning Christ. When people confess sin, it is to say the same as Scripture does concerning sin. And when people confess some promise of Scripture, they must be sure they are saying the same thing about that promise as the total teaching of Scripture on that subject.²

The AG’s definition was meant to disparage the WoF doctrine of “positive confession.” Ironically, it agrees with it.³ Therefore, there is no WoF spin on the word. Many people limit “confession” to the acknowledgment of sin to God (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13). When we confess our sins to God, we agree with what He has said about them.

The faith teachers (and reluctantly the AG) understand that there is also a positive side to confession; one that expresses faith in God’s word and promises (Deut. 26:3-15; Ps. 107:2; Rom. 10:9, 10; 15:9; 1 Tim. 6:12, 13; Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23).

A positive confession is not just *speaking words into the air*; one aspect of it is *acknowledging God’s promises to Him in prayer*. One of Tillin’s countrymen, Colin Urquhart, in his book, “*In Christ Jesus*,” speaks of the “*Five-Fold Confession of faith*.” In this five-fold confession, Urquhart instructs us to *confess the word* to ourselves, to God, to Satan, to one another, and to the world. Expounding upon our need to confess God’s Word in prayer, Urquhart writes,

¹ Some examples of books and tapes by faith teachers on prayer: *Bible Prayer Study Course, Plead Your Case, Prayer Secrets, Praying To Get Results, Steps to Answered Prayer, The Art of Prayer, The Interceding Christian, Prevailing Prayer to Peace, The Will of God in Prayer*, by Kenneth E. Hagin; *Prayer Your Foundation for Success* by Kenneth Copeland; *One Word From God Change Your Prayer Life* by Kenneth and Gloria Copeland; *Jesus, Our Intercessor, Releasing the Ability of God Through Prayer* by Charles Capps; *Prayers That Avail Much, Volumes 1, 2, and 3* (and many other books in this series) by Germaine Copeland; *Praying for the Impossible* by Buddy Harrison; *How To Get Your Prayers Answered* by Norvel Hayes; *Praying Beyond God's Ability* by Dr. Roy Hicks; *A Formula For Answered Prayer* (Tape series) by Dr. Frederick K. C. Price; *The Prayer Of Petition* (Tape Series), *From "Amen" to "There It is!"* (Tape Series) by Jerry Savelle.

² The General Council of the Assemblies of God **The Believer and Positive Confession**, 1980, p. 4

³ See part 1 of my response to the AG titled, “The Assemblies of God and Positive Confession.”

Promises are to be believed. God wants you to pray according to those promises, believing that He is faithful in giving you what you ask. However, *it is not only in asking that you need to confess the word in prayer.* In praising God, we praise Him whose nature is revealed in Scripture.⁴ (Italics are mine)

Many years before Urquhart, E. W. Kenyon taught that, “Real prayer is taking His Word into the Throne Room and letting His Word speak through your lips to Him on the Throne, calling attention to His own promises.”⁵ Chapter 17 of Kenyon’s book, *Advanced Bible Course* is titled, “Holding Fast to Our Confession.” The whole chapter is an exposition of believing prayer – prayer that is in accordance with God’s Word.⁶

The form of prayer mentioned above is supported by the Scripture (James 5:15-18; 1 Kings 18:1; Gen. 28:12-15; 32:11-12; Exodus 32:13-14; Num. 14:17-20; 2 Sam. 7:24-29; 2 Chron. 20:9; Ezek. 36:37; John 15:7; 1 Cor. 1:20). Praying includes a positive confession of God’s Word. It is used to remind God of His promises (Isa. 43:25, 26).

The third problem with Tillin’s accusation is that faith teachers understand prayer and confession as working “hand-in-hand” with each other. Charles Capps writes:

The confession of your mouth, even after you have prayed correctly, will determine whether or not you receive. If you have prayed and asked God for something, and then they say, “I just don’t know what I am going to do, it’s just not working out,” you blew it! You cancelled your prayer. That prayer will not work for you. Hold fast to the confession of faith.⁷

God cannot be pleased apart from faith (Heb. 11:6) and doubt will certainly prevent one from receiving from Him (James 1:5-7; Matt. 21:21, 22). The words of our mouth are a good indicator of what is in our heart (Matt. 12:34-37). Therefore, in Word-Faith theology, confession does not replace prayer, but is vital to confident praying.

Expanding upon her 8th reason, Tillin says that, “Word-of Faith teaches Christians to draw upon powerful ‘forces’ that reside in the human spirit - such as the force of faith.” There is some truth to this statement. The idea of faith being a “force” can be traced as far back as the reformers. After quoting Scriptures on faith and prayer (Mark 11:24; Matt. 21:22; James 1:5-6), the 16th century Reformer, John Calvin writes:

There, opposing faith to wavering, he most appropriately expresses *the force of faith*. Nonetheless, what he adds must be noted: that they who in doubt and perplexity call upon God, uncertain in their minds whether they will be heard or not, will gain nothing (cf. James 1:7).⁸ (Emphasis mine)

Calvin further wrote, “.... Then, since God so often affirms that he will give to each one according to his faith (Matt. 8:13; 9:29; Mark 11:24), he implies that we can

⁴ Urquhart, Colin **In Christ Jesus** (London, UK: Kingdom Faith Ministries, 1981), pp. 197, 198

⁵ Kenyon, Essek W. **In His Presence** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, 1969), p. 136

⁶ Kenyon, Essek W. **Advanced Bible Course** (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, 1970), pp. 125-132

⁷ Capps, Charles **Releasing The Ability of God Through Prayer** (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1978), p.93

⁸ Calvin, John **Institutes of the Christian Religion (Volume 2)** (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 863, 864

obtain nothing apart from faith.”⁹ When faith teachers and others refer to faith and prayer as *a force*, they are using metaphorical language to describe the power and potential that can be accomplished when one trusts God without doubt. Scripture shows us that miraculous power, Holy Spirit energy, and authority is released as a result of faith:

And by the prayer of faith the man who is ill will be made well, and he will be lifted up by the Lord, and for any sin which he has done he will have forgiveness. So then, make a statement of your sins to one another, and say prayers for one another so that you may be made well. The prayer of a good man is full of power in its working. (James 5:15-16 – Bible in Basic English)

The KJV uses the word, "avail" where the BBE uses the phrase, *full of power*. Here are some definitions of *avail*: "Has much *force*." (Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament); "to be of *force*, to be effective, capable of producing results," (Vines's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words); "To be strong; to avail, to be of use, or *force*; to be able" (Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study New Testament); "to be a *force*, avail" (The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon). Therefore, it is legitimate to say that faith and prayer is a *force*. The Bible teaches us that *faith* releases God's power:

And how unlimited is his power to us who have faith, as is seen in the working of the strength of his power, (Eph. 1:19; BBE)

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. (Mark 9:23)

Faith releases power. The Wesleyan commentator, Adam Clark, wrote, "Faith seems to put the almighty power of God into the hands of men; whereas unbelief appears to tie up even the hands of the Almighty."¹⁰ Scripture affirms this to be true.

Nevertheless, Tillin's main objection in this is that the WoF "draw upon powerful 'forces' that reside in the human spirit." True, but Tillin's statement is a distortion of the actual teaching. Yes, Copeland often speaks about the force of faith and patience residing in the human spirit, but he does explain his meaning:

Don't forget the ministry of the Holy Spirit in all of this. He is continually working in you, teaching, interceding, backing your faith with His mighty power. This is where the power of patience is so very important. As long as your faith is active, the Spirit of God is active.¹¹

Copeland reminds his readers that it is the *Holy Spirit* empowering the believer. Copeland is consistent with scripture, which says, "*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*" (Eph. 3:20). We can see from this and other statements that faith teachers do not remove God as the object of faith when referring to it as a "force:"

⁹ Ibid, p. 864

¹⁰ Clark, Adam **Christian Theology** (Arranged by Samuel Dunn) (New York, Lane & Scott, 1851)

¹¹ Copeland, Kenneth **The Force of Faith** (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1983), p. 27

The force of faith is at work, undergirded by the power of patience. Your faith connected with the Father the very moment that you took His Word as the evidence of your healing. (Kenneth Copeland)¹²

God wants us to have faith in Him! Mark 11:22 can also be translated, "Have the faith of God." You see, faith in God is a spiritual force. It comes by hearing the Word of God. The force of faith – Bible faith – can change your circumstances. (Kenneth Hagin Jr.)¹³

Not only do men such as Copeland and Hagin believe that God is the object of our faith, but Copeland believes that God releases His power through our praying:

Money is the lowest form of power that exists on earth. Do you know what is the highest? *The power of prayer!* You can pray in the Name of Jesus, and God will use His ability to handle your situation, whatever it is.¹⁴

Though Copeland describes faith as a "force," he neither replaces prayer with confession, nor does he believe it to be some "faith-force" that works apart from God. As we have seen from John Calvin, Copeland is not the first to use the word "force" to describe faith. Over a century ago, the great writer on prayer, E. M. Bounds, wrote that, "God makes prayer identical in force and power with himself."¹⁵

Over 100 years before Copeland related his understanding of faith and prayer, the prince of preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon, would say the following:

Do you believe in the power of prayer? There are many Christians who do not. They think prayer is a good thing, and they believe that it sometimes does wonders but they do not think that prayer - real prayer - is always successful. They think that prayer's effects depends upon many other things, but that it has no essential quality or power in itself. My own soul's conviction is that prayer is the grandest power in the entire universe. It has more omnipotent force than any other force known to mankind.¹⁶

We have proven that faith teachers do not replace prayer with faith and confession. Nevertheless, the Bible does teach that there are times when, rather than praying to God about a situation, we must speak the word of authority over it. Once, God actually rebuked Moses for praying directly to Him and commanded him to exercise his authority instead (Ex. 14:13-16). Joshua also learned this lesson (Joshua 10:12-14).

Jesus often spoke directly to the source of a problem rather than praying about it (Matt. 8:26; 21:18-20; Luke 4:39). Jesus taught us that we could exercise this same faith and authority (Matt. 21:21, 22; John 14:12). There is time we must speak directly to the mountain or tree rather than pray about it (Matt. 17:20; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 17:5). Faith can be referred to as a "force" or power simply because the word of power can be exercised by faith.

¹² Ibid, p. 32

¹³ Hagin Jr., Kenneth **Another Look at Faith** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1996), p. 27

¹⁴ Copeland, Kenneth **Laws of Prosperity** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1974), p. 21

¹⁵ Bounds, E. M. **The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 376

¹⁶ Spurgeon, Charles H. **The Power of Prayer in a Believer's Life** (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 1993), p. 66