

Why Trying Harder Is Making Your Faith Worse

Thinking Allowed – Episode 6 Companion Resource

This is not a worksheet to fix you. It is a guided reflection to help you notice what has been quietly shaping your faith. Move slowly. Do not rush to resolution.

1. The Hidden Contract

Most Christians do not consciously believe God needs to be impressed. But many live as if He does.

Below are statements that reveal an unspoken contract with God. Circle or underline the ones that feel familiar.

- I feel behind spiritually, even when I am trying.
- I worry that God is disappointed with my inconsistency.
- I feel closer to God when I am disciplined, and farther when I am not.
- I measure my faith by effort, not by trust.
- Rest makes me uneasy.

Reflection:

What do these statements suggest you believe God wants from you?

2. Effort vs. Trust

Trying harder feels responsible. Trust feels risky. Complete these sentences honestly.

When I try harder, I am usually trying to avoid:

When I imagine trusting instead of striving, I feel:

Pause:

Trying harder often feels spiritual, but it is frequently driven by fear, control, or shame. Name which one shows up most for you.

3. The Cost of Striving

Striving always produces fruit. Just not the fruit we want. Check any that apply.

- Anxiety
- Spiritual exhaustion
- Comparison with others
- Guilt when resting

- Fear of falling behind
- A transactional view of God

Reflection:

What has striving actually produced in your faith?

4. The Lie Beneath the Effort

Trying harder is rarely about holiness. It is about safety.
Complete this sentence as honestly as possible:
If I stop trying so hard, I am afraid that:

Now sit with this question:
Who told you that effort is what makes you safe with God?

5. A Better Starting Point

Jesus does not invite you to effort first.
He invites you to trust first.
Read slowly:
"If God never tells me when it is enough, then effort was never the point."

Reflection:

How does this statement confront your current way of relating to God?

6. Practicing Trust Instead of Striving

This is not about doing less.
It is about starting from rest instead of fear.
Choose one small practice for the next week.

- Begin prayer without an agenda, sit in silence for two minutes.
- Stop mid prayer when you feel pressure, name it, and release it.
- Replace "I should" language with "I am invited."
- Take one intentional rest moment without justifying it.

Write the practice you are choosing:

7. Closing Reflection

You do not need to work your way into God's presence. You begin there.

Finish this sentence: Today, I am realizing that my faith does not need more effort, it needs:

Sit quietly for one minute.
No fixing.
No resolving.
Just noticing.



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*If this worksheet surfaced something,
you don't have to carry it alone.*