

“Only By Faith”

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Hebrews 11 is filled with the greatest people of faith from the Old Testament. They went through incredible odds and great disappointments. But as you read how these people lived. Each reference for each one of them begins with the words “by faith”. It was their faith that got them through and caused them to have God’s approval as His chosen.

Have you ever wondered about how you can get God’s approval? Is it by being religious? **No**. By going to church? **No**. By keeping the Ten Commandments? **No**. There’s only one way that you can please God. And Hebrews 11:6 says it so simply and clearly, *“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”*

There are really only two ways to live. One way, and by far the most common, because we as sinful human beings want to be in control is to **Live by Sight**. We tend to only want to follow and invest our time and energy in the things we can see and understand. The other way, and far less commonly taken, because it means we’re not in control and have to trust in someone or something else is to **Live by Faith**. This is to base your life primarily and ultimately on what you cannot see!

This conflict between living by sight and living by faith has been a struggle since creation! Even these patriarchs of faith listed in chapter 11 were involved in it. Because they didn’t see it right away, sometimes their faith was weakened and their trust in God wavered. Jesus called out Thomas after His resurrection for the sin of doubt because of this battle. Listen to John 20:28-29, *“Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

Hebrews eleven looks at what faith is and what faith does. We see how faith caused Abel to worship God, Enoch to walk with God, and Noah to work for God. Today, let’s look at four things necessary for a Life of Faith, based on the life of Abraham.

Faith Involves a Willingness to Obey. Open to Hebrews 11. The Life of Faith begins with the willingness to follow the call of God and to leave where you are and trust God in taking you someplace unknown. Verse 8, *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”*

True faith always leads to decisive action. At the age of 75 Abraham set out for the Promised Land, a land he had never visited and knew nothing about. As a child of God, Abraham was immediately willing to give up his homeland, friends and relatives, and his old way of life. It was all because of faith and trust!

Living by faith can be a lot like driving in a fog. When driving a heavy fog, you really can’t see that far in front of the car, but you keep driving anyway, believing that what you can’t see you will see once you get there. When you move forward 100 feet you can see 100 more feet than you couldn’t see before! You keep going until you reach your destination, driving by faith.

Faith Involves a Willingness to Wait. God’s timing doesn’t always match ours! Because of that, we sometimes lose faith and trust in Him. Look at Abraham in verses 9-10, *“By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with*

Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.” Abraham knew and trusted that God would put him exactly where he needed to be!

As believers we must be willing to walk by faith. We tend to want to gather possessions in the here and now, but these things can hinder us in our walk of faith! We need to remember that this world is not our home! Heaven is! Abraham never saw God’s promise fulfilled; he waited and waited and waited. Often the hardest times for us as believers are the in-between times, the times of waiting.

Waiting is one of life’s greatest disciplines. As we wait, we need to remember an important principle. Waiting is never wasted time! God may be testing you to reveal how committed you really are. Regardless of how it appears, God’s always working behind the scenes preparing the way. God’s using life to position us and prepare us to accomplish His vision in our lives. True faith is waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promises in God’s timing!

Faith Involves a Willingness to Sacrifice. Verses 17-19, *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.”*

It was by faith that Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice when God tested Him. Abraham demonstrated a willingness to give God the most important thing in his life, his son. What’s the most important thing in your life? God will never settle for being second place in your life. God’s only interested in being in first place in your life and He won’t settle for anything less!

Corrie Ten Boom once commented that she’d learned to hold the things of this world loosely in her hand, because she knew that if she grasp them tightly the Lord would have to pry her fingers away and it would hurt!

Is there anything in your life that you are trying to withhold from God? Is there anything you’re holding so tightly that it’s going to hurt if God has to pry it out of your hands?

Faith Involves a Willingness to Risk. This is probably the most difficult of all as you live a life of faith! One crucial question demands an answer. *“If faith in God is so great, why do so few people live it?”* I think an important reason is that most people would rather do anything than take a risk!

Taking risks, means being vulnerable. And that may affect your finances, your future, your feelings, and even your relationships. The human tendency is to want to be safe and secure and to insure ourselves against loss. Basically, we fail at faith because we fear to risk!

A Life of True Faith Leads to Heaven. As you walk by faith, you have to look up to heaven, the ultimate goal, and not to the things here on earth. You need to focus on the eternal rather than the temporal! That’s where God’s guiding!

No matter how weak or how strong your faith is, live your faith in Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior! As you get closer and closer to Him, may your actions and words show that Jesus is your treasure and He’s where your heart is!