

Live by Faith

A Disciple's Response to God's Word

Most of us get along pretty well in this world. Our physical senses serve us well in exploring our world and exposing any dangers that dwell there. We experience our surroundings through what we see, hear, smell, taste and feel. The absence of any of these senses hinders our ability to know fully what is taking place around us, and may even result in undetected dangers.

But how do we know what is happening in the spirit world? Our five senses are of no help in an invisible, incorporeal world. The Bible teaches that while we live in this body, we must **live by Faith**. Paul put it this way.

- 6 Therefore, being always of good courage,
and knowing that while we are at home in the body
we are absent from the Lord
- 7 for we walk by faith,
not by sight

Memorize 

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

Interpret

v 6 How does Paul view our bodies? _____

In what way are we 'absent from the Lord'? _____

What does this verse imply about physical death for the Christian? _____

v 7 What does Paul mean by this verse? _____

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

Circle or Underline ...

v 6 Where we are while in the
body.

v 7 How we walk.
How we should not walk.

'Dying' to Die

The apostle Paul joyfully anticipated his death knowing that it would liberate him from the prison of his sin infected body and open the door to unspeakable joys (Philippians 1:21).

I, too, cannot wait to pass through that shadowy valley. While discussing how some people go to such great lengths and cost to extend their physical lives, one of my co-workers in the lab could not believe my immediate answer to her sarcastic question, 'Well, when would you like to die?' when I responded, 'As soon as possible!' End of discussion. I cannot wait to live where God rules, where His justice reigns supreme and sin is just a distant memory! We are all made for such a world which is why we feel so out of place in this one!

But what is Faith? The writer of Hebrews says,

Memorize 

- 1 Now faith is
the assurance of *things* hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.
- 2 For by it
the men of old gained approval.
- 3 By faith
we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God,
so that what is seen
was not made out of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:1-3

'The Assurance of Things Hoped For'

The greek word translated 'assurance' is *hupostasis*. It literally means 'to stand under' and refers to the foundation that holds up a building, a contract guaranteeing the commitments between two parties or the title deed certifying ownership of a house. Faith, then, is the foundation of God's commitment guaranteeing that we possess what He has already promised to give us. True Faith has no doubt that what God has promised He is able to provide!

In the immediate context, the writer refers to our future 'reward' and the 'preserving of the soul'. How do we attain these 'things hoped for'? Through Faith! Faith in God as the 'rewarder of those who seek Him' (Hebrews 11:6b), gives us the confidence that He will provide what He has promised (1 John 5:14-15). The basis for our salvation, and for everything we hope for in Christ, is our faith in God's righteousness, not our own, for 'without faith it is impossible to please (God)'.

Many would like to see the LORD with their physical eyes, because they think their faith would be strengthened by it. But remember what the LORD said to Thomas, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? **Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**' (John 20:29) Faith does not need to see to believe. It 'sees' because it believes! Beware of needing to see something of God in order to believe.

When Seeing is Not Believing!

Many years ago my optometrist joined a Christian cult because missionaries from that group had visited his office situated near their place of meeting. When he responded skeptically, they told him to pray and ask God to tell him if what they shared was of God. He said days later he was watching an old movie on the TV when, in the middle of the movie, one of the actors turned to look directly at him and said, 'The missionaries are telling you the truth.' The movie then continued on as if nothing happened. Satan can perform 'signs and wonders', too, and if our faith is dependent on seeing a sign, beware of where it leads. That cult teaches many key doctrines contradictory to Scripture, including a salvation by works. Remember, it is Scripture that determines Truth, not a spiritual experience. For if we do not trust in Scripture alone, we will be a victim of satan who disguises himself even as an 'angel of light'!

Hebrews 11:1-3

Circle or Underline ...

v 1

What 'faith' is the assurance of.
What 'faith' is the conviction of.

v 2

What 'men of old' gained by
faith.

v 3

What we understand by faith.
What the visible is not made of.



2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14

'The Conviction of Things Unseen'

The word 'conviction' means 'evidence or proof'. Faith *substantiates* 'things unseen' and proves the truth of God's Word. Faith does not make the invisible real, but affirms it. It opens Christians to the larger reality proclaimed in Scripture concerning God and His Purpose, of the conflict between God's angelic host and satan's demonic hoard, and the eternal consequences awaiting mankind.

Faith in God's Word allows us to 'see' what God sees and 'know' what God knows. Otherwise, we would be wandering in the dark, vulnerable to satan's schemes.

The writer says that faith allows us to know how 'the worlds were created'. As a science major, I had wondered about the origin of the universe and of life itself. Science is still debating these issues. My faith provides me the answer that complements, not contradicts, what scientists have discovered, while revealing what science can never uncover, since no one was there in the beginning except God. Faith affirms that God created 'the worlds' and all of life in its varied forms!

'Seeing' the Unseen

Faith also affirms the reality of a spirit world that impacts the physical more than people may think. In Papua New Guinea, the reality of demons is a given. There, curses can kill, witches really fly and demons appear in visible form. Though I have never seen angels or demons, the people there have. I would go to a village and hear that angels had appeared to them the previous week or be told that Jesus Himself had appeared in their midst!

At a camp where I was speaking, I sensed a dark presence among the campers and gathered the leaders of our ministry to find out why. They told me that demons were appearing to the campers at night, scaring them and making them want to leave. Even my staunchest leaders were thinking of packing up and going home for fear. We prayed into the early morning and saw a dramatic spiritual freedom and renewal the next day. Later I learned that the camp was built over an old cemetery. (Not something I would recommend!)

I didn't have to 'see' demons to know they existed for God's Word is a window into their world. Scripture also reveals that Jesus Christ has authority over demons which enables me to apply that power to claim victory over them.

The Christian who has not learned to Live By Faith is walking in danger,

Memorize 

'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers,
against the powers,
against the world forces of this darkness,
against the spiritual forces of wickedness
in the heavenly places'

Ephesians 6:12



Hebrews 11:3
Romans 1:19-22

Ephesians 6:12

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ What our struggle is *not* against.
- ✓ What our struggle *is* against.
- ✓ Where our adversaries abide.

In this warfare, physical might and street smarts are no match for the power and evil deceptions of our adversaries. They will win every time if those are our only weapons. But ...

Memorize →

3 ... though we walk in the flesh,
we do not war according to the flesh,
4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing
raised up against the knowledge of God,
and we are taking every thought captive
to the obedience of Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

The 'weapons of our warfare' are 'divinely powerful' for they are the Spirit of God and His Word, with which we strike down satan's lies and sanctify our minds to holiness. There is no other way to be victorious by Faith!

Living By Faith

List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

In light of what you learned, list what you will do.

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Circle or Underline ...

- v3 How we do not war.
- v4 What are not of the flesh.
What they are divinely powerful for.
- v5 What we are destroying.
What we are taking captive.
To what we capture them.

For practical applications of this lesson, study **Discipleship Study Book #2**, lessons 4 & 5 available to download free at BibleStudyCD.com.

"I have been crucified with Christ;
and it is no longer I who live,
but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live **by faith** in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave Himself up for me."
Galatians 2:20