

"Walking By Faith"

The apostle Paul said, "We walk by faith and not by sight." Well what does he mean? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore what it means to look at life through the eyes of faith. Stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way; we're here to search God's Word for the Lord's will. Romans 10:17 says that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." We build our faith by searching the Bible. God's inspired Word demonstrates His holiness, His love, and His wisdom. We know the Bible is true because of its prophetic nature, its scientific foreknowledge, and its Divine character. The Bible is certainly unique in its influence, its accuracy, and its beauty. The Bible is truly God's Holy Word. Thanks for spending time with us; we want to be part of your life each week.

Hebrews 11 verses 1 and 2 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation." This describes the kind of faith that God desires from us. Faith is an assurance. And the word "assurance" appeared in Greek business documents with the meaning "title deed." Faith assures us that what we will receive, it will come, what we hope for. Faith is a conviction. It's the conviction or proof of things not seen. When saints of old had this assurance and conviction, God commended them, He vouched for them.

God would give "testimony," that they were faithful on the day of judgment. True faith is not a leap in the dark with the absence of evidence. No, true faith isn't also a blind optimism. It's not a manufactured "hope so" feeling. No, we demonstrate or live or walk our faith by acting with a conviction based on evidence. Now the evidence for what we know gives us a foundation to act, even when there are things that we don't know. Because we know God and His Word, and that they're true, we have the assurance of what we hope for and the evidence for things not seen. What we know to be true gives us ample evidence and reason to demonstrate our faith.

If you want to study more about walking by faith, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from John 20:26 to 29, and explore walking by faith.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John, chapter 20, verses 26 to 29. It talks about Thomas, who had shown his doubt for Jesus, that He had resurrected from the dead, and had to see for himself. And then he sees Jesus. Verse 26.

After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, and the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

And yes, there's a blessing for those of us who can't see Him today, but we still believe. Let's pray together.

Oh Father, help us to look at the evidences that You have given to us in Your Word, and in life. And help us to believe strongly and to walk by faith. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God sets the standard that distinguishes those who please Him from those who don't; that standard is faith. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, "And without faith it's impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." Through the ages when people trusted God for their strength, He stood by them and blessed them.

Consider Abraham. Hebrews 11 and verse 8 says, "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." Because Abraham believed God, He willingly obeyed even when he didn't know where God was leading him. Verse 11 says, "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised." God blessed her because of her faith.

Now man thinks seeing is believing, but God says believing is seeing. Faith works quite simply: God speaks and we hear His word. We trust Him and His word completely and act on it. We act even when we don't fully understand what or why. We act even when things seem impossible or very frightening. We act even when acting is costly. We do this because we believe God will do what is right and what is best. We know that God will keep His promises. Faith means we trust in God's wisdom rather than our own.

Solomon said in Proverbs 3 verses 5 to 8, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones." God expects us to respect and honor what He teaches. We may imagine that we're wise and know what's best; but when acting on our own wisdom goes against the will of God, we end up hurting ourselves spiritually.

Let me illustrate from 2 Kings chapter 5. The captain of the Syrian army, Naaman the leper, came to Elisha the man of God to be healed of leprosy. Well Elisha sent a messenger who told him to go and dip in the Jordan River seven times, and he would be healed. Naaman left in a rage. He explained, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?"

Naaman thought the prophet would make a show and cure the leper. He simply sent out a messenger. Now, some wise servants urged Naaman to do what the prophet urged. And Naaman did. In 2 Kings 5 and verse 14 says, "So he went down and he dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." It wasn't until Naaman trusted and obeyed the prophet that his flesh was restored. And we must learn to trust the Lord and not lean on our own understanding.

Hebrews 11:3 says that "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." Because God only speaks the truth, we understand that God created the universe just as He said. Because God speaks the truth, we believe what He says. And we come to understand what is true, because we know the One who said it. We know that He only speaks the truth. Titus 1 and verse 2 describes God as the God who never lies, who cannot lie. Christian faith isn't wishful thinking; it's an inner conviction based on the truthfulness of God.

What can we know about God? Well we know He loves us. He sent Jesus to die for our sins, so that we could live with Him forever. We know that He provides for us. Paul said in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." We know, thirdly, He hears our prayers, because He heard them many times before. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:7

to 8, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” We know, fourth, that God is with us. God said in Joshua 1 and verse 5, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” We know He’ll protect us, because He promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13, that “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. [Yes] God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” Time and again, I’ve found these promises to be true.

You can trust God in the hardest moments, because God keeps His promises. Faith isn’t a fair-weather friend; God’s truths are still true in every circumstance. In his last days in prison, Paul said in 2 Timothy 1 and verse 12, “for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” Paul could place His soul in the hands of the Father, knowing the Father would take care of Him. Someone wrote:

Into Your hands, Father, into Your hands, I commit my spirit into Your hands.
 All I am and have I yield to You. Your love and grace will bear me through,
 For You know what's best and what I should do,
 So I leave my soul within Your hands.
 Into Your hands, Father, into Your hands, I cast all my burdens into Your hands,
 All my stress and pain I give to You. Your love and grace will bear me through,
 For You know what's best and what I should do, So I cast my cares into Your hands.
 Into Your hands, Father, into Your hands, I cast all my sins into Your hands,
 All I've said and done I bring to You. Your love and grace will bear me through,
 For You have told me what I must do, So I cast my sins into Your hands.
 Into Your hands, Father, into Your hands, I commit my spirit into Your hands.
 My life on earth I leave for You. Your love and grace will bear me through,
 For You have a place I'm going to, So I leave my soul within Your hands.

We can trust God’s Word, because the truth found in the Bible arises from the character of God Himself. God is entirely reliable, completely trustworthy, and utterly honest. So, whatever God says is truly trustworthy. Whatever God commands should be obeyed. Whatever God promises He will fulfill. Whatever God condemns, you can believe is wrong; and whatever God teaches is right. Faith is not simply believing that God can—it’s knowing that God will.

You can trust God, because God is always honest. Numbers 23 and verse 19 says, that “God is not a man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” God doesn’t tease or joke, and He means what He says. We must take God seriously at all times.

You can trust God, because He loves you. Everything He says and does is for your best interest. 1 John 4:9 to 10 says, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. And in this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” When we go through something painful, we want a loved one around to comfort us and help us. We trust the people that we have come to know that they love us. God is worthy of our trust.

God wants us to have an obedient faith. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:36 that “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Now some older versions use the word believe in both places, but the words are

different. The phrase “does not obey” actually reflects what the passage means in the original language.

Abraham is the “father of all who believe” and he demonstrated his faith with obedience. First, Abraham believed God when he didn’t know where God wanted him to go. By faith Abraham lived in the land of promise and he looked “for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11 verse 10).

Second, Abraham and Sarah obeyed when he didn’t know how God would fulfill his promise. Hebrews 11:11 and 12 says, “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

Third, Abraham obeyed when he didn’t know when God would fulfill His promise. Hebrews 11:13 to 16 says, “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak [such things, these things] make it clear that they’re seeking a homeland. And if they’d been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. And therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”

Fourth, Abraham obeyed even when he didn’t know why God gave the commandment. Hebrews 11:17 to 19 says, “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.”

When we believe God, we act on our faith. That’s why we’re speaking about these matters. You see, “faith keeps the man who keeps the faith.” Yes, faith keeps us as we keep it. We walk by faith. And we’re saved by an active faith, not a dead one. Faith, to be any good, must demonstrate itself.

The Bible says in James 1:22 to 25, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.” My friend, are you a doer? Are you somebody who shows his faith? Who shows what you are, and how you love the Lord? Do you serve Him? Do you walk by faith?

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father, help us all to walk by faith, to love You, to serve You, to be Your children and to be people who look to You for everything. Father, we pray that You’ll help us to do Your will in good times and bad. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

We need to possess more than a simple faith in the Lord; we need an obedient faith that possesses us. Many play with religion but never give themselves to the Lord. We must make the Lord the center and focus of our hearts and lives. We must recognize God’s Word is true and has authority over us. Paul said in Galatians 2 and verse 20, “I’ve been crucified with Christ. It’s no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Do you have that kind of faith that leads you to die to your desires and live for the Lord? Are you crucified with Christ?

Faith will lead you to forsake your sins and live righteously. If you believe, you'll confess Jesus as the Christ and be baptized. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Believe and obey today.

Hebrews 3:12 to 14 warns Christians, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For if we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end." Yes, you can stop believing in Christ if you allow sin to harden your heart against God. Don't be deceived by sin. Have faith; there's hope! Don't quit trusting the Lord, and don't fall away. Build up your faith and never let it go.

We hope that you'll walk in faith. And if you want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633.

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We do ask that you get your heart focused on God today by worshiping at church. And there's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. We ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. Let them know that you're watching, and encourage them to watch as well. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.