

FOCUS ON FAITH (Hebrews 11:1-6)

I. Faith defined (Hebrews 11:1).

- A. God does not leave us in the dark as to the definition of faith.
- B. The first descriptive word we have is “substance.”
 - 1. This word literally means “placed under.”
 - 2. It carries the idea of undergirding or foundation.
- C. What it does is lay the foundation for belief in the things for which Christians hope.
 - 1. Biblical hope is defined as desire plus expectation and we are saved by hope (Romans 8:24).
 - 2. Faith allows us to expect to receive the blessings that we desire from God.
 - 3. Revelation 2:10.
- D. The second descriptive word for faith is “evidence.”
 - 1. This literally means “conviction.”
 - 2. There is conviction that what is believed is real based on evidence.
 - 3. This word tells us not only what is charged, but why what is charged is true.
- E. Taken all together, the word “faith” means conviction in someone or something.
- F. There is evidence even for the unseen in which we have faith.
- G. In spiritual matters, there is only one source for faith (Romans 10:17).
 - 1. When one investigates God’s word there is great reason to have faith in God.
 - 2. His word has stood the test of time and it displays the great faithfulness of God to His word in that He has always kept His promises.
- H. God has left us evidence enough for faith.
 - 1. There is great evidence in nature that God exists (Romans 1:19-20).
 - 2. There is great evidence for Jesus as His Son (John 5:36; 20:30-31).
- I. There are rational reasons for having biblical faith.
 - 1. God gave us minds to use in our search for faith (John 8:32).
 - 2. He does not expect us to take blind leaps in the dark.
- J. There are historical reasons for biblical faith.
- K. There is great evidence for faith.
 - 1. There is eyewitness testimony (1 John 1:1-4).
 - 2. There are fulfilled prophecies that prove beyond a doubt the accuracy and truthfulness of God and His word.
- L. Thus biblical faith is conviction in the accuracy, existence and truthfulness of God and His word.
- M. However, biblical faith does not stop with conviction as the rest of Hebrews 11 points out for us.

II. Faith demonstrated (vs. 2-5).

- A. Biblical faith is now shown to be conviction in the accuracy, existence and truthfulness of God and His word that moves one to live a life of faithfulness to God and His word.
- B. By faith, a life of faith, the elders, the forefathers of the Jews, obtained praise from God, which is the meaning of “good report.”
- C. It is by faith that we understand the creation of the world.
 - 1. We know by faith that God spoke the earth and entire universe into existence.
 - a. He has left us great evidence of this.
 - b. He told us this is how the worlds were created (Genesis 1)
 - 2. This shows us that the things that we are allowed to see were created by things which don't appear.
 - a. Paul used this charge against the Gentiles in condemning them for their departure from God.
 - b. Romans 1:18-20.
- D. Faith is based on God's word, as noted earlier, thus God had told Abel as well as Cain what was to be offered to Him.
 - 1. Abel's faith in God moved Him to offer what was commanded by God.
 - 2. This faithful obedience allowed him to be praised by God as being righteous and Abel's example still speaks today.
- E. Enoch walked with God (Genesis 5:21-24).
 - 1. This walking with God indicates a life lived by the commands of God.
 - 2. Enoch did this by faith - his faith in God moved him to obedience and this pleased God.
- F. Each of these men listened to and then obeyed God, which resulted in this inspired commendation for each of them.
- G. In each of these, as well as the other examples of faithful people in this great chapter, we see the word “faith” being followed by action on the part of the one commended for their faith.
 - 1. Faith is belief plus obedient action (James 2:17-18).
 - 2. Faith is more than simple belief.

III. Faith demanded (vs. 6).

- A. This verse tells us the necessity of faith.
- B. You and I must have faith, which is belief plus obedient action, in order to be pleasing to God.
 - 1. It is impossible to please God without faith.
 - 2. Which tells us that it is possible to please God with faith.
- C. Some think that pleasing God is impossible.
 - 1. They have a view of God as being a dictator that is looking to crush us.
 - 2. They view Him as cruel because they can't understand His perfect holiness.
- D. God does not demand perfection, just faithfulness.

1. He knows we are going to sin.
 2. It is for this reason He gives us continual access to the blood of His Son (1 John 1:7).
- E. We are to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
1. The justified live by faith (Romans 1:17).
 2. These verses tell us that the life of one who pleases God is lived in accordance with God's word because that is the instrument that produces and grows faith in God.
- F. When we live in such a manner, just as these great examples in the "Hall of Fame of Faith," we please God.
- G. It is very possible to please God and if Enoch could do it in the world in which he lived, we can in the world in which we live.