The Life of Faith

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"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." – II Corinthians 13:5

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." – I Corinthians 16:13

I. The Importance of Faith Is Its Pleasing Nature to God.

A. Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:5-6). Without faith it is impossible to please God.

B. Notice that those in the "Hall of Faith" are those that pleased God (Hebrews 11).

C. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). God works things that please Him (Phil 2:13).

D. All other fruits that are pleasing to God spring from faith (II Peter 1:1,5-7).

E. Jesus described the general lack of faith that would exist at His coming (Luke 18:8).

F. The just, or those Christ died for, are to live by faith (Romans 1:17; Heb 10:37-39).

II. The Definition of Faith Includes More Than a Bare Belief in God.

A. It is confidence and trust in the existence and ability of God (Heb 11:6; Rom 4:17-21).

B. It is the substance of things hoped for – future things promised (Hebrews 11:1).

C. It is the evidence of things not seen – past things performed (Hebrews 11:1).

III. The Nature of Faith Includes Much More Than a Bare Belief in God.

A. It is the gift of God through regeneration (II Peter 1:1; Galatians 5:22; I John 5:4).

B. It is our responsibility to increase it and add to it (II Peter 1:5; II Thess 1:3; Jude 20).

C. It is dead unless it is accompanied by works (James 2:17).

D. Faith must include more than hearing the word of God (James 1:22).

E. Faith must include more than believing the word of God (James 2:14, 17-20).

F. Faith must include more than saying you know God (I John 2:4).

G. It is such that it can be followed (Hebrews 13:7).

H. It is referred to as a work (John 6:29; I Thessalonians 1:3; Galatians 5:6).

I. Without charity, or love, it is vain and worthless (I Corinthians 13:2).

J. Faith obeys (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

K. Faith endures persecutions and tribulations (II Thessalonians 1:4; I Corinthians 16:13).

L. It must have the characteristics of a child's faith to be accepted (Matthew 18:1-6).

M. Strong faith will not include doubtful disputations (Romans 14:1,2,3).

N. Faith is antithetical to natural considerations (Romans 4:17-21; Matthew 14:28-31).

1. Little faith considers and seeks food and raiment (Matthew 6:30-34).

2. Great faith believes in the power of God without any person present (Matt 8:10).

3. No faith is the consideration of natural things to the extent of fear (Mark 4:40).

4. Paul did not consider his circumstances (II Corinthians 11:23-33).

5. The martyrs surely did not consider circumstances (Hebrews 11:32-40).

O. Faith does not give up when it does not get its way immediately (Matthew 15:25-28).

IV. God Tests Our Faith to Prove Our Faith and to Increase Our Faith.

A. God has promised to test our faith (I Peter 1:7; James 1:3; Romans 5:1-5; I Cor 10:13).

B. God's test may include a lack of response to a problem (Luke 18:1-8).

C. God's test may be responding differently than we expected (II Corinthians 12:7-10).

D. God's test may ask us to sacrifice what means most to us (Genesis 22:1-12).

E. God's test may include a lengthy period of time of relying solely on Him (Deut 8:2-3).

F. God's test may come immediately after the obedience of faith (Matthew 14:28-31; 4:1).

G. My personal experience testifies to these various methods used by God.

V. We Must Live By Faith If We Are to Please God and Live Successful Lives.

A. We have "something to hang on to" in time of need. The premise of faith (Heb 11:6).

B. We often over-react in emphasizing faith to the exclusion of works (James 2:14).

C. Our religion is one of works (James 1:26-27).

1. Our eternal salvation was accomplished by the work and obedience of Jesus Christ.

2. Our salvation in this life requires our work and obedience.

D. Be careful of the way in which you hear the preaching of the gospel (Luke 8:18).

E. Intellectual knowledge alone is dangerous (Agrippa; Pharisees; James 4:17).

F. The proof of faith is in the doing (James 2:18).

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