

How Faith Works...
Series: The Supremacy of Jesus
August 29, 2010 Pastor Bill Bump

REVIEW: DEFINITION OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1 (NLT) What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.

1. Faith begins with hope.

Throughout the Bible, the great enemy of faith is a complacent spirit, an attitude of satisfaction with the status quo.

2. Faith includes the conviction of things not seen.

It means we become aware that we are surrounded by an invisible spiritual kingdom.

DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF GENUINE FAITH:

1. Faith always anticipates.

Hebrews 11:9, 10 (NLT) And even when [Abraham] reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent. And so did Isaac and Jacob, to whom God gave the same promise. Abraham did this because he was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

Abraham, looking forward by faith, believing what God had said would take place, looked across forty centuries of time or more to when God would bring this about.

2. Faith always acts.

Faith is doing something now, in view of the future.
Faith is not passive. It is dynamic, forceful.

Hebrews 11:32-35 (NLT) Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Women received their loved ones back again from death. But others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the

resurrection to a better life.

3. Faith always evaluates.

Faith gladly sacrifices present advantage in order to gain the future.

Hebrews 11:8 (NLT) It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going.

Abraham did not know where he was going, but he knew Whom he was going with and what a difference that makes.

Hebrews 11:24-26 (NLT) It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be treated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of the Messiah than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the great reward that God would give him.

Moses made his choice because he saw the unseen. He looked beyond the visible and believed God.

4. Faith always dares.

Hebrews 11:29, 30 (NLT) It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians followed, they were all drowned. It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho seven days, and the walls came crashing down.

Faith pays no attention to impossibilities.

5. Faith always persists.

Hebrews 11:13-16 (NLT) All these faithful ones died without receiving what God had promised them, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed the promises of God. They agreed that they were no more than foreigners and nomads here on earth. And obviously people who talk like that are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had meant the country they came from, they would have found a way to go back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them.

They were looking for more than their own personal satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

When we live by faith, we are called to judge the present by the future, to weigh the permanent against

the temporary. To dare to do the impossible, regardless of the arguments against, and to keep on doing that day after day.

Hebrews 11:39, 40 (NLT) All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. For God had far better things in mind for us that would also benefit them, for they can't receive the prize at the end of the race until we finish the race.