

Walking by Faith (Part 2) – Pleasing God – Walking in the Spirit

Heb 10:35-11:7

³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷ For in just a very little while,

“He who is coming will come and will not delay.

³⁸ But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back,

I will not be pleased with him.”

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

By Faith

11 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

“My righteous ones will live by faith”

“Without faith it is impossible to please God”

We have the capacity to please God

We are able to live by faith

Walking with God (Abel, Enoch, Noah) – put aside our reliance on our own works and our own agenda

Enter into His rest – the rest of faith

Pleasing God is a fundamental motive / focus of faith

- It is, however, not transactional
- in the sense that we bring our faith to God around something we desire or need
- and He gives it to us because we have faith

Faith seeks God and His agenda (even for those things that we need) and responds to that

It is the approach to God that we see in the statement about living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God

- One of the key lessons that God was teaching His people in the wilderness – Deut 8:3
- One of the way Jesus resists the devil when He was tempted in the wilderness – Mat 4:4
 - He does not begin with His need (for bread) but with the word of His Father
- For us this is Jesus Himself (Jn 6:49-51) – the living bread

- It is also about living by the 'bread' of the word of God every day;
 - **Freshly gathered every day** like the manna was
 - That we hear by spending time listening to the voice of the Father
 - And by walking in the Spirit – **doing the word**

Consider how this shows up in the life of Jesus

He is continually hearing the Father

John 8:28-30

28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, **for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.**" 30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 6:38-40

38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

“My righteous ones will live by faith”

- Those whose way of living pleases God, will live by faith

“Without faith it is impossible to please God”

- Everything that proceeds from faith pleases God
- Anything that does not proceed from faith does not please God
 - Works, without faith, no matter how good or noble, do not please God
 - Moral purity, without faith, no matter how good, does not please God
 - Perseverance or patience, without faith, does not please God
 - Courage and endurance through trials and persecution, without faith, do not please God

Because, if it is not by faith it is by our own works

- It is of the flesh and relies on the flesh

Rom 8:8 – Those who are in the flesh cannot please God

Rom 14:23 – Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin

On the other side of this: – everything that proceeds from faith pleases God

Let’s look at how faith begins

- God pursues us – in His grace
- He reveals Himself
- He enables us to see His glory in the face of Jesus

- He enables us to see our need for salvation
 - Cannot be perfect
 - Cannot, not sin – **enslaved**
- He enables us to see that we cannot save ourselves
- He enables us to understand that the wages of sin is death
- He enables us to understand the gospel
 - The good news about what Jesus **HAS** done to save us
 - He is our salvation
 - It is not about what we have to do (works) to earn salvation
 - It is about what He has done to save us
- Faith arises in response to all of this
- We believe (a verb)
- Our faith connects to the grace of God
 - and we are saved,
 - born again,
 - we are a new creation
 - and we have eternal life

From the outset faith includes an approach that does not rely on our own works because

- we know that, no matter how good those are, they are not enough to save us

From the outset faith believes (verb)

- Not simply by accepting the truth of the gospel in our minds
- but by relying on the power of God in the gospel to save us
- We put our trust in Him

From the outset faith trusts in what God has done and is doing

From the outset faith is a response to something that God has initiated

From the outset faith seeks to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God

- even though we probably do not even know it at the beginning

The nature of the faith we live by once we are saved is no different in terms of its orientation

- It is always putting aside reliance on our own works
- It is always trusting God

It is different in its fruit

- We do cease (rest) from our own works – or relying on those
- But we now actively seek to do God's works
- Faith does not stand alone
- There are works of faith
- Paul speaks of the obedience of faith

Consider the following passages

Eph 5:8-11

8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 **and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord**. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them

Col 1:9-10

9 And so, from the day we heard (*of their faith – v3-4*), we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 **so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him**, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Hebrews 13:16

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for **such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**

When we live by faith we actively seek to please Him

- By doing His will
- The way Jesus did

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us **how you ought to walk and to please God**, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Faith cooperates with God in what He is doing

- In our sanctification
- In the 'good works' He has prepared in advance for us to do – Eph 2:10
- In what He is doing on earth to see His Kingdom come and His will done
- The gospel is at the very heart of this

In Paul's writing especially what shows up is that:

- Faith contrasts with flesh just as Spirit contrasts with law
- Law relies on the flesh.
- Faith relies on the Holy Spirit
- Cooperating with God in what He is doing is about walking in the Spirit

Faith pleases God because it is **an attitude of heart, a posture in life of walking with Him**

Faith walks with the Holy Spirit – **wants to** keeps in step with Him

Walking by faith = walking with God = walking in the Spirit

The word of God is near us – even in our hearts

The power of God is at work in us – we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

We can:

- Keep in step with the Holy Spirit – by faith
- Align ourselves with His agenda – by faith
 - The Holy Spirit wants:
 - To reveal Jesus to us
 - To make us like Jesus – fruit of the Spirit
 - To work in us and through us to build the Church – gifts of the Spirit
 - To make Jesus known through us – power to be witnesses

We are able to:

- Not grieve the Holy Spirit
- Not quench the Holy Spirit
- Be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit

We are able to walk by faith God – The Holy Spirit leads us and empowers us to do that

We have the capacity to please God – The Holy Spirit leads us and empowers us to do that

Hebrews 10:35-39

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Hebrews 13:20-21 – Benediction

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,
21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, **working in us that which is pleasing in his sight**, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Note:

In the *Greek* New Testament, the word “*faith*” is mostly “*pistis*” and the words “believe” or “believed” are mostly “*pisteuo*.” In his gospel account, John prefers to use the verb, *pisteuo*.

In a nutshell:

Faith does not come to God with an agenda, it comes to God to find and follow His agenda

Faith has no higher agenda than to please God

Obedience is not about avoiding God's displeasure but rather a faith fuelled desire to please Him

Faith does not cause God to do anything, it connects with and believes in what He is already doing

Faith is an attitude of heart, a posture in life, of walking with God

Faith behaves righteously

Faith comes when we shift our reliance away from what we do (or can do) to believe in what God says He will do

Faith is not passive. Believe is a verb and there are 'works' that faith does in response to the word of God