

LIVING BY FAITH

“And without faith it is impossible to please God...”

—HEBREWS 11:6

If we were to construct a top ten list of the most misunderstood words in the Christian vocabulary, I would nominate the word ‘faith’ for the number one spot. It is a word which introduces us to the key factor in Christian living, designed to bring freedom, liberty and power into our experience. Yet, like no other word, it has brought frustration, discouragement and even a sense of condemnation to people.

It is by faith that truth becomes experience and without it, truth remains elusive, impractical and theoretical. The writer of Hebrews, comparing Israel in the Old Testament to his readers, states, “For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard it did not combine it with faith” (Hebrews 4:2). Two groups of people heard the same truth. To the one group it was of immense value, but to the other it was of no value at all. The reason? One group combined what they knew with faith while the other group did not. It is the combination of truth with faith that makes the truth of the Gospel work effectively in our lives.

One thing we cannot escape as we read the Bible is that faith is an indispensable part of Christian experience. Scripture tells us that we are cleansed by faith, saved by faith, justified by faith and that we have access to God by faith. However, having been saved by faith, we also discover that we are to live by faith and to walk by faith. In so doing, we discover we are to fight the good fight of faith, to take the shield of faith and to overcome the world by faith.

We then discover that without faith it is impossible to please God and “everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). Whatever else we may think about faith, we have to agree it is not only of utmost importance, but essential! If we have difficulty living the Christian life, in all probability, it is related to our exercise of faith or lack of it.

It is by faith God designed the Christian life to function. Many Christians recognize their need for Christ to save them, and the act of becoming a Christian by faith is basic and fundamental to them. However, the problem arises when there is a failure to recognize the equal necessity to live each day by faith in the same way they became Christians. The result of exercising faith in God is what enables Him to work in us, through us and for us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me an unwavering faith in You that enables You to work in me and through me every day of my life. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I exercising the same faith today as when I first became a Christian?