



Living by faith

The wrong track

- Secular culture: faith is a blind leap because God is unknowable.

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*: faith in God requires “a mighty jump from the rational over to the unknowable.” “If faith were rational, it wouldn’t be—by definition—faith. Faith is belief in what you cannot see or prove or touch. Faith is walking face-first and full-speed into the dark.”

The wrong track

- **Believing in God:** many Christians agree that uncertainty is necessary for faith.
- **Following God:** if uncertainty is necessary for faith, then we only have faith when we are uncertain.
- So faith means taking large, uncertain risks.
Attempt something so hard that you will fail unless God comes through for you.

Is this faith?

- “When God invites you to join Him in His work, He presents a God-sized assignment for you to accomplish. You will realize that you cannot accomplish it on your own. If God does not help you, you will fail.”
- “I have come to the place in my life that, if the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it probably is *not* from God.”

Is this faith?

- “It’s a frightening and utterly exhilarating truth, isn’t it? As God’s chosen, blessed sons and daughters, we are expected to attempt something large enough that failure is guaranteed ... unless God steps in.”

The right track

- Faith is certainty (*Hebrews 11:1*)
- Faith brings the invisible facts of the future into the present.
- If faith means certainty, then do I lack faith when I doubt?
 - **Not if I commit** (*Luke 23:46*)
 - **Faith is an action verb**

How do we gain certainty?

- Not by challenging/manipulating God's power
- But by hearing a word from God (*Abraham*)
 - *Heb. 11:8*—**command**
 - *Heb. 11:11*—**promise**
 - *Heb. 11:17–19*—**promise and command**

What is our promise?

- It's big (*Heb. 11:13*)
- It's about what God has done.
 - *Heb. 9:26–28*—Jesus died, arose, and will return to destroy sin and death and bring salvation.
 - *1 Cor. 15:1–5*—the gospel is received, not achieved.

What is our promise?

- It does not guarantee worldly success.
 - Some will enjoy success (*Heb. 11:32–35*)
 - Some will endure apparent failure (*Heb. 11:35–38*)
 - None have yet received the promise (*Heb. 11:39–40*)

What is our command?

- Persevere! (*Heb. 10:35–39; 12:1*)
- How to persevere?
 - Trust God's promise
 - Obey God's commands. *Hebrews 12–13*: live in peace and be holy, avoid bitterness and sexual immorality, entertain strangers, follow your leaders, do good and share with others.

The Normal Christian Life

- “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody” (*1 Thessalonians 4:11–12*).
- The size or success of your life is not relevant.
- What God has done > anything we can do.