

WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD KNOW (#WCSK) 2.1: FAITH

The series What Christians Should Know Volume II (#WCSK) provides Biblical instruction on everyday practices and basic concepts of the Christian faith. All Scriptures will be taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted. Biblical references are examples and are in no way intended to be exhaustive. Many of the ideas here will build upon the series [What Christians Should Know Volume I](#), which provides education on core beliefs and doctrines in the Christian faith. All of the lessons are best used as a general guide as you engage in your own Bible study.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

Greetings to all! I trust you have had a restful summer, and I am glad you have returned for the second installment of *What Christians Should Know*. Let’s get started.

In the last series, I spoke about faith excessively and on many occasions did not refer to “Christianity” but instead to the “Christian faith.” The reason why is that faith is central to the idea of the Christian religion, central to the idea of the redemption of humankind, and central to the idea of one of the core doctrines of Christianity: that we are saved by grace alone and *through faith alone*.¹

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith” (Matthew 21:22, ESV).

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, ESV).

And Jesus answered saying to them, “Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. (Mark 11:22-24)

¹ Ephesians 2:8; Galatians 2:16-21. See also [What Christians Should Know Part V: Jesus Christ](#)

The formal biblical definition of ‘faith’ can be found in Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* defines ‘faith’ as “Trust in, or reliance on, God who is himself trustworthy.”²

Let’s dissect this definition from Hebrews. First, the Greek word for ‘faith’ in this verse is *pistis*. (The other Greek word used in the New Testament for faith is *pisteuein*; the former word is the noun, the latter is the verb.) *Pistis* means fidelity; the conviction of the truth of God, and particularly the reliance on Christ for salvation. This word conveys an overwhelming sense of trust. Second, notice that faith is different than hope. Faith *is* (present) the assurance of things *hoped for* (future). Faith works in the present, and that faith is grounded not in uncertainty or doubt, but *in assurance*. It is from this certainty, grounded in the truthfulness of God³ and His promises that we then look forward with hope into the future.⁴ Now without getting too technical with language, it is important to note that hope in a Biblical sense differs from what hope means to an American in the 21st century. In the contemporary world, someone can *hope* that their spouse buys them a nice gift for their birthday. They can *hope* that the Yankees make it to the World Series. They can *hope* that their toddler will not throw a tantrum when the family goes out in public. In all of these instances of hoping, the future is uncertain. But, as R.C. Sproul writes, “When the Bible speaks of hope, it is not referring to a desire for a future outcome that is uncertain, but rather a desire for a future outcome that is absolutely sure. Based on our trust in the promises of God, we can be fully confident about the outcome.”⁵

Third, by implication, we now understand that faith is never “blind” or “ignorant” because God’s promises are trustworthy. Because God is the truth, we therefore have assurance in our faith, which projects into the future as certain hope: “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19). Faith is the *assurance*, which comes from the Greek word *hypostasis*, meaning ‘concretely, the support of something, or confidence’. Faith is the assurance just as hope is an anchor—two things that are held firmly in place by something sturdy and reliable. There is no wavering, and that stance is rooted in something that has enough weight or importance to hold a ship in place against hostile tides. That anchor represents the promises of God.

Again, Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, *the conviction* of things not seen” (emphasis added). The root of the word ‘conviction’ in Greek is *elegchos*, which means ‘proof or evidence.’ The fourth point: faith, then, is the *proof* or *evidence* of things not seen. Since evidence is something that we can know, this knowable proof points directly to God, who reigns over all things *both* seen and unseen.

² Paul J. Achtemeier ed., *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 326.

³ John 14:6. For more on the characteristics of God, see [WCSK Part II: Who God Is](#)

⁴ For more on God’s promises and the trustworthiness of the Bible, see [WCSK III: The Bible](#)

⁵ R.C. Sproul, *What is Faith?* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2010), Loc 22, Kindle

So while many things are unseen (e.g. the future), I have faith in and believe in God who rules over and knows everything about the unseen. Romans 1:20 actually tells us that God reveals the unseen to us *through* the seen: “For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” So while *I* may know nothing about the unseen, I have faith in the One who does. So if God tells me about an unseen promise, and I trust God, then I can trust in the unseen simply because my faith is in God, One who is reliable⁶ and who is incapable of lying.⁷ People unfamiliar with God think it is irrational to trust and believe in Him. History has provided a different perspective: God has proven to be so objectively trustworthy and reliable to humanity—the most illogical and senseless thing a person could therefore do is to reject His promises or the things He says. And that truth is not out of reach; it is accessible to everyone—not only through the Bible, but also through natural means. As Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of his hands.”

Notably, faith exists *not* by our own doing. Faith is a gift from God as a function of God’s grace.⁸ Faith is a divine gift because humankind has fallen and is corrupt,⁹ and therefore we are unable to “achieve” faith due to our fallen natures.¹⁰ God’s grace therefore enables us to believe and to have faith in Him.¹¹ A logical question quickly arises: if God is the only One who can give me faith, then why should I bother doing anything if nothing that *I* do matters anyway? Well, if you don’t know God, then the single best thing you can do is *seek Him* and learn about Him by hearing the preaching of the Word, by going to church and reading the Bible. Because, as it turns out, you may not know about God and have faith *now*, but you cannot be certain what future God has in store for you. Another way of saying that is you may be certain that you are a member of God’s elect,¹² but you *cannot* be certain you are *not* a member of His elect. The cost for anyone to leverage his or her uncertainty for apathy is the loss of eternal life. Hearing the preached Word is a powerful force and the Word of God will not return to him void: “So will my Word be which goes forth from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

Faith that is “like a child”¹³ recognizes a reliable and trustworthy father figure, but it is not babyish or an immature faith based on lack of knowledge or understanding. This is why faith comes from the use of the senses, not the rejection of reality: “So faith comes

⁶ Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 18:2; Lamentations 3:22-24

⁷ Titus 1:2

⁸ For more on Grace, see [WCSK Part VI: Grace and Stewardship](#)

⁹ Romans 3:23. For more on sin and the Fall of Man, see [WCSK Part IV: Creation and Sin](#)

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:8-9; I Corinthians 12:9

¹¹ John 6:65; Romans 12:3

¹² Ephesians 1:3-4

¹³ Matthew 18:3; Luke 18:17

from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). It naturally follows that with more exposure to the Word and with more hearing of the Word, faith would increase—and this is exactly the case. Hence, II Corinthians 10:16 says, “But with the hope that as your faith grows ...” while II Thessalonians 1:3 says, “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting *because your faith is greatly enlarged*, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater” (italics mine). This also explains why Jesus qualified some people as having little faith (e.g. Matthew 8:26 and 14:31) and having great faith (e.g. Matthew 8:10). Other people also believed but still asked for help with their unbelief: “I do believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

In the modern era, people tend to think of faith as something they are at the center of. They construct faith as something that *they* develop. However, in the Bible God always stands in the center and it is *His* divine initiative and trustworthiness that opens up the way for people to respond to His fidelity. THE LORD and THE LORD alone is “my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2). And, because *God has chosen* the elect,¹⁴ His promises are therefore intended for this group who now engage in a relationship with Him. Hence, faith begins with God and this involves the individual *in the context of a relationship* with the Lord. Without a true and trustworthy God and without a relationship, faith ceases to exist.

Faith is not a subjective experience: it’s never *my* experience nor what Jesus means *to me*. If that was the case, then faith would vary from person to person and what applies to one would be invalid for the next. The reality that $1 + 1 = 2$ holds true not because *I feel* like it’s true, but because anyone can use their senses to perceive this actuality. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing *by the word of Christ*” (emphasis added). The word of Christ is unchanging, and the objective power of faith comes from this timeless and static word. People and experiences change all the time. If personal experience determines faith, then faith becomes null and void, contingent upon emotions, and wavers in the hostile winds and turbulent waters of life. If faith was based on experience, then one amazing sermon would get me fired up for Jesus—but what happens when the fervor of the acute event fades? Get another “fix” for God? That sounds more like drug dependency than a long-term commitment. If you sat through a sermon and didn’t “feel” anything, or you read a Bible passage and didn’t become overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, God is still God, faith is still faith, and $1 + 1 = 2$.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) did not testify as to how the experiences of God made them feel; rather they testified to the factual reality of Jesus, His teachings, His death, and His resurrection. Thus, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). These same facts can be learned and appreciated by all of humanity equally, which explains to a large degree why God chose the written word as a permanent medium to reveal Himself.

¹⁴ Ephesians 1:3-6

In *The Weight of Glory*, C. S. Lewis says, “These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.” In other words, good experience is never something that we’re looking for; it’s something that we have *in pursuit of something else*. Our objective faith, rooted in the objective truth and trustworthiness of God, will certainly yield many experiences in our lives, but endlessly searching for the experience will distract you from the real pursuit: God.

A doctrine of experience-based faith opens up a very large door to counterfeiting. On the one hand it can perversely say, “*If you don’t* have this experience, then you don’t have faith and don’t belong to God. Chase the experience.” This leads to sensations of personal inadequacy and the glorification of the rare and miraculous at the expense of the ordinary. The Bible is a highlight reel. Guess what happened in between all of the sensational moments? A lot of ordinary, regular, and very plain everyday life. On the other hand, a doctrine of experience-based faith can perversely say, “*If you do* have this experience, then you don’t have faith and don’t belong to God.” This leads to legalism and artificially constrains what faith “should look like.” A doctrine of God-based faith says, “If you believe God and have faith *in Him*, your experiences may change—but your faith doesn’t. Peace be unto you. Now, love God, live in submission to Him, and do as you please.”

Let’s look at some Biblical examples of faith. In Exodus 14:31, after God had destroyed the Egyptians who were pursuing the Israelites, the text says: “When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.” In response to the things God had already done, *then* the people believed in the Lord. Our ability to believe God and have faith is only possible because God is first faithful.¹⁵ From divine faithfulness comes exclusive demands,¹⁶ obedience to those exclusive demands,¹⁷ the rejection of idols,¹⁸ praise of God,¹⁹ and a totality of life based exclusively on trust in He who is eternally trustworthy. Hence, faith means believing God and trusting in Him; therefore the opposite of faith is not fear, nor is it certainty—it’s idolatry. The First Commandment is anti-idolatry: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). The Bible, God’s incarnate Word, begins in Genesis 1:1 with, “In the beginning, God ...”; it does not start with “In the beginning, something other than God ...”. *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* says, “In fact, the opposite of faithfulness is apostasy, as for example, in Deuteronomy

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 7:9; I Corinthians 10:13; II Timothy 2:13; I John 1:9; Hebrews 10:23

¹⁶ Exodus 20:1-17; I Kings 8:61

¹⁷ Genesis 6:9, 22:1-18; Joshua 1:7-8

¹⁸ Isaiah 42:17

¹⁹ Psalm 5:11, 22:1-5, 62:1

32:30, in which the phrase “Children in whom there is no faithfulness” is synonymous with idolatry.”²⁰

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul broadly expounds on the topic of faith. He affirms that faith is always toward God,²¹ specifically toward the promise of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus.²² Paul repeatedly speaks of faith as an active source of power that does not maintain idleness but encourages activity; faith has life²³ that manifests itself in love;²⁴ it has forward progress²⁵ and strives;²⁶ it increases²⁷ and is a power that works in those who believe God.²⁸ People are also capable of being deficient in faith²⁹ and believing in vain.³⁰ The three-part formula of faith, love, and hope³¹ is also used by Paul. He emphasizes that faith always works in love (since it would be impossible to believe and trust in God if you had animosity toward Him) and that it is grounded in the resurrection of Christ and the ultimate fulfillment of being raised to Christ on the last day.³²

And because Paul describes faith as being dynamic, it becomes clear that *faith does not negate human action* because of God’s providence,³³ or the maintenance and direction of creation to fulfill His divine will. All throughout the Bible for example, we read about people always *doing something* because they have faith in God. Abram had to get up and leave his homeland of Haran. Moses had to get up and leave Egypt and then lead the Israelites through the wilderness. Paul had to get up and get out to many cities in modern-day Europe and Asia to plant new Christian churches. In Mosaic Law, God specifically tells his followers *to do* certain things.³⁴ In the story of David and Goliath, David did not divorce himself from reality or pretend Goliath wasn’t there. Instead, his mentality³⁵ (faith) is what drove him *to confront and interact directly with his reality*. In fact, David ran up toward the giant Goliath to confront him: “Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line

²⁰ Paul J. Achtemeier ed., *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 327.

²¹ I Thessalonians 1:8

²² I Thessalonians 4:14

²³ I Thessalonians 1:23

²⁴ Galatians 5:6

²⁵ Philippians 1:25

²⁶ Philippians 1:27

²⁷ II Corinthians 10:15

²⁸ I Thessalonians 2:13

²⁹ Romans 14:1

³⁰ Romans 11:20; I Corinthians 15:2

³¹ I Corinthians 13:13; I Thessalonians 1:3

³² Romans 6:8, 15:13; Galatians 5:5; II Corinthians 4:14

³³ Proverbs 16:9, 33; Jeremiah 29:11; Job 31:35; Romans 8:28

³⁴ For example the fifth commandment: “Honor your father and your mother ...” (Exodus 20:12).

³⁵ I Samuel 17:37

to meet the Philistine” (I Samuel 17:48). God was never afraid nor did He shy away from our reality, which is why He sent His Son, Jesus. We should all follow this example and never allow ourselves to shy away from our reality that exists solely because of *God’s action*.

It should now be clear that faith only becomes valuable when the object of that faith is considered. So when a person casually says, “You gotta have faith!” the next question should be, “In what?” You could, theoretically, have “faith” in the tooth fairy or the New York Knicks. I don’t recommend either. Or, you could have legitimate Biblical faith rooted in God, His eternal promises, the tangible Word of God, and the historical person of Jesus Christ. Faith therefore only becomes valuable *contingent upon where it is directed*. Therefore, when God says that if I believe in His son (Jesus), I will not perish but will have everlasting life,³⁶ and I know from the Bible that such a promise is trustworthy, then God is the One Who provides the concrete raw material from which my faith is built. Faith speaks the fundamental nature of hope, anchored in and by God. Faith and hope thus have tangible, real, ironclad substance and are not wishful thinking or dream projection. And—by the way, it now also becomes clear that because faith is grounded in God’s promises, believing in something not promised by God or not grounded in Biblical truth is not faith—it’s human desire. There is only one promise that bears any everlasting significance: that those who have faith in and believe Jesus will be reconciled back to God, raised up and have eternal life.³⁷ Hence, any type of fulfillment that can only be measured in worldly terms (e.g., money, health, fame, success) *may* be granted by God, but His ultimate promise is not temporary and natural—it’s eternal and supernatural.

God is changeless,³⁸ but our circumstances change all the time. Our trust is *not* in our circumstances, but in God. Therefore, while everyone will experience tough, heart-breaking and arduous circumstances in their life, what gives them the strength to press on is the timeless and unchanging God who transcends all natural circumstances. Of course this would make no sense to a non-believer, because they don’t know God, aren’t aware of His promises, don’t have a relationship with Him, can’t trust Him, and therefore are devoid of faith and Christ-centered hope.

Habakkuk 2:4 says, “The righteous will live by his faith.” This phrase is repeated on three different occasions in the New Testament: Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. This reiteration begs our attention because it means that those whom God considers holy and who keep His commandments use faith as the guiding principle in their lives. Hebrews 11:2 says, “For by [faith] the men of old gained approval.” Subsequently, believing in God means that you believe his Word, His values, and His ethics. By faith we refuse to take quick and easy shortcuts because such paths violate God’s Word (see Luke 4:1-13). “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible”

³⁶ John 3:16

³⁷ John 3:16; Romans 6:1-6; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 3:1

³⁸ Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8

(Hebrews 11:3). Accordingly, for example, faith tells us that “In the beginning” no one, except God, was there to record what happened when our universe began. Using human knowledge alone, the best we can do is look backward and deduce what we think, *based on uncertainty*. Thankfully for those who live by faith and believe in God, we trust the One Who is eternal and Who was there to give an account of where we came from.

What does great faith look like in the lives of real people? We will look at two examples:

Abraham. Galatians 3:7 says, “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.” Hebrews 11 contains the “Hall of Faith.” This is a list of many people in the Biblical narrative who had great faith. Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19 says:

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations whose architect and builder is God ... By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, “In Isaac your descendants shall be called.” He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

The Bible introduces us to Abram in Genesis 11:26 and then in Genesis 12:1-3, *God speaks to him*, and Abram obeys. (And in 12:7 God appears to Abram). Notice that Abram did not step out into a void with a blindfold hoping to find something greater. God spoke to Abram first, and in that speech, God made a promise to Abram. In Genesis 12:1-3 God says:

Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Genesis 12:4 then says, “So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him.” God made a promise to Abram. Abram then obeyed based upon that promise. Obedience therefore is a natural extension of faith because believing God is intimately connected with living in submission to Him. Notably, it is this faith that justifies us, *not* the works of obedience (Romans 4:17). Also notice that Abram was 75 years old (c.f. Genesis 12:4) when he left Haran to go where God directed him. In other words, he was very “comfortable” in where he was, but he purposely moved out of his comfort zone in pursuit of God’s promise: “He was looking for the city which has foundations, whose

architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:19). Hence, the pursuit of a heavenly realm and not an earthly one kept him in constant motion his entire life.

Genesis 15:6 subsequently says, “Then [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” This great trust in God is what brought Abraham to sacrifice his only son in Genesis 22. Essentially, in this “testing” of Abraham, he was only able to offer up his son *by faith*, by believing God, by trusting in His promises, *and believing in God’s ability to raise His son from the dead* (Hebrews 11:19). Being a parent, there is no greater trepidation that stirs up my bones than being asked to sacrifice my child. This is a normal reaction, and serves to highlight the point that oftentimes faith is not easy and can make you very uncomfortable, even fearful. The fear does not negate your faith. The fear simply means that God is preparing to do something big—and while the unknown makes *you* uncomfortable, God is already waiting for you on the other side. This can help explain why after being commanded to offer up his son in Genesis 22:2, Abraham, presumably after a restless, tortuous night of no sleep, is said to have “rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey” (verse 3).

Yet, Abraham—a father asked to give up his only son—could never have offered a suitable sacrifice using a *sinful* human being. The sacrifice of Isaac was thus a foreshadowing of what was to come; the fulfillment of a promise. Abraham, like many other figures in the Old Testament, looked forward with faith to the coming Messiah. Hence, R.C. Sproul writes, “The only difference between Abraham and us is the direction of time. Abraham looked forward to the cross; we look backward to the cross. His faith was in the promise; our faith is in the fulfillment of that promise.”³⁹ Moreover, in John 8:56, Jesus says, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Moses. Hebrews 11:23-29 says:

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

I have always loved the story of Moses because it reflects a paradigm of inversion. That is, Moses rejected what was “high” for what was “low.” He rejected what was easy for

³⁹ R.C. Sproul, *What is Faith?* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2010), Loc 212, Kindle

what was hard. He rejected what would have brought him individual praise and accomplishment for what was sacrificial. Why? Because *by faith*, he used a value system antithetical to the rules of the world, which made his actions seem “strange” or “weird.” But in Moses’ mind, his actions made perfect sense, because he was being faithful to God. In Exodus 2:11-13, the text says:

Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

Moses was not an Egyptian by birth, but was a Hebrew of the house of Levi. As a baby, his mother sent him down the Nile in a wicker basket. He was then picked up by Pharaoh’s daughter and raised as her son. Essentially, Moses lived the “good life” in the midst of royalty in a foreign land. Yet when Moses encountered this difficult scenario, the predicament forced him to choose. Moses *could* have turned the other way when he saw an Egyptian dehumanizing a fellow Hebrew. He could have scoffed and gone about his business and he could have brushed the scenario away as “the way things are.” But, cognizant of all the worldly treasures that he stood to lose, he instead chose to kill the Egyptian, becoming a murderer, his life subsequently changed forever. He could not go back to where he was from and had to flee. What he chose to do was to reject all of his worldly luxuries and to “endure ill-treatment with the people of God [rather] than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” These verses in Hebrews tell us that sin is pleasurable but that pleasure is *passing*. Moses rejected the pleasures of sin. Why? Because his faith gave him a value system that enabled his belief in God and his trust in God’s promises. Thus, he did not trust sin, nor did he place any confidence in the “treasures of Egypt.”

By faith, Moses chose God—but that choice was very, very costly. And when you look at the lives of anyone else in the Hall of Faith (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua and unnamed others), they all paid a hefty price for their belief. Faith is never cheap. Faith is always expensive, and considering what’s at stake—eternal life—a reasonable question we should all ask ourselves is, what are we willing to sacrifice for God? The sacrificial legacy of the faithful calls us forward to wage war in a cataclysmic battle *for God, for faith*, and against the many principalities that seek to rob God’s glory. Look at what the fallen had to endure:

Others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (Hebrews 11:35-38).

What Biblical history has taught us is that being faithful and living by faith does not mean living comfortably by the pattern of the world. It means believing God and honoring Him at all costs—even if that means an open declaration of “war” against the world.

God, being the kind and merciful god that he is, has enough respect for His creation that He doesn't ask you to believe anything based on “blind” faith. He invites you to come and discover His promises for yourself, promises that you can read and investigate with your own eyes. In fact, He loves the world so much, He sent His Son, Who incarnated as a human being. People used their senses to experience the reality of Jesus: people saw Him, spoke to Him, and touched Him. Then, after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to more people, some of whom then wrote down *what they saw*. Those eyewitnesses also spoke to many others about Jesus. And in many cases, it was the miraculous and awesome real-life experience of the resurrected Christ that transformed people's lives. The New Testament calls all believers to place their trust in God based upon eyewitness testimony, not on a blind leap into a dark nebulous void. This is why in II Peter 1:16 the apostle says, “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” God doesn't want you to deny your senses to find him because He's the One who gave you those senses in the first place. His majesty can well withstand your scrutiny.

The next lesson will be on the Tabernacle. To get it, either check back on dlcfc.org or [subscribe to my newsletter](#) (box top right) to have *WCSK* lessons (and all other posted content) delivered straight to your inbox.

God bless!

Dr. C. H. E. Sadaphal

For Further Reading

R.C. Sproul, *What is Faith? (Crucial Questions Book 8)* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2010)