

☞ Walking by Faith

Humor about Faith:

A pastor was speaking to his people on the relationship between fact and faith. He said, "That you are sitting before me in this church--is fact. That I am standing here, speaking from this pulpit--is fact. That I believe anyone is listening to me--is faith!"

Faith... we are saved by faith; justified by faith; sanctified by faith; we receive the promises by faith; we understand by faith; we obey by faith; we wait by faith; stand by faith; and...

☞ 2 Corinthians 5:7

We walk by faith, not by sight. NKJV

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Demonstration: trust walk; one person lead a blindfolded person around the room.

What was required of the "follower" to navigate the course safely?

☞ Trust the Seer

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. NKJV

☞ Listen closely

Isaiah 28:23

Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.

Isaiah 30:21

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

☞ Obey the instructions

Jeremiah 7:23

Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

During the terrible days of the Blitz, a father, holding his small son by the hand, ran from a building that had been struck by a bomb. In the front yard was a shell hole. Seeking shelter as quickly as possible, the father jumped into the hole and held up his arms for his son to follow. Terrified, yet hearing his father's voice telling him to jump, the boy replied, "I can't see you!" The father, looking up against the sky tinted red by the burning buildings, called to the silhouette of his son, "But I can see you. Jump!" The boy jumped, because he trusted his

father. *The Christian faith enables us to face life or meet death, not because we can see, but with the certainty that we are seen; not that we know all the answers, but that we are known.*

☞ Let's look at the battle between **faith and sight...**

☞ **Sight trusts in possessions and prosperity; Faith sees God as the source.**

Luke 18:18-23 (*the rich young ruler*)

"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" So, Jesus listed off some of the Ten Commandments and the young man replied that he had faithfully kept those since his childhood. Then Jesus told him to do one more thing: sell everything and give it to the poor, then follow me. Verse 23 says, "When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth."

☞ **Sight focuses on the how; Faith focuses on the Who.**

In John chapter 9, we read about a man who had been born blind. Jesus healed him but those around the man just could not understand what had happened. They interrogated him, as if he were a criminal, demanding to know the how...

John 9:10-11

"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. **11** He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

☞ **Sight sees the size of the situation; Faith sees the size of God.**

1 Samuel 17:4, 11

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall... On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

1 Samuel 17:45-47

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

☞ **Sight is self-focused; Faith seeks God first.**

Matthew 6:31-33

do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ...But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

☞ **Sight is based on feelings; Faith is based on what God has to say.**

Abraham and Sarah heard what God said about giving them a son but they just couldn't believe it.

Genesis 17:15-18

God told Abraham, I will give you a son by Sarah and kings will come from her... Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"

Genesis 18:11

Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Dealing with your feelings while keeping faith is very important. We need to learn to **lead our emotions.**

☞ Circumstances + beliefs = thoughts ---> emotions ---> actions ---> back to circumstances

You can't always control your circumstances. But you can control your beliefs. Abraham learned this and demonstrated it when God told him to take his son up the mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. By now, Abraham's faith had grown and his thoughts and emotions were directed by his beliefs. He didn't laugh or cry or argue this time... he remembered what God had said about this boy and he had confidence in God's ability...

Genesis 22:5

We will worship and then we will come back to you.

Hebrews 11:19

Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead

Faith means that we keep our eyes on God who controls circumstances, not on the circumstances themselves.

☞ Sight sees the Problems; Faith see the Possibilities.

2 Kings 6:13-17 (*Elisha and his servant*)

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. **16** "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." **17** And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

☞ Sight is in a hurry; Faith waits on God.

1 Samuel 13:11-14

Saul is about to go into battle, but Samuel had not yet arrived to offer the burnt offering before they went to war. So, Saul got antsy and took matters into his own hands, making the burnt offering himself. It was not his place to do that and ultimately it cost him his kingdom.

Isaiah 40:31

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. NKJV

--Corrie Ten Boom... When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.

There are many contrasts between sight and faith. We are called to walk by faith, not by sight. We trust God and his word even when we can't see or understand it all.

The phrase "we walk by faith, not by sight," sometimes causes people to think the bible promotes "**blind faith**." That's the idea of trusting someone or something without any kind of evidence. I'm not an advocate of blind faith and I don't believe the Bible teaches blind faith. Jesus encouraged people to look at the evidence. He even said, "at least believe the miracles." (John 10:38) The New Testament instructs us to defend the faith and to give the reasons for our faith.

☞ Therefore, I promote "**reasonable faith**." There is evidence that leads me to believe as I do. I don't fully understand everything that God says in the Bible and I can't see everything that God is doing. But there is enough evidence for me to trust God for those things I don't see and understand. If I could see and understand it all, there wouldn't really be a need for faith. So, it's a combination of reason and faith.

You trust the chair you're sitting on to hold you. But if it was tattered and the welded joints were obviously broken, you might have some reservations about sitting down. As well, just because somebody says something doesn't mean I will automatically trust them. But someone with whom I have a history is a different story. I can trust them because they have been trustworthy before.

My dad has an illustration that tests your faith. He's got a rat trap that is set and he will ask you to touch the release mechanism. It is definitely a real rat trap and it appears to be set to snap. Now, my sight is telling me one thing, but my dad is telling me another. So, I have to choose whether I believe what I see or what my dad is telling me. It really is a question of **his character and our relationship**.

☞ God has proven himself repeatedly so we can trust him completely. We can **walk by faith, not by sight**.