



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 04:

PATTERN OF THE LIFE OF FAITH **Hebrews 11:8-12**

Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). To please God, each of us must live by faith in Christ. Abel, Enoch, Noah had faith in God and He testified of them that they pleased Him. In Abel, we learn the commencement of the life of faith; Enoch teaches us the characteristics of the continuity of the life of faith; Noah's life and action instruct us on the conviction and courage of the life of faith. The Scripture challenges us to let **"Christ dwell in [our] hearts by faith"** (Ephesians 3:17), to **"live by faith"** (Galatians 2:20), to pray in faith (James 1:6), to resist our adversary, the devil, by faith (1 Peter 5:8,9), to overcome the world by faith (1 John 5:4), to **"walk by faith"** (2 Corinthians 5:7).

To please God and to walk with Him, we are to **"walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised"** (Romans 4:12). Abraham's life of faith provides a pattern for our faith. His life was nothing else, but a continual practice of faith. The first evidence of faith in his life is his obedience to God, when He called him out of his country. From then on, his life furnishes fuller details concerning the life of faith.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:8; Genesis 12:1-4; Joshua 24:2-3; Acts 7:2-4; Isaiah 51:2; Romans 1:5; Luke 5:32; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Acts 13:2; 2 Peter 1:10.

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out... obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). **"The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee"** (Genesis 12:1). What a challenge to his faith this was! He was called to go out of idolatry, not out of the family of God (Joshua 24:2,3; Isaiah 51:1,2). What a testing of faith this was – to be converted at 75! Abraham was already seventy-five years of age (Genesis 12:4) and long journeys and break-up of old associations are not easily undertaken by elderly people. To forsake the old life, to leave loved ones and family idolatry behind, to abandon present certainty for a future uncertainty, to go forth, not knowing where, must have seemed unreasonable to the flesh and carnal reasoning; only faith could do such a thing in answer to God's call.

A practical separation from the world is demanded of us, for **"the friendship of the world is enmity with God"** (James 4:4). As it was contrary to nature for Abraham to leave family and idolatry, so it is equally contrary to nature for the Christian to separate from the world and crucify the flesh. Abraham **"obeyed; and he went out"**. He obeyed not only in word, but in deed. **"By faith, Abraham... obeyed"** (Hebrews 11:8). Faith and obedience can never be separated just as the sun and light or fire and heat can never be separated.

"He went out, not knowing whither he went". At the time God called him, He did not specify which land he was to journey to, nor where it was located. It was by faith, real faith in the Living God, and not by sight, that he moved forward. Many so-called Christians only obey God after considering their own personal interests. God requires unqualified obedience from us. The path of obedience must be trod, if ever you are to reach heaven. No disobedient soul who is wrapped up in self will enter heaven.

THE PROOF AND PATIENCE OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:9-10; Genesis 13:12,14-18; 17:8; 26:2-5; Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:10; 12:28; 13:14; John 14:2.

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country...” (Hebrews 11:9). This verse brings before us the second proof of Abraham’s faith. In the previous verse, we are told of the place he left; here we are told of the place to which he was called. We learn from him the necessity of patience and constancy of faith in waiting for the fulfillment of the promise. As it was by faith that Abraham went out of Chaldea, so it was by faith he remained out of his native idolatrous country. We come out of the world to come into Christ’s Kingdom by faith and remain separated from the world through faith.

Unless a supernatural work of grace had been wrought in Abraham’s heart, subduing his natural reasoning, he would not have remained in Canaan. He stayed there, **“as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles”**, patiently waiting for the inheritance. The Christian also has been begotten **“to an inheritance”** (1 Peter 1:4), but he does not fully enter into it (into heaven) the moment he is called **“from death unto life”**. He, too, waits patiently for that **“inheritance reserved in heaven”**.

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Walking by faith, not by sight, he set his heart and eyes upon things above and not upon things below. Faith lifts the heart above and beyond earthly things to desire spiritual and heavenly things.

THE POWER OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:11-12; Romans 4:19-21; Hebrews 10:23; Genesis 22:17; Deuteronomy 1:10; Nehemiah 9:23; Acts 10:43; 26:18; Hebrews 10:35-37.

Having spoken of Abraham’s faith, the apostle now makes mention of Sarah’s faith. What a great blessing it is when a husband and wife are both partners and partakers of living, dynamic faith – both moving in the same direction in faith. The believing husband and the believing wife are **“heirs together of the grace of life”** (1 Peter 3:7). Sarah’s faith shows the marvelous power of a God-given faith exercised in the presence of the most discouraging circumstances. Her faith was intensely practical, relying upon the faithfulness of God, absolutely and completely resting upon His promise. Her faith survived every trial to which it was exposed.

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed” (Hebrews 11:11). It is through FAITH that we **receive** Christ (John 1:12), **“gladly receive the Word”** (Acts 2:41; 8:14), **“receive remission of sins”** (Acts 10:43), **“receive the Word of God, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God”** (1 Thessalonians 2:13), **“receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness”** (Romans 5:17), **“receive inheritance among them which are sanctified”** (Acts 26:18), **“receive answers to prayer”** (Mark 11:24), **“receive the power and gift of the Holy Ghost”** (Acts 1:8; 2:38,39), **“receive the promise”** (Hebrews 10:36), **“receive of His fullness”** (John 1:16).

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