

By Faith Moses...

Hebrews 11 not only defines *faith* (see vv.1,6), example after example is given to illustrate it. In each of these examples, faith produces *obedient action*. That is, faith caused those cited to act in accordance with God's commands and expectations. Action that is taken from any other motivation cannot be *of faith*, because Romans 10:17 says, "So *faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" However, the decision to live *by faith* usually requires some additional choices along the way...

Consider Moses in this connection. His overall decision to live *by faith* in obedience to God's instructions involved additional choices that can be easily seen by concentrating on the verbs in Hebrews 11:24-28.

- "By faith Moses...**refused**," v.24. Living *by faith* means **refusing** some of the *personally advantageous* options of life. Moses refused a position as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Being a wealthy and powerful man in the government of the wicked and idolatrous nation of Egypt was something *faith* caused him to refuse. Faith will also cause us to say "No" to other things that might be *personally advantageous* to us- like vocations that are incongruent with God's word.
- "By faith Moses...**choosing**," v.25. *Refusing* one thing often enables the *choice* of another and better option. In this case, Moses *chose* to endure "ill treatment with the people of God" rather than enjoying "the passing pleasures of sin." This *choice* was made *by* and *because of* faith. For us, such a choice usually doesn't involve the opportunity to be a prince in the most powerful nation on the planet. More normally, it involves a decision to stand with the righteous- even though it involves ridicule, rather than to *party* with the worldly.
- "By faith Moses...**considering**," v.26. In essence, to *consider* means to *spend time contemplating*. Faith causes one to stop and think- to reflect on how the contemplated course or action "fits" with, or is contrary to, God's will. Allowing oneself the *time to think* about the relative values of each option, both in the short and long term, provides the opportunity to research or review God's word on the matter, and to entreat Him for wisdom and courage by prayer. Such *considerations* are the product of faith.
- "By faith Moses...**left**," v.27. The faithful choices to *refuse*, *choose*, and *consider* also meant that there would have to be *action* taken. To a large extent, the previous choices have been mental; *leaving* is physical. Faith is not confined to the mind and heart, but must also include the body. It is one thing to *think* and *feel* a certain way, but this cannot be all there is to it. Faith acts according to *faithful* thoughts and desires. Moses had conviction regarding what faith required, and followed through in faith. To be *faithful*, we must *act* in faith.
- "By faith Moses...**kept**," v.28. Faith involves both *negative* and *positive* decisions and their incumbent actions. It is not defined or exemplified only by what one *refuses* and *leaves*, but must also include what one *keeps*. Moses *kept* "the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood...". God's word demands that we *abstain* from many things, but it also requires that we *keep* others also. God considers no

one “faithful” solely on the basis of what they *refuse* and *leave*- as Moses’ example teaches. There are obligations to be *kept* also.

Thus, true faith is not a “better felt than told” sensation. It involves and requires: *refusals* of pleasurable but sinful activities; *choosing* lifestyles with benefits that are spiritual and eternal over those that are only physical and temporary; *considering* always God’s will in every decision made and path taken; *leaving* behind anything and everything that is not conducive to pleasing God; and *keeping* His commands. If it isn’t this *kind* of faith, it is *vain*, *empty*, and *worthless*. “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain,**” 1Corinthians 15:1-2. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)