

Are you “Walking by Faith”?

How would you answer the question of our title? Would it be something along the lines of, “Well, maybe- I *hope* so...at least I’m trying to ‘walk by faith,’ but I’m not sure I really know what that means, or how to know whether or not that I am!”? Perhaps that would be the answer for far too many of us. In this lesson, we hope to accomplish two primary goals: 1) to know, if we don’t already, what it is to “walk by faith”; and 2) to learn how to determine whether or not we are “walking by faith”. Lest this lesson seem too fundamental, here’s a few questions to get us started:

- How many of us know where in the Bible the admonition to “walk by faith, not by sight” is found?
- How many of us know that it is neither the beginning, nor the end of the sentence in which it occurs?
- How many of us know what the first part of the sentence in which it is found says?
- How many of us know what the last part of the sentence in which it is found says?

Let’s get started by reading our primary text of 2Cor.5:1-10.

I. First “What does it mean to ‘walk by faith’?”

A. Most discussions of “faith” stem from Heb.11:1, but let’s stick to Paul’s letters to the Corinthians for a bit:

1. Notice 1Cor.15:12-17. Paul is correcting the view of some Corinthians that “*there is no resurrection of the dead*”. He does so with this reasoning:

a. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised, v.13. “So?” they might ask.

b. If Christ has not been raised, “*then our preaching is vain*” v.14a. That is, the preaching of a resurrected Christ is “empty” or “worthless”. Again, “So?” might be the response.

c. But if Christ has not been raised, then “*your faith is also vain.*” Again, “vain” means “empty or “worthless.” Where is this heading? Think about it:

1) Because of Christ’s resurrection, the Corinthians ***believed something yet future would happen to them!*** That is, because Christ was raised from the dead (life after physical death), they could have confidence or assurance that the same would happen to them! “Yeah, so?”

2) “***Faith is the assurance of things hope for, the conviction (or “evidence”) of things not seen.***” (Heb.11:1) The Corinthians, and all others for that matter, could have confidence that there is more to this life than *physical existence*- that this life is a time of preparation for an *eternal spiritual existence*. Folks, it a nutshell, that’s faith!

2. Now, just for clarity’s sake, look also at 2Cor.4:16-18. What is Paul again saying to the Corinthians?

a. v.16, There is an *outer man* which decays daily, but an *inner man* that is renewed day by day- Question: How do you know that to be true?

b. v.17, *Momentary* light affliction here, is producing an *eternal* weight of glory- Question: How do you know that to be true?;

c. v.18, So we look (Grk. *skopeo*- to look, observe, contemplate, to fix one's eyes upon, to direct one's attention to) *not at the things which are seen* (the temporal, physical things of this life), but at the things which are *not seen* (the *spiritual* things of the next life)! **When we "look" or concentrate our attention on things that are eternal rather than physical, that's faith!**

II. How do you know if you're "walking by faith"?

A. Let's examine the text in which we find the phrase!

- Do you **realize the future, v.1?** Do you understand and accept the inevitability that your "earthly tent...house" will be "torn down"- that you will die? Are living in accordance with that realization, so that you can inherit an eternal "house not made with hands"?
- Are you **uncomfortable in the present, and do you long for the future, vv.2-3?** The "present" means *in this life*, and the "future" means *after this life*. Now, that's a simple and direct question. What's the answer for you?
- Do you feel **burdened with mortality, and do you want to be immortal, v.4?** Funny- most people's concept of *immortality* is to live forever here! Is that really what you want?
- Do you have the **pledge of the Holy Spirit, v.5?** Don't let this scare you! Christians do have the "pledge of the Spirit"- see Rom.8:1-17 to find out what that means.
- Are you **always of good courage because** you know that while you *in the body* you are separated from the Lord, **v.6,**
- but that when you are separated **from your body** you will be at home with the Lord, **v.8?** Or is it somewhat the *other way around* for you? Are you "happy" now because you are not yet "with the Lord"?
- Do you have **as your ambition- whether here and now or then and there, to be pleasing to the Lord, v.9?** Are you like Paul in that whether *here* or *there*, your goal is "to live is Christ and to die is gain"? cf. Phil.2:21-24
- Are you ready for the **recompense of judgment, v.10?** Whether or not we *fear* the judgment of the Lord in the future has much to say about how we're living now! cf. 1John 4:17-18

III. Conclusions

If the answer to these questions is "yes"- then you are "walking by faith" v.7!
Unfortunately the inverse is also true.

So, you tell me: Are you "walking by faith"?

Or, are you "walking by sight"? It's one or the other, and certainly cannot be both.