

THE FAITH OF ABEL

Hebrews 11 is known as the hall of faith. The chapter begins with a definition of faith (Heb. 11.1). From that point, you will find a number of individuals who exemplified the kind of faith that verse 1 describes. We can go to the dictionary and find the definition of faith. We can study the original language and understand the concept of faith. Yet the best way to understand faith is to see it in action. The first example presented is the faith of Abel (Heb. 11.4).

This reference takes us all the way back to the Old Testament book of Genesis where we read about two sacrifices. The offering brought by Cain was of the fruit of the ground. Such an offering required hard labor (Gen. 3.17-19). However, this was Cain's occupation (Gen. 4.2). When he offered to God the fruit of the ground, he offered what had come from his own hard work and sweat. We are told that God did not respect Cain's offering.

The kind of offering that Abel brought to God was the firstborn of his flock (Gen. 4.4). Cain's occupation was a shepherd (Gen. 4.2). Notice that Abel offered to God the "firstborn." The idea is that God got the very first sheep that was born. He did not keep the first sheep for himself and give the leftovers to God. This gives us some insight as to why God accepted Abel's offering.

In what way did Abel offer his sacrifice out of faith? We are told that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10.17). If Abel offered his sacrifice by faith, God must have told him the kind of sacrifice He required. Abel did not merely accept what God said. He acted on it. "*By faith Abel offered*" (Heb. 11.4). Faith is doing what God tells you to do (James 2.14ff). Abel heard what God told him to do, and he responded in obedience by offering the sacrifice God wanted him to offer.

What kind of sacrifice did God require? We are told that Abel offered "*a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*" (Heb. 11.4). The idea of "excellent" is better quality. The implication is that Abel offered the best of what he had in contrast Cain offering God only the leftovers.

God expects us to live by faith. We are to listen to what God says and do as He commands. What does God command? He requires that we give Him our very best (Matt. 22.37). Today, though dead, Abel still tells us about faith (Heb. 11.4). CLP

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"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"
-Mark 16.15

January 5, 2025

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

BIBLE READING PLAN

Reading your Bible regularly is a great resolution. The best way to help you keep your New Year's resolution to read your Bible is to have a daily Bible reading plan.

There are a number of plans from which to choose. Many of the Bible programs that are on your electronic devices have their own reading plans. Personally, I use "Logos" which puts the Bible into chronological order and has dates along the top that tells me what I am to read on any given day. If you are looking for a good way to read your Bible daily, here are some suggestions.

If you were to take the year and divide it up, you would find that there are 261 weekday each year. There are also 259 chapters in the New Testament. If you read a chapter every day with the exception of the weekend, you will have read the entire New Testament in a year. Also consider that there are thirty or thirty-one days in a month. There are twenty-eight chapters in Acts. There are also twenty-eight chapters in Matthew. If you read one chapter of Acts every day, you will read the book in a month. Perhaps alternate between Acts and Matthew.

There are lots of different ways of dividing the Bible and integrate it into a daily reading schedule. However you decide, make reading your Bible part of your regular routine. CLP

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1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 – AN EXPLANATION

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

INTRODUCTION:

1. We are told to pray, “do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt. 6.13).
2. What is the meaning behind 1 Corinthians 10.13?

I. THE PROBLEM

- A. There is a general statement about temptation.
 1. **1 CORINTHIANS 10.13:** “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man”
 2. **1 CORINTHIANS 10.13:** “you may be able to bear it.”
- B. What is the temptation that is set before us?
 1. Self: Every temptation comes from self and what you desire as an individual. (James 1.14)
 2. Satan: The devil uses your desire to take advantage of your vulnerabilities. (2 Cor. 2.11; 1 Thes. 3.5)
 3. Spirits: The devil dispatches his demons to craft circumstances to tempt us. (Eph. 6.12)
 4. Sin: When I give into temptation and break the laws of God, the Bible calls that sin. (1 John 3.4).

II. THE PROMISE

- A. There is a general statement about God.
 1. **1 CORINTHIANS 10.13:** “But God is faithful”
 2. Faithful carries the idea of being reliable. You can always count on God. (1 John 1.9)
- B. How does God help us resist temptation?
 1. Scripture: To say no to temptation, I must allow the scriptures to dictate my decisions. (Ps. 119.11)
 2. Savior: Jesus is involved in my life to help me resist temptations. (Heb. 2.17,18)
 3. Spirits: Angels are “ministering spirits” sent out to serve faithful Christians. (Heb. 1.14; 1 Pet. 3.22)
 4. Security: With God’s promise, I know that I can always be right with God. (Rom. 8.1)

CONCLUSION: Whether you chose to obey God or give into temptation, it is always a choice.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

If you search the internet, you will find website that offers various timers. All you do is input a specific date, and a timer begins to count down. These timers are used for planning a vacation to help you know how much time you have before you leave on your trip. They can be used to remind you how much time you have before a holiday or birthday. But you can also create what is known as a life timer. The idea is that you input the day you expect to die. For example, you might estimate that you will die at the age of ninety. So you input the date of your ninetieth birthday. Then the timer will begin a countdown, so you will always know how much time you have left before you die.

As morbid as it may sound, it is important to remember that our time is limited. Knowing that the clock is ticking encourages us to use our time wisely. The psalmist wrote, “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Assuming that I live a full life, I only have about thirty or forty years left. That realization creates in me a sense of urgency. I do not want to waste my time doing things that will not help me reach my goals. I do not want to procrastinate. But in keeping with the inspired wisdom of Solomon, I want to do whatever I need to do, “for there is no work...in the grave where you are going” (Ecc. 9.10).

If you are not right with God, the clock is ticking. In reference to the gospel, Ananias asked Paul, “Why are you waiting?” (Acts 22.16). This is why the Holy Spirit wrote, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6.2). Do you have a sense of urgency to obey the gospel? Do you feel a pressing need to restore my broken relationship before it is too late. Or do you feel like Felix who said, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you” (Acts 24.25).

If you are a Christian who has turned away from God, the clock is ticking. To the brethren in Romans, it says “that it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13.11). To Timothy, Paul wrote to “be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2.15). To be diligent carries the idea of seeing as urgent. Are you urgent to seek out God’s approval through the teachings of scripture?

God never intended for us to live for eternity in these physical bodies. They are designed to decay and cease to function. But in our spiritual bodies, we will live eternally either in heaven or in hell. Where depends on what we do here. The clock is ticking. CLP