

Faith and Character

The brother of Jesus wrote by inspiration, "Faith without works is dead," (see the whole context in James 2:14-26). Yes, we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:10) but saving faith is a faith that moves us to walk "in His steps," 1 Peter 2:21.

In Hebrews 11 we see what many call "the hall of faith" because each of the Bible characters we find there accomplished their feats by faith. By faith in God and His word and His promises and His truths and His own faithfulness, these men and women became something they were not *before* they had biblical faith in God.

As we consider what faith does for us, one thing we must recognize is the reality that faith produces certain character traits needed to actually accomplish things for God and His kingdom. For instance, in Hebrews 11:27 we read of Moses, "by faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king...." Not fearing the wrath of a powerful king must have taken ***courage***. That character trait was not temporary. It served him throughout his life, even while leading a stubborn, fearful people for 40 years.

We read of others in verses 32-38 who accomplished marvelous things for God and His people... conquered kingdoms... shut the mouths of lions... from weakness were made strong...experienced mockings, scourgings, chains and imprisonment... were put to death... were destitute, afflicted, ill-treated... and lived in caves and holes in the ground. It is easy to see the character traits their faith produced in them, courage, patience, persistence, humility, dedication, suffering, etc.

As we think about ***having faith*** (which we should, Hebrews 11:6), we must also realize that only a ***working faith*** can produce in us the character trait of a stern constitution that can brave the challenges of life that bring affliction which, "...is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far behind all comprehension," (2 Cor. 4:17).

Merely having faith reside in you is not enough. It is when that faith rises up to produce courage, persistence, dedication, humility, long-suffering and other character traits, it actually accomplishes good for God; that inner faith becomes a working faith. Praise God that we have these examples of God's men and women to encourage us and spur us on to accomplish greater goals for God.

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