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Hebrews 12:1, 2 – Examining faith and walking with God

1. “Therefore” demands that the following instruction be taken with consideration to the previous examples of faith.
2. Common false views of faith.
 - a. Faith is only believing and trusting God.
 - b. Faith is feeling assurance, confidence, or conviction about the things of God.
 - c. Faith is feeling assured about a belief but we should also have reason to back up our belief.
3. Hebrews 11 and the need to understand faith.
 - a. 11:1 – The substance of things being hoped for. Your faith is the foundation of your hope. 1 Peter 3:15.
 - b. The evidence or proof of things not seen is grammatically in apposition to the substance, which means it is further describing the substance. Evidence or proof leads to intellectual conviction.
 - c. 11:3 – By such proof we understand (*νοέω*, understand with the mind) the necessities of creation. Is this by merely trusting what Genesis says about creation as I have taught before?
 - d. Consider Romans 1:18-28 in regards to creation.
 - i. What is the proof that God exists? This comes through taking in what we can see and reasoning out what is behind its existence, which we cannot see. This is a choice. 1:20
 - ii. Why suppress something that you know to be true? The existence of God is a threat to their “good”. They exchange what they know for what they desire (lust, sense appetite; 1:24, 26)
 - iii. 1:28 – they did not examine God to have in epignosis. God gave them to their unfit, unapproved mind. A depraved mind is one that chooses not to examine reality and seek truth as such.
 - iv. Attitude toward truth determines the path of every man’s life. There is no special formula, experience, or teaching that will bring a man to salvation if he chooses to suppress truth. 2 Thess. 2:10.
 - v. The difference between the faith of an unbeliever and believer is the unbeliever seeks to prove what he wants to be true, and the believer seeks to prove truth as such.
 - e. Consider what Christ said concerning not worrying. Matt. 6:19-34 (judgment and reasoning)
4. The 3 acts of the mind and the 2 judgments about God that must be real. Heb. 11:6.
 - a. Simple Apprehension: God, reward, good
 - b. Judging: 1. God exists. 2. God rewards seeking Him

- c. Reasoning: All reasoning in Christian faith should include the previous 2 judgments about God.
 - d. These 2 essential beliefs are what ensure that every deed of spiritual faith is movement toward the greatest good.
- 5. Does spiritual/Christian faith have a natural tendency to produce works?
- 6. Even if faith naturally moves one toward good works it does not follow that saving faith **directly** leads to good works.
- 7. God prefers believers live by faith even when the content is wrong, rather than do things that the mind is not convinced is right to do. Romans 14:5
 - a. One who is weak in faith correlates to one who is lacking in reasoning, either for lack of information or undeveloped reasoning skills. These are positive believers.
 - b. God wants believers to walk according to their intellect. Romans 14:14
 - c. Have your faith according to yourself before God. 14:22
 - d. To act without faith is to act without reasoned approval in the mind.
- 8. The Holy Spirit's role in personal faith. Gal. 5:22
 - a. Conviction (John 16:8, 3:20, 6:44, Heb. 12:5) – Conviction is from the same word in Hebrews 11:1, which refers to proof of something.
 - b. Teaching and remembering (John 14:26)
 - c. The Holy Spirit brings us from gnosis to epignosis. Epignosis means that something has been reasoned and accepted as true and therefore it is reality. Rom. 1:28
 - d. The Holy Spirit helps us grow in faith but is not always necessary to have faith. (Creation, O.T. Heroes) The Holy Spirit generally aides in understanding special revelation.
- 9. Examining the heroes of the faith. (All had the reality of God and His goodness in their minds)
 - a. Abel – produced quality in sacrifice (Heb. 11:4, Gen. 4:4)
 - b. Enoch – walked with God (11:5, Gen. 5:21-24)
 - c. Noah – walked with God (11:7, Gen. 6:13-22)
 - d. Abraham – focused on the reward and used logic with his faith(11:8, 10, 13-16, 19)
 - e. Sarah – used logic with her faith. She led her thinking.(11:11)
 - f. Moses – reasoned in his mind what was the greater good. Could see God. (11:26, 27)
 - g. Rahab – reasoned the power of the God of Israel. Others refused belief, persuasion. (11:31, 3:18, 19; Josh. 2:1-14)
- 10. 12:1 – With consideration to the heroes of the faith we ought to prepare ourselves and clear the path to run the race set before us.
 - a. The race (ἀγῶνα) itself suggests that it at times it will be very unpleasant on a sense level. On the intellectual level it is moving toward the Ultimate Good which when accompanied with hope should bring pleasure, joy or peace.
 - b. First we are to be putting off every weight or encumbrance.
 - i. A weight is something in your life that keeps on distracting you so that you cannot run the race (walk with God) at your full potential.
 - ii. Although weights are distractions not all distractions are weights.

- iii. Work and seeking wealth is probably one of the biggest distractions to our walk and one of the easiest to justify. Matt. 13:22, Ex. 5:6-9
 - 1. Since work is commanded and necessary, God did not command to quit your job, but rather do your job as unto the Lord. Col. 3:23
 - 2. If one is doing their job as unto the Lord can that also pull them away from the Lord?
- iv. A weight can be fear that walking with God will take away or prohibit another desired good. The weight of a vain imagination. Israel, Abraham
- v. All weights must be recognized and put away.
 - 1. What things in the life or mind keep you from walking with God?
 - 2. As in running a race, it is often not until you attempt to run that you will realize what needs to be cut to run more efficiently.
- c. Second, we are to put away sin. The idea of εὐπερίστατον is that the sin is a good that surrounds you. This is consistent with Moses choosing not to enjoy sin, and also Jesus exchanging His joy to go to the cross. (11:25)
 - i. Sin deals with specific acts that go against the will of God.
 - ii. Sin demands that you suppress, reject, or replace your faith to act on a sense appetite.
 - iii. Can you knowingly sin while simultaneously having at the center of your intellect the reality that God exists and is the Ultimate Good?
 - iv. Moses led his thinking in accordance with 2 realities.(11:26, 27)
 - v. Sin is something that distracts you at the sense level. The initial distraction is not sin but may lead you to sin. Example: Fear or Sexual temptation.
- d. Christ and the exchange we all must make. (12:2, Romans 15:3)
 - i. A proper translation should read that Christ exchanged the joy before Him to endure the cross.
 - ii. The joy before Him would be a present emotion of joy that He was experiencing. Luke 22:15, John 13:1
- e. The sin may be something that is not wicked but can be exchanged for the plan of God.
 - i. Moses was not necessarily sinning by growing up in Egypt and enjoying a privileged life. The sin would have been continuing down that privileged path in exchange for the plan of God. (11:24)
 - ii. Christ would have sinned if He chose enjoyment of being with His people over going to the cross.
 - iii. There comes a time when things that were enjoyable and proper must be put away to move forward in the plan of God. It is proper for a child to be a child and think like a child, but it is sin for a man or women to refuse to stop being a child. I Cor. 13:11
- f. Esau, the example of what not to do. 12:16, 17
 - i. Purchasing and eating a meal is not sin by itself but chosen in exchange for the plan of God such action is a sin.
 - ii. Desiring good things from God does not make you a good Christian. (12:17)