Live by Faith
A Disciple’s Response to God’s Word

Most of us get along pretty well in this world. Our physical senses serve us well in exploring our world and exposing any dangers that dwell there. We experience our surroundings through what we see, hear, smell, taste and feel. The absence of any of these senses hinders our ability to know fully what is taking place around us, and may even result in undetected dangers.

But how do we know what is happening in the spirit world? Our five senses are of no help in an invisible, incorporeal world. The Bible teaches that while we live in this body, we must live by Faith. Paul put it this way.

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord
7 for we walk by faith, not by sight

Interpret

v 6 How does Paul view our bodies? ________________________________

In what way are we ‘absent from the Lord’? ________________________________

What does this verse imply about physical death for the Christian? _____

v 7 What does Paul mean by this verse? ________________________________

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

‘Dying’ to Die
The apostle Paul joyfully anticipated his death knowing that it would liberate him from the prison of his sin infected body and open the door to unspeakable joys (Philippians 1:21).
I, too, cannot wait to pass through that shadowy valley. While discussing how some people go to such great lengths and cost to extend their physical lives, one of my co-workers in the lab could not believe my immediate answer to her sarcastic question, ‘Well, when would you like to die?’ when I responded, ‘As soon as possible!’ End of discussion. I cannot wait to live where God rules, where His justice reigns supreme and sin is just a distant memory! We are all made for such a world which is why we feel so out of place in this one!
But what is Faith? The writer of Hebrews says,

1 Now faith is
   the assurance of things hoped for,
   the conviction of things not seen.
2 For by it
   the men of old gained approval.
3 By faith
   we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God,
      so that what is seen
   was not made out of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:1-3

'The Assurance of Things Hoped For'

The greek word translated 'assurance' is hupostasis. It literally means 'to stand under' and refers to the foundation that holds up a building, a contract guaranteeing the commitments between two parties or the title deed certifying ownership of a house. Faith, then, is the foundation of God's commitment guaranteeing that we possess what He has already promised to give us. True Faith has no doubt that what God has promised He is able to provide!

In the immediate context, the writer refers to our future 'reward' and the 'preserving of the soul'. How do we attain these 'things hoped for'? Through Faith! Faith in God as the 'rewarder of those who seek Him' (Hebrews 11:6b), gives us the confidence that He will provide what He has promised (1 John 5:14-15). The basis for our salvation, and for everything we hope for in Christ, is our faith in God's righteousness, not our own, for 'without faith it is impossible to please (God)'.

Many would like to see the LORD with their physical eyes, because they think their faith would be strengthened by it. But remember what the LORD said to Thomas, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.' (John 20:29) Faith does not need to see to believe. It 'sees' because it believes! Beware of needing to see something of God in order to believe.

When Seeing is Not Believing!

Many years ago my optometrist joined a Christian cult because missionaries from that group had visited his office situated near their place of meeting. When he responded skeptically, they told him to pray and ask God to tell him if what they shared was of God. He said days later he was watching an old movie on the TV when, in the middle of the movie, one of the actors turned to look directly at him and said, 'The missionaries are telling you the truth.' The movie then continued on as if nothing happened. Satan can perform 'signs and wonders', too, and if our faith is dependent on seeing a sign, beware of where it leads. That cult teaches many key doctrines contradictory to Scripture, including a salvation by works. Remember, it is Scripture that determines Truth, not a spiritual experience. For if we do not trust in Scripture alone, we will be a victim of satan who disguises himself even as an 'angel of light'!
Memorize

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always; again, I say, rejoice.

To the Lord belong strength and power; the world is firmly established; he judges the people with equity.

Pray without ceasing.

Ephesians 6:12

Circle or Underline ...

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

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In this warfare, physical might and street smarts are no match for the power and evil deceptions of our adversaries. They will win every time if those are our only weapons. But ...

3 ... though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,
4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

The 'weapons of our warfare' are 'divinely powerful' for they are the Spirit of God and His Word, with which we strike down satan's lies and sanctify our minds to holiness. There is no other way to be victorious by Faith!

Living By Faith
List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

In light of what you learned, list what you will do.

Memorize

2 Corinthians 10:3-5
Circle or Underline ...

v 3 How we do not war.
v 4 What are not of the flesh.
   What they are divinely powerful for.
v 5 What we are destroying.
   What we are taking captive.
   To what we capture them.

For practical applications of this lesson, study Discipleship Study Book #2, lessons 4 & 5 available to download free at BibleStudyCD.com.
"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Galatians 2:20