

Problem:

Hebrews 10:35-39; 6:11-12

faith out of focus - confident in the wrong thing - self—>The Hebrew Christians were tempted to lose their confidence in Christ and to turn to the Law again -which was really confidence or a focus on themselves.

We may not be facing this scenario but we are tempted to lose the focus of our faith.

This happens when we believe in faith as if it were an active force that we wield. This obviously focuses our faith on ourselves.

read the following horrible article and then discuss the following quotes that address it:

<http://christinearylo.com/2014/04/want-faith-lift-3-simple-mighty-steps-release-fear-can-receive-divine-flow/>

we are skeptical of the truth but confident in ourselves - it should be the exact opposite.

Discuss the following quotes from G.K. Chesterton

"Shall I tell you where the men are who believe most in themselves? For I can tell you. I know of men who believe in themselves more colossally than Napoleon or Caesar. I know where flames the fixed star of certainty and success. I can guide you to the thrones of the Super-men. The men who really believe in themselves are all in lunatic asylums."

That drunken poet from whom you would not take a dreary tragedy, he believed in himself. That elderly minister with an epic from whom you were hiding in a back room, he believed in himself. If you consulted your business experience instead of your ugly individualistic philosophy, you would know that believing in himself is one of the commonest signs of a rotter. Actors who can't act believe in themselves; and debtors who won't pay. It would be much truer to say that a man will certainly fail, because he believes in himself. Complete self-confidence is not merely a sin; complete self-confidence is a weakness....And to all this my friend the publisher made this very deep and effective reply, "Well, if a man is not to believe in himself, in what is he to believe?"

A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert--himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt--the Divine Reason.

Chesterton, G. K. (Gilbert Keith) (1994-05-01). Orthodoxy (pp. 28-29). Public Domain Books. Kindle Edition.

Main Idea:

Faith that pleases God is faith focused ON God- not on self - not on circumstances

Implication:

The lifestyle that pleases God is not one where extraordinary people wield the power of an extraordinary Force called faith. Rather, it is one where ordinary people accomplish extraordinary feats because of their ordinary fidelity to an extraordinary God.

Text:**By Faith**

Heb. 11:1 ¶ Now **faith is** the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen.

Heb. 11:2 For **by it** the people of old received their **commendation**.

Heb. 11:3 **By faith** we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

*assurance= trust in what is hoped for - 2 Cor 4:17-18 - what we are focused on
Gen 1 - God said - and it was so. our promise that it will be as He has said*

(Psalm 33) - His steadfast Word - Faith is confident action based on the certainty of God's sure Word

->we see faith defined as assurance in the most sure thing there is -God's Word. It is not our confidence that is awesome but the object of our confidence that is awesome. God's Word is the surest thing to put faith in. The focus of this faith is God not self nor circumstances. The faith that pleases God is faith focused on God not on self nor on circumstances.

They Worshipped

Heb. 11:4 ¶ **By faith** Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was **commended** as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And **through his faith**, though he died, he still speaks.

Lk 18:9-27 - repentant, reliant faith drew near reliant on grace understanding death required to approach - focused and confident in God

->Abel focused on God not on himself - Cain focused on offering what he could -the fruit of the ground- Able focused on what he could not bring - so he offered a sacrifice showing his focus on God's ability and his inability. Luke 18 speaks to our faith begin focused on God when we worship. Our confidence is based on Him not us. This is how we worship - focused on Him -not us.

They Walked

Heb. 11:5 **By faith** Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was **commended** as having pleased God.

Heb. 11:6 And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

(Genesis 5:22-24 - translated to Heaven walked with God)

Gal 5:16-26 -and were rewarded - rewarded with fruit - focused on God not self

->Enoch drew near to God focused on the fact that He was real and a rewarder of those who seek Him. His focus was not on himself but on God and He was rewarded. In the same way we walk with God not focused on the law or our behavior but focused on Him and His desires and we are rewarded with the fruit of the spirit. We walk with God when we are focused on God, not on self or circumstances.

They Warned

Heb. 11:7 **By faith** Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. **By this** he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

2 tim 4:1-7— focused on God not on self

->Noah did not see his circumstances but instead remained focused on God and His sure promises. He, a normal ordinary man, was used by God because he put his ordinary faith in the extraordinary God. He looked past himself and his circumstances and kept building and preaching because he was focused on God's sure promise.

They Waited

Heb. 11:8 ¶ **By faith** Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb. 11:9 **By faith** he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

Heb. 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Heb. 11:11 **By faith** Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

Heb. 11:12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Heb. 11:13 ¶ **These all died in faith**, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Heb. 11:14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

Heb. 11:15 If they had (and they hadn't) been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

Heb. 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God**, for he has prepared for them a city.

Jn 8:56 - Abraham saw my day; - focused on God not circumstances

James 5:7; 2 Pet 3:6-14 - waiting for what is not here- circumstances don't match promises

->Abraham and Sarah looked past their circumstances and instead focused on God's promises. They acted on them and relied on them being true. They exhibited ordinary faith in the extraordinary God. They looked past the here and now and knew that Gods Word is more sure than the present reality.

They Worked

Heb. 11:17 ¶ **By faith** Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son,

Heb. 11:18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

Heb. 11:19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Heb. 11:20 **By faith** Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.

Heb. 11:21 **By faith** Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

Heb. 11:22 **By faith** Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

(Phil 2:12-13 -exercise - act on the reality of your faith)

James 1:2-4 - especially in trial and testing - a proving ground for your faith - war etc either strengthens what is there or exposes what isn't

Exodus 14:10-15 - go forward; Ephesians 1:15-23 - stop asking for what is already yours and act

->We are told to work out our faith - to exercise it. These patriarchs did just that. they acted in ordinary steps of ordinary faith on the truthfulness of God's promises. We need to stop continually asking for what God has said is ours already and start acting on the fact that these things are ours.

They Warred

Heb. 11:23 ¶ **By faith** Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Heb. 11:24 **By faith** Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

Heb. 11:25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

Heb. 11:26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Heb. 11:27 **By faith** he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

Heb. 11:28 **By faith** he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

Heb. 11:29 ¶ **By faith** the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Heb. 11:30 **By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

Heb. 11:31 **By faith** Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

1 Tim 1:15, 18-19; 2 Cor 10:4-5 - focused on the truth to fight error -

->Moses did not see the ideas of his contemporaries as too hard to fight against - He relied on the sureness of God's Word and challenged the false ideas of the Egyptians. Moses, the people, Rahab, looked past their circumstances and kept focused on God's promises. These were more sure than anything else.

They Won

Heb. 11:32 ¶ And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—

Heb. 11:33 who **through faith** conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Heb. 11:34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Heb. 11:35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.

Heb. 11:36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

Heb. 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two (Isaiah in a hollow log), they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—

Heb. 11:38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Heb. 11:39 ¶ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised.
Heb. 11:40 since God had provided something better for us (Christ), that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

not healed and prosperous - commended - 11:2, 4, 5, 39;

God values repentant faith- david -2 Kings 14:1-3; acts 13:22- a man after God's heart

->all these were commended- approved- by God for their faith. This is the faith that please God. David exemplifies this- David - the murder and adulterous man that he was, was pleasing to God because his focus was on God not on himself. These people focused on a promise that had its root in the future work of Christ on the cross- Our focus is on the finished work of Christ on the cross and the promise and guarantee of His return and our subsequent perfection.

Its our turn

Heb. 12:1 ¶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of **witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Heb. 12:2 **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

-> In Exodus 4:1-14a we see that it was ok for Moses to doubt himself but it was not ok for him to doubt God.

implication:

you can doubt yourself and still worship God

you can doubt yourself and still walk with God

you can doubt yourself and still warn others in the Name of God

you can doubt yourself and still work in the world for God

you can doubt yourself and still wage the warfare of God

you can doubt yourself and still win for God

but you cannot doubt God and do any of these things

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Hebrews 6:11-12 -we are called to be imitators.

—>He calls us—with all our habits and hang-ups, warts and worries—to action. We are called to step out of step with the world, hop up on the stage of history, and take our place in God's roll

call of the faithful. Of course we are inadequate; but so have been all others who have evidenced the grace of God. It would not be grace otherwise. —>C.S. Lewis

Do you believe God can use you? What ordinary step of faith will you make because of this extraordinary God- will you pray- evangelize etc.

Action:

october 15th evangelism meeting at the ministry center @ 6:30 - we believe the gospel is the power of God but how will they hear unless someone tells them?

baptism - proclaiming the reality of your faith

Our beliefs dictate our behavior - discuss the following article by Schaeffer - if it is over your head skip it but it is really a good one. the basic premise is that it is not a special kind of belief but ordinary belief in the rarity of the God who is actually there and who has actually made the world that is actually real. This is the basis for a real vibrant faith that pleases God.

<http://www.rationalpi.com/theshelter/live.html>

read this article and discuss and then come up with some more and practical steps of faith to act on them

<http://www.bible.ca/d-7promises-god.htm>

spend a bunch of time talking about how to take tangible steps of faith - here is an article regarding the promises of God related to evangelism

<http://www.yale.edu/cpc/studycenter/pamphlets/Evangelism.html>

how can you implement these things? - definitely send someone to the evangelism meeting October 15 @ 6:30 @ the ministry center.