

## Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

**Therefore, being always of good courage [confident], and knowing that while we [believers] are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I [Paul] say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home [present] with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him [God]. (II Corinthians 5:6-9)**

This passage presents a fact—a positional truth based on our salvation—and not an exhortation, that we walk by faith and not by sight. In the context of this passage, Paul affirmed to the Corinthian brethren (and all believers) that even though they were in Christ while physically living on this earth, their future would be with Christ in the heavens, which is a place that they could not see. Therefore, he exhorted them to desire to live their lives (i.e., to walk by faith) as pleasing to God until they went home. We need to examine ourselves to see if we are actually walking by faith so that we, too, will please God.

**Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (II Corinthians 4:16-18)**

The phrase *seeing is believing* does not hold true regarding the things of God and the mind of man. God demonstrated His power through mighty miracles to Pharaoh and yet he did not change his ways. Even though the people of Israel sought after signs from God before they would believe Him or His prophets (John 4:48; I Corinthians 1:22), their failure to do so after witnessing the miracles of God is chronicled throughout Scripture (e.g., Numbers 14:22-23; John 12:37-40; Acts 2:22-23). Only those who already believed God by faith recognized His miraculous signs and wonders. However, the people who believed God did not depend on signs to believe in Him, because they knew by faith that God was faithful and would do everything He said He would do.

**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction [evidence] of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. (Hebrews 11:1-2)**

Many people in the world today are looking for signs by God (or their concept of God) to believe in something or to establish their faith, whatever it may be. Even many believers, as well as those who falsely claim to know Christ, are looking for signs and miracles and participate in gatherings devoted to sign gifts and miracles. They claim to be able to speak in tongues and to heal all sorts of sickness and disease, and point to world events, as proof that they are witnessing signs of God.

Brethren, although God certainly did demonstrate His power through the agency of men, such as through Moses and the prophets, His Son, and His apostles (including Paul), He is not doing so in this dispensation of grace. Mankind has proven itself incapable of recognizing God through His miracles. Paul demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit through all kinds of miracles, including raising the dead (Acts 20:7-12), but in his first letter to the Corinthians (who were abusing sign gifts such as speaking in tongues—I Corinthians 14:1-40) he said that the sign gifts would pass away (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Indeed, they did pass away during Paul's ministry as evidenced by the total lack of references to sign gifts in his later books and the fact he was no longer able to heal his coworkers (Philippians 2:25-27;

I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20). The passing of sign gifts coincided with the completion of the revelation to Paul concerning the mystery and the gospel of grace;<sup>1</sup> God's word to us, therefore, was complete and nothing else was needed for God to reveal Himself to us (Ephesians 3:8-12; Colossians 1:25-27).

Instead of looking for signs, therefore, we are to walk by faith and not by sight. How do we do this? If we *believe* what God has done for us through Christ (we cannot *see* what He has done or will do for us), then we ought to live accordingly by faith as demonstrated by the following exhortations:

- We were saved by the grace of God, so we should work out our salvation by living above reproach (Philippians 2:12-16).
- God has reconciled us to Himself, so we should reconcile ourselves to Him (II Corinthians 5:18-20).
- We have been sanctified, or set apart, by God, so we should live sanctified lives for Him (II Timothy 2:19-21).
- We have been made righteous by God, so we should present ourselves as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12-13).
- We have been bought by the precious blood of Christ, so we should glorify God in our bodies (I Corinthians 6:19-20).
- Christ is in us, so we should put on Christ (Romans 13:14).
- God has forgiven us, so we should forgive others (Ephesians 4:32).
- God has bestowed upon us His strength and power, so we should be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10-17).
- God made us complete in Christ, so we should not disregard the love, forgiveness, and strength of God by dwelling on past mistakes or being overcome by guilt or anxiety—we should depend on Him (Romans 8:26-28; Philippians 4:6-9; Colossians 3:1-3; I Peter 5:6-7).
- We are citizens of heaven, so we should live as faithful representatives of God's heavenly kingdom and as ambassadors for Christ (I Thessalonians 2:10-12; II Corinthians 5:20).

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<sup>1</sup> The passing of sign gifts also coincided with the setting aside (blindness) of Israel by God until this dispensation of grace is concluded at the rapture (Romans 11:25). The signs performed by the apostles were intended to prove to the people of Israel that they were speaking the truth of God (II Corinthians 12:11-13; Hebrews 2:4). However, Israel continued to reject the word of the apostles despite witnessing their sign gifts.