

The Challenge to Walk by Faith
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Introduction: Walking by faith will challenge us to our core.

- A. The essence of faith is trusting God even when your *perceptions and feelings* oppose what God says.
 - 1. Without this kind of trust, one cannot be saved. **(Rom 1:16-17)**
 - 2. We can be saved when we fail and return! Our faith will be tested!
- B. When we seek to grow in faith, God will likely send us tests.
 - 1. Habakkuk learned this lesson. **(Hab 2:3-4)**
 - 2. Tests are not pleasant or easy. It ought to drive us to our knees in seeking God.
 - 3. A true mark of maturity is how our hearts respond to adversity. **(Rom 4:17-18)**
 - 4. When genuine, mature faith is found then God can do a powerful work through you. **(Lk 17:6)**

I. Our faith must lead us over anger

- A. Many allow anger to become their master. **(Eph 4:26-27)**
 - 1. There will be many disappointments in this life. It is easy to live a life of grudges against those who have hurt us.
 - 2. Uncontrolled anger will cause us to be blind. We will turn on those we love out of the desire to have personal revenge.
- B. Consider the struggles of one of David's mighty men, *Abishai*.
 - 1. He was a might man of faith and courage. **(2 Sam 23:18-19; 1 Chron 18:12)**
 - 2. He also had a family background that was given to foolish anger.
 - 3. His brother Asahel stubbornly forced Abner to kill him in battle. **(2 Sam 2:22)**
 - 4. He nor his wicked brother Joab would not accept responsibility for this death.
- C. Abishai was helped by David to let his faith in God control him.
 - 1. The injustices inflicted on David by Saul infuriated him. He wanted to kill Saul when he had an opportunity.
 - 2. David showed him what it meant to trust God! It is too easy to rationalize. **(1 Sam 26:6-9)**
 - 3. David taught this same lesson when confronted by Shimei. **(2 Sam 16:7-10)**
 - 4. What was the end of Saul and Shimei? David knew to trust God.
- D. Abishai gave into his anger in the presence of his brother Joab. **(Prov 22:24-25)**
 - 1. He participated in the cowardly murder of Abner. **(2 Sam 3:30)**
 - 2. David had made peace and had a covenant with Abner. Bitterness caused Joab to blindly make charges against Abner. **(2 Sam 3:21, 24-25)**
 - 3. Joab did not trust God, David or anyone else in his anger. He had no king!
 - 4. David plainly stated the consequences of "friends" like this! **(2 Sam 3:28-29)**
 - 5. Please do not get into private meetings with angry, irrational people. God will bring justice and vengeance – let Him do His work in His time!
 - 6. Abishai later saves David's life. Perhaps he matured in his faith. **(2 Sam 21:17)**

II. Our faith must lead us over depression

- A. Men of faith will have occasions to battle depression.
 - 1. Elijah wanted to die! **(1 Kings 19:3-4)**
 - 2. David thought no one cared! **(Psa 142:3-4)**
- B. There is a real danger that we might live in depression. This can be passed on through generations.
 - 1. Depression often is a result of failing to let go of things we should give to God. What needless heavy weights we often carry. **(Mt 11:28-30)**
 - 2. Many are taught in their homes to hold grudges, carry worries and think of God only in terms of outward rules. They are afraid that they will be cheated!
 - 3. Those who fail to learn how to deal with hurt will live in hurt and never heal! **(Rom 12:14, 17-21)**
- C. The common fruit of unchecked depression.
 - 1. You began a life of withdrawal from good. You cannot be counted on! **(Gal 6:9; 2 Thess 3:13)**
 - 2. You can be unjust in your view and in your judgments of others. Seeking real justice requires time and is challenging (stressful). It is very easy to “read minds,” close your mind, and to intimidate and enslave others to line up with your reality. You must have your way!
 - 3. In isolation, your imagination and worries will run wild. **(1 Sam 22:8)**

III. Our faith must lead us to prayer

- A. God has given us a way to place those heaven burdens on Him. **(1 Pt 5:6-7)**
 - 1. It is often our pride that causes us to cast aside God’s provisions and ways.
 - 2. Will we really learn to trust God? When we do men and events will no longer have the power to paralyze us in fear. **(1 Pt 3:12-14)**
 - 3. When we clearly know the will of God then we can accept whatever may come.
- B. Consider how David learned how to pour out his heart to God. **(Psa 143:5-8)**
 - 1. Real maturity is found in learning the true nature of God and depending on Him.
 - 2. Our brooding, suffering, worries and pain should act like goods to turn us to a different way of thinking! **(Acts 9:5)**
 - 3. When we learn to give our emotional turmoil to God rather than men, then true peace can be found. This is a peace based on truth (reality!).
 - 4. There is a big difference in “cause me to know the way in which I should walk” and the one who wants his own way. It is very plain to see this.
- C. What worries do you and I need to give to God?
 - 1. Are we fearful of world events and the political chaos? **(Isa 31:1; Psa 20:7; Ps 118:8-9)**
 - 2. Are we upset that evil men may “get away” with evil? **(Ps 73:11-12; 16-17)**
 - 3. Do we find ourselves wanting to “help” God? (Ex. Jonah)
 - 3. May God give us the faith to put behind our past in the pursuit of God! **(Phil 3:13-14)**

Conclusion: Where is our faith right now?