

Light Brings Salt

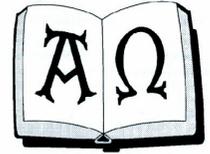
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Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God
"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."



What is Biblical Faith?

Pastor John Griffith

Hebrews 11:1 reads, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Faith means learning to trust God for what we cannot see with our visible eyes. It means learning to think and act on the principles and promises of the Word regardless of how things seem to us. Remember we only see one small aspect of a situation; God sees the end from the beginning. In the words of 2 Corinthians 5:8, **we are to "walk by faith and not by sight."**

Hebrews 11:6 reads, "**And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**"

There are two important concepts we learn from this verse:

(1) You cannot please God without faith. **It is to be the modus operandi for the Christian life.**

It is God's desire and plan that we learn to live by faith because faith acknowledges our weakness and rests in God's provision. It glorifies God. But faith in what?

(2) Faith as our modus operandi consists of two fundamental concepts:

First, we must believe that He is. We must believe in the existence of God. According to the Bible, a true belief in God's **existence** includes faith in His essence and transcendence.

Transcendence is the concept that God exists **outside** and beyond the universe.

Essence speaks of who God is as the independent and sovereign God who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite, and unchangeable, holy, love, veracity, etc..

Second, we must believe that He is also a rewarder of those who seek Him.

This means belief in the very personal love of God, that He provides for and cares for His own.

Included in this is the concept of God's eminence, that though transcendent, He is nevertheless involved in the affairs of the universe, and that the creation cannot exist or function properly without Him and His intimate involvement. **Col. 1:17**

Point that Hebrews 11:6 makes is that we are totally dependent on God for our existence, for our happiness, and for our security. God cares about us intimately. 1 Pet 5:7

Application to our daily life: For many Christians, the Christian life is totally devoid of God's power. It is simply a matter of doing the best they can to conform to certain expected standards.

Some are more successful at conforming externally to the pattern of their peers than others, but even for these, there is generally the awareness that something is missing.

Some find comfort in the ideas that no one is perfect, everyone has their weaknesses. They are doing their best, and **feel** sure God understands.

Certainly, no one is perfect. Maybe we are doing our best and God does understand, but this does not alter the fact that unless we are walking by faith in God and His plan and provision, we are missing out on the life Christ offers us.

Our best is not what God wants. He wants faith in His best--the Lord Jesus--His very own Son and the fullness of blessing He has made for us in Him.

Think about this. No one can live the Christian life on their own any more than they can perfectly keep the law of the Old Testament Rom. 3:9-20; 7:1-25; Gal. 3:10-14).

If we could live the Christian life without God's enablement, why do you suppose God would send the Holy Spirit to indwell the church through each believer (John 7:37-39; emphasis on a continuous flow of spiritual provision)?

If we could live the Christian life and serve the Lord without God's power through faith, why would the

Lord Jesus give the Holy Spirit the title of the "Helper" or better translated, "the Enabler" (John 14:16, 26)?

Why would He point to the disciples' inadequacy apart from the Spirit (John 16:7) and tell them not to attempt any ministry until the coming of the Spirit (Acts 1:4-8)?

If they were able to operate successfully without God's empowerment these exhortations make absolutely no sense!

Because of all we face from the enemies of God who are arrayed against us as Christians, the world around us, the flesh within us, and the devil with all of his counterfeit programs and doctrine seeking to deceive us.

With all this against us, the Christian life and ministry is an absolute impossibility apart from God's supernatural ability which must be appropriated moment by moment through faith. The nature of these forces and our weakness necessitates the need for nothing short of the divine power of God.

To think that we can live the Christian life on our own is the height of ignorance or pride. So what then is it to be for you, a life of muddling along in your own way, in your own power or a life of faith, living by His power and provision??



Petraeus Victorious

By Ralph Peters
from the New York Post

In Baghdad on September 16, Dave Petraeus, the most successful American general in more than a half-century, passed the flag to his former deputy, Gen. Ray Odierno. It was a milestone not only in our great endeavor in Iraq, but in the 5,000-year history of the lands watered by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Petraeus moved up to take over our Central Command, or CENTCOM, where he faces the gritty challenges of the world's strategic junkyard, the greater Middle East: No rest for the victor. But *we* can pause to consider what he achieved:

Two years ago, many Americans believed Iraq was hopeless. Personally, I'd begun to despair

of the administration ever fighting to win. Without a sharp change in policy and practice, our effort to bring democracy to a wretched population would end by discrediting democracy and unjustly humiliating our military.

In "politics above country" Washington, partisan Democrats *celebrated* our impending defeat, salivating over American casualties as vote-getters. Repeatedly, they sought to deny our troops the resources they needed to fight and survive.

Then, in a very dark hour, two things happened. Realizing - at last - that former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had failed him, our president backed a hail-Mary-pass troop surge to give Iraq one last chance. And he chose a new commander, Petraeus.

We all know what happened: Iraq turned around with a speed that bewildered the experts.

In the 19 months of the Petraeus era, Iraq evolved from a bloody landscape sliding toward civil war to a land of hope. Urban combat and a literal reign of terror have been replaced by the spreading rule of law, a blossoming economy, LA-quality traffic jams - and the political squabbling that accompanies democracy.

As Petraeus is always the first to note, much remains to be done and much could still go wrong. But every single trend line has turned positive. Al Qaeda's grip has been broken. (It can still set off bombs, but can no longer set itself up as a champion of Sunni Muslims.) Our troops are coming home at a steady pace. And (dare one say it?) we're *winning*.

That last point's a sore one. Scrupulously avoiding any statement or action that played politics, Petraeus nonetheless changed the terms of our presidential election.

A year ago, the big issue was Iraq, which Sen. Barack Obama insisted remained a disaster. Now the campaign is a contest of qualifications - and character.

Of course, Petraeus had a lot of help - he's always the first to point out that a successful

command is a collective achievement. But the huffy claims that it was this, that or the other thing that "really" brought about positive change in Iraq fail to grasp what Petraeus got from the start: There's *never* a single solution to an insurgency.

Yes, a handful of savvy US officers had begun to grasp the opportunity to "flip" the Sunni tribes of Anbar to our side even before Petraeus took command. But Petraeus recognized a greater potential and expanded the effort dramatically: He turned a promising local business into a nationwide franchise.

Yes, the surge gave Petraeus more flexibility than his predecessors had. But the critical difference was that he employed our troops differently, sending them into neighborhoods to *stay* and provide security for the people. And he exploited the surge's psychological effect - convincing allies and enemies alike that we weren't about to quit. Without that reassurance, the turnaround wouldn't have happened.

And yes, we were even lucky in the extremism and cruelty of our enemies - both al Qaeda's butchers and Muqtada al Sadr's gangsters. They quickly wore out whatever welcome they had among the people.

Yes, Petraeus assumed command at a fortunate time, but Napoleon wanted lucky generals for good reasons. And opportunities are worthless if unexploited.

Always competent in his earlier career, Petraeus rose to greatness over the last two years. Dismissed by a few jealous peers as a "Pentagon prince," he turned out to be the "fightin'est" general we had.

On the home front, the defeat-is-virtuous crowd had talked themselves into believing they were getting a Gandhi; instead, we got a Grant. No previous US commander in Iraq remotely approached Petraeus' relentless determination to track down and kill the enemy's senior leaders. (Think *that* didn't make a difference?)

Petraeus now stands in a long line of great captains who fought in Mesopotamia, a line stretching back past Alexander the Great to the conquering kings who haunt the Old Testament. Yet there's a crucial difference in the case of this American warrior: He didn't come to conquer, but to offer freedom.

Appalled by our military's success, the media played down the change-of-command ceremony. But history will give Petraeus his due. Meanwhile, a few words from a great poet will serve for this magnificent general who now turns to Afghanistan: "Not fare well, but fare *forward*."

Quote of the week!

“[Barack] Obama... blamed the shocking new round of subprime-related bankruptcies on the free-market system, and specifically the ‘trickle-down’ economics of the Bush administration, which he tried to gig opponent John McCain for wanting to extend. But it was the Clinton administration, obsessed with multiculturalism, that dictated where mortgage lenders could lend, and originally helped create the market for the high-risk subprime loans now infecting like a retrovirus the balance sheets of many of Wall Street’s most revered institutions. Tough new regulations forced lenders into high-risk areas where they had no choice but to lower lending standards to make the loans that sound business practices had previously guarded against making. It was either that or face stiff government penalties. The untold story in this whole national crisis is that President Clinton put on steroids the Community Redevelopment Act, a well-intended Carter-era law designed to encourage minority homeownership. And in so doing, he helped create the market for the risky subprime loans that he and Democrats now decry as not only greedy but ‘predatory.’ Yes, the market was fueled by greed and overleveraging in the secondary market for subprimes, vis-a-vis mortgaged-backed securities traded on Wall Street. But the seed was planted in the ‘90s by Clinton and his social engineers.” —*Investor’s Business Daily*