

GOD'S HALL OF FAITH

Various professional sports honor their greatest players in their Hall of Fame. Baseball @ Cooperstown, N.Y.; Football @ Canton, Ohio; Basketball @ Springfield, Mass.; Hockey Toronto, Canada; Golf @ St. Augustine, Fla; Nascar @ Charlotte, N.C.

God has also honored some of His great followers, not in a Hall of Fame but in a Hall of Faith. Hebrews 11 reveals some of God's heroes of the faith. As we walk through it, we see that they are not honored for what they thought or intended, but how they lived and what they did. **Faith is not just a mental activity but it involves action on the field of life.** Here are some examples from the Bible.

- Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain
- Noah believed God's warning about a flood and built an ark
- Abraham obeyed God's word to leave home without knowing where he was to go
- Sarah received God's promise to have a child even though very old
- Abraham trusted God when he went to lay Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice

- Moses' parents hid him for 3 months despite warnings from Pharaoh
- Moses was not afraid to leave Egypt and lead his people into freedom
- Rahab hid the spies at Jericho despite the danger
- Enoch's life pleased God so he was translated to heaven without dying – Heb. 11:5

- Joshua and people marched around city 7 daysthe walls then fell
- Many leaders conquered kingdoms and saw great escapes and deliverances
- Many others showed a different faith....the faith to endure torture etc.
God is pleased by such faith just as much

Enoch walked with God – Genesis 5:22-24; The word **walk** in Hebrews is **halak**, which is **the root word for friendship** and means, **'to walk up and down with, to be conversant with'**. It is the same word used in Amos 3:3, **'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?** Enoch had a close personal relationship and fellowship with God. God reveals things to His close friends because He trusts them.

The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant and reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning. - Psalm 25:14 AMP Classic
The secret [of the wise counsel] - AMP The friendship of the Lord - ESV

The book of Jude speaks of coming judgment upon the ungodly, including fallen angels. God gave Enoch a prophetic word about them.

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with 10,000's of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them..... Jude 14,15

Most people would say they believe in God (a supreme being), but much fewer actually believe God. They believe God exists but they do not trust him enough to act on His instructions or promises. Enoch lived in an ungodly generation which followed their own gods and desires. Enoch lived 365 years and then God took Him to heaven. God will do the same for those who belong to Jesus when He returns to this earth.

TYPES OF FAITH

Saving Faith This type of faith justifies us, which means it makes us righteous in the sight of God as we confess our faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work He completed through his death, burial, resurrection and ascension to heaven. **Faith gives us access into God's grace**, His undeserved favor. We are saved by grace through faith. - Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 5:1-2. This is not only how we enter into the kingdom of God but it is also how we continue to partake of God's blessings and promises.....by grace through faith. **Grace makes things available** because of the blood and sacrificial death of Jesus and His resurrection and ascension to the throne of God. **Faith is our way of receiving what Jesus has already purchased for us:** eg. forgiveness of sins, righteousness, Holy Spirit, Eternal life, healing, protection, provision etc.

Grace is a credit card, faith is making withdrawals from it.

A real Christian is defined as a 'believer' – John 6:29. The apostle Paul was sure of his salvation. - 2 Timothy 1:12, Philippians 1:6

Measure of Faith (Ministry Faith)

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one **a measure of faith**. - Romans 12:3 NKJV

.....God has apportioned to each **a degree of faith** [and a purpose designed for service] -AMP

Romans chapters 1-11 describes what God has done for us. Romans 12 begins with these words.....

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, **in view of God's mercy**, **to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

As we stand on the mountain peak at Romans 12, God wants us to look back at all He has done for us. (Romans 1-11. The only proper and reasonable response is for us to honor God as we use the gifts he has given us for his glory and kingdom purposes. In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to offer sacrifices. Animals were slain and then placed on the **fire on the altar**. After Jesus came to earth, He was the sacrifice that was slain for all of mankind. God now wants his followers to lay down their lives as 'living sacrifices' as they use the gifts that God has

given to them. God does not place us on a fire but He wants the **fire** of His Holy Spirit to be **in us** and **upon us**, just as on the day of Pentecost.

Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavor; **be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord. - Romans 12:11 Amplified**

Over 30 years ago God showed me how we are to **keep our zeal** for Him. As I was reading about the Holy Spirit gifts in Romans 12:6-7 where we are commanded to use the grace gift that God has given us, the following words jumped off the page at me!

'If it is teaching, let him teach'

Over the previous 10 years God had given me a great desire to study and take notes from various Christian speakers. This was God's way for preparing me for what was to come. In 1992 I got a phone call from a Dr. Browne in London who asked me to come and teach at a Bible School there. I got the notice on a Wednesday and he wanted me to start the next Monday on the subject of Pastoral Theology. Also, I would have to write my own course material! I was forced to step out in faith and God was faithful to help me to do it successfully. Over the next 4 days I searched the Bible for all the verses on sheep and shepherds. I did not sleep a lot during that time, but it was an invigorating and great learning experience. In time I was also asked to write several Bible correspondence courses. Over the next years I was asked to teach new believers in Russia, Czech Republic and India. **Whenever we use the gifts God has given us, it brings us great satisfaction and joy, and others are also inspired and blessed.** If we do not use our gifts, they will not reach their full development and the world will not receive the benefits of God's gifts and callings that He planned through us. Even though God has given each believer a gift, not everyone uses them. God gave the promised land to Israel, but not everyone went in to claim their inheritance.

The Power of Little Faith

The size of our faith is not the most important issue, for Jesus reminded disciples that the faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains! - Matthew 17:20-21, Luke 17:5-6. We must be careful not to forget God when studying faith. We can begin to see faith as a force or a concept in a formula. We must place our faith in our great God and not become preoccupied with the size of our faith. There are persons who seem to have great faith but it is not focused properly.

It is better to have a little faith in a BIG GOD than BIG FAITH in a little god.

Growing Faith

Our faith can grow when we hear and practice God's Word in the Bible. To respect His Word is to respect the God who stands behind that Word. It also grows through pressures and persecutions. How does one grow bigger muscles? It is through exercise and increasing resistance. The apostle Paul saw this at work in the Christians at Thessalonica.

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all persecutions and trials you are enduring. - 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

Grows = Gk. / huperauxano = To increase above ordinary degree, which implies internal growth as of a tree. – Vines Dictionary

Difficult times often cause people to turn to God. Some of the most dedicated Christians today live in places of that have persecution or live under threat of it, for example, those Christians in China and Iran. The South Korean church has set the example of faith and persistent prayer as they live under imminent threat from communist N. Korea.

All of our service is to be done in faith:

- **Pray by faith – Matthew 21:22**
- **Give in faith – Luke 6:38**
- **Live by faith – Romans 1:17**
- **Walk by faith – Romans 4:12**
- **Everything in faith – Romans 14:23**
- **Resist evil by faith – Ephesians 6:16**
- **Seek God by faith – Hebrews 11:6**
- **Overcome the world by faith – 1 John 5:4**

As we use the measure God gives us, it will grow and our influence will expand for the kingdom of God. **How do we keep our zeal and fire for God?** By using the gifts he has given us! Here is a verse I often repeat when making disciples with a person.

'A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.' - Proverbs 11:25 NIV

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