

**Of colds, lost car keys,
and faith . . .**

Life has its challenges . .

- ▶ **Missing car keys?**
- ▶ **We pray**
- ▶ **Got a cold?**
- ▶ **We pray?**
- ▶ **Is this all there is to ‘faith?’**

Hebrews 11 Highlights - the Faith Chapter!

- ▶ (And the beginning of chap 12, and a few other verses . . .)
- ▶ How familiar are you with this chapter?
- ▶ How can it help us right here, right now?

Excerpts from Hebrews 11 & 12, NIV

- ▶ *The definition of biblical faith:*
- ▶ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for.



► Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses].

► Amplified Version

So, biblical faith must start with the undeniable existence of the God of the Bible

- ▶³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

The definition continues:

- ▶ *After briefly writing of Abel and Enoch, the writer explains:*
- ▶ ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Biblical faith is comprised of:

1. faith is confidence in what we hope for and
2. assurance about what we do not see.
3. the universe was formed at God's command . .
4. [we] believe that He exists and
5. that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Most of us are pretty comfortable with that definition, right?

- ▶ So, what's the problem?
- ▶ Actually, 2 problems:
 1. Satan and his allies
 2. US: me and you!

You and I have a problem:

- ▶ ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
 - ▶ James 1.14, NIV

And then there's God's enemy, Satan:

- ▶ ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

▶ 1 Peter 5.8-9, NIV

And then there's the problem of self-deception:

- ▶ The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?
- ▶ Jeremiah 17.9, NIV

Faith is not natural:

- ▶ Doubt is natural
- ▶ Fear is natural
- ▶ Questioning is natural
- ▶ We need help!!

And there is help!

- ▶⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.
- ▶ Ephesians 2.8-9, NIV

Salvation - God's work for us by working in us!

- ▶ For it is by grace you have been saved,
- ▶ through what?
- ▶ **faith**—and this is not from yourselves, *it is the gift of God*—
- ▶ ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Back to Hebrews . . .

- ▶ *We read about Noah, Abraham and Sarah, and then there is a dramatic pause in the text:*
- ▶ ¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

The writer continues to list apparent successes and failures!!!

- ▶ ³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.
 - ▶ Hebrews 11.39-40, NIV

The big conclusion about faith:

- ▶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

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- ▶² *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*
For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

▶³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

▶ Hebrews 12, NIV

We have hope, and He is a Person!

- ▶²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is . . .
- ▶ *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*
 - ▶ Colossians 1.27, NIV

Our Faith is in the Living Savior, Jesus!

- ▶ Watch out for discouragement -
 - ▶ ‘lose heart’
- ▶ Watch what you watch -
 - ▶ ‘fixing your eyes on Jesus’

▶ ¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ ***But encourage one another daily***, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

▶ Hebrews 3, NIV

Encourage each other!

- ▶ ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, ***but encouraging one another***—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- ▶ Hebrews 10, NIV

Faith is always tested . .

- ▶ “We are all faced with a series of great opportunities . . .
- ▶ brilliantly disguised as unsolvable problems”
 - ▶ Pastor Chuck Swindoll

So, about those missing car keys . .

- ▶ Did someone ever say to you,
- ▶ ‘You’ve got this!’
- ▶ God through Christ says to you,
- ▶ God’s got this!

- ▶ Jesus before you
- ▶ Jesus behind you
- ▶ Jesus beside you
- ▶ Jesus within you
- ▶ Jesus instead of you