

## Meditations November 16 - 18

### November 18

***Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) <sup>6</sup>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.***

What does it take to please God? Faith! Remember that faith is described as being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we can't see. Why is faith needed to please God? The passage answers, "*because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*"

First, we must believe He exists. Though we have mountains of evidence, it still takes faith to believe the unseen. God wants you to know He is real. That is the beginning of your spiritual journey. Somewhere along the road of life you first began to consider that He was real and involved in your life. Our sinful nature will fight acknowledgment of this reality because it implies submission. If I accept the work of the Spirit in me and acknowledge that God is real, I owe a debt of gratitude to my Maker. Then I begin to realize I may not be living according to my gracious Maker's design. Just to begin believing that He exists starts a cycle of reconciliation and change in authority over my life.

Then the passage tells us that we need to believe that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. If we believe He exists but don't believe He rewards the ones who earnestly seek Him, we have misconstrued the loving relational nature of God. We have made Him out to be a dictator rather than a loving Father. Have you taken both steps, belief in His existence and His loving relational nature? Then you are pleasing God. If you are stuck on that journey, ask Him to show you where your attitude or understanding has gone off track. Or maybe something (or someone) is standing between you and God. He wants to show you and to draw you into a loving relationship with Him.

**Meditation: Can I say that I am earnestly seeking God?**

## November 17

***Hebrews 11:1-3 (NIV) <sup>1</sup>Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. <sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for. <sup>3</sup>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.***

Faith, it is a difficult thing to describe. The Bible's definition is to be sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This chapter in Hebrews goes on to give us numerous examples of faith demonstrated in the lives of people in Scripture. The introduction to the chapter says that the possession of this sureness and certainty is what made the lives of the saints commendable.

We often think that great deeds done are the reason that God would approve of a life, but this passage says it is the source of the deeds, faith. One could have faith and not have opportunity to express it, such as the thief on the cross next to Jesus. In most cases, faith expresses itself in unusual action that the world considers crazy or worthless. What has your faith motivated you to do that made no sense to the world? What is it motivating you to do today?

The first illustration of faith is creation. How was the universe formed? Honest science says there is more than the forces we understand at work. Faith simply reads the Word of God and declares that God said it and it was. Science must declare matter to be eternal for it is a "scientific" fact that nothing comes from nothing. Faith says matter came from the Creator. Which takes more "faith"?

If everything you see was formed at God's command, what does your faith tell you of the hope of sanctification and heaven? Is it any easier for God to speak universes into existence than it is for Him to bring you to heaven perfected in body, soul, and spirit? (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Faith declares, "God said it, and I believe it." It is being sure of our hope, and certain of what we can't see. God can finish the work **He started, crowning His creation with purified believers.**

**Prayer: Lord, increase my faith. Help me have the certainty that You will finish the work You started in me.**

## November 16

***Hebrews 10:25, 35-36 (NIV) <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.***

***35So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.***

It is an epidemic in the church today. The worldly attitude of not being bothered has found a place in the hearts of many Christians. Stay at home Christians probably outnumber those that worship together. For many, it began when they were offended by something that happened where they found fellowship. It may have been a pastor that was immoral, an accountant that cheated, or power struggle that got ugly. Or, it can simply be the parting of the hair. Instead of realizing that flesh had gained one small victory, they counted the war for encouraging fellowship lost. Instead of striving all the more to make that fellowship strong and safe, they retreat to the comfort and predictability of their home. "I can watch a TV preacher." It was a problem in the first century also, (minus the TV) because people are prone to sin – separation from God.

Fellowship isn't safe! Neither is God! God and the fellowship of believers will challenge you, test you, and change you. We need that to grow and mature. Instead of allowing the trials and tests to grow us, we often retreat to our cave and hole up and build our wall higher and higher, so that our heart won't be hurt again. That is the way of stagnation. That is a way of indifference. There is a fellowship of believers that needs you, and you need a fellowship of believers. The trials will strengthen and grow and spiritually mature you.

If you aren't in a fellowship of believers now, ask yourself why. Don't throw away your confidence in what God can do in you and through your brothers and sisters in Christ. Stick it out! Pray it through. Be a part of the positive, encouraging transformation of your local fellowship. God has promised to bless you for it. The author of these verses warned us that as we approach the Lord's return, it is all the more necessary to meet together for encouragement. *So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.*

**Consider: How can I encourage others where I fellowship?**