

STUDYING GALATIANS

BIBLE STUDY OUTREACH @ 1984, 1993

LESSON 7

Galatians 3: 6 - 11

Gen. 15: 1 - 13; Acts 7: 1 - 8

What Is This Walk Of Faith

If you were to ask someone with whom you weren't too well acquainted, "Do you believe there is a God?" you would likely get a "Yes." If you continues to ask, "Do you believe that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit?" the answer could very well be a shrug of the shoulders and an unconcerned, "I don't know if I believe that or not, Meaning, "It doesn't really make that much difference to me." Does it make any difference to you? It won't if you don't really know who God is.

Does believing in God make a difference in the way you live? Think how you'd feel if God sent a message to you writing it across the wall in big, bold letters, just as He did at Belshazzar's feast in Daniel's time! It might say, "I will withdraw my Spirit from you if you do not obey me perfectly." Would that make a difference to you in your life-style? As a believer you could not bear to think of God's withdrawing His Spirit, but worse than that, you would not be able to believe God. He has made certain promises to you. One is that He would never leave you. How could God change His Word? If He said He was going to change His mind about that, then He could change His mind about all the rest: His conditions for salvation, His unconditional love, His provision for forgiveness and cleansing. OH! How terrible! If He changed His mind on one thing you couldn't believe anything about God for sure. Then, too, the second thing that is equally terrible is that if you had been accustomed to seek God for wisdom, and relied upon the Holy Spirit, you would be left completely undone, shattered, helpless and without hope. So, if you do believe it makes a difference, you are living by some degree of faith! You depend upon what God tells you in His Word and you act upon it in faith. If this is not true, then you have not begun to live by faith.

In Galatians 3:6 - 11 Paul refers to Old Testament records. He remembers Abraham, who lived about 4,000 years ago. Abraham lived in a sophisticated and ungodly culture that believed in many gods. The religion was very colorful, sensual, and it appealed to all parts of man's nature, the worst as well as the best. In the middle of all this Abraham heard the voice of God speak to him. Acts 7:3 tells us God told Abraham to depart from his land and from his people, to go to the land He would show him. God told him a lot more, but what is important, Abraham listened. He believed God and took action. He obeyed God. It may not have been easy for Abraham to leave everything, for he was a rich man; he probably was a "religious" man also. When God told him to leave all, it meant leaving everything that was familiar to him, including his religion, wealth and life-style. This means Abraham had to reject all that was tangible for that which was spiritual. He had to say, "I no longer believe in the rituals and worship of dead idols. I believe in God, for He has talked to me. He is a living God. He has called me to go somewhere else, and to believe something new and different. I choose to listen to God's voice and to believe what He says to me." That is how to begin to live by faith! It is to turn from the old ways and come into a totally new life with God. Abraham knew he no longer was his own. He had turned from being a self-made to a man who leaned entirely upon God.

So it is with us. We must walk by faith. We can no longer do everything our way, as we may have done for long time. We no longer have any right to ourselves; we belong totally to God. He asks us to believe in

His Son, to once again believe in Someone we cannot see! You may have experienced the awareness of God's moving in your life when you asked Jesus into your heart. You could not see Him but you were certain God was there doing something wonderful in your life. At that time you were "seeing with spiritual eyes." You used your eyes of faith when, in your heart, you saw Jesus take your sin upon His bleeding shoulders and carry it to Calvary. Yes, you can see with faith's eyes. You know that He is able to carry you out of this life into eternity where He has prepared your home.

Abraham's faith was counted as righteousness by God, just as your faith in Jesus Christ's redemptive work for your sin is counted as righteousness by God. In God's eyes your faith is as good as Abraham's faith. We know this because His Word tells us it is true, "The just shall live by faith." This message runs like a silver thread of triumph through the entire Bible. The prophets carried this message from one generation to the next. It has meaning for everyone from Abraham down to you and me.

The question persists, "Abraham lived before Christ; how could he be saved?" God's provision has always been there for those who would believe Him for it. Rahab, a harlot, believed that the God of the Hebrews could save her and her whole family. She obeyed the instructions to put out the scarlet cord from her window. She and her family were saved! Rahab learned to walk by faith as a result of trusting God. God counted her faith so important to Him that He chose her to be in Jesus' lineage. Oh! God counts our faith; it is His provision for our passport into eternity.

Faith was required long before the law came into being. Faith is required now because Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Now it is faith in Jesus Christ. No one can become right with God without faith in the One Who shed His blood to remove the account of sin against man. God used faith to cover the span of time. The scriptures show us that the gospel was preached to Abraham in the announcement that "in him" would all the nations be blessed. "In him" could not mean because of his merit but on the principle of faith which God had brought to the front and acknowledged as He spoke of Abraham. "They which are of faith, are blessed with Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). What an exciting thought to be a part of what God started over 4,000 years ago, to be the recipient of God's promise, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the people on the earth will be blessed through you"!

This blessing comes from Abraham to us in two ways: First, The Lord Jesus came through Abraham's seed. We, who are born of God through Jesus' life within, are a part of the Gentile "nation" that God had in mind to form as a Bride for Christ; Second, God said, "They that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). This means all the promises God provided for our lives are ours because we are a part of His plan. So we see that a walk of faith must be a conscious choice to appropriate the Word of God, daily choosing to walk with Him by the power of His Holy Spirit. Bow your head and pray the verse below. Give God glory for His great love and provision that includes YOU!

I live – and yet not I,
'Tis Christ that lives in me;
His PRESENCE and His POWER
Give JOY and VICTORY!

Anonymous

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SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE UPON:

Jesus said to him, (Thomas), "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed" John 20:29.

Does your faith falter and get weak at times? Does weakness of faith disturb you and make you question your salvation? Do not despair! Even the disciples, who were with Jesus daily, were weak in their faith and despaired after Jesus' crucifixion. A while earlier Jesus had rebuked Peter by saying, "O ye of little faith," when Peter had been walking on the water. Peter's problem was that he took his eyes off Jesus. Jesus knew that would also happen to us. He told Thomas that those who have not seen Him are blessed if they continued to believe in Him. Faith is consent of our will to believe that which we cannot see. Faith in Jesus is believing that Jesus is there to help us at all times. This means we must accept God's provision regardless of whether we see it or not, because faith has engrafted us to Christ Glory to God! What a blessed surety of Security.

SUGGESTION: Read all the recommended scripture listed above.

1. What new understanding did God teach you in your last week's lesson?

Questions 2 - 6 are from Acts 7:1 - 8 and Gen. 15:1 - 13.

2.
 - a. What is God called in Acts 7:2?
 - b. How does knowing Who God is help you to be a more vibrant Christian?
3. Tell what you know about Mesopotamia.
4.
 - a. Who and what was Abraham to leave?
 - b. Have you ever experienced this?
5.
 - a. From Acts 7:5, what was Abraham's inheritance?
 - b. Give what you think Abraham's thoughts were when God told him about all He promised to him.
6. Compare Gen. 15:13 with Acts 7:5 - 7, then list as many facts as you can.
7. What does Acts 7:8 tell us that is very significant to the Jewish people?

8.
 - a. Why did Paul mention Abraham in v.6?
 - b. Who were Abraham's physical descendants?
 - c. Who are Abraham's spiritual descendants?
9.
 - a. Tell why you think v.8 says the gospel, (used in most translations), was preached to Abraham by God's words, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."
 - b. What does Gen. 12:3 say about God's promise to Abraham?
 - c. How does v.8 especially make you grateful?
10.
 - a. Read Luke 19:1 - 10 and tell what is important in v.9.
 - b. What does 2 Cor. 5:17 tell you that would apply to Zacchaeus?
 - c. How would you explain this to someone who doesn't know the Savior?
11.
 - a. Explain Gal. 3:10 by telling the kind of hardship it put on the people.
 - b. What does Rom. 8:1a say to those who are not under the law, but are "in Christ"?
 - c. How have believers been set free from the law of sin and death?
 - d. What has blessed you most from the answers to question 11?
12.
 - a. Verse 11 uses the word "justified" in it; what does Luke 18:13,14 tell you about the meaning of the word?
 - b. How would you describe the word "justified?"
 - c. What does God say about someone who keeps only the law?
 - d. Does what you are learning give you a burden for peoples' souls?
14. What do Hab.2:4 and Rom. 1:17 tell you? In your own words, explain what the quote means. (Make it personal.)
15. What part of this lesson did you like best? How did it bless you?