



## A Spiritual Encouragement Message

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### **Live By Faith**

by Oscar Velazquez

Throughout time, all the nations of the world have had outstanding characters in their History, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrew Christians of the first century knew the value of those great examples to uplift discouraged nations. The Hebrew Christians needed to pay much closer attention to God's message (Heb 2:1), they were neglecting such a great salvation (Heb 2:3), some of them had an evil, unbelieving heart separating them from God (Heb 3:12), they were in danger of becoming hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13). Some of them seem to be failing to reach God's rest (Heb 4:1). They became dull of hearing and so needed to learn the basics again (Heb 5:11-12), they were becoming sluggish (Heb 6:12), some even developed the habit of neglecting to meet together (Heb 10:25), and started sinning deliberately (Heb 10:26). They were not to shrink back to be destroyed (Heb 10:39), and they needed to understand that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). They needed not to grow weary or fainthearted (Heb 11:3), instead they needed to lift their drooping hands and strengthen their weak knees (Heb 12:12).

The solution to their discouragement was to live by faith. The contrast to shrink back was to have faith (Heb.10:39). The writer offered a list of the ancient Hebrews of good testimony who achieved approval and good report, he called them the great cloud of witnesses (Heb.11:2,39, 12:1). The expression by faith defined the lives of each one of them. What would those men and women tell us today about how to live by faith?

- Abel would tell us: "Offer to God the most excellent sacrifice, even when your brother doesn't, or if it will cost your life"
- Enoch would tell us: "Walk with God, even when the entire world walks away."
- Noah would shout to us: "Keep going even when no one believes you."

- Abraham and Sarah would tell us: "God knows where you are going, just keep faithful and patiently pass the tests."
- Isaac would tell us: "Keep the faith, even when your kids fight each other and one shows no interest."
- Jacob would tell us: "God is with you, even if your brother fights with you and your father in-law cheats you."
- Joseph would shout to us: "God has a purpose, even if your siblings betray you and hate you to death."
- Moses would tell us: "Continue to serve the Lord no matter the cost, no matter what you leave behind."
- Rahab would shout to us: "It doesn't matter who you were, but who God will make of you when you put your trust in Him."
- Gideon would tell us: "Don't ask for signs! Make an effort and God will help you fight your battles."
- Barak would tell us: "Don't doubt, the Lord already gave the victory."
- Samson would tell us: "I felt so different and I was tempted more than you, but God was always there."
- Jephthah would shout to us: "Be really careful about what you promise to God."
- David would tell us: "I had way more enemies than you."
- Samuel would tell us: "Dedicate yourself to God and be ready to listen to His Word so you can be instrumental in His work."
- The Prophets would tell us: "Endure, we suffered much more than you."

Besides that great cloud of witnesses who lived by faith, the inspired writer offered those Hebrew Christians a much higher example to consider, a bigger objective (Heb.12:1-4). If the Son of God Himself set the greatest example of trusting the Father, who are we to expect a crown without a fight, or a medal without a race? Jesus tells us: "Be faithful until death and I will give you a crown of life (Rev 2:10)." The writer of the epistle to the Hebrew Christians said to follow the Author, Founder and Perfecter of the faith. After the resurrection of Jesus, we now have a better goal and a greater example to follow living by faith.