

The First of Three Abiding Subjects
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Introduction:

1. In this verse three abiding subjects are listed that we plan to study over the next few weeks.
2. Today we are concentrating on the first abiding subject -- "faith."
3. Most of our lesson will be based on Hebrews 11, but let us first touch on several verses that emphasize the importance of faith.
 - a. (Matthew 23:23) In addition to judgment and mercy, Jesus considered faith to be one of *"the weightier matters of the law."*
 - b. (2 Corinthians 5:7) *"We walk by faith, not by sight."*
 - c. (Ephesians 2:8) We are saved by grace through faith.
 - d. (Ephesians 6:16) "The shield of faith" will enable us *"to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."*
 - e. (1 John 5:4) Through faith we can overcome the world.
4. Let us turn our attention to Hebrews 11 and consider 5 things we can accomplish through faith.

Discussion:

- I. FIRST, THROUGH FAITH WE CAN KNOW THINGS WE CANNOT SEE
 - A. (vs.1) Faith is defined as *"the 'substance' [assurance] of things hoped for, the 'evidence' [conviction] of things not seen."*
 - B. With our faith based on God's Word (Romans 10:17), we can know:
 1. things from the past we have not seen (vs.3; Genesis 1)
 2. things in the future we have not seen (vs.13-16; John 14:2-3).
- II. SECOND, THROUGH FAITH WE CAN BE IN GOOD STANDING WITH GOD
 - A. (vs.2) Through faith the elders obtained *"a good report,"* including:
 1. Abel (vs.4)
 2. Enoch (vs.5).
 - B. (vs.6) Through faith we can please God.
 1. We must believe that He exists, but believing in God alone is not sufficient (James 2:19).
 2. We must also believe that He rewards those who *"diligently seek Him."*
- III. THIRD, THROUGH FAITH WE CAN FOLLOW GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS, EVEN UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES
 - A. (vs.7) Noah followed God's instructions to build the ark.
 - B. Abraham followed God's instructions to:
 1. leave his homeland and go to a place God would show him (vs.8-10)
 2. offer Isaac as a sacrifice (vs.17-19).
- IV. FOURTH, THROUGH FAITH WE CAN LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM
 - A. (vs.20) Isaac looked to the future as he blessed his sons.
 - B. (vs.21) Jacob looked to the future as he blessed Joseph's sons.
 - C. (vs.22) Joseph looked to the future as he made burial plans.
- V. FIFTH, THROUGH FAITH WE CAN OVERCOME OBSTACLES
 - A. (vs.23-28) Moses overcame obstacles throughout his life.
 - B. (vs.29-30) The Israelites overcame obstacles on several occasions.
 - C. (vs.31) Rahab, a Gentile harlot, was spared when Jericho was destroyed.
 - D. (vs.32-38) Many other Old Testament characters overcame difficult trials as they served God.
 - E. (vs.39-40) A message of encouragement is given to Christians who have access to far greater blessings than the Old Testament characters listed.

Conclusion:

1. Faith is "the first of 3 abiding subjects" listed in 1 Corinthians 13:13.
2. Let us strive to increase our faith -- through faith we can accomplish great things.
3. In closing, let us be reminded from Colossians 2:11-13 of the role that faith plays in our salvation.