

LIVING BY FAITH

(Hebrews 11:1-2)

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

1. REMEMBERING What are some of the most pressing questions, criticisms, or concerns you have heard about *living by faith*?
2. REFLECTING What is the most pressing question, criticism, or concern that you have had about how to live by faith?
3. DISCOVERING: Read 1Cor 2:7-16 and answer the questions that follow.

We declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁹However, as it is written:

*"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived" (Isaiah 64:4)*

—the things God has prepared for those who love him—¹⁰these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.¹⁴The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,¹⁶for,

*"Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?" (Isaiah 40:13)*

But we have the mind of Christ.

- List at least a dozen principles taught in this passage.
- How might principles provided about the Holy Spirit and the mind help you in living by faith?
- How does what is being taught here relate to Hebrews 11:1-2?

4. CONNECTING Read over the quotes below. What insight do they provide on how you could live by faith in today's world?

The lesson the whole Bible is trying to get across begins with this simple truth: things are not what they seem. There is more going on here than meets the eye. (John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*)

From the first page to the last, the Bible renders an account of another reality operating simultaneous to, but usually hidden from, the material reality of earth. The invisible world may sometimes "borrow" the visible world in an attempt to communicate, as with the burning bush that Moses saw with his physical eyes. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

Most of the reality with which we deal is invisible. Most of what makes up human existence is inaccessible to our five senses: emotions, thoughts, dreams, love, hope, character, purpose, belief. Even what makes up most of basic physical existence is out of the range of our unassisted senses: molecules and atoms, neutrons and protons, the air we breathe, the ancestors we derive from, the angels who protect us. We live immersed in these immense invisibles. (Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*)

Every creature on earth has a way to connect to the environment around it, a means to pick up and process what is out there. I will call this mechanism correspondence. In some cases, an animal's correspondence can far exceed our human ability. Bats detect insects by sonar; eels stun their prey with electricity; pigeons navigate by magnetic fields; blood hounds drink in a world of smell unavailable to us. Perhaps the unseen world requires an inbuilt set of correspondences activated through some sort of spiritual quickening. God is not "out there" in the material world, and we can only perceive him by gaining a new ability to correspond. (Philip Yancey, *Reaching for the Invisible God*)

Imagination is the capacity to make connections between the visible and the invisible, between heaven and earth, between present and past, between present and future. For Christians, whose largest investment is in the invisible, the imagination is indispensable, for it is only by means of the imagination that we can see reality whole, in context. (Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*)

5. RESPONDING: What will you do to engage your imagination, mind, and the Holy Spirit to "correspond" with God better, "live immersed in these immense invisibles," and live by faith?