


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- Hope is the desire for a good future outcome. But it comes in two sorts—what are they?
(1) Psalm 146:3; Proverbs 11:7 & Jeremiah 17:5 = " _____ *hope*"
(2) Psalm 25:3; Isaiah 49:23 & Romans 5:5 = " _____ *hope*"
- Since hope is an expectation of **future** good, what is to be our attitude and behavior **now**?
(1) Lamentation 3:31-33 — _____
(2) Psalm 27:13-14 — _____

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- How do you think we can know **which specific things** to hope for? Why do you think that?
- We wait in confident hope, but according to Isaiah 30:18, **who else** waits? What does that mean?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- For what are you waiting now? Would you tell us a little about it?
- None of us **likes** to wait, but according to Lamentations 3:26, how does God describe waiting?
- According to Psalm 40:1-2, what will God do for us if we learn to wait patiently with biblical faith?
- What will he do **for others** if **we** wait patiently with biblical faith (see v. 3b)?
- Who in your family needs to "trust in the Lord"? According to v. 1-3, what is your role in that?

Sermon Summary Key Text: Hebrews 11:1-3, 6

Hebrews 11 presents God's inductees into his "Hall of Faith". The possession of great faith is the only qualification. Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who, because of persecution, were tempted to return to Judaism. The author exhorts them to persevere in their faith, arguing that Christianity is superior to Judaism in every way. And so, the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to press on to maturity, and to exemplify a mature faith. In fact, he argues that steadfast endurance in the face of obstacles is the evidence of true faith! In Hebrews 11 we learn about true biblical faith—what it is and what it looks like in the real world.

Biblical faith is the assurance of things hoped for. Biblical faith is always rooted in what God has said—what he has revealed, promised or commanded in the Bible (Romans 10:17; Psalm 119:160). A person exercising true Biblical faith is merely acting on what they know to be true—because God has declared it to be true. Biblical faith doesn't ignore sensory knowledge, but it doesn't base its decisions on it alone. It has a higher, more certain basis in reality—it appeals to revelation knowledge, that is, to what God has revealed through his Word. When your faith is rooted in what God has said in the Bible, you can have full assurance of its trustworthiness. Assurance of faith is rooted in what God clearly affirms in his Word. And so true Biblical faith is not blind optimism or a manufactured "hope-so" feeling. It is an unwavering assurance that what God has promised, he will surely bring to pass.

Biblical faith is the conviction of things not seen. This is the same truth we have just seen, but it is carried further in that it implies a response—an outward manifestation of an inward assurance. This is a faith that works, not just a faith that inwardly believes. This is a faith that acts on what it knows to be true.

Biblical faith rests upon divine revelation. Hebrews makes it clear that genuine God pleasing faith rests upon divine revelation—that is, what is written in the Bible (Hebrews 1:3). By faith, we know that we are not just highly evolved mammals—the random result of time, chance and natural selection—that we have been put here to steward over the rest of God's creation, and we know how the world got in the mess that it is in. By faith we know that Jesus is the sinless Son of God who came into the world to be our Savior, that he bore the guilt of our sins on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, where now he intercedes for us. It is by faith that we know that all who place their trust in Christ receive God's forgiveness and are adopted into God's eternal family, that there is nothing we or anyone else can do to jeopardize our salvation. By faith we know that God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose, that prayer changes things, that when a Christian dies, we go home to be with the Lord (John 14:1–3). By faith we know that one day Jesus will return and set up his eternal kingdom and we will reign with him and that one day we will judge those angels who have sinned against God. With divine revelation we can have a confident assurance that all of these things are true, and consequently we should live our lives in light of these certainties. The capacity to exercise faith is created in all of us. Biblical faith operates in the same realm. It accepts and acts upon many things that it does not completely understand.

Biblical faith is different from natural faith. It is rooted in revelation knowledge—that is, in what God has revealed to us in the Bible. Biblical faith is given to us as a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8). Faith is the only way to please God (v. 6). God calls us to pursue a very different kind of life—a life based upon unseen eternal values and realities. We must believe that pursuing God and his will for our lives will ultimately bring us the greatest joy now and especially in the future kingdom of God (Psalm 73:25). Hebrews 11 calls us back to a life of faith—which appears risky to us. But ironically, with biblical faith, there is no real risk. Notice again that Biblical faith is always rooted in the future—the ultimate payoff is still ahead of us. "Faith is the firm, unshakable confidence in God which is built upon the assurance that he will be faithful to his promises."

Are you more apt to believe and act upon humanly derived explanations of reality, or upon what God's Word reveals about reality? What does your answer reveal about the nature of your faith? Do you think that you have a "God-pleasing" faith right now? Why or why not? What needs to change?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

As we launch into this study of men and women of faith (Hebrews 11), let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to learn how to live the God-pleasing life of faith...

Monday— Study Proverbs 3:5-6, learning how to rely on God rather than on human understanding.

Tuesday— Study Hebrews 11:1, learning how to view God's character and promises.

Wednesday— Study James 2:17 to learn the relationship of obedience to the life of faith.

Thursday— Study 2 Corinthians 5:7 to know what to do when circumstances are confusing.

Friday— Study Habakkuk 2:4b to discover how to find acceptance before God.

Saturday— Study Hebrews 11:13 to learn how to live in the "already, but not yet".

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]