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Defending Against Discouragement and Despair: Picking up the Shield of Faith *A Commentary by Jason Curry*



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Preachers and teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ have discussed the idea and reality of faith for thousands of years. In my opinion, one of the best definitions of the concept of faith, as it is expressed throughout all of salvation history, was constructed by the late Reverend Dr. E. K. Bailey, founder and pastor of the Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. In one of my favorite, audio sermons by Dr. Bailey, he states that faith is "acting like a thing is so, even though it is not so, in order that it might be so." For example, faith would be acting like someone will graduate from college one day, even though they do not have all of the money to pay tuition, in order that God's destiny might be fulfilled in their lives as they become a businessperson, lawyer or dentist. For those interested in spreading the gospel through song, faith may be acting like that you will

sing in front of thousands of people, even though no one has offered you a recording contract, in order that that God purpose for your life may become realized and manifested among generations of people. To be sure, Reverend Bailey's definition of the word faith resonates with the Apostle Paul's definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "Faith in the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen." Paul also says in Hebrews 11:6 without faith it is impossible to please the Lord.

We need both the idea and reality of faith in God and faith in ourselves if we are to fulfill our great and divine destiny. The presence of the faith is so central to and essential for our success as Christians to overcome evil, Paul takes the time to mention it among the full amount that we must wear in our daily lives. Paul says in Ephesians 6:16: "In addition to this,

take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all of the flaming arrows of the evil one." As Christians, we are always under attack from the flaming arrows of discouragement and despair. If I am given poetic license to personify the powers and principalities which often use people, I would argue that they tell us: "It can't be done," "we will never succeed," "people will laugh when we fail" or "it will never happen in this lifetime." The shield of faith guards us from the negativity of these powers and principalities. The shield of faith also reminds us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:14). I still believe that Paul is correct: With the faith of a mustard seed, we can move mountains (Matthew 17:20).