

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: “Ephesians 6:14-15 “...above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked one....”

Quote: “Faith involves assent (agreement after careful consideration), and assent is conviction produced by evidence; it follows that faith without evidence is either irrational or impossible.” Charles Hodge (Hebrews 11:1-3; Romans 1:18-22)

Rome’s enemies would soak cotton material in pitch, attach it to the end of an arrow, light it with fire, and shoot this “fiery dart” at the soldier’s shield in an attempt to cause him to throw it down and expose his body to danger. The shield was a door-like defense that could protect the soldier’s entire body if he held it close. In spiritual warfare, the fiery darts of temptation are often launched from a distance. Once they lodge in the breast, their burning flame can engulf the heart—the source of our thoughts, will and emotions. Faith, serving as a shield, can put out any and all the fiery temptations that are hurled our way.¹ Every Christian can take heart in the truth that “no temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”¹

The shield of faith for the Christian soldier is *resolute trust* that leads to **CONVICTIONS based upon the Word of God**. God’s Word is both the source and the sustenance of faith.² Faith is like “mortar” in the foundation, as well as in the superstructure, of our “spiritual house;” it is the common thread between the “in-working” of God’s Spirit in salvation and the “outworking” of that salvation in sanctification and service.³ By His grace, and through His Word, God gives us faith and repentance.⁴ We make a tragic mistake when we fail to *cultivate* that gift of faith by personally studying to show ourselves approved unto Him.⁵ The Holy Spirit, Who gives an understanding of the gospel for salvation, will also enable believers to form

convictions that are anchored in the promises of God.⁶ Likewise, sitting under the instruction of pastors and teachers, who acknowledge the gravity of their ministry and their own dependence upon God’s grace to teach and to live God’s Word, is critical to building our faith.⁷

C.S. Lewis wrote, “The human reason, *unassisted by Grace*, has about as much chance of retaining its hold on truths already gained as a snowflake has of retaining its consistency in the mouth of a blast furnace. If we wish to be rational, not now and then, but constantly, we must pray for the gift of faith, for the power to go on believing not in the teeth of reason but in the teeth of lust and terror and jealousy and boredom and indifference....” Failure to make God’s Word a daily priority will undermine our faith. Paul

referred to “continuing in the faith, grounded and steadfast, not being moved away from the hope of the gospel,” but being “rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith.”⁸ Faith is not

static! Apart from growing in the grace and knowledge of God, our shield of faith will be an inadequate defense against defamation from scoffers, discouragement in well-doing, disillusionment during persecution and defeat in the battle with our flesh. Paul commended the Thessalonians whose growth in faith was exemplary. “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.”⁹ Strengthen your faith by studying God’s Word and sheltering yourself in Who He is and what He has promised.¹⁰ David, a man after God’s own heart, yet who had “feet of clay,” wrote, “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, *That I might not sin against You!*”¹¹

“The Shield of Faith”

¹ Heb.4:14-16; 10:23 ² Rom.10:17; I John 5:4 ³ Phil.2:12, 13 ⁴ James 1:18; I Cor.2; Eph.1, 2; Acts 26:15-18; Rom.2:4-10; Acts 11:18 ⁵ Jn.17:17; II Tim.2:15 ⁶ Rom.4:19-24 ⁷ James 3; Heb.10:25; Jude 1:20 ⁸ Col.1:23; 2:7 ⁹ I Thess. 3:10; II Thess. 1:3, 4 ¹⁰ I Jn.5:11-13 ¹¹ Psa.119:9-11