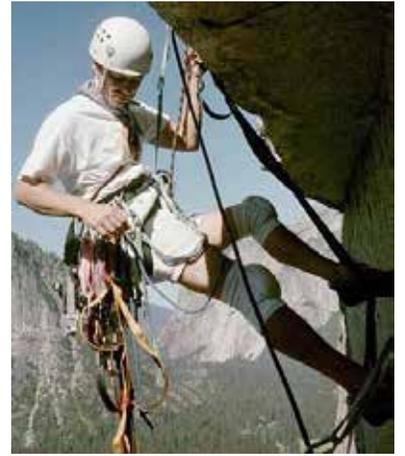


“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” Hebrews 3:14 KJV



Beginnings give us “first impressions”; where conclusions begin to form; where we fix dependence and trust. For example: You expected your new car to start and run properly; to get you places on time; it’s functions to operate on demand; and when you had proved its worthiness with daily use, you did not give it a second thought until something mal-functioned. The same is true of relationships. The passage of time reveals who can and cannot be trusted. Once broken, trust is not easily restored. You first came to Jesus in desperate need and humble obedience. He removed your burden of sin and you knew blessed forgiveness and cleansing! We often ask God to remove the consequences of our own evil and when He does not, we allow Satan to poison our minds with doubts of God’s abilities to keep us. We know God has clearly said, *“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* He will never abdicate the absolutes of His Word, but has promised to *“never forsake you”* and *“will, with the temptation, make a way of escape!”* How soon we forget that Jesus, God’s Word made flesh, IS the “WAY” and how we began our pilgrimage to Heaven! Whether it is our own sins or the temptations of Satan’s fiery darts, it is only through faithful obedience to God’s Word that we escape the snares of wickedness. Proving God’s faithfulness through obedience places a Rock of everlasting trust beneath our feet that allows us to *“stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free! The Truth shall MAKE you free!”* We are *“made free”* from sin by repentance (return to obedience to God’s Word), but we cannot begin to trust what we do not prove through daily use and practice. If you find yourself wishing your faith was as strong as you perceive another’s to be, then you have not used nor proved the promises of God through daily use and practice. God desires our faith to be shining testimonies to Himself. *“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME. Let your light so shine before men, THAT THEY MAY SEE your good works (obedience), and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER.”* Many times, God must put the heat of affliction to our faith so we may see it’s strengths or weaknesses; to purify and strengthen it. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son, the son God had promised to him, and *“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”* And there you have it. Our faith benefits us by leading us to God and His provision, but its purpose is to glorify Him who gives it: *“For by Grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH, and that NOT OF YOURSELVES it is the GIFT of God. Faith cometh by...the WORD OF GOD.”* You have no faith except by God’s Word delivered to you which you believe! *“As many as RECEIVED [God’s Word] to them gave He power to become the sons of God, EVEN TO THEM WHICH BELIEVE ON HIS NAME.”* If you do not obey God’s Word, you have rejected it or not received it! Faithful obedience, even in private, is the proof of faith. *“Faith WITHOUT works is Dead.”* Faith produces deeds of obedience, but not the other way around. Once RECEIVED it brings God’s Power to you. Peter likened faith to gold. *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*

Our confidence is founded in,
Our daily abstinence from sin,
Our faith and trust in God’s commands,
Provides the Rock whereon we stand! ~CGP

The purer gold is, the more workable it becomes. Pure gold can be beaten into sheets so thin it can be draped upon food and eaten! If gold resists the craftsman’s attempts to bend and shape, it is heated and purified again and again

until it accepts the will of the Goldsmith; proclaiming the glory of its Maker with its exquisite beauty! It is “*not by works of righteousness*” that we are saved, but by the finished work of righteousness Christ accomplished at Golgotha! Obedience can only be willing if we daily use and practice it: Stepping daily over the side of our craft onto the storm tossed waves of life, staying focused upon our Lord, and ignoring the howling gale’s of circumstance and the crashing waves of consequence that impotently threaten the power of our Lord! Faith is the cord which binds our Liberty in Christ securely to our hearts and minds! “*It is God (His Word) which worketh in you (in your mind) both to will AND to do of HIS GOOD PLEASURE. Let (your choice) this mind (God’s Word) be IN YOU. Meditate (think) therein DAY AND NIGHT.*” You do what you think! We sin, because we CHOOSE to think about sin! Faith isn’t yours until you receive and believe (obey) God’s Word. “*Faith (obedience to God’s Word) is the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for, the EVIDENCE of things NOT seen.*” No EVIDENCE: No FAITH!

“BEING CONFIDENT of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work (faith) in you WILL PERFORM IT until the Day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6 KJV

C. G. Palmer