

Living Above the Fray

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

Taken from Day 20: Living Above the Fray
by C. D. Hildebrand

Christians should never be hypocrites, but we do live a double life. On the one hand, we exist in this natural world. We experience what everyone else does. When anyone is overcome by life, our perceptions can be greatly magnified to the point of overloading them. We can't walk around with blinders on and simply ignore what our senses perceive; so, what are we to do?

Even Abraham, our great example of faith, "contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:19 NASB). He wasn't unaware of the impossibilities of their situation. He couldn't pretend them away or ignore them. He was very old, his body was as good as dead, and Sarah was far beyond the age to bear a child. These were the facts. His senses reminded him of them on a daily basis.

Even with these "truths" before him, Abraham walked by faith.

Romans 4:20-21

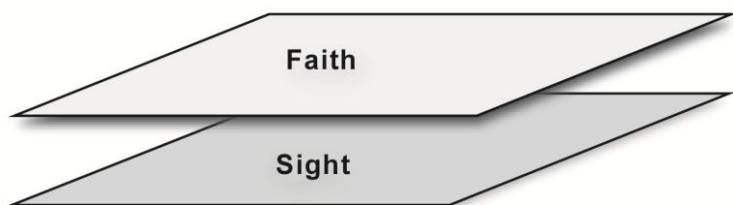
*Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but **grew strong in faith**, giving glory to God, ²¹and **being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.***

As believers, we live a life on two planes: the natural plane which includes all we can perceive with our five senses, and the supernatural one which is based on our faith in the promises of God (His grace) which we perceive by His Spirit. Put simply, "We walk by faith, and not by sight," (2 Cor. 5:7). The Amplified Version of this well-known verse brings this truth to life.

For we walk by faith [we regulate our lives and conduct ourselves by our conviction or belief

respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, with trust and holy fervor; thus we walk] not by sight or appearance.

Here is how I visualize this double life. We live a natural life of “sight” simply because we live on this earth, but because we are new creations, we also have the privilege of walking on the level of the supernatural life of faith. Another way to put this is we “live above the fray” (above the struggle or battle that might be raging).



I adopted this term of living above the fray when I was a high school teacher. I adored my students, but sometimes their drama was directed toward me, or I had to deal with it because it was disruptive. I had a choice about how to respond when these storms would rise. I could get caught up in their adolescent emotional outbursts or live above them. While the storm was raging, I would tell myself, “Live above the fray.” This helped me make compassionate and kind decisions.

As a parent, sometimes our children can put us to the test. They are too young to know how to walk by faith, so we must show them how. Our only other choice is to hurl insults in their direction and possibly cause psychological damage. No, we are the grownups. We must walk by faith, not by sight, patiently teaching them and giving them compassion and love. In marriage or any relationship, there are times when other people's storms threaten our own peace. Live above the fray! Walk by faith, not by sight. Someone needs to be clear-thinking. By faith, that person can be you.

Life can be so overwhelming at times. It is difficult to navigate the wind and waves that threaten us, but just as Abraham did, we can choose to esteem the promise of God as more valid than what we are forced to perceive with our senses. When we choose to walk by faith and not by sight, we discover an amazing joy and

power that is beyond comprehension. We almost can't believe it ourselves when we experience it. We know we should be freaking out over all that is so disturbing, but instead we nearly fly on the wings of faith. This glorious blessing given to His children is meant to sustain us as we overcome the overwhelming.

I Reach Out to Him

*I put my trust in the God
Who created everything
I put my faith in His Son, who died for me.
When no one else on earth can help or understand,
I reach out to Him.
He takes my hand.¹*

Psalm 27: 1-3, 6

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
²When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
³Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I will be confident.
⁶And now my head shall be lifted up above my
enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His
tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.*

Sometimes, God will help us as we walk by faith by giving us a practical way of remembering His promises. He did this for Abraham when he coupled His promise with two illustrations of its completion. He told him to look at the stars and to look at the grains

¹ I wrote this little song during a very scary experience many years ago. It helped me to focus on Jesus instead of the fears that loomed large in my life.

of sand on the sea, and said, so shall your seed be. So, each day as he looked at the sand and each night as he glanced at the skies, he was reminded of God's promise to him.

How might this work in our lives? We have many resources. First of all, we can look at the lives of those recorded in Scripture who obtained great things from God. We can also look back to the many things God has done for us in the past. Sometimes, God speaks something into our hearts. For me, this was when He called me to preach the gospel to the saved. So many times when frustrations and obstacles have tried to hold us back, we've remembered this calling and then moved confidently forward.

The other idea is a bit more controversial, but I think it is acceptable, and that is to see with our spiritual eyes what the completed promise will look like. Some go astray here, thinking that by visualizing they can make things come to pass. I don't endorse that at all. Yet, there is no harm in picturing our prayers being answered instead of focusing on the here and now, just as Abraham looked forward to the promises of God.

When we live the supernatural life of faith in God and His goodness and forsake living by sight, we actually experience joy and peace when we could reasonably be drowning in sadness and fear. This life of faith is so miraculous that words can never express it. It can only be known by living it.

We walk by faith and not by sight.

