

What You Know May Not Be So

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews gives, not so much a DEFINITION of faith (what it IS), but a DESCRIPTION of faith (how it WORKS).

Faith is the SUBSTANCE (“support”) of things hoped for.
Faith is the EVIDENCE (“proof”) of things not seen.

As a kid, were you ever tormented by a verbal bully who was wittier and faster than you? Do you remember how frustrating it was when your slower mental faculties couldn’t come up with a snappy comeback for the deluge of insults, teasing or name-calling?

Have you ever longed for a snappy comeback from the Bible that you could throw back in the face of the devil when he comes to assault and accuse? Or maybe in the face of one of the people he uses to spew his carnality, criticism, discouragement and defeat all over the place? (The devil is thrilled when he can find an empty head and an active mouth in the same body – he uses those people like a ventriloquist uses a dummy!) When you are stupefied and without argument in the face of such demonic bombardment, have you ever wish for a final, unstoppable comeback that could shut the mouth of hell?

There is a word, a great word, just one word: **NEVERTHELESS!**

NEVERTHELESS is a word bridge connecting two ideas, the first of which has no power, even if it is factual, to lessen the greater truth of the second. It says, “What you know may not be so!”

“My teacher said that Saint John is the capital of New Brunswick.” She may have said it – nevertheless, Fredericton is NB’s capital.

“I don’t believe that you own a Chrysler Town & Country.” That is your opinion – nevertheless, my car is still sitting out in the parking lot.

NEVERTHELESS builds a firewall between TRUTH and mere FACT (they are not the same!). Nevertheless says, “That may be so, it may be exactly as you have stated it, but it utterly lacks the strength to erode the unassailable truth it hopes to diminish!”

NEVERTHELESS is the most efficient rebuttal to any argument, and is the tool only of the utterly confident. You can state whatever FACTS you want, but I cannot be shaken from the TRUTH I know!

Learn how to use this one Bible word, and in the face of life’s most baffling circumstances you will never be defenseless!

BECAUSE WHAT YOU KNOW MAY NOT BE SO!

What you know may not be so – in impossible situations

The great prophet Elijah had finished his work, and his assistant Elisha sensed in his spirit that God was soon going to take his mentor to Heaven. The unknown future hung heavy in the air, almost more real than the present.

“You stay here at Gilgal,” Elijah said, “I’m going to Bethel.” “As the Lord lives,” Elisha retorted, “I will not let you out of my sight.” That’s the way it went all day; it was like Elijah was trying to lose him. Gilgal ... Bethel ... Jericho ... and finally the Jordan River, where the waters parted at the snap of the elder prophet’s mantle.

Finally, Elijah turns and says, “We both know what is about to happen, so ask what you will – what do you want me to do for you before I’m taken away?” Elisha’s answer comes quickly: “Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” Elijah’s reaction is equally quick: “You have asked a hard thing.”

2 Kings 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: **nevertheless**, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

Never, not once in all their journeys, has Elisha heard these words. Blinding an army, praying down fire, holding back the rain, toppling the house of wicked King Ahab, none of these have been hard things. But a double portion – that’s hard to do.

Suddenly, a terrifying sight comes straight at them – a chariot and horses of fire out of the sky! It drove right between them like a lightning bolt, but ELISHA’S EYES NEVER LEFT ELIJAH! Don’t look away, Elisha! Your promise depends on it! Most Bible readers will tell you that the chariot of fire took Elijah to Heaven, but we’re not sure that’s true. Check it out – the Bible says that a whirlwind took Him away. THE CHARIOT WAS A DISTRACTION, but Elisha kept his focus.

Elisha had indeed asked a hard thing, NEVERTHELESS, because he wouldn’t take his eyes off the goal, he received Elijah’s mantle.

Years later as he lay dying, Elisha was visited by King Joash, who was afraid of the Syrians. The prophet had him shoot an arrow out the window and declared it the “arrow of the Lord’s deliverance.” He then commanded Joash to take his other arrows and strike the ground, assuming he would realize this was a prophetic moment.

When Joash only struck the ground three times, Elisha was angry. Here was a young man like many modern Christians who do not strike enough, seek, cry, pray, or ask big enough. When God says “HIT” then hit and keep on hitting until the “hard thing” happens!

Don’t be afraid to “ask big” – the Scriptural evidence indicates that God is more impatient with the timid than with the aggressive!

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

You need to pray hard, work hard – and then just trust God to do the hard thing on your behalf! The obstacles may LOOK huge, and they may BE huge, but WHAT YOU KNOW MAY NOT BE SO!

What you know may not be so – when facing opposition

The words did not originate with a late-night comic, a sharp-witted politician or even an ancient philosopher. In their original form, they belong to Jesus, who knew that the enemies of truth run in packs ...

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

Paul also anticipated an onslaught of liberalism against the infant church after his death, false brethren armed with personality, education, charisma and intellect, but mostly with ravenous appetites to devour the faith of defenseless lambs ...

Acts 20:29-30 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

They are cowardly for the most part, waiting to lure the young and innocent away from the fold so they can pounce on them with their mockery, arguments and intimidation. And our amoral society loves these tolerant, liberal and sophisticated “christians” because their lax lifestyle doesn’t create conviction, break the status quo, or disturb their comfort zone.

Youthful, innocent, brand-new converts are lacerated without pity and even made to feel guilty for their holy and separated lifestyle by these liberal “christians” with their pseudo-freedom. And in such an antagonistic religious atmosphere, believers – especially young believers – need an irrefutable, undebatable answer that dismisses these adversaries and strengthens their faith.

That answer – which, by the way, infuriates the new breed of pseudo Christians – is found in the clear calm syllables of NEVERTHELESS.

You may find yourself at the end of your own intellect when attempting to defend your faith against those who have spent years honing their arguments to a fine edge. No matter how bright or well-prepared you are, you may eventually come up against a brighter and better-prepared opponent. But arm yourself with the ultimate answer, and you will never be defeated!

Wait until they have spent all their energy, used up all their intellectual ammunition, and stand triumphant over what they expect to be your whimpering, defeated form.

“There, what do you have to say about that?” “Just one word,” you say without a hint of panic, “NEVERTHELESS!” After all your arguments, and despite your obvious intellect, you cannot tear down the foundation of God in my life ... I don’t even need to defend it.”

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

In living for God, like with every great undertaking, there will always be Job’s comforters around to tell you what is impossible, impractical, impulsive, imperfect, impetuous, improbable, impudent and imbecilic. There will always be a Sanballet and Tobiah at your elbow to tell you how unachievable your dream is. Such voices of discouragement are a dime a dozen – ask Nehemiah, the wall builder, who had the perfect answer in the face of an army of dream killers!

Nehemiah 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

People may try to talk you out of your experience or your convictions, but just tell them, “What you know may not be so!” NEVERTHELESS!

Nehemiah 6:3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

What you know may not be so – when facing trials

Nowhere does the Bible promise Christians a life of ease; in fact, many Scriptures say the exact opposite ...

Psalms 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

We sometimes try to impose on God our limited understanding of “FAIRNESS” and we quickly find out that He will not submit. A mother of three must have three equal candy bars, or else she will painstakingly divide the one she has into three equal portions. Never would she give the candy to one child and ask the other two children to rejoice while they watch him eat!

Yet that is precisely what God does! He lifts one Christian to public prominence and bountiful blessing before the eyes of the world, while another is allowed to pour out their life in service and die in obscurity, hardship and suffering. **God’s dealings with humanity defy our cozy explanations and tidy little formulas of faith!**

Only one word can ever make sense of it all, and bring a sense of joy and victory to every life, no matter how much suffering or blessing it contains ... NEVERTHELESS!

Satan has practiced his arguments for thousands of years and learned his lines well, and he never misses an opportunity to accuse God and His dealings. “There is your God for you! He lets you work like a slave, pray without ceasing, pour out your heart, and give till you drop, and then He rewards you with trials and suffering. Do you deny these facts?” “NO.” Well, what do you have to say to this fine mess?” “Just one word ... NEVERTHELESS!”

Remember the definition? Nevertheless is a bridge between two opposing sets of facts, the first of which (my suffering) cannot invalidate or even dilute the latter (God’s goodness).

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: **nevertheless** I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

I know WHOM I have believed, and I know that He will KEEP the records! If you’ve ever felt unappreciated or even unnoticed, here’s the one word that will keep your spirits up ... NEVERTHELESS! Because you can’t see the whole picture yet ... and what you know may not be so!

What you know may not be so – if it doesn’t make sense

Jesus’ command seemed like mockery to the sweating, exhausted fishermen. It was broad daylight, and even a carpenter should know that you can’t catch fish on the Sea of Galilee in broad daylight! Peter and the others had labored all night, and now they were tired. And now, this prophet from the land-locked village of Nazareth is spouting off directions as though he knew something about fishing! Peter has the right to feel fatigued and more than a little frustrated.

All right, he will do it. He will cast the nets out one more time – but not without letting everyone know he thinks it is a stupid idea. If this carpenter wants nets, he’ll get nets – wet, heavy, empty nets. But in spite of his reluctance (and maybe even a bit of rebellion), Peter decides to acquiesce with one powerful word ...

Luke 5:5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: **nevertheless** at thy word I will let down the net.

And suddenly, Peter is stunned. Never, not on his greatest night of fishing, had Peter ever made a haul like this. So many fish!

We often labor under the illusion that all obedience must be joyful. Don’t be absurd! There may well be burdens or demands placed on us by the Lord that make no more sense than fishing in the daylight did to Peter. And it is permissible to tell God that you do not understand. He will let you talk – He is sovereign, not rude! God is not upset by your explanations as to why the situation is impossible. So let Him hear it all – I’m sure He will appreciate your help! ☺ However, when you are finished telling Him why it makes no sense, be sure to obey with the one word that will unlock the miraculous in your life: NEVERTHELESS!

Miraculous, supernatural, abundant blessings await the exhausted workers who will, despite their own common sense, cast their nets just one more time in obedience to the Lord! **The more unlikely the command, the greater the miracle!** So when you are too tired, too young, too old, too poor, too unknown, too burdened, too imperfect and too unspiritual to obey God’s voice, tell Him all about it, let Him know all your complaints. And then answer with the word He waits to hear: NEVERTHELESS!

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Keep on believing, because what you know may not be so!