

Passing the proficiency test...

A friend and I were discussing a required piano proficiency test given at a major Christian university. The requirements and challenges set before each candidate were daunting to the piano major as well as the voice major just trying to pass it to receive an undergraduate degree. As we were discussing the scales, arpeggios, sight-reading and transposition exercises, the Lord dropped into my spirit the idea that our faith goes through a proficiency test that is just as demanding.

The word “proficiency” denotes “manifesting the knowledge and experience needed...” To just have the knowledge doesn’t necessarily say that you are able to manifest it in a practical exercise. The information that is received intellectually in a classroom setting somehow has to be processed and demonstrated through the young music student’s fingers in a highly stressful environment.

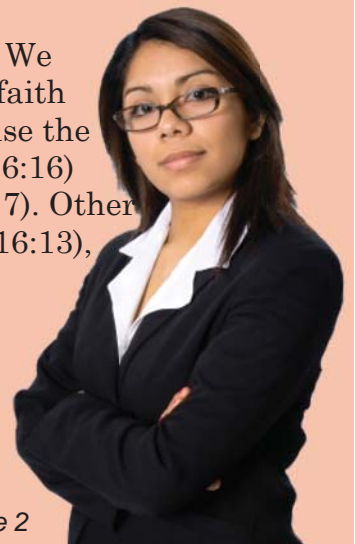
Our faith, which we obtain through the reading of God’s Word, must be processed and demonstrated in our daily lives. I often find myself wanting and have to go back to childlike faith and the tried and true scriptures to re-establish myself during challenging circumstances.

As a young piano student, I encountered learning from three piano instructors. Changing teachers in itself was not that big a deal, except when you consider the fact that with each new teacher came the concern that my knowledge of the basic music fundamentals may have been inadequate. When it was all said and done I had gone through John Thompson’s Piano Book Number One a grand total of three times. My favorite selections to this day, are *The Swan’s Song* and *Stepping Stones*.

Our proficiency test of faith, too, should show a consecutive progress of knowledge and experience. We are required to live by (Romans 1:17) and walk by faith (Romans 4:12). In so doing we are admonished to use the shield of faith to resist the evil attacks (Ephesians 6:16) as we overcome the world with faith (1 John 2:13-17). Other faith exercises will include to stand fast in (1 Cor. 16:13), to continue in (Acts 14:22) and be strong in faith (Romans 4:20-24).

Just as the music candidate would be praying during such an extensive test, we too can echo the request of the disciples, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

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Focus Questions

1. If God were to grade your faith on an achievement chart, what letter grade would He record? What comment would He add to the report to explain your grade?
2. Journal below each type of “fiery darts” which you encounter on a regular basis.
3. Look up the word “faith” in a Bible concordance. Match the scriptures to your list above to be used to resist and overcome the feelings of doubt and defeat.

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