

HEROES FROM HEBREWS 11 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 1: July 6-11

Theme: Faith

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-3

¹ *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* ² *This is what the ancients were commended for.* ³ *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

1. What is faith as defined in this chapter (Hebrews 11:1)?
2. How is faith 'the *assurance** of things hoped for' (Hebrews 11:1)?
Some translations render the word **hypostasis as "substance."*
3. What faith did the ancients (elders) have that God commended (Hebrews 11:2)?
4. What is the relationship between seeing and faith?
5. What do we understand by faith concerning the worlds (Hebrews 11:3)?
6. How does that help us today?

WEEK 2: July 13-18

Theme: Abel

Scripture: Hebrews 11:4

⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

1. Read and compare Genesis 4:1-15 with Hebrews 11:4.
2. What was God looking at when he saw the two offerings?
3. What do these verses in Genesis say about faith?
4. How does Hebrews 11:6 help explain the interpretation of the Abel story in Hebrews 11:4?
5. In what way does Abel still 'speak' today?
6. How does the example of Abel help us today?

WEEK 3: July 20 – July 25

Theme: Enoch

Scripture: Hebrews 11:5-6

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1. Read and compare Genesis 5:21-24 with Hebrews 11:5-6.
2. What information do they provide about the faith of Enoch?
3. How does Hebrews 11:6 explain the way the author of Hebrews interprets Enoch in Hebrews 11:5?
4. How does the example of Enoch encourage us today?
5. Why is faith essential to pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6)?
6. Why do we need to believe God exists before we can come to God (Hebrews 11:6)?
7. What is the reward that God gives to those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)?

WEEK 4: July 27 – August 1

Theme: Noah

Scripture: Hebrews 11:7

⁷ By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

1. Read and compare Genesis 6:13-22 with Hebrews 11:7.
2. What is the relationship between faith and obedience in the life of Noah?
3. What warning did Noah receive?
4. In what respect did Noah's faith condemn the world?
5. What does it mean to be an heir of righteousness?
6. How does the example of Noah help us today?
7. Putting these three examples together how do they illustrate Hebrews 11:1-2?

WEEK 5: August 3-8

Theme: Abraham

Scripture: Hebrews 11:8-19

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

1. What did God call Abraham to do? (vs. 8)
2. What did he promise? How did Abraham show his faith in God? (vs. 8)
3. How does the long delay in promised possession of the land relate to Abraham's faith (see also Acts 7:1-8)?
4. How does a delay in the fulfilment of God's promises affect your faith?
5. What is the significance of Isaac and Jacob being "heirs of the same promise" as Abraham (Hebrews 11:9)?
6. To what promise does verse 11 refer?
7. What did Abraham believe about God? How did God bless his faith? (vs.12)

WEEK 6: August 10-15

Theme: My 3 Sons: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

Scripture: Hebrews 11:20-22

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. ²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

1. Why do you feel the Patriarchs are included in this list in Hebrews 11?
2. How does this part of their history contribute to our author's theme and purpose?
3. What is it that all three are counting on coming true?
4. What did Abraham, by faith, believe about God when he considered offering up his son (Hebrews 11:17-19)?
5. How did Joseph's faith illustrate Hebrews 11:1-2 (Hebrews 11:22)?
6. Joseph – In what way does his blessing invoke a future promise?
7. How might you incorporate blessing into your life or the lives of those around you?
8. How might doing that help you and them to start looking ahead in faith to what God is going to do?

WEEK 7: August 17-22

Theme: Moses

Scripture: Hebrews 11:23-29

²³ By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. ²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

1. Why is it significant that Moses had faithful parents?
2. How does the faith or lack of faith of a parent have an impact on their children?
3. What did Moses' parents have as the basis for their faith? (what were they believing when they protected him?)
4. What reasons led Moses to decide to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin* (Hebrews 11:25)?
**Some translations render this "the pleasures of sin [for a season]."*
5. How did faith enter into Israel's crossing of the Red Sea (see also Exodus 14:21-31)?
6. What two things did Moses and the Hebrews do out of faith in God?
7. How does the world, like Pharaoh, try to make us afraid? What is the Christian response?

WEEK 8: August 24 – August 29

Theme: Jericho

Scripture: Hebrews 11:30-31

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. ³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

1. What was the role of faith in the falling of the walls of Jericho? (*see also Joshua 6:12-21*)
2. How is this in keeping with Joshua's character, as we know it from Scripture?
3. What do you do with something God says that may not make sense to you at the time?
4. Why do you think some things only make sense looking back in the rear-view mirror of life?
5. How come this pagan woman (Rahab) has faith in the one true God?
6. Others in the city had also undoubtedly heard about these things as well. What was the difference between Rahab and the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho? (Read Joshua 2:8-14)
7. In what ways does Rahab respond differently to God's promise about inheriting the land than the wilderness generation? (*Ironic, considering that she is from the nation that they feared the most!*)

WEEK 9: August 31 – September 5

Theme: Faith & the rest

Scripture: Hebrews 11:32-40

³² And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

1. What was true of all the people the author mentioned in Hebrews 11?
2. What promises from God give you hope and keep you needing to trust in Him (Hebrews 11:39)?
3. List some of the amazing things done by faithful people in past ages (Hebrews 11:33-35a).
4. What do you learn about difficulty and persecution from these verses?

5. What are some reasons that God does not always deliver those who trust in Him?

6. List some of the things these people of faith endured in past ages (Hebrews 11:35b-38).

7. Was there any joy at all for these people of faith (Hebrews 11:36)?

8. How does the Scripture describe these people (Hebrews 11:38)?

9. Why is the world an unworthy place for a people of faith (Hebrews 11:38)?

10. What did these 'heroes of faith' obtain? What did they not? Why (Hebrews 11:39-40)?

11. What is the better thing God provided for us (Hebrews 11:40)?

12. While none of us seeks difficulty, how might these verses encourage you to endure when you face trials and persecutions?

13. From this chapter, what do we learn about faith and works?

14. How would their faith encourage ours?

15. How would you explain their faith to someone who did not understand faith in God?