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Hebrews 11

*“Faith Lessons” Part 1*

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Hebrews chapter eleven is one of the most studied and beloved chapters in the Bible. It’s commonly referred to as the “Hall of Faith,” because of the examples of men and women who persevered in their faith through tough times of trials and testing, difficulties and decision. They were not “spiritual giants,” they were men and women just like us who, because of their faith, became revered as “spiritual giants,” even though they were just ordinary people. The writer of Hebrews names 17 people specifically, and many others generally.

**Hebrews 11:1-7** will be the focus of “Faith Lessons” Part 1. Before we look at specific examples of faith, it’s important not only to know about different types of faith, but also to know what faith is and isn’t.

### Different Kinds of Faith

1. Saving faith
  - a. Every person who comes to Christ for salvation must exercise saving faith.
  - b. **Ephesians 2:8** - *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.”*
    - i. This verse even tells us that we don’t even have the faith to believe; it is God who gives us the faith to believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
2. The Gift of faith
  - a. Faith is one of the spiritual gifts Paul mentions in the first letter to the Corinthian church.

i. **1 Corinthians 12:9** – “... to another faith by the same Spirit...”

3. Living by faith – **Hebrews 11**

- a. This is the everyday faith that is evidenced by a simple trust and confidence in the faithfulness of the Lord that sees us through the difficulties, decisions, trials, testing and challenging times in life.

Faith Involves “Seeing” What is Unseen

4. The word “sight” is referred to nine times in this chapter. (v. 1, 3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 23, 26, 27)
5. Faith involves some aspect of “sight,” not with physical eyes, but with spiritual eyes.
6. **2 Corinthians 4:18** – *“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*
7. Don McClure,<sup>1</sup> in a message he recently gave at Cornerstone Chapel, remarked that our physical senses will in fact diminish as we age; we’ll lose the ability to see, hear, taste, touch or smell. The hope, however, is that our spiritual senses will grow stronger the longer we walk with the Lord, so that we will hear his voice, feel his presence or see him working.
8. Faith is spiritual sight!

Faith is an Action, Not Just a Feeling

9. “Faith is action based on trust and confidence in the promises and faithfulness of God.”
  - a. Abel “*offered*” (**Hebrews 11:4**)
  - b. Noah “*built*” (**Hebrews 11:7**)
  - c. Abraham “*went*” (**Hebrews 11:8**)
10. Faith is not trust in the end result.
  - a. Many people believe faith is mustering up a predetermined idea of what is supposed to happen.

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<sup>1</sup> Don is a pastor and teacher who’s been involved in the Calvary Chapel movement for many years – [http://www.calvaryway.com/10467/content/content\\_id/186299/About\\_Don](http://www.calvaryway.com/10467/content/content_id/186299/About_Don). “Sharpening Your Spiritual Senses” August 14/15, 2010 – <http://www.cornerstonechapel.net/ministries/teachingLibrary>

- b. This mindset can lead to disillusionment because many misunderstand faith as engaging God to make him do what they want to happen.
  - c. Faith is, in fact, relying on the promises and faithfulness of God - not the results.
11. There is no greater place to begin a “faith lesson” than with the story of creation, because after all, if you are going to be able to trust God in your life, you must first be willing to accept by faith that he created the universe.
  12. **Jeremiah 32:17** - *“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”*
  13. Sir Isaac Newton said: “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being. This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called ‘Lord God,’ or ‘Universal Ruler.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

### Abel

14. **Hebrews 11:4** - *“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.”*
15. Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. Cain and Abel didn’t experience Paradise first-hand, since their parents had been expelled from the Garden of Eden before they were born.
16. The way God prescribed to commune with him was through a blood sacrifice.
  - a. When Adam and Eve sinned and were cast from the Garden of Eden, God clothed them with animal skins as the first sacrifice.
17. Abel followed God’s prescribed way of worship and atonement, but Cain did not.
  - a. Abel gave from the *“firstborn of his flocks,”*<sup>3</sup> and the Lord looked upon Abel and his offering with favor.
  - b. Cain gave *“some of the fruits of the soil,”*<sup>4</sup> and God was displeased with him.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v12/i3/newton.asp#r2>

<sup>3</sup> **Genesis 4:4**

<sup>4</sup> **Genesis 4:3**

- c. [Genesis 4:6-7](#) - *"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.' "*
- d. Cain tried to circumvent God's ways, and Abel was honored as a man of faith because he did what was right in the eyes of God.

18. The lesson we learn from Abel is do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

### Enoch

19. [Hebrews 11:5](#) - *"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."*

20. [Jude 14-15](#) indicates Enoch was a prophet.

- a. *"Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones **15** to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.'* "

21. Not much is known about Enoch, except what we find in [Genesis 5:21-24](#).

- a. *"When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."*

22. We do know that he *"pleased God,"*<sup>5</sup> so God took him to heaven so that he wouldn't have to experience death!

23. Enoch's life leaves a challenge for every Christian, according to [Hebrews 11:6](#): *"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."*

24. The lesson we learn from Enoch is walk with the Lord and live a life that is pleasing to him.

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<sup>5</sup> [Hebrews 11:5](#)

## Noah

25. **Hebrews 11:7** – *“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 comes by faith.”*
26. There are five chapters in Genesis dedicated to Noah; however, there is only one verse in Hebrews 11, but it’s all we need to know about him – he feared God.
27. In **2 Peter 2:5**, we read that Noah was a *“preacher of righteousness.”*
28. He had faith that what God said was true, so he built the ark in anticipation of the coming flood.
29. Noah told people that it was going to rain, which would cause a flood, so he spent approximately 100 years building the ark, because he had faith in God’s word.
30. Noah believed God and lived out his faith in a generation that was scoffing and critical. He lived a righteous life during a time that the Bible describes as *“only evil all the time.”*<sup>6</sup>
31. **Matthew 24:37–39** – *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*

## Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Hebrews 11:1–7** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss **Ephesians 2:8**.
  - a. The Bible indicates salvation comes by faith, rather than something we do (works), so why do you think many people believe a relationship with the Lord is entered into by anything other than faith?

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<sup>6</sup> **Genesis 6:5**

4. Spend time talking about what you see in the lives of people you know who have the gift of faith.
  - a. Do you think they don't take life seriously because of the level of trust and faith they have in the Lord?
  - b. Humorously speaking, Pastor Gary said he's sometimes "bugged" by people who have the gift of faith.
    - i. Do these folks bug you?
    - ii. If they do, what does this say about your measure of faith?
5. As you age physically and you recognize there is a deterioration of your physical senses, do you at the same time recognize an increase in your spiritual senses?
  - a. Do you see the Lord at work in your life?
  - b. Do you hear his voice in the teaching of the Bible, in the worship service, in prayer, and when you read the Bible?
6. Pastor Gary said, "Faith is action based on trust and confidence in the promises and faithfulness of God."
  - a. Describe times when your faith became action.
    - i. Refer to #9a regarding Abel, Noah and Abraham.
7. Pastor Gary remarked at the beginning of this teaching by saying that people need to get [Genesis 1:1](#) - God is the creator - before they can understand [Hebrews 11](#).
  - a. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences concerning people who've mocked and derided them for believing what the Bible has to say about creation, the flood, etc.
8. Review and discuss the "case for faith" in the life of Abel, Enoch and Noah.
  - a. Abel - Do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.
  - b. Enoch - Walk with the Lord and live a life that is pleasing to him.
  - c. Noah - Believe God even when others mock your faith.
9. Close your time with prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to each person live like Abel and do what is right in the sight of God; to be like Enoch, who walked with the Lord and lived a life that was pleasing to God; to be like Noah, who believed God for more than 100 years, even though he was mocked for having faith and trust in God; and to understand that God is looking for men and women who will live a righteous life for the glory of God - even in the face of a mocking culture - while they wait for the glorious return of Jesus Christ!