

An Intro To Faith

A Study of Hebrews - (Hebrews 11:1-7)
Pastor Bob Johnson, March 22nd, 2020

Biblical Faith ...

- **is ...** (regarding the future)
(Hebrews 11:1-3)
- **is ...** (requiring action)
(Hebrews 11:4, James 2:14-17, Genesis 4:2-7)
- **is ...** (requiring trust)
(Genesis 4:4, Proverbs 3:5-6)
- **is ...** (regarding rewards)
(Hebrews 11:4-5, Genesis 4:6-8, Genesis 5:21-24)
- **is ...** (regarding pleasing God)
(Hebrews 11:5-7, Genesis 6:5-12)
- **is ...** (regarding pleasing others)
(Genesis 6:14-16)

An Introduction to Faith:

(Matthew 7:21-27, Psalm 66:16, Matthew 5:14-16)

- **There is no _____ w/o ...**
- **There is no _____ w/o ...**
- **There is no _____ w/o ...**

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to our eleventh week of this 12 week study of Hebrews 5-11! After this week, we have just one more week in this 'small group season' at GPC before we take a few weeks off. Our small groups will start back up (hopefully ... not via our computers) a few weeks after Easter. At GPC, we are big on small groups :) even during these 'social distancing day'. May our church family grow warmer together as we still connect with each (God is not practicing social distancing with us) to develop friendships and encourage each other as we learn to apply God's truths to our everyday lives.

Getting Started:

Last Sunday morning was our second week of watching our 'on-line service'. Instead of gathering together, we stayed home and watched the worship and message from our website. How was that for you? When and with who did you watch our service?

What has it been like for you this past week during this ongoing 'social distancing' season? What have you been doing at home that you don't normally do or do as much? What have you been doing outside so you don't go crazy being cooped up inside all the time? What are you doing that is semi-close to some exercise? What TV shows or movies or u-tubes or whatever ... have you been watching lately to pass the time?

What have you been feeling this past week with all the global, national and local news and how our 'normal lives' have not been that normal lately? If you haven't been consumed with anxiety/worry, what has helped? In seasons of life, like this, our faith or our fears will grow. When we 'feed our faith', we 'starve our fears'! What are some practical ways you and we can focus on God's presence and promises rather than letting our feelings and fears dictate how we view what we see and don't see? Bob shared the following quote from Corrie Ten Boom. *"Worry doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength. Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."* What about that quote encourages you or prompts a thought?

As we are getting warmed up in sharing with one another, Bob showed a few jerseys last Sunday and mentioned a few legendary San Diego sports stars. What sports stars, or movie stars ... or any stars from past generations do you enjoy reflecting back on? Why does he or she or they stand out to you? What is it about them that you enjoyed or found inspiring?

Quick Review:

Let's re-read Hebrews 11:1-7. Looking back at your notes from last Sunday's teaching on this passage, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, confused you, encouraged you, or stretched your thinking?

Which of the three guys (Abel, Enoch or Noah) more stretched you regarding being a person of Biblical faith?

1. Hebrews 11 begins by defining Biblical faith as a confidence in God and a conviction that He is at work and will come through on our behalf. How is Biblical faith different from a blind leap into the dark or wishful positive thinking?

2. We heard last Sunday that Biblical faith is behavioral and sacrificial and not just mental or often comfortable. Those commended for their faith in Scripture chose to trust God enough to follow His promptings even as they battled their feelings. In our 'digital group time' this week, as we look at the life of Jesus and reflect on the calls to the crowds following him, we get a better understanding of what faith in action looks like.

The next four passages give examples of Jesus calling his followers to action. Let's read through each of the following passages one at a time and then reflect on a few questions.

Read Matthew 16:24-25 and answer the questions below.

Read Mark 9:35 and answer the questions below.

Read Matthew 18:2-3 and answer the questions below.

Read Luke 18:9-14 and answer the questions below.

- In one or two sentences, how would you sum up what Jesus said in your own words?
- How might what Jesus said practically play out in a person's life?
- What keeps us from doing this at times?
- Can you think of a time you have done this well?

Of the four passages, which of these verses is most challenging for you to put into practice? After reflecting on each of the passage, are there any reoccurring themes each time you answered, "What keeps you from doing this at times?"

3. As we continue our study of Hebrews 11 and walk through more of "God's Hall of Faith", there is one common theme that will stand out. Starting with Abel, Enoch and Noah, the people we will be studying surprisingly were all common people but with an uncommon faith.

As they lived out their lives, each were given an opportunity to rise above 'spiritual mediocrity' and stand out for God in their time. Some lived longer, some shorter, but all shined bright.

Speaking of shining bright even when things might look a bit bleak at times, let's read and reflect on Matthew 5:13-16.

In this classic passage from Jesus' sermon on the mount, the early followers of Jesus and us too ... are encouraged to live purposeful lives.

Ok ... how can we live purposefully while we wait for more normalcy to return to our lives? Let's decide together to not just 'get through' this season, but 'grow through' and 'shine through' it.

While we are cooped up, what can it look like (our attitudes and actions) to help us continue to grow through the next week or two?

And ... while cooped up, what can it look like (our attitudes and actions) to help us continue to shine bright for God as we strive to be salt and light to our family, friends, neighbors etc.?

Wrapping Up:

Looking back on the message from Sunday and from our discussion, what is one truth that stands out to you that you can prayerfully ask God to help apply to your life somehow?

Before we wrap up and click off :(, let's pray for one another!

What are some specific requests we have that we can pray for?