

A decorative border of teal heart outlines surrounds the central text. The hearts are arranged in a grid, with some missing in the fourth row to accommodate the text. The text 'TAKE HEART' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

TAKE HEART

Connect Group Sessions

Hebrews 11.

This exciting study of Hebrews 11 will take us on a great journey of learning more about what it means to be a person of faith. This study guide is provided to help you grow individually and as a group.

Growing In Faith – In Your Group Time

The goal of connect group curriculum is for real-life discipleship to happen.

Each week do the following:

Select a Group Role Card. You can try different roles each week. Groups can have members ‘pick a card’ at the beginning of the meeting or the week prior. This is a great way to enable everyone to contribute in the group.

Groups Role Cards: Guide, Encourager, Time Keeper, Servant, Prayer Person, Connector, Contributors. See your leader for the Group Role Cards.

View ‘Table Talk’ Video Session. This is a short video (approx. 7 min) where Pastor Jon and Pastor Lorie will interact around the passage of scripture being studied each week. It’s a great kick-start to your discussion time and provides some additional insights to the sermon and the passage being studied. Video links are provided to the leaders each week.

Read the scripture passages provided. Also refer to the sermon passage.

Refer to the discussion questions, working through each of the following sections with the help of the Guide and Encourager: The Character's Story, God's Story, Your Story and Group Stories. Don't feel that you need to do every question each week, simply use them as a guide for your discussion.

Recite the scripture memory passage together. Don't worry if you have to refer to it...retain as much as you can.

Pray. Use the prayer section as a guide to participate together in prayer as a group.

Growing In Faith – Outside Your Group Time

As we go through this study together we encourage you to put into practice two very powerful exercises to help you grow in faith:

Journal

Record what you are learning from these great stories of faith. What is God saying to you? What are you learning about who God is and who you are? What steps of faith is the Lord asking you to take?

Memorize

As a church we will be memorizing a series of verses (see below). Take on the challenge as a group! Recite it with your group weekly to help each other along.

Hebrews 11:1-3, 6, 12:1-3 (NIV)

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.

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.

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Discussion Questions

The Character's Story

When we read someone's story we learn about who they are in light of their background and the setting of their story. This section will help you identify with the character and the lessons from their story.

- Read the corresponding biography for each character.
- How did the sermon inform your understanding or challenge you this week?
- What specifically did the author of Hebrews point out about this week's character? Why is this significant? How does it demonstrate their faith?
- Hebrews 11:6 says: *'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.'* How did the character believe God and how were they seeking Him?
- How does the Bible character exemplify living hope and inspire you towards greater faith?

God's Story

When we read scripture we need to ask what it is revealing about God. This section will enable you to reflect on the character of God as presented in each of the faith stories. This may challenge you to consider your own view of God.

- What aspect of God’s character is revealed in the story this week? Examples: loving, faithful, provider, promise keeper, kind, trustworthy, powerful, miracle worker, gracious, protector...
- How has your view of God been challenged or encouraged from this story? How does that impact your relationship with Him?
- Do you really believe that God is who He says He is in this story? Give an example from your life at any age or stage where you experienced this truth of who He is for yourself.

Your Story

This section is for you to get personal about what you are learning and what your response is. The goal is to grow in faith, so each week you will have an opportunity to ‘check in’ with how your faith journey is going.

- What are you learning about what it means to be a person of faith?
- What did you learn about yourself from this week’s story? Could you identify with the character? Why or why not?
- What would the author say about you this week, in the past or in the future? By faith _____ (your name) obeyed God by _____.
- Do a weekly faith check up on a scale of 1-10 . How are you doing in trusting God this week?



1 Doing it my way **5** Learning to let go **10** Leaving it up to Him

- Is there something that is hindering you from trusting God? What is it? What would help you trust God more?

Group Stories

This section will enable people in your group to share faith stories from their life to help you get to know each other more deeply and to learn from one another. Have a different person share a short testimony with your group each week. Your testimony can focus on one of the following:

- How and when did you first come to faith in God?
- How are you growing in faith right now?
- How have you demonstrated faith in God in the past? What happened?
- How would you like to demonstrate faith in God in the future?

Pray

- Ask God to help you pray faith-filled prayers. Prayers that believe God is who He says He is and He will do what He says He will do. Make a list of specific requests that you are believing God for. Examples: Salvation for others, renewal, awakening, revival, forgiveness, restoration for relationships, health, finances, etc.
- Ask God to remove any hindrances that are limiting your faith and trust in Him.
- Confess sin that is holding you back from fully believing and trusting God.
- Ask God to increase your faith.

Session 1 – Faith & Enoch

Hebrews 11:5-6

Key Verse

Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. Genesis 5:24

Enoch's story is told in Genesis 5:18-24. He is also mentioned in Luke 3:37, Jude 1:14-15.

Enoch's Biography

Enoch holds a rare distinction in the Bible: He did not die. Instead, God “took him away.” Scripture does not reveal much about this remarkable man. Only a short sentence, “Enoch walked faithfully with God,” in Genesis 5:22 and repeated in Genesis 5:24 reveals why he was so special to his Creator. In this wicked period before the flood, most men did not walk faithfully with God. They walked their own path, the crooked way of sin. Enoch did not keep silent about the sin around him. Jude says Enoch prophesied about those evil people. Enoch walked in faith 365 years of his life, and that made all the difference. No matter what happened, he trusted God. He obeyed God. God loved Enoch so much he spared him the experience of death.

Sermon Notes:

Session 2 – Sarah

Hebrews 11:11

Key Verse

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Genesis 21:1

Sarah's story is told in Genesis chapters 11 through 25; Romans 4:19, 9:9, 1 Peter 3:6.

Sarah's Biography

Sarah (originally named Sarai) was one of several women in the Bible who were unable to have children. That proved doubly distressing for her because God had promised her husband Abraham that he would be the father of the Jewish nation, with descendants more numerous than the stars in the sky. After waiting many years, Sarah convinced Abraham to sleep with her handmaiden, Hagar, to produce an heir. That was an accepted practice in ancient times. The child born of that encounter was named Ishmael. But God had not forgotten his promise. Three heavenly beings, disguised as travelers, appeared to Abraham. God repeated his promise to Abraham that his wife would bear a son. Even though Sarah was very old, she did conceive and deliver a son. They named him Isaac. Isaac would father Esau and Jacob. Jacob would father 12 sons who would become heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah would come David, and finally Jesus of Nazareth, God's promised Saviour.

Sermon Notes:

Session 3 – Abel

Hebrews 11:4

Key Verse

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith. Hebrews 11:4

Abel's story is told in Genesis 4:1-8. He is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35, Hebrews 12:24.

Abel's Biography

Abel was the second child born into the world, but the first one to obey God. All we know about this man is that his parents were Adam and Eve, he was a shepherd, he presented pleasing offerings to God, and his short life was ended at the hands of his jealous older brother, Cain.

The Bible doesn't tell us why God liked Abel's gift and disliked Cain's, but both Cain and Abel knew what God expected. Only Abel obeyed. Throughout history, Abel is remembered for his obedience and faith (Hebrews 11:4), and he is called "righteous" (Matthew 23:35). The Bible is filled with God's general guidelines and expectations for our lives. It is also filled with more specific directions. Like Abel, we must obey regardless of the cost and trust God to make things right.

Sermon Notes:

Session 4 – Noah

Hebrews 11:7

Key Verse

So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.
Genesis 6:22

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:28-10:32. He is also mentioned in Isaiah 54:9, Luke 17:26-27.

Noah's Biography

The story of Noah's life involves not one, but two great and tragic floods. The world in Noah's day was flooded with evil. The number of those who remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love had dwindled to one. Of God's people, only Noah was left. God's response to the severe situation was a 120-year-long last chance, during which he had Noah build a graphic illustration of the message of his life. Nothing like a huge boat on dry land to make a point! For Noah, obedience meant a long-term commitment to a project. Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. It is interesting that the length of Noah's obedience was greater than the life span of people today. The only comparable long-term project is our very lives. But perhaps this is one great challenge Noah's life gives us—to live, in acceptance of God's grace, an entire lifetime of obedience and gratitude.

Sermon Notes:

Session 5 – Abraham

Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19

Key Verse

And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith. Genesis 15:6

Abraham's story is told in Genesis 11-25, Acts 7:2-8, Romans 4.

Abraham's Biography

Abraham, the founding father of the Jewish nation of Israel, was a man of great faith and obedience to the will of God. His name in Hebrew means “father of a multitude.” Originally called Abram, or “exalted father,” the Lord changed his name to Abraham as a symbol of the covenant promise to multiply his descendants into a great nation that God would call his own. Prior to this, God had already visited Abraham when he was 75, promising to bless him and make his offspring into an abundant nation of people. All Abraham had to do was obey God and do what God told him to do. This marked the beginning of the covenant God established with Abraham. It was also Abraham's first test from God, since he and his wife Sarai (later changed to Sarah) were still without children. Abraham demonstrated remarkable faith and trust, immediately leaving his home and his clan the moment God called him to the unknown territory of Canaan.

One crucial lesson we learn from Abraham is that God can and will use us in spite of our weaknesses. God will even stand by us and rescue us from our foolish mistakes. The Lord is greatly pleased by our faith and willingness to obey him. Like most of us, Abraham came to the full realization of God's purpose and promise only over a long period of time and a process of revelation. Thus, we learn from him that God's calling will usually come to us in stages.

Sermon Notes:

Session 6 – Joseph

Hebrews 11:22

Key Verse

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

Joseph's story is told in Genesis chapters 30-50. Other references include Exodus 13:19, Acts 7:10-18.

Joseph's Biography

Joseph in the Bible is one of the greatest heroes of the Old Testament, second perhaps, only to Moses. What separated him from others was his absolute trust in God, regardless of what happened to him. He is a shining example of what can happen when a person surrenders to God and obeys completely.

In his youth, Joseph was proud, enjoying his status as his father's favorite. Joseph bragged, giving no thought to how it hurt his brothers. They became so angry with his arrogance that they threw him down a dry well, then sold him into slavery to a passing caravan. Taken to Egypt, Joseph was sold again to Potiphar, an official in Pharaoh's household. Through hard work and humility, Joseph rose to the position of overseer of Potiphar's entire estate. But Potiphar's wife lusted after Joseph. When Joseph rejected her sinful advance, she lied and said Joseph tried to rape her. Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison.

Joseph must have wondered why he was being punished for doing the right thing. Even so, he worked hard again and was put in charge of all the prisoners.

Through a series of events God had given Joseph the gift of interpreting dreams, he was eventually restored to his former position and his God-given wisdom was so great that Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all of Egypt. Joseph stockpiled grain to avoid a terrible famine.

Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food, and after many tests, Joseph revealed himself to them. He forgave them, then sent for their father, Jacob, and the rest of his people.

They all came to Egypt and settled in land Pharaoh gave them. Out of much adversity, Joseph saved the 12 tribes of Israel, God's chosen people. Joseph is a "type" of Christ, as a character in the Bible with godly qualities who foreshadows the Messiah, savior of his people.

Sermon Notes:

Session 7 – Moses

Hebrews 11:23-28

Key Verse

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:14

Moses story is told in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. He is also mentioned in Acts 7:20-44.

Moses' Biography

Moses stands as the dominant figure of the Old Testament. God chose Moses to lead the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt and mediate his covenant with them. Moses handed down the Ten Commandments to the people, then completed his mission by bringing the Israelites to the edge of the Promised Land. Although Moses was inadequate for these monumental tasks, God worked mightily through him, supporting Moses every step of the way.

Moses helped free the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, the most powerful nation in the world at that time. He led this huge mass of unruly refugees through the desert, kept order, and brought them to the border of their future home in Canaan.

Under divine inspiration, he authored the first five books of the Bible or the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Moses obeyed God's orders despite personal danger and overwhelming odds. God worked tremendous miracles through him. Moses had great faith in God, even when no one else did. He was on such intimate terms with God that God talked with him regularly.

Sermon Notes:

Session 8 – The Persecuted

Hebrews 11:35b-40

There are multiple characters this week. As you go through the discussion questions reflect on the various people in the passage.

How do the stories of these people give you a bigger perspective of what it means to be a person of faith?

Sermon Notes:

Session 9 – Cloud of Witnesses

Hebrews 12:1-4

How can I grow as a Christian?

Spiritual growth results from trusting in Jesus Christ. “The righteous man shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life. To help facilitate your spiritual growth, practice the following:

How are you doing in these areas? Give yourself a rating between 1-10 (1 being low, 10 being high)

- G** Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7)
- R** Read the Bible daily (Acts 17:11), beginning with the Gospel of John.
- O** Obey God moment-by-moment (John 14:21)
- W** Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19, John 15:8)
- T** Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7)
- H** Holy Spirit: Allow Him to control and empower your daily life (Galatians 5:16, 17; Acts 1:8)

- How has this series impacted your life? What did you learn from this series through the group time as well as your own personal time with God?
- What steps are you taking to live by faith, to keep running the race? Share specifics with your group.
- Pray for each other that there would be quick obedience to do whatever God asks of you and to be the person He has made you to be.

Sermon Notes:



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www.christianity.about.com

Life Application Study Bible

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