

# Small Group Guide: The Tension of Faith

Based on Hebrews 11

## Key Takeaways from the Sermon

### 1. Faith is More Than Belief

- Faith (hypostasis) = "that which stands under" or "title deed of possession"
- It's not just hoping for things, but having assurance of things not yet seen
- Faith is a gift from God that develops over time through relationship with Him

### 2. Three Types of Faith

- Converting Faith - Salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- Daily Faith - Walking with Jesus through transformation
- Supernatural Faith - Gift of the Holy Spirit for the miraculous

### 3. The Tension: Horizontal vs. Vertical Faith

- Horizontal Faith - What can God do for me here and now?
- Vertical Faith - Seeing Jesus as the ultimate promise and reward
- True heroes of faith saw beyond earthly blessings to the eternal city

### 4. Two Types of Faith Heroes

- Those who saw miracles, conquered kingdoms, received promises
- Those who suffered, were tortured, martyred—yet never compromised
- Both groups had one thing in common: they saw Jesus and counted Him as everything

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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Understanding Faith

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-2. What does it mean that faith is "the assurance of things hoped for"? How is this different from just hoping for something?
2. The sermon mentioned that many Christians have "hope" but not yet "faith." What's the difference? Where do you find yourself?

3. Peter walking on water: The pastor said Peter walked on the Word of God, not just the water. What does it mean to "stand on God's Word" in your current circumstances?

## Section 2: The Tension of Faith

4. Read Hebrews 11:13-16. Abraham received promises (the land, a son) but still "died in faith, not having received the promises." How can both be true? What does this teach us about faith?
5. The sermon said: "Faith is not about what you can get, but what God wants to make you into on this journey." How does this challenge or change your perspective on prayer and faith?
6. Moses' choice (Hebrews 11:24-27): He gave up being Pharaoh to suffer with God's people. What "passing pleasures" or earthly securities might God be asking you to release in order to gain something greater?

## Section 3: Horizontal vs. Vertical Faith

7. Pastor Clay suggested we use "80% of our faith for earthly things and 20% for heavenly things." Why is this problematic? How can we flip this ratio?
8. Read Hebrews 11:35-38. Why does God include the stories of those who were "tortured, sawn in two, destitute" as examples of faith? What does this teach us about success and faith?
9. What does it mean that "the world was not worthy" of these suffering saints? How does this reframe how we view persecution or difficulty?

## Section 4: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

10. Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What "weights" or earthly accomplishments might you be carrying that God is asking you to lay down? How do these prevent you from running your race well?
  11. Jesus "endured the cross" for "the joy set before Him"—which was us. How does knowing you are Jesus' joy change your perspective on your worth and identity?
  12. The sermon ended with: "Jesus is everything." Is He? If someone looked at your life—your time, money, worries, pursuits—what would they say is your "everything"?
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## This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

### Option 1: Faith Inventory

- List 5 things you're currently hoping/praying for
- For each one, ask: "Is this horizontal (earthly) or vertical (eternal) faith?"
- Ask God to shift your heart toward vertical faith—seeing Jesus as the ultimate promise

### Option 2: Step Out in Faith

- Identify one area where God has been speaking to you but you've been hesitant
- Take one concrete step of obedience this week (give financially, pray for healing, share your faith, etc.)
- Journal what happens—whether you see results or not

### Option 3: Lay Down Weights

- Identify one "weight" you're carrying (worry, earthly ambition, need for control, unforgiveness)
- Spend time in prayer specifically releasing this to God
- Replace it by meditating on Hebrews 11-12 daily

### Option 4: Practice Vertical Faith

- Each day this week, set aside 10 minutes to focus solely on who Jesus is (not what He can do for you)
- Read about Jesus in the Gospels, worship, thank Him for who He is
- Notice how this affects your perspective on daily challenges

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## Personal Reflection Questions

1. If I'm honest, is my faith mostly horizontal (focused on earthly blessings) or vertical (focused on Jesus Himself)?
  2. What would change in my life if I truly believed "the world is not my home" and lived as a citizen of heaven?
  3. Am I willing to trust God even if He doesn't answer my prayers the way I want? Even if I suffer?
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## Prayer Time

### Group Prayer Focus:

1. For Salvation - Pray for those who raised their hands or anyone in the group still wrestling with fully surrendering to Christ
2. For Faith to Grow - Ask God to increase faith in specific areas where group members are struggling with doubt
3. For Healing - Pray specifically for physical, emotional, or spiritual healing needs in the group
4. For Vertical Perspective - Pray that God would shift hearts from earthly focus to eternal focus

### Ministry Time:

- Offer to pray for anyone who needs healing or breakthrough
- Encourage people to step out in faith and pray for one another
- Believe God for the miraculous

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## Closing Thought

"Faith is a way of seeing the kingdom of God as a greater reality than what our current circumstances are. When we're locked in with heaven, heaven flows through us."

Memory Verse for the Week: *"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* - Hebrews 12:2

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