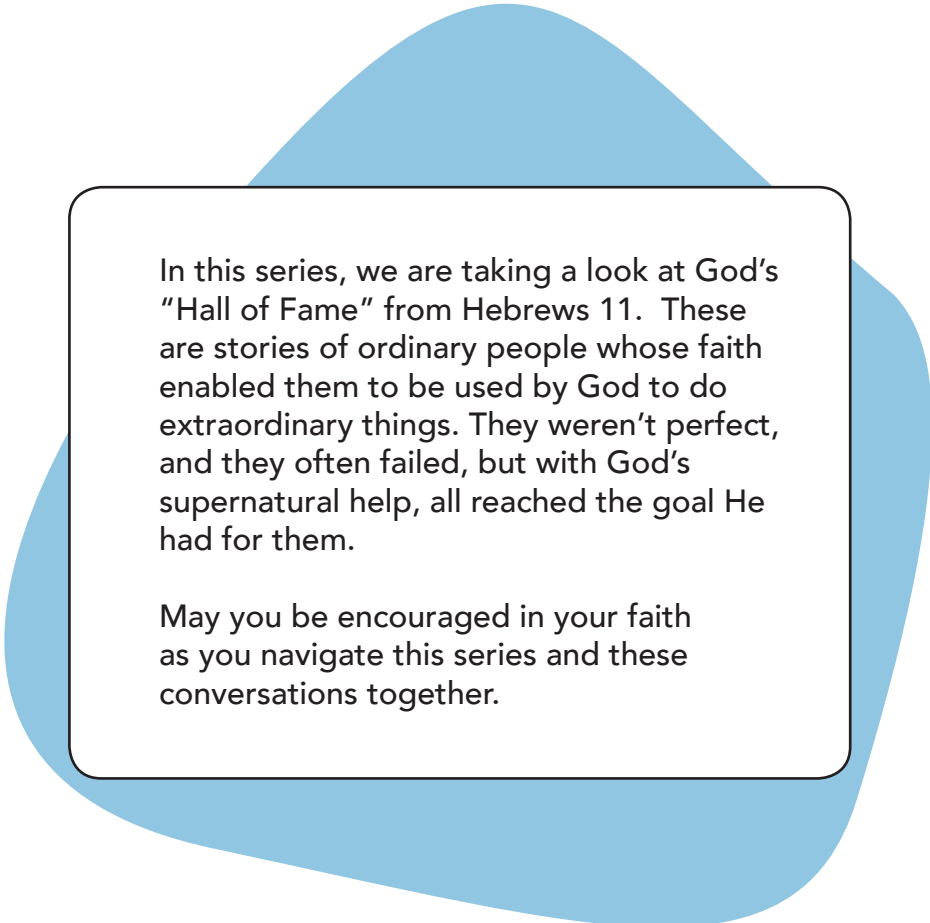


5 WEEKS

WHAT GOD CAN DO THROUGH ORDINARY YOU





In this series, we are taking a look at God's "Hall of Fame" from Hebrews 11. These are stories of ordinary people whose faith enabled them to be used by God to do extraordinary things. They weren't perfect, and they often failed, but with God's supernatural help, all reached the goal He had for them.

May you be encouraged in your faith as you navigate this series and these conversations together.

© Copyright 2024. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

4 Keys to Effective Living -
Moses 4

2

The Type of Person God Uses -
Noah 7

3

4 Tests of a Real Believer -
Abraham 10

4

How to be a Stronger Person -
Samson 13

5

God Can Turn Nobodies into Somebodies -
Gideon 15

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group..... 18

Group Agreement 19

4 Keys to Effective Living

MOSES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Who is your favorite sports hero?

Big Idea:

From Moses, we can draw four principles for an effective life: 1) Be yourself, 2) accept responsibility for your life, 3) establish a value system, and 4) never take your eyes off the goal.

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 11:24-28

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 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. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's

anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 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."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Hebrews 12:1-23

"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, 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. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Discussion:

Read the key Scriptures and discuss the following

1. In what ways have you been drawn to be someone or something other than your true self? How has that impacted you?
2. Moses, Jewish by birth, cut himself off from a promising career as an Egyptian and refused to live a lie. Instead, he wanted do what God made him to do, but his true identity caused him some suffering. Share any ways that you've experienced negative outcomes from being yourself and/or pursuing what God would have you do.
3. In Moses' story we see him both refusing and choosing. Discuss what Hebrews 11 says about that.
4. Moses took responsibility for his own life, and although there was suffering in it, there was also reward. What encouragement can you take from Moses' example?
5. In Hebrews 11:26, we see that Moses considered God's will of greater value than all treasures of Egypt. He set up a value system for his life and lived by it. Discuss what values you have established and committed to live by in your own life.
6. How do those align with God's purpose and values?
7. In Hebrews 11:27, it says that Moses was looking ahead beyond the here and now - he was man of vision, had eyes of faith, and continually visualized his goal. That enabled him to see past the many problems he faced to keep pressing on toward God's greater purpose. What problems are discouraging you currently?
8. How might you put them in perspective of God's greater purpose?
9. Of the four principles we glean from Moses' life, which most resonates with you and why?

Wrapping It Up:

Discuss what commitment you might make today to carry out God's greater purpose in your life.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for all who received Christ this week at our Easter services, that they will take steps to grow in their faith and engage in authentic biblical community.

Memory Verse:

"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, 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. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Hebrews 12:1-3

2

The Type of Person God Uses Noah

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you felt like your actions caused you to stick out like a sore thumb.

Big Idea:

Through Noah we can glean four characteristics of the kind of person God uses. 1) Noah was available 2) Noah dared to be different 3) Noah followed God completely 4) Noah never gave up

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 11:7

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

2 Chronicles 16:9

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole

earth that he may show himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is fully committed to Him."

Genesis 6:5-8

"Then the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. And the Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth and His heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I'll wipe out mankind whom I've created from the face of the earth. Man and animals, creatures that move along the ground and birds of the air for I am grieved that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."

Genesis 6:9

"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God."

Genesis 6:22

"Noah did everything just as God commanded."

Discussion:

Read the key Scriptures and discuss the following:

1. Out of all the people who lived on the earth, what do you see from the key Scriptures that would indicate possible reasons that God chose Noah?
2. In God's eyes, availability is much more important than ability. In what ways have you seen God use your availability, even in those situations where you felt your ability was lacking?
3. In Genesis 6:9, we see that Noah stood in stark contrast to the rest of those who walked on the earth at that time. He dared to be different and wasn't afraid to stand alone. In a time when conformity is often an enemy of following Jesus, what actions are you taking or might you take in your life to walk faithfully with God?
4. In Genesis 6:22, we see that Noah did everything just as God commanded, and it was by his faith that he is included in God's Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11. Faith is following God's instructions even when it doesn't make sense. Can you share a time in your life where following God's instructions just didn't make sense?
5. How did you respond in that scenario and what was the result?
6. Discuss how you discern what God's instructions are for your life. What are reliable ways to do so?
7. Building the ark according to God's specifications was no small feat. Possibly taking up to 120 years to complete, Noah's patience, persistence, and determination are evident. While you may not be asked to build an ark, what can you learn from Noah's perseverance as you navigate difficulties and obstacles in your life?
8. Consider Noah's mess up at the end of his life (Genesis 9) and that it didn't disqualify him from being used by God. How does that encourage you in the midst of your own failures?

Wrapping It Up:

Reread 2 Chronicles 16:9. Then pray together a prayer committing your heart wholly to God.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our new members who were presented before the congregation.

Memory Verse:

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth that he may show himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are fully committed to Him."

2 Chronicles 16:9

4 Tests of a Real Believer

Abraham

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is the best promise you've ever fulfilled for another person?

Big Idea:

Abraham shows us 4 ways that God tests our faith. 1) The test of major change 2) the test of a delayed promise 3) the test of an impossible problem 4) the test of a senseless tragedy.

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 11:8-19

"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. 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. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

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. 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.

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. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death."

Romans 4:3

"What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Discussion:

Read the key Scriptures and discuss the following:

1. How do you tend to respond when you're uncertain about the future?
2. Abraham's life shows that a test of a real believer is that they follow God's leading without knowing where they're going. When have you seen that at play in your own life?
3. God wants us to base our lives on promises, but as Abraham's life showed, sometimes those promises

are delayed. What do you learn from Abraham's example about believing God, even in the delays?

4. When's the last time you were up against a problem that seemed impossible or insurmountable?
5. Discuss the examples in Abraham's life of impossible problems.
6. How do His responses to God in these circumstances inspire you in your own challenges?
7. Abraham went through the most traumatic of testings when it came to his son Isaac, yet he trusted God without having any explanation. This showed that faith goes beyond realm of explanations. Share a time when you had no explanation, but were able to trust God nevertheless.
8. What do you find the most challenging in the four ways that God tests our faith?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together to grow in your faith and in your ability to trust God no matter the circumstances.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are currently walking through the most difficult testings of their life. Ask God to give them faith to believe, and to be strengthened in their journey.

Memory Verse:

“What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Romans 4:3

4

How to be a Stronger Person Samson

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Who is the strongest person you know? And what about them makes you choose them?

Big Idea:

Samson's story reveals three things that weaken your life. 1) Self Indulgence 2) Bitterness 3) Carelessness

Key Scriptures:

Judges 14-15

Hebrews 11:32-34

"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, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 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."

Galatians 6:7-8

"Do not be misled. Remember that you cannot ignore God and get away with it. A man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows. If he sows to please his own desires, he will be planting seeds of evil and will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death."

Proverbs 29:22

"An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins."

Discussion:

Read the key Scriptures and discuss the following:

1. It's been said that the wise learn from experience, but the wiser learn from the experiences of others. Samson is one such person from whom we can learn. Read his story together from Judges 14-15.

2. What is the most tragic aspect of Samson's story, from your perspective?
3. Samson's weakness ended up costing him his strength. Discuss how that can play out in your own life when you disregard God.
4. Another aspect of Samson's life is that he lived in a constant state of resentment and anger. He had great strength, but little self-control. Discuss where that anger and lack of self-control cost him most.
5. What cautions does that bring to mind for your own life application?
6. Samson was careless with the gifts that God had given him. And it cost him dearly. What gifts has God given you for which you might be more grateful?
7. The good news of the Gospel is that God gives people second chances. After Samson lost everything, he recommitted his life to God and God began to build strength back into his life. Samson's greatest victory was on the last day of his life. What can you glean from his story?

Wrapping It Up:

Share and pray together for the areas that most weaken your life. Ask God to bring strength from your greatest weakness.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for all those who will be baptized at our Sunday services next week.

Memory Verse:

"Do not be misled. Remember that you cannot ignore God and get away with it. A man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows."

Galatians 6:7

God Can Turn Nobodies into Somebodies

Gideon

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Describe a time when you felt the most weak and fearful.

Big Idea:

Gideon's life shows how God can change anyone through:
1) Affirmation 2) Revelation 3) Confrontation 4) Transformation

Key Scriptures:

Judges 6-7

2 Corinthians 12:9

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Discussion:

1. The story of Gideon reminds us that God turns nobodies into somebodies. Read his story together in Judges 6-7.
2. In Judges 6:12, God affirms Gideon, speaking into him a destiny that had not yet come to fruition. What

glimpses of your destiny has God affirmed in you?

3. In verse 14, "The Lord turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength that you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?' ... The Lord answered, 'I will be with you. You will strike down the Midianites as if they were but one man.'" God encouraged Gideon to go in the strength that he had, despite the fact that was very little strength. Share an area where you feel you are lacking strength. How might this aspect of Gideon's story encourage you in your own weakness?
4. Discuss how God eventually tested Gideon in his faith before He used him to deliver Israel. (Judges 6:25-35)
5. When God wants to use you, He may test you physically, emotionally or spiritually. How might you prepare yourself for these tests as they come?

6. Gideon was transformed by the tests he endured and the faith he displayed. How have you experienced God's transformation in your life through His testing?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray for one another as we wrap up this series, that God would use each of you in extraordinary ways as He grows your faith in Him.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for those in our Walk with Me program, that their lives will be transformed just as Gideon's was.

Memory Verse:

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

NOTES:

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?

Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



SUNNYBROOK
community church

5601 Sunnybrook Drive
Sioux City, Iowa 51106
www.sunnybrookchurch.org