



Hebrews 11:23-29
Your Faith Affects Others

Summary: Moses is affected by the faith of his family, makes it his own, and affects others.

Most people become a Christian through the influence of someone they know – a friend, family member, college roommate, or coworker. God gets your attention about spiritual things, then He uses that person and the conversations you have with them, the things you see in their life, to help you make sense of the things you're wrestling with in your own heart and mind and what you see in the world.

Now, they might not be there when you make a prayer of surrender to God, when you ask Jesus into your life as Savior, that might happen on your own in your car or your room or at some church service, but they play a significant role in helping you get to that point.

And that's the way God intends the Christian faith to work – for some crazy reason He prefers to use imperfect, broken people to reach and help other imperfect broken people. Their faith affects you and then at some point, your faith begins to affect others too.

That's the pattern we see unfolding in the book of Hebrews as we walk down the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. We see what happened in the lives of Old Testament saints and the choices they made to trust God, even when life was hard. We see how they trusted God's calling, His commands, and His character instead of their own feelings and circumstances. And, we get to see how it all turned out.

The whole chapter is designed to help us see that trusting in God is not always easy, but it's right. It's good. And ultimately, it delivers the greatest results. We have the privilege of seeing their examples to encourage us to live by faith today.

The chapter is organized chronologically, it begins with Creation and then moves up through the people and events of the book of Genesis – so we've seen the role faith played in the lives of Abraham and his family. Last week we saw how faith filtered through down through the generations from Abraham to his son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, and His great-grandson Joseph. And now we fast forward a few hundred years and see what happened as God continued to fulfill His promises to make Abraham's descendants a great nation.

We'll see how the faith of parents saved the life of their son, how the boy grew and made their faith his own, and how he later led an entire nation out of slavery by calling them to trust God, by faith. That man was Moses and the best way to understand what we'll see in Hebrews is to go back and read Exodus, so will you keep a finger in Hebrews, but turn with me back to:

Exodus 1:1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; 4 Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5 All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). 6 And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. 7 But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; 10 come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. 13 So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; 16 and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. 18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?" 19 And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. 21 And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

22 So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

Exodus 2:1 And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. 2 So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she hid him three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. 6 And when she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give *you* your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house, adopted into a position of incredible wealth, comfort, education, and opportunity. But somehow, he knew "these are not my people." The people we oppress, the ones we discriminate against, the ones we talk about as a "problem" those are actually my people.

And so, eventually he came to a pivotal decision point – he would turn his back on all his friends and privileges in the capital and identify with his true heritage, his true people. And then, skipping over a lot of details we don't have time to explore in 40 minutes on a Sunday, God eventually called him to stand up to the forces of power and lead his people out of slavery. It's an amazing story that has been a source of inspiration, comfort, and guidance to God's people throughout history, especially to those suffering on the outside of political power, the oppressed, the mistreated, those suffering injustice.

But we read about it here in Hebrews because we're reminded that all of this happened **by faith**. Faith, belief that what God is doing is more important than what I'm feeling or facing, believing that He really is in control and that the big picture is more important than what I can see on the small screen of my life, is what fueled all the critical decisions leading up to and through these pivotal events in history. And that is why we read a summary of what happened back in Hebrews in the Hall of Faith. Turn there with me now and notice what is said about the role faith played in these historic events:

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

We start with the faith of Moses' parents. They knew what the king had ordered, but they also knew there was something special about this child. And their faith had an effect on their son, a very direct effect - it saved his life.

So now, track this with me, mom and dad, because it may be that the greatest thing you do in your life is to make a choice, by faith, that shapes and influences the life of your child who then goes on to do the really great thing. What if your main role, in God's big plan, is to make a decision, by faith, that will influence or enable all the other things that God will do through your child in the coming years? It's something powerful to think about, isn't it?

And, maybe just like Moses' parents, you'll make that choice when it's very hard to do and you have no idea how it will turn out. But you know this – you're making the choice, the

sacrifice, the decision, [by faith](#), trusting God. Believing that His ways are best, even if they're bumpy.

Some of us didn't grow up with a God-fearing mom and dad together in the house and we're trying to figure out what that looks like because now we have to fill that role. Well, mom and dad, or future mom and dad, I want you to see – your faith can make an impact on your children. You might not see it immediately, but if you're making choices and decisions [by faith](#) in an attempt to obey and follow God, it can have a tremendous impact on the life of your child, and who knows who else, later down the road.

Moses' mom had no idea how things would work out when she put her baby boy in the river, she had no idea he'd be walking through water on dry ground one day leading an entire nation. And you don't either - you don't know where your act of faith will lead, but you at least have the privilege of seeing her example and how it turned out. And that's why this is here in Hebrews, to show you what has happened in the past so that you're encouraged to make choices today.

One last thing: notice, at some point Moses' parents trusted God and let go of their son. They did what they could to hide him and help him for a while, but the moment finally came when they could not hold him any longer. They couldn't hide him. They had to let him go and trust God. So too with you mom and dad – you're going to shelter your child for a time, protect them for a time, but sooner or later you have to let them go and trust God to work things out. Moses' mom didn't micromanage her dear son. It hurt her to let him go, for sure, but she did, and she trusted God to work things out, not her ability to control the situation.

Of course, it looks like God handled things just fine because the day came when Moses took his own stand for the faith. He turned from all the privileges he had, all the access to power and influence, all the opportunity and connections – he walked away from it all and said, it's better to be who and what I really am, by the grace of God.

[Hebrews 11:24](#) [By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.](#)

The day came when Moses relocated the center of his identity. Each of us anchors our identity and therefore our value, our sense of self-worth, in something. Maybe you see yourself as an athlete or the competitive type. You'll turn anything into a game because games have winners, and that's you. Or maybe, you're from Texas, you wear your boots with pride and you love your truck. You might see yourself as Irish, or Mexican, or Puerto Rican. There is some label that you attach to yourself, it is the lens through which you see and hope to be seen.

Well, Moses had a sense of identity. And it was a good one, he was a son of the daughter of Pharaoh. He had rank and standing. People knew his name. He had privileges, there were

people who envied him – and that’s the mark of success many people want, isn’t it – to be known, noticed, and envied – look at me, you wish you were me. That feels good to our flesh.

But Moses gave that up and chose something else instead, to be counted among the people of God. He gave up what other people admired and took up what that same group of people despised.

Why on earth would you do that? Well, that’s just the thing – the answer is not found on earth, it’s found in eternity. Moses shifted his foundation because he shifted his perspective. Notice:

Hebrews 11:25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

Moses made a life-changing decision, and it was all driven by his calculation of what was truly valuable and enduring – he came to value God’s eternal pleasure over [the passing pleasures of sin](#), which is a fascinating term worthy of our consideration.

You see, you need to notice, that according to Scripture, sin can be pleasurable. That’s actually the problem, isn’t it? Sin can be fun, enjoyable, thrilling, *for a moment*. It can have [passing pleasures](#). If it wasn’t fun, there wouldn’t be any draw. You may have to talk yourself into making better decisions, controlling your emotions, eating more vegetables, doing your homework, or spending less money. But you never have to talk yourself into lust, or anger, or laziness, they pretty much always sound like a good option in the moment.

But here’s the problem, sometimes we try to run a fake news campaign on sin. We try to say oh it’s horrible, terrible stuff, only really bad, nasty people do it, they’re trapped by it, they’re slaves to sin. And look, there’s some theological truth to that - but if we’re not careful we wind up making a caricature of sin that bears no semblance with reality. And then, when temptation shows up we don’t quite know what to do because it isn’t smelly, nasty, and ugly. We’re not revolted by it. It actually seems like it might be a good idea.

Whether you’re trying to guide yourself or others through life and decision making, you’ll do a much better job if you just admit – sin often has a [passing pleasure](#). It makes sense *in the moment*.

The calculus doesn’t change until you take in the long view, until you recognize that it’s a [passing pleasure](#) and it’s not really worth the long-term costs.

I’m sure plenty of us have had the experience of giving into something that felt good in the moment and when it was over you were suddenly filled with regret and remorse – the morning after, or the moment it’s over, you suddenly wish it hadn’t happened. You got a double whammy of guilt *and* shame or disappointment.

And look, it's really easy to make the connection here with things in the realm of passion – from lust to anger, but it's more than that actually, it's also recognizing that even many of the morally neutral or good things here on earth are still [passing pleasures](#).

I've said before, one of my great challenges in ministry is to help a congregation living in the affluent suburbs of Washington DC to understand that you can throw away your life chasing a career in the same way someone else throws away their life chasing heroin. The path will look different from the outside, but the destination is still the same if it's all driven by your own pursuit of satisfaction and fulfillment. And the truth is: some of us are far more tempted by the possibility of promotion or recognition than we are of getting high.

But you don't have to look very far to find examples of people who got to the top and realized the view wasn't what they thought it would be. You finally work your way into the kitchen and see how the sausage is made but then you lose your appetite.

What am I saying? Simply this – there are thousands of ways to spend to your life and only one that really matters – to spend it serving God, choosing Him over everything else, whether the options are bright and shiny or dull and dingy. Do you choose to be known as a man or woman of God or to [enjoy the passing pleasures of sin](#) – in whatever form of [pleasure](#) you prefer, whether socially acceptable and career enhancing, or personally destructive?

If your life is all about you, your goals, your dreams, your wants, needs, desires, and you haven't invited God in to shape and direct and counsel you on it all, chances are really, really, good that your life is shaped by [passing pleasures](#) – things that will be fun or fulfilling for a moment but ultimately fade away.

But listen to me church, listen to me, because this is super, super important: it's also possible for you to do *some of the same things you're doing right now*, but do them in a redeemed way. If you surrender your life, your career, your goals, to God, He might tell you to sacrifice them, to throw them all away, or set them off to the side and do something else.

But, He also might tell you to hold onto them, keep them, but pursue them in a different way – to pursue them as good things, but not ultimate things. Hear me church, please, please, hear me – you can worship God at work, at school, in your community. Worship is not just for Sunday and Wednesday night. God is with you at all times. I'm asking you, begging you, to see that, know that, and talk with Him about what it means in your specific situation. What difference does it make for God to be part of your life on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock? What role does faith really play in your life? Is it an accessory, or the foundation, the core? And how does that affect where you locate the center of your identity?

That's a choice you have to make. There are choices others can make for you. We've already seen that, we've seen that Moses' parents made a choice, [by faith](#), that set him up well, he was off to a good start. Praise God for the good choices others have made and the way they help us. But here we see, Moses made this choice himself. He looked at the possibilities,

considered the outcomes, adjusted the focal length of his field of view to consider the eternal and spiritual aspect, and then he made a choice.

Hebrews 11:25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

And once he had made that choice to identify with God, to anchor his identity in eternity instead of Egypt, God went ahead and made him a leader again, only this time, a leader of his own people.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

God used Moses to lead people into freedom. They followed God by following Moses, by faith. Was it easy for Moses to be a leader and example? No. Was it automatic? No. Were there times when he was frustrated and fearful and felt like giving up? Yes. But God used him to affect an entire nation of people inspiring them to follow, **by faith**.

He led them to do things that were unprecedented – to celebrate Passover as a way of avoiding God’s judgement and to walk through the Red Sea when they were pinned in by the Egyptian Army. He had the faith to lead and they had the faith follow, it all happened, **by faith**.

So here’s where I want to end up – with some application for us today, because remember, these things are here in Scripture to help us benefit from their example.

I want to ask: what is your primary source of identity and where do you find it? Are you searching for a place in the palace of Egypt or have you found your identity in eternity as a child of God? This is one of the largest issues facing our society – people don’t know who they are or why they’re here or what they’re supposed to be doing. The search for identity and purpose is driving so many of our cultural conflicts and crises today. Do you know who you are? Do you know why you’re here? Do you know what life is about?

Moses gave up everything to be counted among the people of God because he believed it was worth it. What about you? What do you want out of life? Whose acceptance are you seeking? What role is faith playing in your life? And how is God forming that faith today?

We’ve seen how the faith of Moses’ parents affected him, how he then took a stand **by faith** himself, and how God used his faith to affect others, radically changing their lives by leading them to freedom. Your life has already been affected by someone else. You need to make that faith your own. And when you do, God can use you to affect others. The future is full of possibilities, if you’re looking far enough ahead - to an eternal kingdom that does not fade where your entrance and identity are made sure in Christ. Let’s pray.



Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

Hebrews 11:23-29 Your Faith Affects Others

Summary: Moses is affected by the faith of his family, makes it his own, and affects others.

- Moses' parents chose to save him, by faith. Whose faith has influenced and affected your life? Where do you see the spiritual fingerprints of family, friends, and others in your life?
 - Moses' parents choose to save him and disobey the government's order. When is it right to resist or defy authority?
- Moses chose to identify with his Hebrew relatives instead of the people in the palace believing, by faith, that this was a better choice in light of eternity. When have you had to take a stand for what you believe? What did it cost you?
 - Moses chose to anchor his primary identity in his family history, as one of God's chosen people. What do you see as primary aspects of your identity? How do you see yourself or explain yourself to others?
 - Consider others who have shifted their primary identity and what it cost them. Examples include Prince Harry and Meghan denouncing their titles. Arwen identifying with Aragon instead of the elves in *The Lord of Rings*. Those who leave the faith and culture of their family to follow Christ. Others?
 - How have you experienced the pull of sin as both pleasurable and passing?
 - Read: 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.
 - How does the theme of this passage connect with what we've learned from Moses? What do they both say about eternity vs the present? The presence of affliction? To explore this further, examine 1 Pe 4:12-16
- God used the faith of Moses to the people of Israel to celebrate Passover, leave Egypt, and walk through the Red Sea. How has God used your faith to affect someone else?