

“Commendable Faith (Part 1)”

When you read Hebrews 11 it’s like taking a tour of God’s Hall of Fame for heroes of the faith. Hebrews 11 shows us how to live by faith, and obtain a good testimony, and be commended for our faith. This chapter opens with a wonderful definition of faith: *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.”* Faith is hoping for something you haven’t seen, yet. It’s seeing as a reality, that which is not yet a reality, as though it were a reality. Faith is believing God and taking Him at His word. Faith is essential, because without faith it is impossible to please God (see Hebrews 11:6). Hebrews 11:3-7 gives us four descriptions of “commendable faith.”

First of all, having commendable faith means ***you accept what the Word of God says as true.*** Hebrews 11:3 says, *“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”* Out of nothing, God created everything with His spoken word. Faith believes the Genesis account of creation because God’s Word says this is how it happened. Having commendable faith means you believe what the Word of God says. **Second**, having commendable faith means ***you offer the most excellent sacrifice to God that you know will be acceptable to Him.*** Hebrews 11:4 says, *“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”* Abel and Cain were brothers, and both understood that *without the shedding of blood there is no remission/forgiveness for sins* (see Hebrews 9:22). As a shepherd, Abel brought some of his flock to the Lord as an offering—and the Lord respected Abel and his offering. As a farmer, Cain should have also brought an animal sacrifice to the Lord, but instead he brought what was more convenient for him, an offering of the fruit of the ground. The Lord did not respect Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry about this. Cain refused to listen to the Lord’s rebuke, and he ended up killing his brother over this incident. This tragic story teaches us that commendable faith sacrifices to God on His terms, not on our terms. It’s not about what is most convenient for us, it’s all about what God requires.

Third, having commendable faith means ***you please God by walking with God, knowing what He’s like, even though you’ve never seen Him.*** Hebrews 11:5-6 says, *“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him;’ for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* Enoch shows us that commendable faith leads us to pursue a personal relationship with our unseen God. We walk with Him, and we strive to get closer and closer to Him, and we diligently seek Him even though we’ve never seen Him with our physical eyes. But faith leads us to know and believe that He is more real than what we see with our physical eyes. **Fourth**, having commendable faith means ***you believe what you have been told without seeing any evidence of it—and then you act accordingly.*** Hebrews 11:7 says, *“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”* People’s wickedness was so great in the earth the Lord told Noah to make an

ark because He was going to destroy all flesh. Noah believed, even though no one else did, outside of his immediate family. Do you possess the kind of commendable faith that Noah had? Do you believe what God says, no matter what? Are you living by faith, regardless of what others think? This is what commendable faith looks like.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. I invite you make this declaration: *I believe what the Bible says!*
2. Are you following God on His terms? Or are you following God according to the way you think things should be?
3. How is your walk with God?
4. Do you believe what God says? Period?