

Better. Better Faith

Hebrews 11:1-2, 13, 39-40 and 12:1-2: 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... 13 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...39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect... 12 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.

LIFE GROUP / PERSONAL STUDY:

Faith is our trust in God and in His promises, that He is who he says He is and that He will do what He says He will do. It is literally hope and assurance in things not seen. There are times when our faith is circumstantial—when things are going well it is easy to praise God and believe that He is behind all of the blessings we are receiving. But when trouble strikes it is not surprising that we wonder, doubt, and question God's presence. This week in our Better series, we delve into BETTER FAITH; releasing things that hinder us, recognizing the path that God has mapped out for us, and relying on Jesus during good times and bad. We demonstrate true faith when we believe God's promises even when we don't see those promises fulfilled immediately.

1A) PERSONAL: What does faith in God look like to you? Describe ways that you demonstrate your faith.

1B) PERSONAL: Recall a time when you doubted God's presence in a particular circumstance. How was the situation resolved? In hindsight, how was God working on your behalf through it?

Read Hebrews 11:4-31:

2A) Briefly note how the following showed their faith in God.

Abel (V4):

Isaac (V20):

Enoch (V5):

Joseph (V22):

Noah (V7):

Moses (V23):

Abraham (Vs8, 17):

The people of Israel (V30):

Sarah (V11):

Rahab (V31):

Jacob (V21):

2B) PERSONAL: How is your faith impacted as you read through this “Who’s Who” of the faithful?

Read Mark 4:35-41:

3A) Describe how the disciples reacted and what Jesus said to them.

3B) PERSONAL: At that moment, the disciples’ faith was tied to their circumstance. During this 2020 pandemic, how have you questioned God’s presence in your circumstance? What blessings have you received from God in the midst of it?

Read Acts 7:51-59:

4) The stoning of Stephen lead to a great wave of persecution and believers scattered. But his death was not in vain. Choose one of the by-products below, noting what you learn.

Philip’s evangelistic tour (Acts 8:4-40)

Paul (Saul’s) conversion (Acts 9:1-30)

Peter’s missionary tour (Acts 9:32-11:18)

The church in Antioch of Syria founded (Acts 11:19-30)

Read Hebrews 12:1-2:

5) What are the commands stated in verse 1?

6) PERSONAL: What weight do you need to release because it is hindering your faith or entangling you in sin? (A what, a who, or a you)

7) PERSONAL: Create a prayer below asking God to give you clarity to recognize the path that God wants for your life and a deeper faith that allows you to rely on Him in every circumstance, with thanksgiving for the sacrifice that Jesus made for you.

ACT: Believing that God exists is only the beginning. He wants more than just acknowledgement. God wants your faith to lead to a personal, trusting, dependent relationship with him. As Pastor Bill and Pastor Rob have said, “You have all of Jesus that you want.” Don’t you want to get as much of Jesus as you can? Think of ways that you can rely more on God regardless of your circumstance. He wants you to share your thoughts, concerns, questions, your joys and your sorrows, the days where you have conquered sin and the times when you have fallen short. You will be amazed at the peace that you have when you press into God, knowing that He has you every step of your journey.

Daily Devotional: It always helps to look at the context of the passage. Then try to answer the following questions about the passage. Who is involved? What is going on? Where is the action taking place? When? How can this concept apply to my life? Why is it important? Also look for Commands, Warnings, and Examples to follow or not to follow.

- Every day this week read about strengthening our faith so that we may live life to the fullest in Christ.

Monday:

Galatians 2:20 NIV

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Tuesday:

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Wednesday:

Romans 10:10 NIV

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Thursday:

Romans 10:17 ESV

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Friday:

Mark 11:22-24 ESV

And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Saturday:

Galatians 3:22 NIV

But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Sunday:

Hebrews 11:6 ESV

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

