

## *Amazing Stories That Inspire Our Faith*

### *Inspiring Faith Series - Week 1*

Hebrews 11:1-2

**Introduction:** Because understanding what faith in God looks like is clearer through examples than explanations, in this series we will see how ordinary men and women demonstrated inspiring faith in God. Their faith stories will inspire and strengthen our faith in God! We will see how faith isn't the absence of doubt, nor does faith mean having all the answers. Hebrews 11 is not a "Who's Who" of perfect people. It is a record of ordinary men and women, like you and me, who believed that no one will ever be disappointed who puts their faith and trust in God!

**Key Series Truth:** Because God is fully faithful, we can trust Him fully and always have faith in what He can do.

**Section 1 - Faith defined.** (Hebrews 11:1)

#### **Three facts about the Hebrews 11 people of faith**

**Fact #1** - Though these individuals are separated by time and circumstances, they are connected by one common factor: what they did, they did by faith in God.

**Fact #2** - Living by faith sometimes meant moving out of their comfort zones and going against public opinion.

**Fact #3** - Living by faith wasn't only for a select group of "special" people or only for special circumstances. All believers are called to live by faith in God daily, then and now. (Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7)

**Section 2 - Faith applied.** (Hebrews 11:2)

**Notice this:** Faith has been defined as "outrageous trust in God." "Outrageous trust" is what you have when you build an ark hundreds of miles from any body of water (as Noah did). "Outrageous trust" compels you to leave your home, without knowing where you are going, because that's where God is leading (as Abraham did). "Outrageous trust" sends you into the Elah Valley to face a giant named Goliath (as David did). Do you have "outrageous trust in God"? Why or why not? Outrageous trust in God, because God is fully trustworthy, enables us to face life's circumstances with a "God's got this" faith.

#### **Three important facts about faith**

**Fact #1** - Faith is not a feeling but a choice to believe what God says.

**Fact #2** - Faith doubts our doubts rather than doubting our God.

**Fact #3** - Faith means believing in advance what often only makes sense in hindsight. Crossing Red Seas in life can be intimidating and frightening, but when we reach the other side, we can see how God led us safely all the way!

**Conclusion:** When we look at the lives of the people mentioned here, we quickly discover that they struggled in many areas. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all failed miserably when it came to honesty. Moses didn't do well with his temper. King David failed in the area of sexual purity. We don't find anyone receiving straight A's when it comes to the report card of their lives. So, what were they commended for? Their good report is awarded to them in one area and one area only – their faith in God. The ancients weren't commended for living perfect lives but for having faith in a perfect God. We don't live perfect lives, but we, too, can have faith in our perfect God.



*We've Got to Have Faith  
If We're Going to Please God*  
Inspiring Faith Series - Week 2  
Hebrews 11:3-7

**Introduction:** Our lives either demonstrate faith in God — meaning we trust Him, or they don't. If we live by faith, we please God. If we don't, we are not pleasing Him. Think about that for a moment and ask yourself, "How does my life show faith, my trust, in God?"

**Four reasons why we need faith**

**Reason #1: Without faith, we cannot understand the universe.**  
(Hebrews 11:3)

**Notice two important observations**

**Observation #1 - The universe's design bears evidence of God as its Designer.**

→ **Notice this:** God formed the universe at His command. The Greek word for "formed" means to put things together in a way that perfectly fits them for their purpose. We can observe the magnificence and beauty of creation all around us, which reveals evidence of Intelligent Design from a Creator, who is God.

**Observation #2 - Apart from a Creator, science cannot explain the origin of the universe.**

→ **Notice this:** The Bible explains why the theory of evolution exists. Romans 1:25 states, "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and

served created things rather than the Creator ..." Evolutionary scientists believe that life developed entirely without any intervention from a Higher Being. The goal of the evolutionist is to offer an alternative explanation for the origins of life, thus showing that belief in God is unnecessary. What evolutionists and atheists fear is this: if there is a Creator, He gets to define right and wrong, and we would be accountable to Him. What science reveals through a telescope or microscope will always point us back to the Creator, God. Whatever science reveals — without faith in a Creator God — will always leave us hopeless.

**Reason #2: Without faith, we cannot be right with God.** (Hebrews 11:4)

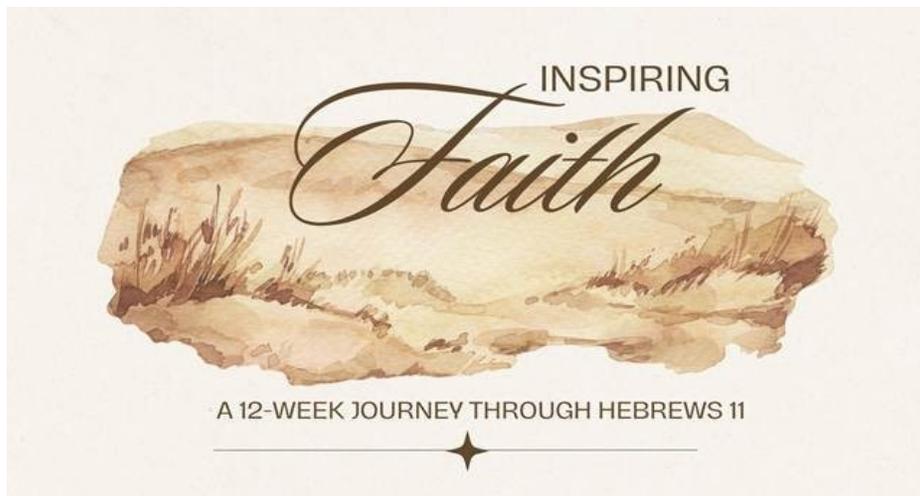
→ **Notice this:** Whatever may be said about the two offerings, the real difference was in the heart. Abel had faith and believed that God would be pleased with him for offering God his best. Cain lacked faith and apparently just went through the motions of giving an offering to God. While Abel's heart was pure when he offered his gift, Cain's heart appeared to be filled with pride, believing he didn't need to give his best to God.

**Reason #3: Without faith, we cannot please God.** (Hebrews 11:5-6)

→ **Notice this:** In Hebrews 11, we learn about faith in God through the Old Testament characters in the Bible. A significant aspect of their lives that highlights their faith in God is that they trusted completely in Him. When they displayed faith, confidence, and trust in God, He was pleased with them and rewarded them. This aspect of faith relies on the certainty of God's character as a good, great, and gracious God.

**Reason #4: Without faith, we cannot stand with God and stand against the world's ways.** (Hebrews 11:7)

→ **Notice this:** The Bible calls Noah a preacher of righteousness, but he didn't have much to show for his efforts. For 120 years, he preached the truth and called the society around him to repentance. When the flood finally came, only eight people were saved. However, by faith, Noah preached when no one seemed to listen. By faith, Noah built an ark when people ridiculed him. By faith, Noah continued to preach righteousness and construct the ark year after year. By faith, Noah stood with God while standing against the world's ways.



## *Abraham - Faith that Trusts God*

### *One Step At A Time*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 3

Hebrews 11:8-10

**Introduction:** Repeatedly, God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This description of God is based on the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with their descendants, received the promised land of Israel from God. Today, a heated debate continues over whether Israel owns its land, Gaza, and the surrounding areas. While some people and some Middle Eastern nations call the Jews OCCUPIERS of the land of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob calls the Jews the OWNERS of the land of Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had a plan for the salvation of humanity that involved sending a Savior through a specific nation and person. That plan was set in motion when God called Abraham and began the nation of Israel through him, and that plan was brought to fulfillment when Jesus died and rose again. Through Abraham, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would bless all the nations of the world by sending His Son, our Savior, to provide salvation available to all.

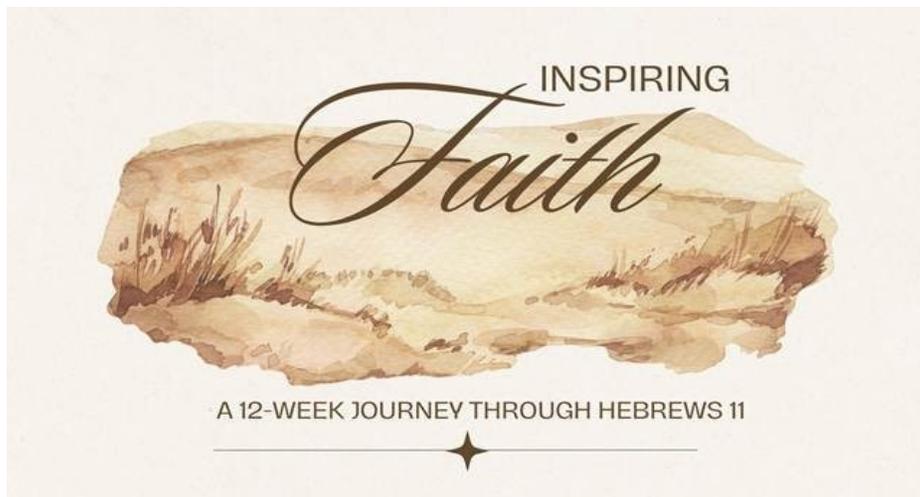
#### **Two significant facts about Abraham**

**Fact #1** - Before Abraham was a believer who had faith in God, he was an unbeliever who worshipped other gods.

**Fact #2** - Abraham was a prosperous man, considered successful by any human standard, when God said something to him that would change his life and ultimately change the world.

#### **What Abraham teaches us about living by faith**

- 1. Living by faith means living a life of trusting and obeying God.** (Hebrews 11:8)  
→ **Notice this:** The story of Abraham shows us that obeying God may not always work out the way we think it will, but it will always work out for the best. Everything else that happened in Abraham's life flowed from his decision to obey God. Obedience brings blessings, while disobedience brings consequences. Because God is trustworthy, we can have faith in Him one step at a time.
- 2. Living by faith means trusting in God as we wait for Him to fulfill His promises.** (Hebrews 11:9)  
→ **Notice this:** Following God in faith means we don't wait for full information before deciding to follow Him. Abraham obeyed "even though he did not know where he was going." God gave Abraham the direction to go, but not all the details. We are to say "yes" to God with the information we have, knowing we can trust God with the details. "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) Like Abraham, we can know that when we are waiting, God is always working out His plans for our lives.
- 3. Living by faith means, while living life now, we never take our eyes off Heaven.** (Hebrews 11:10)  
→ **Notice this:** This broken world comes with a huge helping of disappointments and pain, and never fully delivers on all that it promises. But one key to Abraham's faithful life was that he kept "looking forward" to Heaven. Abraham, knowing he was going to Heaven, changed his whole outlook on life. He could take whatever the world bought his way because his heart was set on Heaven. We can do the same



## *Abraham and Sarah: Having Faith*

### *In the Faithful Promises of God*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 4

Hebrews 11:11-12

**Introduction:** When it comes to keeping promises, God is absolutely faithful. We will see that to be true from the lives of Abraham and Sarah. The Bible says in Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, so He does not lie. He is not human, so He does not change his mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has He ever promised and not carried it through?” God is the ultimate promise keeper, and He has a perfect record in the promise-keeping department!

**What Abraham and Sarah teach us about demonstrating faith in the faithful promises of God**

**Lesson #1 - Faith believes in God's promises even against all odds.**

**Hebrews 11:11:** 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.

\* Abraham is told that he and Sarah will have a child within a year, and the child will be a son. See Genesis 18:9-15.

→ **Notice this:** The angelic visitor countered Sarah's question (“Can an old woman like me have a baby?”) with one of His own: “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” In other words, the angelic visitor answered Sarah's unbelief with the assurance: “Nothing is too hard for the Lord!” The question “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” is clearly rhetorical and warrants a strong “No! Nothing is too difficult for the Lord!” That statement remains just as true today as it was back then.

\* **Hebrews 10:23,** “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

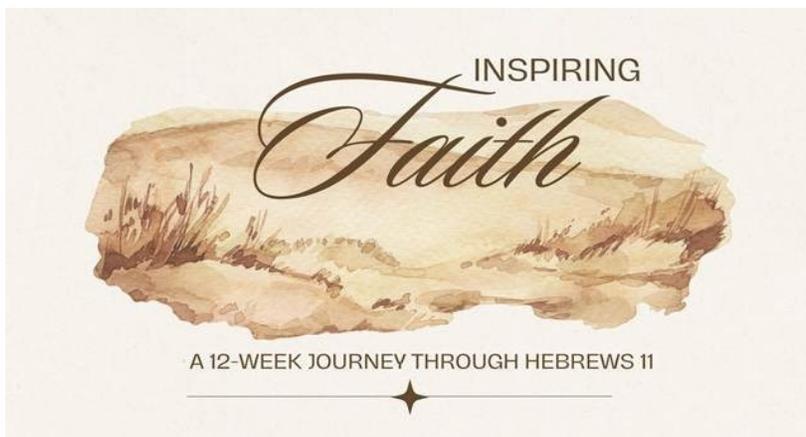
**Lesson #2 - God works through our faith in His promises to bring us blessings.**

**Hebrews 11:12:** 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.

→ **Notice this:** God wants us to embrace the promises in His word to find the comfort, strength, and assurance we need in life. And through our faith (trust) in His promises, God will bless us. However, Abraham's faith in God not only brought blessings to Abraham but also to his family and many others.

**Lesson #3 - The promises of God are unbreakable – we can never break God's promises by leaning on them!**

→ **Notice this:** Faith in God means trusting in His promises. Faith believes God's promises against all odds because nothing is impossible for God, and God is always faithful to keep His promises. God works through our faith in His promises to bring blessings to us and others. To doubt God's promise is to doubt God's power or to doubt God's character. To “lean on the promises of God” means we rely on God's assurances and faithfulness, as shown throughout the Bible, to find comfort, peace, strength, guidance, and hope, especially during tough or uncertain times. So, daily rely on the promises of God by trusting in God's faithful promises!



## *Living on Earth While Looking to Heaven:*

### *Why We Live the Way We Live*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 5

Hebrews 11:13-16

**Introduction:** Some Christians are described as being so heavenly-minded that they do no earthly good. That can be true if focusing on Heaven distracts us from our God-given responsibilities here on earth. If we never show God's love or share the gospel with those around us, are we truly fulfilling the responsibilities God has given us for this life? Are we genuinely living out Ephesians 2:10? "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Instead of the promise of Heaven distracting us from our earthly duties, our hearts focused on Heaven should influence how we use our time, talents, and treasures.

### **Reasons we look forward to Heaven and don't settle for the things of this world**

**Reason #1 - Heaven is where ALL God's promises will ultimately be fulfilled.**  
(Hebrew 11:13a)

### **Don't miss these two truths about the promises of Heaven**

**Truth #1** - We do not receive all of God's promises while here on earth.

**Notice this:** What was true for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is true for us as well. We can stand on numerous promises of God for help throughout this life. However, we do not receive the fulfillment of ALL of God's promises until Heaven (examples: a perfect body, perfect health, no more sorrow or pain, perfect peace and joy, seeing again believing family members and friends, always being in the glorious presence of God).

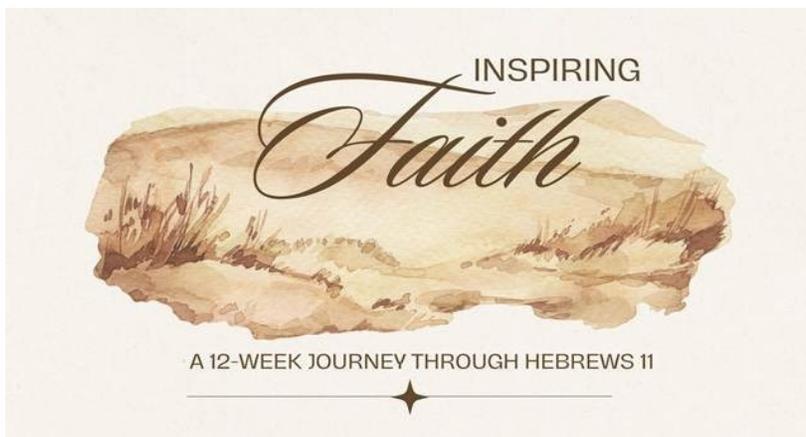
**Truth #2** - For now, we do get glimpses of Heaven's glories from a distance.

**Notice this:** All believers die without receiving everything God has promised us. When we die, we pass without ever seeing God, ever seeing Jesus, or ever seeing Heaven, but we believe we will eventually receive the full fulfillment of all God's promises. After our last moment on earth, our next moment will be in Heaven, where we will experience everything God has promised.

**Reason #2 - We were not created to live in a broken world or find our fulfillment in the things of this world.** (Hebrew 11:13b)

**Notice this:** There are two worlds. This present imperfect world and a perfect world God has created for us after this life. Some people expect to find happiness in this world, but their continued search for it actually brings unhappiness. If someone believes that life in this world is their only chance at happiness, they will be disappointed when the world fails to deliver on its promises. However, God never fails to deliver on His promises in this life and after this life. As Christians, we never want to settle for what this world offers and feel at home in a world that isn't our forever home.

**Notice this:** A gospel song called "This World Is Not My Home" says what the writer of Hebrews is saying in this way: "This world is not my home. I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door. And I can't feel at home in this world anymore." When we keep looking toward the place God has prepared for us, it keeps us moving forward in this life. No matter what challenges, setbacks, disappointments, or losses we experience in this life, as a Christian, we know the best is always yet to come!



## *Knowing God Will Keep His Promises*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 6

Hebrews 11:17-19

**Introduction:** One aspect of faith we will see today is how faith in God can lead us to obey Him. We are to follow what God says and leave the results up to Him. The outcome is God's job; obedience is ours. Abraham showed faith in God because he obeyed Him, even when he had good reasons to question God. The struggle with our doubts and fears is real, but so are the many blessings that come when we trust and obey!

### **Three aspects of Abraham's faith we need to see**

#### **1. The story of Abraham and Isaac is a story about Abraham's test.**

(Hebrews 11:17)

→ **Notice this:** Abraham faced a promise from God and a command from God that seemed to contradict each other. How could descendants and an entire nation come from the promised child, Isaac, if Abraham was now asked to sacrifice Isaac? But "by faith," Abraham obeyed the command and trusted that God would handle the promise. Abraham practiced something we also need today when fear and doubts challenge our faith in God: he didn't doubt in the dark what God had told him in the light. Like Abraham, we can trust and obey, not because we understand everything, but because we know the One who does.

#### **2. The story of Abraham and Isaac is a story about Abraham's trust.**

(Hebrews 11:18)

→ **Notice this:** The promise of God and the command of God seem to contradict each other. If Abraham obeys the command, doesn't that cancel the promise since Isaac would be dead? If Abraham disobeys the command, what happens to the promise? Would God no longer be obligated to fulfill the promise if Abraham disobeyed God? Here is where Abraham's faith in God is shown because he believed in a trustworthy God. He didn't know how God would do it; He just knew God would do it somehow. When God makes a promise in His Word, we don't need to spend time wondering how He will fulfill it. Faith trusts what God says and leaves the "how" in God's capable hands.

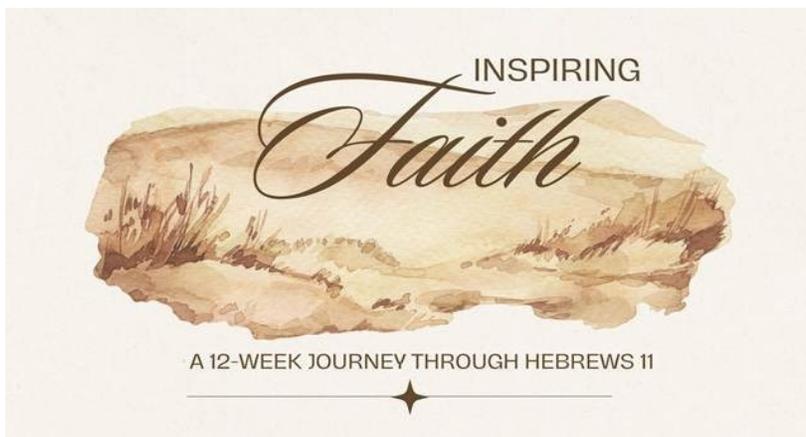
#### **3. The story of Abraham and Isaac is a story about Abraham's triumph.**

(Hebrews 11:19)

→ **Notice this:** For more than 2000 years, Christians have seen in the story of Abraham and Isaac a picture of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Genesis 22, we see what a man would do for the love of God. But at Calvary on the cross, we see what God would do for the love of man. Abraham was only asked to sacrifice Isaac; God actually sacrificed His only Son. When God's hand of justice for our sin was raised at Calvary, there was no one to cry out, "Stop. Do nothing to harm Him." Judgment fell on God's one and only Son, as Jesus died for you and me.

### **The foreshadowing of God's sacrifice of His one and only Son**

Isaac carried the wood. Jesus carried the cross. Isaac was laid on the altar. Jesus was nailed to the cross. Abraham was willing to put his son to death. God the Father allowed his Son to be put to death. The ram was offered in the place of Isaac. Jesus, the lamb of God, was offered in the place of sinners. Abraham received his son back "figuratively." Jesus literally rose from the dead.



## *Trusting God with the Future*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 7

Hebrews 11:20-22

**Introduction:** What do you think people worry about most – the past or the future? Most would say we worry more about the future. The past can trouble us, and we might regret certain things from earlier times, but what we worry about the most is the unknown future and what it might hold. Yes, Christians should pay attention to and plan for the future, but no, we should not live in constant worry about it. Why? Because the same God who is faithful to us now will remain faithful to us in the future. As Corrie Ten Boom has said, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” The part of faith that Hebrews 11 focuses on today is having faith in God with our future. Learning to trust God with our future is a powerful antidote to worry. Today, we will look at the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and see how they trusted God with their futures and how we can too from Hebrews 11:20-22.

### **Three examples of people who trusted God with their future**

**Example #1 - Isaac.** Faith in God lets us trust our future to God. (Hebrews 11:20)

→ **Notice this:** “While grieving the loss of my job I loved, I turned to my favorite Scripture passage. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, ‘Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.’ Even if we sometimes feel lost and alone, it’s such a tremendous relief to know I don’t have to come up with the next plans for my future. I can take one step forward each day, trusting God will guide me.” [“We Can Trust the Lord with Our Future” by Beth Bell]

**Example #2 - Jacob.** Faith in God allows us to trust Him to control our lives rather than us trying to control our circumstances. (Hebrews 11:21)

→ **Notice this:** For much of Jacob’s life (his name meant “deceiver”), he tried to manipulate others and control his circumstances. But Jacob finally learned to trust God rather than trying to control people and events. Are we like Jacob was most of his life? Do we have “controller” tendencies? Faith means we trust God with our future. And that means trusting God rather than trying to control our circumstances. We do not know what tomorrow holds, but we know Who holds our tomorrow.

**Example #3 - Joseph.** Faith in God allows us to trust in God’s bigger plans and purpose for our lives. (Hebrews 11:22)

→ **Notice this:** Though Joseph was old and near death, he looked beyond Egypt into the distant future. He knew that God would someday fulfill His promise and free the Israelites from Egypt, giving them their own land. Because he firmly believed in that promise, he told the Israelites not to leave his bones in Egypt but to make sure to carry his mummified body with them and provide him a burial place in the Promised Land. Nothing of God in us dies when a Christian passes. We die, but God’s promises live on. They may bury us, but they don’t bury God’s promises with us. Our death cannot undo God’s faithful work in us. His work in us is bigger and greater than we can imagine. Our God is the God of the future.

## *Saying "No" to Say "Yes" to God*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 8

Hebrews 11:23-29

**Introduction:** One of the hardest things to do in life is learning to say no at the right time, in the right way, for the right reasons. Life is made up of decisions. In fact, that's really what life is - a series of decisions we make that will lead us in one direction or another. We make our decisions, and then our decisions make us. Every day, we choose to go in one direction or another. We can't say "yes" to this - without saying "no" to that. That's the truth we will learn today from the life of Moses in Hebrews 11:23-28.

Moses not only accomplished great things for God when he said "yes" to Him, but he also did great things for God because of the times he said "no" to other things.

### **How refusing the world's ways led to God's blessings**

#### **Refusal #1 - He refused Egypt's fame.** (Hebrews 11:23-24)

**Notice this:** What would be the odds that the Pharaoh's daughter, the same one who ordered the killing of all Hebrew baby boys, would be the one person in all Egypt to find baby Moses on the banks of the Nile River? What would be the odds that she, upon discovering baby Moses, would fall in love with him and want him to be her child? What would be the odds that Miriam, Moses' sister, who had been watching the floating basket from a distance every day to make sure her baby brother was safe, would approach Pharaoh's daughter and offer to find a Hebrew mother to nurse the baby? And what are the odds that Pharaoh's daughter would end up hiring Moses' own mother to nurse him? Let's be sure to see the fingerprints of God in each of these events, as He was raising a deliverer for Israel whose name would be Moses. Moses being found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in Pharaoh's court was part of God's plan to prepare Moses for the day he would confront a future Pharaoh and declare that the Lord says, "Let my people go!" These events are not coincidences – they are the providential workings of God's hand!

#### **Refusal #2 - He refused Egypt's pleasures.** (Hebrews 11:25)

**Notice this:** Moses faced the temptation to identify with the pleasures that would come from being an Egyptian rather than the pains that would come from being an Israelite. Who would choose to identify with the slaves instead of the masters? As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses would have easy access to a life of pleasure, comfort, and luxury. Yet, Moses said "no" to the temporary pleasures of sin so he could say "yes" to God and the eternal blessings that come from Him.

#### **Refusal #3 - He refused Egypt's wealth.** (Hebrews 11:26)

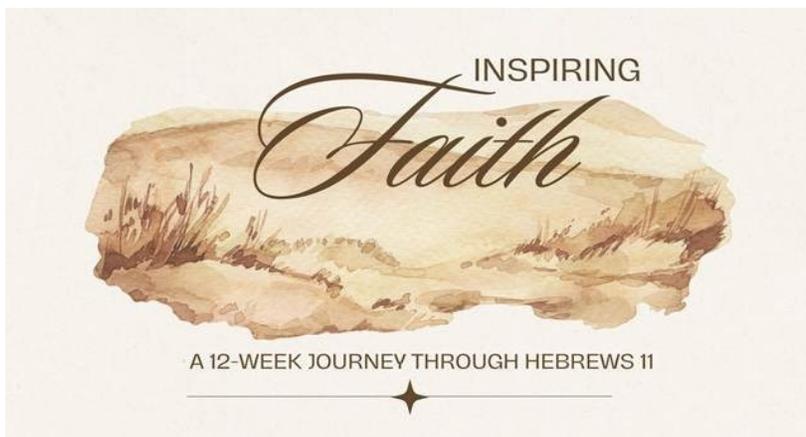
**Notice this:** Why would Moses refuse the incredible riches and wealth of Egypt? Verse 26 tells us "because he was looking ahead to his reward." Moses did some mental calculating. He looked at the temporary things this world offers and concluded it could not even come close to the eternal blessings and rewards that come from following God. In the long run, Egypt and all that it offers vanishes into the dust, but those who say "yes" to God live and are blessed forever. So, Moses blocked out everything else and focused his attention on the rewards to come for those who say "yes" to God.

#### **Refusal #4 - He refused Egypt's king.** (Hebrews 11:27)

**Notice this:** Moses' natural eyes could see the danger from Pharaoh, and he understood the risk of remaining in Egypt. Still, his eyes of faith could see Him who is invisible, and he knew that his trust in his great God was more important than any fear of an angry Pharaoh. It's always easier to stay in "Egypt," but it's always best to trust and follow God. Like Moses, with any problem, God will help us persevere.

#### **Refusal #5 - He refused Egypt's religions.** (Hebrews 11:28-29)

**Notice this:** The blood of the Lamb is what made the difference then and continues to do so now. For those who reject the blood of Jesus that was shed for our forgiveness of sin, God has no other plan of salvation. Jesus is God's Lamb, the one whose blood covers all sin. 1 John 1:7 "... the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." And now, anyone, anywhere, at any time who comes to Jesus will not be turned away and can be fully forgiven.



## *Saying "No" to Say "Yes" to God - Part 2*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 9

Hebrews 11:23-29

**Introduction:** One of the hardest things to do in life is learning to say no at the right time, in the right way, for the right reasons. Life is made up of decisions. In fact, that's really what life is - a series of decisions we make that will lead us in one direction or another. We make our decisions, and then our decisions make us. Every day, we choose to go in one direction or another. We can't say "yes" to this - without saying "no" to that. That's the truth we will learn today from the life of Moses in Hebrews 11:23-29. Moses not only accomplished great things for God when he said "yes" to Him, but he also achieved great things for God because of the times he said "no" to other things.

### **A quick review of last week's Bible study**

(Hebrews 11:23-27)

### **How Moses' refusal of the world's ways led to God's blessings**

**Refusal #1 - He refused Egypt's fame.** (Hebrews 11:23-24)

**Refusal #2 - He refused Egypt's pleasures.** (Hebrews 11:25)

**Refusal #3 - He refused Egypt's wealth.** (Hebrews 11:26)

**Refusal #4 - He refused Egypt's king.** (Hebrews 11:27)

**Today's Bible study** (Hebrews 11:28-29)

**Refusal #5 - He refused Egypt's religion.** (Hebrews 11:28-29)

**Notice this:** The blood of the Lamb is what made the difference then and continues to do so today. For those who reject the blood of Jesus that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins, God has no other plan of salvation (Acts 4:12). Jesus is God's Lamb, the one whose blood covers all sin (John 1:29). What can wash away our sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. 1 John 1:7 tells us "... the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." And now, anyone, anywhere, at any time who comes to Jesus will not be turned away and can receive a forgiven life, a new life, and everlasting life! (John 6:37)

**Important Reminder:** When the writer of Hebrews 11 compiled the list of men and women of faith in God, he included the Hebrews who followed Moses across the Red Sea, an event so momentous that it is called "the Exodus." By faith, Moses and the Israelites believed in God in the face of an impossible situation and were rescued from certain destruction. But that's not the whole story. Hebrews 11:29 adds the fact that when the Egyptians tried to follow them, they drowned when the waters of the Red Sea swept over them. By faith in God, some were saved. Without faith in God, others were lost. True then and still true today. If anyone, anywhere can be saved any time, it is our responsibility to point others around us to salvation in Jesus (1 Peter 3:15).

# *Faith That Can Bring Down Walls*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 10

Hebrews 11:30

**Class Note:** We will not meet next Wednesday, November 26, the day before Thanksgiving. We will continue meeting through December 17, then take a short break during the Christmas holidays, resuming on January 14.

**Introduction:** One of the most well-known battle stories in the Bible is that of Joshua and the battle at Jericho. This event tends to stand out among the battles recorded in the Bible because it is a story of God giving His people an incredible victory when they were facing what seemed to be an impossible situation. God had promised to give the Israelites the Promised Land; however, the mighty walled city of Jericho stood in their way. Unless the Israelites found a way to bring down those walls, they could not take the city. And if the city couldn't be taken, they would not be able to enter the Promised Land. However, just as God provided a breakthrough for the Israelites in their time of need, God will do the same for us today when our faith and trust are in Him.

## **What kind of faith brings down walls of opposition**

### **1. To bring down walls of opposition takes faith in a big God.**

→ **Notice this:** To overcome this potential breakdown at Jericho, the children of Israel had to have faith in their great God. The walls of Jericho were a massive obstacle for the Israelites, but they posed no problem for the God who created the universe. When we face a major obstacle in life, we sometimes panic because we focus on what we can do instead of what God can do.

### **2. To bring down walls of opposition takes faith that trusts in God.**

→ **Notice this:** To have faith in God when we may not understand

everything going on takes trust in God. Those who leave everything in God's hand will eventually see God's hand in everything.

### **3. To bring down walls of opposition takes faith that will wait on God.**

→ **Notice this:** Sometimes, when we pray for God to deal with a specific obstacle in our lives, we may feel like the Israelites did when they walked around Jericho in circles, seemingly going nowhere. However, we can trust in God's timing and His ways, knowing that while we are waiting, He is working.

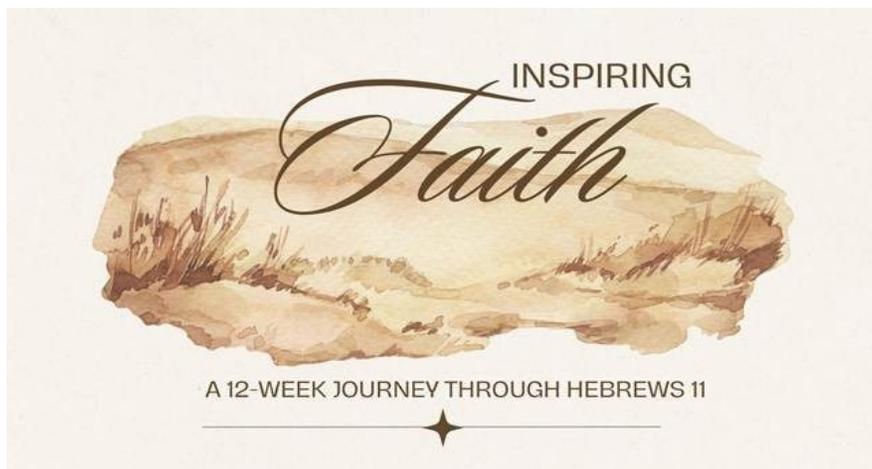
### **4. To bring down walls of opposition takes faith that anticipates that God will act.**

→ **Notice this:** If God is the true hero of this story - and He is - then why did God require the people to march around the city for six days, and then seven times on the seventh day? It's not as if their marching somehow destabilized the stones in the walls. Here is a lesson about God doing His part as we do our part. It's not passive faith that God honors. The kind of faith that says to God, "I will wait on You to do something." The kind of faith that God honors is an active faith, a faith that does our part, trusting God to do His part.

### **5. To bring down walls of opposition takes faith in God despite doubts.**

→ **Notice this:** One definition of faith is this: "Faith is belief plus unbelief and acting on the belief part." Mark 9:24 records a father's prayer, "I believe; help my unbelief!" This is a meaningful prayer that recognizes both faith and doubt can be present, but it is our trust in God that will always help us overcome our doubts. Faith doesn't mean we have 100% certainty in what we are praying about, but it does mean we have 100% certainty in God. Therefore, we will not lean on our own understanding but seek God to guide our paths.

**Conclusion:** We can have full faith that God can break down any walls of opposition in our lives, because He is always faithful.



## *How God's Grace Can Do Amazing Things*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 11

Hebrews 11:31

**Introduction:** The Bible never tries to hide Rahab's occupation. The first time we see her in Joshua 2:1, she is called "a prostitute named Rahab." In Joshua 6:17 and again in 6:25, she is called "Rahab the prostitute." And twice in the New Testament, her occupation is mentioned: "Rahab the prostitute" (James 2:25) and "By faith the prostitute Rahab" (Hebrews 11:31). We might raise our eyebrows and shake our heads at Rahab's lifestyle choices. However, have we ever thought about how degrading she must have felt? Sexual sins had to leave a deep scar on her soul, resulting in guilt, shame, and worthlessness. We assume Rahab had given up any hope of ever turning her life around... but God had other plans. There is something else the Bible never ignores about Rahab - she became a life changed by God's amazing grace!

**Notice this:** Joshua 2 tells us of the story of Rahab, who may seem like an unusual example of faith in God. Yet her willingness to forsake the gods of Canaan and to identify herself with the God of Israel was worthy of mention in Hebrews 11. She said to the two Israelite spies in Joshua 2:11: "...The LORD your God is God in Heaven above and on the earth below." This was her affirmation of faith in God.

The story of Rahab is ...

1. **A story of a seemingly hopeless beginning.** (Joshua 2:1)

→ **Notice this:** Rahab was a Gentile, which means she did not have faith in the God of Israel. She would have been raised in a pagan religion that worshipped false gods and idols and practiced the wicked lifestyles of pagan people. No matter what she prayed to the Canaanite gods, her life still seemed hopeless, with her future no different or better than her present.

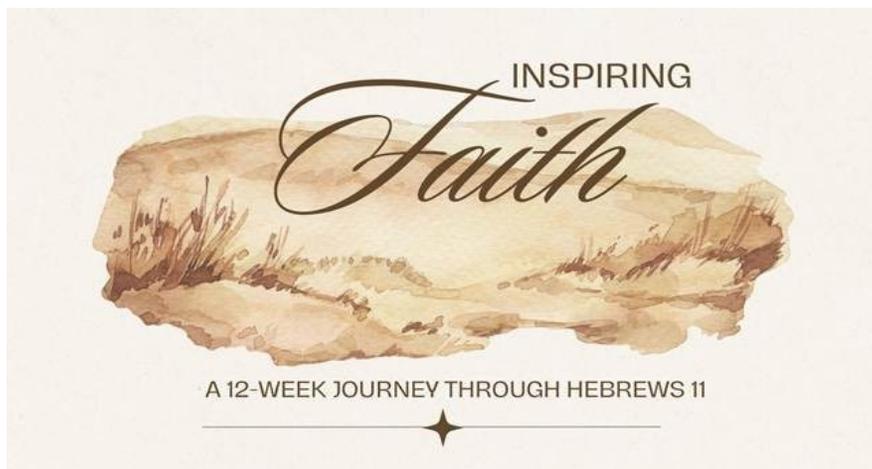
2. **A story of a remarkable deliverance.** (Joshua 6:22-25)

→ **Notice this:** Remember, as good Bible students, we want always to be looking for the fingerprints of God in the circumstances of life. Rahab's house was situated against the city wall (Joshua 2:15), which provided an escape route for the two spies. Rahab and her house weren't chosen randomly or by luck. Rahab and her house were providentially chosen by God to protect the spies and to prepare Israel for the next step in defeating Jericho. As a result of Rahab's faith and actions, the two men promised to deliver Rahab and her family when the Israelites attacked.

3. **A story of a timeless message.** (Hebrews 11:31)

→ **Notice this:** For over 2,000 years, Christians have recognized a single, timeless theme in Rahab's story: God's salvation is available to everyone because no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. There is no pit so deep that God's love isn't deeper. There is no sin so terrible that God cannot forgive it. There is no stain on a soul that God cannot wash away.

**Conclusion:** The fact that Rahab was a prostitute only magnifies the grace of God by showing that no one is too far or too sinful to be beyond God's love, grace, and reach. Rahab stands as a symbol of hope for all men and women who are broken, hurting, and fallen and say, "There is no hope for me." Remember, Rahab was a harlot who now lives in Heaven. What God did in saving her, He can do for anyone who turns to and trusts in Him.



## *Imperfect People with Faith in a Perfect God*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 12

Hebrews 11:32

**Introduction:** The writer of Hebrews lists six more examples of people who had faith in God in verse 32. These men shared something besides their faith in God: none of them was perfect. Each had faults, as we will see in our Bible study. Yet, each was commended for their faith in God. They were imperfect people who had faith in a perfect God. Spoiler alert: None of us is perfect. Each of us has our faults. Therefore, we acknowledge that we are imperfect people who have faith in a perfect God.

### **Flawed People with Faith in a Faithful God**

#### **Example #1 - Gideon's flaw was being fearful.**

**Notice this:** When we look at Gideon's life, we don't see a man of great faith; we see an ordinary man who had faith in a great God. It turns out that Gideon made a fine military leader once he got past his fear. As long as he believed he couldn't do it, he was right. But once faith in God replaced his fear of his circumstances, he walked in victory!

#### **Example #2 - Barak's flaw was his timid spirit.**

**Notice this:** Even though Barak led the troops in battle, Deborah took charge instead of the man God had chosen for this task. Barak was a good guy who was

overly dependent on others. In dealing with being timid, he should have had an attitude that said, "I can't, but God can."

#### **Example #3 - Samson's flaw was his inability to control his emotions.**

**Notice this:** Samson never learned to control his emotions, so his emotions controlled him. Samson's runaway emotions ran away with him. He could sometimes do good things for God, like most of us. But he could also turn right around and make foolish mistakes, like most of us. Yet, despite his flawed faith, he continued to have faith in God, and God used him to deliver His people from the Philistines. Even when it may seem like we have forgotten about God, keep having faith in Him, for He never forgets about us.

#### **Example #4 - Jephthah's flaw was impulsiveness.**

**Notice this:** Jephthah made an impulsive and foolish mistake that would haunt him forever. Instead of seeking God and waiting on God, Jephthah took matters into his own hands. Although Jephthah had made some mistakes, his faith in what God could do led to an important victory over the Ammonites (Judges 11:32).

#### **Example #5 - David's flaw was being emotion-driven.**

**Notice this:** Though David was a man after God's own heart, he was also human and sometimes made sinful choices, such as adultery (2 Samuel 11). This event in David's life shows us that everyone, even those near to God, struggles with sin. It also serves as a strong example of how temptation and sin can quickly take us further than we ever wanted to go and cost us more than we ever wanted to pay. And yet, in the psalms that David later wrote, we see God forgiving him and honoring David's faith in Him. God's mercy is always greater than our mistakes!

#### **Example #6 - Samuel's flaw was being emotion-driven.**

**Notice this:** While the Bible portrays Samuel as righteous, his primary failing was neglecting his family. His sons became corrupt judges who took bribes and perverted justice, ultimately leading Israel to demand a king and reject God's direct rule. His extensive travel across Israel to judge meant he was often away from home, which no doubt contributed to his son's moral and spiritual failure. Thankfully, God's grace, when we confess our sins, is greater than the messes our mistakes make.

# *Faith in God for All Seasons of Life*

Inspiring Faith Series - Week 13

Hebrews 11:33-40

**Note:** Today is our last Wednesday Morning Adult Bible study before a short Christmas break. We will resume our Bible study starting January 14th.

**Introduction:** Last week, we looked at verse 32, which begins, “And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell ....” I love this! This great chapter about people who showed faith in God needs to conclude - not because the author has run out of examples of faith - but because he has too many more examples of faith in God he could keep sharing! In this final section of Hebrews 11, the author summarizes additional examples of believers who demonstrated their faith and trust in God. This section of scripture is meant to inspire us to have faith in God to give us victories in life and to see us through times of suffering.

**Through faith in God much can be accomplished**

**Section 1 - By faith, believers were victorious over their circumstances.**

(Hebrews 11:33-35a)

**Section 2 - By faith, believers were victorious under their circumstances.**

(Hebrews 11:35b-38)

**Section 3 - We have more reasons to have faith in God today than these men and women did.** (Hebrews 11:39-40)

**Why faith in God is so important**

1. **Faith explains how humanity began.** (Hebrews 11:3)
2. **Faith gains God's favor.** (Hebrews 11:4)
3. **Faith pleases God.** (Hebrews 11:5-6)

4. **Faith helps keep us godly in an ungodly world.**  
(Hebrews 11:7)
5. **Faith follows God and trusts the results to Him.**  
(Hebrews 11:8-10)
6. **Faith enables us to believe God's promises.**  
(Hebrews 11:11-12)
7. **Faith believes what it sees in the distance.**  
(Hebrews 11:13-16)
8. **Faith trusts in God even when things in the moment don't always make sense.** (Hebrews 11:17-19)
9. **Faith looks beyond death to God's promises of eternal life.**  
(Hebrews 11:20-22)
10. **Faith trusts God no matter what because faith knows God's got it!**  
(Hebrews 11:23)
11. **Faith refuses to live by the ways of the world.**  
(Hebrews 11:24-29)
12. **Faith leans on “But God” to bring down any walls of trouble or difficulty.** (Hebrews 11:30)
13. **Faith redeems anything sin has ruined.** (Hebrews 11:31)
14. **Faith renews flawed believers.** (Hebrews 11:32)
15. **Faith overcomes the odds because of God.**  
(Hebrews 11:33-35a)
16. **Faith pays any great price for the greater good.**  
(Hebrews 11:35b-38)
17. **Faith always knows for the believer; the best is yet to come!**  
(Hebrews 11:39-40)