

Faith that Endures

(Online Study, Tuesday Evening at 7:00 PM)

Week 1: What Real Faith Looks Like

Hebrews 11:1–7

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Christians under pressure—believers tempted to drift away from Christ and return to the familiar securities of the old covenant. In chapter 11, the writer begins a powerful survey of faithful men and women whose trust in God defined their lives. But before recounting their stories, he gives us a working definition of faith itself.

Faith, we learn, is not wishful thinking or blind optimism. It is confident trust in God’s promises and firm conviction about realities that cannot be seen with human eyes. This is the kind of faith that pleased God from the very beginning of human history. Abel offered a better sacrifice because he trusted God’s word. Enoch walked with God so closely that God took him. Noah built an ark for a flood no one could yet imagine—because God said it was coming.

Each of these examples teaches us that real faith is not passive. It acts. It obeys. It trusts God’s word even when circumstances seem impossible. And each one reminds us that God has always honored those who take Him at His word. As we begin this series on enduring faith, Hebrews 11 lays the foundation: faith is trusting God enough to obey Him—no matter the cost.

Group Discussion: Why do you think the writer of Hebrews defines faith before listing examples of faithful people? How does a clear understanding of faith protect us from misconceptions about what it means to trust God?

Personal Reflection: When you think about your own faith, is it primarily intellectual agreement with truth, or does it actively shape the way you live and the decisions you make? How might this passage challenge or deepen your understanding?

Read Hebrews 11:1–7

Study Questions

1. In verse 1, the writer describes faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” What is the difference between biblical faith and mere optimism or wishful thinking?

2. Verse 2 says the people of old “received their commendation” through faith. What does it mean to be commended by God, and why does faith—rather than accomplishment—earn that commendation?
3. According to verse 3, faith helps us understand that “the universe was created by the word of God.” How does belief in God as Creator shape everything else about the Christian worldview?
4. In verse 4, Abel offered a “more acceptable sacrifice” than Cain. What made Abel’s offering acceptable, and what does this teach about approaching God on His terms rather than our own?
5. The passage says Abel “still speaks” even though he died (v. 4). In what sense does a life of faith continue to speak and influence others long after death?
6. Verse 5 tells us Enoch “was taken up so that he should not see death” because “he had pleased God.” What does it mean to walk with God so closely that your life becomes a testimony of faith?
7. According to verse 6, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Why is faith—not merely good behavior or religious activity—the foundation of a right relationship with God?
8. Verse 6 also says that those who draw near to God must believe “that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Why are both of these beliefs essential to genuine faith?

9. In verse 7, Noah acted “in reverent fear” and built an ark for events not yet seen. What does Noah’s obedience teach about the relationship between faith and action?

10. Looking at these opening verses of Hebrews 11 as a whole, what foundation do they lay for enduring faith? How do Abel, Enoch, and Noah together illustrate what it means to trust God through every season of life?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages:

Genesis 4:1–7 — Worship that pleases God versus worship that does not

Genesis 6:9–22 — Noah’s obedience in building the ark

James 2:14–26 — Faith demonstrated through works