

Living by Faith, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 2: Faith That Worships and Walks with God: Abel and Enoch

Hebrews 11:4–6

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson moves the class from the definition of faith to faith in action, and it lands on two truths that are central to our heritage. First, faith worships, and not all worship is acceptable. Abel and Cain both came to God, but only Abel came by faith, and Hebrews credits his faith, not merely his offering, as the ground of God's approval (Hebrews 11:4). The doctrinal stake here is large: God Himself, not the worshiper, defines what worship is acceptable. Cain's offering was sincere and costly, yet it was refused. This sets up the heaviest block of the lesson at Question 9, where you will make the case that acceptable worship must be offered by faith, that is, according to God's revealed word and pattern, not according to human preference or sincerity alone. Connect this to Jesus' teaching that the Father seeks those who worship 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24), and to the simple New Testament pattern the Lord's church seeks to follow in its worship.

Second, faith walks. Enoch is praised not for a single heroic act but for a sustained life: 'Enoch walked with God' (Genesis 5:24), and he 'was commended as having pleased God' (Hebrews 11:5). This is the spiritual formation thread that runs through the whole study. The goal is not merely to win an argument about worship but to form disciples whose daily lives are spent in close, faithful company with God. Hold these two emphases together throughout: God cares deeply both about how we worship Him and about how we walk before Him the rest of the week, and Hebrews 11:6 binds them together by declaring that without faith it is impossible to please Him at all.

Teach with wonder, not merely correction. The same God who refused Cain's offering still speaks through Abel thousands of years later, and the same God who walked with Enoch invites every believer into that nearness. Help your students feel both the seriousness of approaching God on His terms and the tenderness of a God who rewards those who seek Him. Keep pressing the personal question: not only 'Is our worship right?' but 'Are we walking with God today?'

Question 1

Student Question: *Hebrews 11:4 says, 'By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.' What made Abel's sacrifice 'more acceptable,' and why does the writer credit faith rather than the sacrifice itself as the reason God commended him as righteous?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start by letting the class feel the puzzle. On the surface, both brothers brought to God what they had. Cain, a farmer, brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel, a shepherd, brought of the firstborn of his flock. Yet God 'had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard' (Genesis 4:4-5). Hebrews resolves the puzzle for us: the difference was faith. Abel's offering was 'more acceptable' because it was offered by faith, and faith always responds to what God has said.

Help the class see that faith implies a word from God to trust and obey. Romans 10:17 tells us faith comes by hearing the word of God, so Abel's faith means he was acting on instruction God had given, while Cain was not. Whatever the exact details, Abel approached God God's way, and Cain approached God his own way. The text is careful: it credits the faith behind the offering, not just the offering as an object.

Draw out the result. By that faith Abel 'was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.' God's acceptance of the worship was His testimony about the worshiper. Faith expressed in obedient worship is what God counted as righteousness, the same pattern we see all through Scripture, where genuine faith shows itself in obedience.

Guard the class from a wrong turn. The point is not that physical animal sacrifice was magic, nor that Cain's vegetables were inherently unworthy. The point is the heart of faith that listens to God and the obedience that flows from it. This prepares the way for the larger truth at Question 9, that worship pleases God when it is offered by faith according to His will.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Abel's offering accepted because it was offered by faith, not because of its material value
- Faith as a response to what God has revealed (Romans 10:17)
- God, not the worshiper, as the one who defines acceptable worship
- Faith expressed in obedient worship counted as righteousness
- The difference between coming to God on His terms and coming on our own

Discussion Prompts

- What exactly made Abel's offering acceptable when Cain's was not?
- Why does the text credit Abel's faith rather than simply his sacrifice?
- How does true faith always involve responding to something God has said?

Question 2

Student Question: *Think about how you approach worship and giving to God. Do you tend to bring God your best, or whatever is left over and convenient? What might your habits reveal about the faith behind them?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the first self-examining question, and it presses the Abel pattern into our own habits. Abel brought the firstborn and the fat portions, the best he had. The question gently asks whether we bring God our first and best or merely our leftovers, in our giving, our attention in worship, our time, and our energy. Keep the tone searching but not shaming.

Help the class see that habits reveal faith. What we offer God reflects what we believe about Him. A person who truly trusts that God is worthy and that He provides will bring their best; a person who is unsure or distracted will tend to bring whatever is convenient. The outward pattern is a window into the inward conviction.

Move toward encouragement and growth. The remedy is not merely to try harder but to grow in faith until giving God our best becomes natural worship. Invite students to name one area, perhaps the focus of their worship on the Lord's Day, or the priority of their giving, where they sense God calling them to bring their first and best rather than their leftovers.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Bringing God our first and best as an expression of faith
- Worship habits as a window into what we truly believe about God
- The difference between offering God our priority and our leftovers
- Giving, attention, and time as acts of worship
- Growth in faith expressed in increasingly wholehearted worship

Discussion Prompts

- In what areas do you tend to give God your best, and where do you give leftovers?
- What do your worship and giving habits reveal about your view of God?
- What would it look like this week to bring God your first rather than your last?

Question 3

Student Question: *The text says that through his faith Abel, 'though he died, he still speaks.' In what sense does a faithful person continue to speak after death, and what does this suggest about the lasting influence of a life lived by faith?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open up the striking image. Abel was the first human being to die, murdered by his own brother, and the first martyr for faithful worship. Yet thousands of years later his faith is still being preached. His example, recorded in Scripture, continues to call later generations to trust and obey God. A faithful life does not end its witness at the grave.

Connect to related passages to deepen the point. Genesis 4 says Abel's blood 'cried out' to God from the ground, and Hebrews 12:24 contrasts that cry with the better word of the sprinkled

blood of Jesus. Abel's testimony reaches forward through Scripture and ultimately points us toward Christ, the perfectly righteous one whose blood speaks of forgiveness.

Apply it to the influence of ordinary faithful lives. We rarely think of our daily faithfulness as something that will keep speaking after we are gone, yet it does, in the people we have shaped, the example we leave, and the testimony of a life given to God. Encourage the class that no act of genuine faith is ever wasted or forgotten.

Turn it toward hope. Abel died young and unjustly, yet God vindicated him and gave him a voice that outlasts empires. This is a comfort to every believer who feels their quiet faithfulness goes unnoticed. God remembers, and He gives the faithful a witness that endures.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The enduring witness of a faithful life beyond death
- Abel as the first martyr for acceptable worship
- Scripture preserving and amplifying the testimony of the faithful
- Abel's blood pointing forward to the better word of Christ's blood (Hebrews 12:24)
- The lasting influence of ordinary, faithful believers on those who follow

Discussion Prompts

- In what sense does Abel still speak to us today?
- How does a faithful life keep influencing others after death?
- What kind of witness would you want your life to keep speaking?

Question 4

Student Question: *Whose faith from a previous generation still 'speaks' to you, even though they may be gone? What part of their walk with God do you most want to carry forward in your own life?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Abel's enduring voice toward gratitude and inheritance. Faith is handed down, and most of us can name someone, a parent, grandparent, elder, or older friend, whose trust in God still shapes us though they have passed on. Give the class time to remember specific people and specific moments.

Help them name the particular quality they want to carry forward. It is rarely a person's achievements; it is their steadfast prayer, their generosity, their faithfulness in the assembly, their patience in suffering, or their unwavering hope. Naming the specific trait turns admiration into something we can pursue.

Point forward to responsibility. Just as others have spoken to us by their faith, we are even now speaking to those who come behind us. Challenge the class to consider what their own faith will say to the next generation, and to live in a way worth imitating.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faith handed down across generations (2 Timothy 1:5)
- Gratitude for the faithful who have gone before us
- Specific qualities of faith worth imitating and carrying forward
- Every believer as a witness to the generation that follows
- The responsibility to pass on a faith worth inheriting

Discussion Prompts

- Whose faith still speaks to you, and what did it sound like?
- What specific part of their walk with God do you want to carry forward?
- What will your faith say to those who come after you?

Question 5

Student Question: *Hebrews 11:5 says Enoch 'was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him.' Genesis 5 tells us simply that 'Enoch walked with God.' What does it mean to 'walk with God,' and what kind of daily life does that phrase describe?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Slow down on the beauty of the phrase 'walked with God.' Walking suggests companionship, direction, and steady progress over time. It is not a single visit to God but a shared journey, day after day, in the same direction He is going. Enoch's life was defined not by one dramatic event but by sustained nearness to God.

Fill in the picture from the rest of Scripture. To walk with God is to live in agreement with Him (Amos 3:3 asks how two can walk together unless they agree), to keep step with His will, to talk with Him in prayer, to obey His word, and to keep Him constantly in view. It is ordinary, daily, and relational, the very thing God desires from each of us.

Make it concrete for modern life. Walking with God shows up in how we begin our mornings, the choices we make at work, the way we treat our families, and what we do with our private hours. Enoch lived in a corrupt age, just before the flood, yet he walked with God in the middle of it. So can we.

Tie it to the lesson's heart. This is the spiritual formation center of the passage. God is not only interested in our acts of worship on the first day of the week; He desires our daily

companionship all week long. Walking with God is the unhurried, faithful relationship that pleases Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Walking with God as sustained, daily companionship rather than occasional contact
- Agreement with God's will as the basis of walking with Him (Amos 3:3)
- Walking with God expressed in prayer, obedience, and constant awareness of Him
- Faithfulness to God maintained even in a corrupt age
- Daily discipleship as the relationship God most desires

Discussion Prompts

- What does the phrase 'walked with God' suggest about the kind of life Enoch lived?
- What does it look like, practically, to keep step with God day by day?
- How can a person walk with God in the middle of a corrupt or distracted age?

Question 6

Student Question: *Be honest about the rhythm of your week. Where in your ordinary days do you sense you are genuinely walking with God, and where have you let the relationship drift into routine or distance?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question brings Enoch's walk into the texture of our own weeks. Most of us have times when God feels near and times when we have drifted into autopilot. Naming both honestly is the first step toward closer fellowship. Create a safe climate where people can admit distance without shame.

Help students trace the causes of drift. Walking with God usually weakens not through one big rebellion but through neglect, hurry, distraction, and crowded schedules that slowly crowd Him out. Invite them to identify the specific places where the relationship has gone quiet.

Point toward renewal. Walking with God is restored not by guilt but by simply drawing near again, in prayer, in His word, in worship, and in obedience. Encourage the class that God is always glad to resume the walk, and that small, consistent steps rebuild nearness over time. James 4:8 promises that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Honest self-examination of one's daily walk with God
- Drift caused by neglect, hurry, and distraction rather than open rebellion
- Drawing near to God as the path to renewed fellowship (James 4:8)
- Small, consistent habits that rebuild closeness with God
- God's readiness to resume the walk with anyone who turns back to Him

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your week do you most sense you are walking with God?
- Where has the relationship drifted into routine or distance?
- What is one small step that would help you draw near to God again?

Question 7

Student Question: *Verse 5 says that before Enoch was taken, 'he was commended as having pleased God.' Why does God place such value on a life that simply pleases Him, and how is pleasing God different from merely impressing people or keeping up religious appearances?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on the quiet greatness of the commendation. Enoch is not praised for power, eloquence, or accomplishment, but for having 'pleased God.' That is the highest honor Scripture can give, and it is available to the most ordinary believer. God values a life aimed at pleasing Him above every visible achievement.

Draw the contrast the question asks for. Pleasing people is about appearances and applause; pleasing God is about the heart and is often hidden from human eyes. Jesus warned against doing righteous acts 'to be seen by others' (Matthew 6:1). It is entirely possible to impress a congregation while failing to please God, and entirely possible to please God while no one notices.

Help the class see what pleases God. According to the surrounding verses, what pleases God is faith, the trust that draws near to Him and seeks Him. Pleasing God is therefore not earning His favor by performance but living in faithful relationship with Him. The aim of the Christian life is summed up well as making it our aim to please Him (2 Corinthians 5:9).

Bring it home with hope. To live for an audience of One simplifies everything. We are freed from the exhausting work of managing appearances and freed to walk faithfully whether anyone sees or not, because the One who matters always sees.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Pleasing God as the highest honor and the true aim of life (2 Corinthians 5:9)
- The difference between pleasing God and impressing people (Matthew 6:1)
- Faith as what ultimately pleases God
- The danger of religious appearances that lack genuine faith
- Freedom found in living for the approval of God alone

Discussion Prompts

- Why is being commended as having 'pleased God' such a high honor?
- How is pleasing God different from impressing people?

- What changes when we live for an audience of One?

Question 8

Student Question: *Where in your life are you more concerned with pleasing people, or being seen as a good person, than with actually pleasing God? What would change if pleasing Him became your first concern?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the previous one into honest self-examination. Nearly all of us feel the pull of human approval, and it quietly steers our decisions, our words, and even our religion. Help the class name the specific arenas, work, family, social media, even church, where they are managing appearances rather than seeking God's approval.

Expose the cost of people-pleasing gently. Galatians 1:10 warns that if we are still trying to please people, we cannot be servants of Christ. The fear of others' opinions can keep us from obedience, from speaking the truth, and from costly faithfulness. It is a heavy and unsatisfying master.

Offer the freedom of the alternative. When pleasing God becomes our first concern, the opinions of others lose their tyranny. We can love people without needing their applause, and we can obey God even when it is unpopular. Invite each student to name one area where they will choose God's approval over human approval this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The pull of human approval and the fear of others' opinions
- People-pleasing as an obstacle to serving Christ (Galatians 1:10)
- Religious appearances as a subtle form of seeking human approval
- Freedom and courage that come from seeking God's approval first
- Concrete choices that put pleasing God ahead of pleasing people

Discussion Prompts

- In what arena do you most feel the pull to please people?
- How has the fear of others' opinions ever kept you from obeying God?
- What would change this week if pleasing God became your first concern?

Question 9

Student Question: *Hebrews 11:6 says, '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.' The account of Cain and Abel shows that not every offering is acceptable, and Jesus taught that the Father seeks those who worship 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24). How does this verse, together with Abel's example, teach us that acceptable worship must be offered by faith,*

that is, according to what God has actually revealed in His word rather than according to our own preferences?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal heart of the lesson, so give it the most room and teach it with both clarity and reverence. Begin with the sheer force of the words: 'without faith it is impossible to please him.' Not difficult, not less likely, but impossible. Whatever we bring to God, if it is not offered in faith, it cannot please Him. This single statement sets the standard for all worship and all approach to God.

Show what faith involves from the verse itself. To draw near, one must believe 'that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.' But biblical faith is never bare belief that God exists; it is trust that responds to what He has said. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), so to worship by faith is to worship according to what God has actually revealed, not according to what seems good to us. This is exactly where Cain failed. His offering may have been sincere and costly, but it was on his own terms, not God's, and God refused it.

Bring in the teaching of Jesus to make the standard explicit. In John 4:24 Jesus says, 'God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' Worship must be both heartfelt (in spirit) and according to truth, that is, according to God's revealed will. Sincerity alone is not the measure; truth is. A worshiper can be deeply sincere and still be unacceptable if the worship is not what God has authorized, just as Cain was. This is a sobering and important point, and it should be made plainly.

Draw out the church-of-Christ emphasis with conviction and warmth. Because God defines acceptable worship, we look to the New Testament to see how the Lord's church is to worship Him. There we find the pattern the first Christians followed: gathering on the first day of the week, eating the Lord's Supper to remember His death (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26), giving as we have prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), praying, singing praise from the heart (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), and being built up by the preaching and teaching of God's word (Acts 2:42). We do not have authority to add to this or substitute our own preferences, however appealing they may seem, because acceptable worship is offered by faith, and faith follows what God has revealed. The complete New Testament is our pattern and authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and we need no new revelation to guide us.

Guard the heart of the matter so this does not become mere rule-keeping. The reason we worship according to God's word is not legalism but faith and love. To worship as God directs is to honor Him as God and to trust that He knows best how He should be approached. Acceptable worship is both in spirit and in truth, full of the heart and faithful to the pattern. End on the note of wonder: the God who refused Cain still invites us near, and He rewards those who seek Him in faith, on His terms, with their whole heart.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Faith as the indispensable condition of pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6)
- Acceptable worship defined by God, not by the worshiper's preference
- Worship offered by faith, that is, according to God's revealed word, illustrated by Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
- Worship in spirit and truth, both heartfelt and according to truth (John 4:24)
- Sincerity alone insufficient apart from worship according to God's will
- The New Testament pattern for the worship of the Lord's church: the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, giving, prayer, singing, and the word (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19)
- The complete New Testament as our authority, requiring no new revelation (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it impossible to please God apart from faith?
- How does Abel's example show that worship must be on God's terms, not ours?
- What does it mean to worship both in spirit and in truth, and how does that guide how the church worships today?

Question 10

Student Question: *Looking back over Hebrews 11:4–6 as a whole, in the example of Abel who worshiped by faith or Enoch who walked with God, name one concrete way you sense Jesus is forming you. What is one step you will take this week to worship Him on His terms or to walk more closely with Him?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question gathers the whole passage and turns it toward transformation. Abel teaches us to worship by faith on God's terms; Enoch teaches us to walk with God daily. Ask each student to choose the one that speaks most to where they are right now and to name a specific way Jesus is shaping them through it.

Press for concreteness over good intentions. Worshiping on God's terms might mean recommitting to the worship of the Lord's church with a whole heart, or for someone who has not yet obeyed the gospel, responding to Christ in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Walking with God might mean a daily time in His word, a renewed prayer life, or removing something that has been crowding Him out. The aim is a real step this week, not merely a warmer feeling.

Close by lifting their eyes to Christ, the goal of the whole study. Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), and the aim is not just better behavior but a life increasingly formed into His likeness as we worship and walk with the Father as He did. Pray over the specific steps named, and encourage the class to follow up with one another.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Personal application of Abel's worship and Enoch's walk to one's own life
- Worshiping God on His terms and walking with Him daily as concrete commitments
- Obedience to the gospel for anyone who has not yet responded to Christ (Acts 2:38)
- Christ as the author and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2)
- Spiritual formation into the likeness of Christ as the aim of the study

Discussion Prompts

- Does Abel's worship or Enoch's walk speak more to where you are right now?
- What concrete step will you take this week to worship on God's terms or walk closer to Him?
- How can this class pray for and encourage you in that step?