

## LESSON 10

AUGUST 8, 2021

### UNIT III. FAITH GIVES US HOPE

#### THE EXAMPLES OF HEROES

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Hebrews 11:32-40

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES:** Hebrews 11; 13:1-19

**PRINT PASSAGE:** Hebrews 11:1-8, 13-16

#### KEY VERSE

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1, KJV) .  
. . . .

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1, NIV)

#### LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Identify the faith contributions of the heroes in Hebrews 11.
- Value the people in your lives who act heroically through faith.
- Grow in your potential to become faith heroes.

#### KEY TERMS

**Assurance (verse 1)**—Greek: *hupostasis* (hoop-os'-tas-is): a support, “substance” (KJV), steadiness; confidence.

**Faith (verse 1)**—Greek: *pistis* (pis'-tis): belief; trust.

**Gifts (verse 4)**—Greek: *dóron* (do'-ron): things presented freely to another; presents; sacrifices; “offerings” (NIV).

**Righteous (verse 4)**—Greek: *dikaíos* (dik'-ah-yos): correct; just; upright; by implication, innocent.

**Sacrifice (verse 4)**—Greek: *thusia* (thoo-see'-ah): victim; an “offering” (NIV) to God.

**Visible (verse 3)**—Greek: *phainó* (fah'-ee-no): able to be seen; brought forth into the light; to meet the eyes; to “appear” (KJV).

#### PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.

- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

## **WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS**

People enduring life's miseries hopelessly plod along the way of life. What can enliven this emptiness of existence? Faith in God provides the assurance of hope and conviction of certainty.

## **THE LESSON IN FOCUS**

In our lifetimes, all of us have encountered at least one person whom we greatly admire. In some cases, we may have tailored some aspect of our lives to mimic or honor those whom we hold in high regard. Whether living or deceased, near or distant, they have helped to shape us for the better. After a period of time, we can easily begin to struggle with remaining devoted to causes that seem to have no resolution. We enjoy peace and resolve and seek to avoid conflict as much as possible, especially ongoing conflict. While we do not openly admit it (at least most adults do not), we seek to live in a way that can be upheld by others or admired. We have grown to be aware and appreciative of our cultural, social, or religious heritage. We take pride in the struggle and heroism of our forefathers. This knowledge and understanding give us encouragement to continually strive to achieve something we believe in, even when there is no evidence to substantiate our belief. To help us to stay the course and maintain a strong level of hope, we often share inspirational stories about historical personalities to younger generations. It is our desire that these stories will inspire the future generations to excel and achieve beyond their current circumstances with confident faith, believing that all things are possible.

## **THE LESSON IN CONTEXT**

The authorship of Hebrews is unknown. Some have speculated that Paul wrote Hebrews, but modern theologians and scholars reject this assertion. Some scholars have postulated that the author is Barnabas, which would explain certain theological similarities to Paul's letters with slight differences in tone and textures. The fact is, however, that the text of the book gives no clue of the author's identity. Hebrews 11:1-2 serves as an introduction to a doctrinal discourse on faith that perseveres through divine service. The twofold definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 is typical of the Hebrew (or Jewish) way of thinking. Its literary structure and parallelism follow the pattern of Hebrew poetry, in which two statements reflect the same or similar ideas. The author asserts that no matter how excellent the works of the saints might have been, the worthiness or value of their works was derived only by faith. The writer directly affirmed what had already been hinted at: the ancestors of the faith pleased God by faith alone. God blesses actions that are motivated and driven not by fear or obligation but by one's confident trust in God. When he was in Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham was commanded to go where God would lead him. He responded with faith, obeying God without hesitation—a striking example of faith in action (see Genesis 11:31; 12:14). This is the faith God expects from those who profess to love Him.

## **OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)**

1. Whom or what type of people do you consider as heroes?
2. What actions or attributes qualify them as heroes?
3. Consider the likelihood that someone may regard you as his/her hero. What heroic qualities do you think you possess?

## **INSIGHTS**

As believers, we are inspired to persevere based on the faith testimonies of those who have gone before us. We often reflect upon stories of others' faith and perseverance to find encouragement during difficult times. Other people's triumphs can serve to remind us that we are capable of enduring great hardships and overcoming obstacles others thought or deemed impossible. During hard times, we may be tempted to think that we are suffering more than anyone else. The truth is that we are neither the first nor the last persons to face hardship. Whatever we may be facing, the reality is that someone else is facing an even greater struggle. With God, you can persevere through tremendous disappointment, pain, and suffering. Don't be bitter or feel defeated when life doesn't go according to your plan, hopes, or timetable. Look to God with complete faith; He gives the bold strength to carry on.

## **EXPLORATION**

Christians know that living by faith means trusting God even when one is unable to see the outcome of a situation. While we cannot control or see the end result, we trust that the ultimate conclusion will accomplish our good and God's glory. Look for appropriate, helpful opportunities to share your own faith testimony with others who may be struggling through tough times; it will likely give them hope and encouragement to press on.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER**

### **COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 11:1-3**

#### **KJV**

NOW FAITH is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

#### **NIV**

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.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

The writer begins by inviting the reader to examine the nature of true faith. What is faith? The author says it is trust in the unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, for we may know by faith what we cannot see with the eye. Writing to a presumably Jewish audience, the writer continued the treatise on faith by recalling the record of several notable Hebrew ancestors—heroes and heroines who lived by trusting in the unseen. Faith is the ultimate assurance and evidence that things which are not seen are spiritual realities. By the act of believing, God’s children know that the Lord made the worlds by His Word. They know that those who have pleased God, like Abel, Enoch, and Noah, did so by acting in faith. This is the way and pattern of pleasing God—embracing the unseen, living by faith, and trusting God and His promises completely.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Questions:** Do you ever question your faith? If so, how do you overcome? If not, what helps you to remain faithful?
- **Young Adult Questions:** Many people fail to see the benefit of trying to please God by doing the right thing. What insight do you gain from the stories of Abel and Enoch? Does God notice what we do?

## COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 11:4-8

### KJV

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

### NIV

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

By faith, Abel made an acceptable offering to God—a blood sacrifice. Some have suggested that Abel’s superior sacrifice symbolized the superiority of atonement through blood sacrifice, as consummated by Jesus under the new covenant. Enoch lived a righteous life of unbroken fellowship with God. He lived faithfully before God, and before his transition from this world, his testimony was that he pleased God. This should be the goal of every true believer—as it is impossible to please God apart from genuine faith. Abel presented an acceptable offering and Enoch lived an acceptable life. Noah believed that God would judge the earth; his firm belief became the motivation for his life of faith. Noah built the ark as an evidence of his faith. The later patriarchs also bore similar witness. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses each exemplified living by faith. Abraham and Moses served as the better examples because they played such an important part in purposes of God in the earth. Abraham exemplified obedience by faith when he departed from his homeland to become a tent dweller and spiritual pilgrim, with his eye fixed upon a city he had yet to see. Later, he willingly prepared to offer his son back to God while maintaining full faith that God would provide and that the great promise of God concerning his life and future would not fail.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** Share examples of two persons whose faith you have observed up-close and from a distance. Why do you count them as faithful?
- **Young Adult Question:** Identify someone in your life who has demonstrated remarkable faith. Share with the class if time permits.

## COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 11:13-16

### KJV

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

#### NIV

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.

14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

For true believers, to live by faith is to die in faith. The faith life is a pilgrimage for those who will as true saints, constantly searching for God, seek Him as they trust His promises. Life is far easier for those who keep heaven as their focus—this world is not the ultimate reward or final destination. It allows for a life filled with peace and joy. Heaven is the only home of faithful believers. It is the better country to which those who live by faith are fully committed and because they are committed to God, He is committed to them. God is pleased to be their God and proves it by providing for them a city or place of habitation (see John 14:1-2). As a pleased parent, God takes delight in seeing His children live victoriously, despite life's inevitable twists and turns. God takes no pleasure in Christians who falter amid the smallest temptation or lose their strength and hope even in mild adversities. God is delighted to be the God of resilient overcomers whose faith and focus remain fixed on Him. They realize that through His power they can face, withstand, endure, and overcome all things.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** What kinds of thoughts motivate you to remain faithful to God? Share examples that can encourage others to remain faithful.
- **Young Adult Questions:** Many young adult Christians are so attached to the things of this world that it overshadows their excitement for heaven. Do you agree? How can we embrace a greater appreciation and anticipation for heaven?

#### LIFE APPLICATION

##### Refer to Adult Book

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

—This week, reflect on your walk with God. How faithful have you been regarding the work of the Lord? In which area(s) can you improve?

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

—This week, considering your personal reflection, share with a trusted fellow Christian and develop an accountability plan that allows you to affirm and update your spiritual progress in specific areas where you feel most challenged.

### **Refer to Young Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

—Believe it or not, just like Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, you have the potential to become a spiritual hero in this generation; all you need is faith. Someone can be greatly inspired by the power of your faithful witness. Are you willing to take God at His word?

**(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)**

—You are different. You may not speak the world's language or feel that you fit into every social circle. Why? Because your citizenship is in heaven. God has promised heaven to those who believe in Christ. Invite someone to join you on this journey, encouraging him or her to accept Christ as Savior and live faithfully for Him.

### **NEXT WEEK'S LESSON**

The lesson topic for Sunday, August 15, 2021, is "Keep Going." The Devotional Reading is Psalm 40:1-13, the Background Scripture is Hebrews 10:19-39, and the Printed Text is Hebrews 10:23-36.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord, help us to see You clearly and to see ourselves as we truly are. Help us to grow and improve our walk with You. Order our steps as we look to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Lord, help us to see You clearly and to see ourselves as we truly are. Help us to grow and improve our walk with You. Order our steps as we look to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

### **A PERSEVERING FAITH**

*(August 9-15, 2021)*

MONDAY, August 9: "Save Your Life by Losing It" (Mark 8:31-37)

TUESDAY, August 10: "Respond to Abusers with Blessings" (1 Peter 3:9-19)

WEDNESDAY, August 11: "Be Faithful Until Death" (Revelation 2:8-11)

THURSDAY, August 12: "Sanctified by Christ's Sacrifice" (Hebrews 10:1-10)

FRIDAY, August 13: "The Inner Life of New Believers" (Hebrews 10:11-18)

SATURDAY, August 14: "Approach God with a Pure Heart" (Hebrews 10:19-22)

SUNDAY, August 15: "Act in Ways That Preserve the Faith" (Hebrews 10:23-36)