

Focus on Faith

Chapter 3 New Testament Audio Lesson #75



Objective: To understand why we should hold onto our faith



Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.... 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.

—Hebrews 11:1-2, 6

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.

—Hebrews 12:1

Because the readers of Hebrews were suffering persecution, they were despairing. The author urges them to think back to when they were first saved, when Jesus was their first love. If they hold onto their faith, in heaven they will receive a greater reward. The author also exhorts them to hold onto their faith because the righteous live by faith. We are saved by faith and then we live by faith.

Chapter 11 is considered the Faith Chapter, with faith defined in verse one. When we hope, we believe that there is something good in this world and that it will happen to us, but we may not have any evidence. Faith is the evidence; it gives substance to our hope. Biblical faith is an act of belief in something or someone you cannot see based upon evidence. But in this passage, faith itself is the evidence of the unseen object: God. The greatest evidence of God is the person who has faith, because God is the source of faith.

We should hold onto our faith because without it, we cannot please God. When we come to God, we must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. In Jeremiah 29:13, God says, “*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*”

Faith involves action. The heroes of the faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 performed acts of belief. Noah, who had never seen rain, worked for 120 years to build the ark. The evidence of Noah’s faith was shown by his obedience to God, his action – building the ark.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that the heroes of the faith are surrounding us as though we are in a great stadium. We are the participants, and they are the witnesses, cheering us on. The author reminds us that God disciplines those He loves. Even though discipline at the time it happens is difficult, its purpose is to affirm our salvation through Jesus Christ.



1. True or **False**: Faith is only internal; it does not involve action.
2. **True** or False: The author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to hold onto their faith.
3. True or **False**: Faith involves our intellect only, not our will.
4. **True** or False: The greatest evidence that God exists is the person who believes in Him.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. Why would the Hebrews want to give up on their faith?
 - a. Jesus' death and resurrection had been disproved.
 - b. They were tired of being lectured to by the author.
 - c. Some Jewish people were trying to teach them a false gospel.
 - d. They were being persecuted.**
6. What does God promise to those who hold onto their faith?
 - a. A prosperous life on earth
 - b. No persecution
 - c. A greater reward in heaven**
 - d. No suffering
7. Why are these people called the heroes of the faith?
 - a. Their faith was evidenced by their actions.**
 - b. They performed deeds of remarkable heroism.
 - c. They saved other people's lives.
 - d. They told other people about Jesus.**

8. Why did God take Enoch?
 - a. **He pleased God.**
 - b. Enoch disobeyed God.
 - c. Enoch angered God.
 - d. Enoch's wife had just died, and he was sad.

9. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Why?
 - a. **If you want to go to God, you must believe He exists.**
 - b. God ignores people who do not believe in Him.
 - c. God gets mad if you have unbelief in your heart.
 - d. We cannot know what pleases God.

10. Why was Noah discussed in the Faith Chapter, Hebrews 11?
 - a. **He had never seen rain or an ark, but he believed God.**
 - b. His carpentry skills were exceptional.
 - c. God took his sons away to save them from experiencing death.
 - d. **He obeyed God.**

11. Hebrews tells us that "a great cloud of witnesses" surrounds us. Who might these people be?
 - a. Angels
 - b. **The people listed in Hebrews 11**
 - c. **Loved ones who were believers when they died**
 - d. People who do not want us to hold onto our faith

12. Sometimes, God uses hardship to discipline us. Why?
 - a. He is cruel.
 - b. **He loves us as His children.**
 - c. He wants us to be afraid of Him.
 - d. **He does it for our good.**



Have you ever been tempted to throw away your faith? Why? Has this study helped strengthen your faith? How?

How are hope and faith tied together? What gives substance to hope? Have you placed your hope in Jesus?



Thank God that faith is a gift from Him. Ask God to help you hold onto your faith, no matter what, and to deepen it. Thank God for biblical examples of people who lived by faith. Ask His help to be an example to those around you.



Going Deeper

1. Describe and apply how the heart of the author's argument begins at 10:35 and continues through the beginning of chapter 12. _____

2. Give and apply at least four reasons why the author exhorts these Hebrew believers not to throw away their faith. _____

3. How do these reasons form a definition of what faith truly is? _____

4. In what way does that definition present a context in which the author presents a long list of heroes of faith? _____

5. Describe and apply what all those heroes of faith have in common. _____

6. Describe and apply personally how faith itself in a believer is the evidence of the unseen Giver of faith. _____

7. How would you describe and personally apply the way divine chastisement is, in itself, affirmation that we are truly a child of God? _____
