

Hebrews 11:1-3, 6 – Faith

Main point: Faith helps us to trust God and his goodness.



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: Chapter 11 of Hebrews is one of the great chapters of faith in the Bible. We'll be looking only at the beginning of chapter 11, but in the rest of the chapter the writer tells stories about many biblical figures who had faith in God through thick and thin. It's worth a read!

Focus of the study:

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by faith the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the entire universe was created by the word of God, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. ...⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that God exists and that God rewards those who seek him.

Questions:

1. *v. 1: I wonder what the definition of faith is? How does the writer put it?*
 - a. The assurance of things hoped for ... *What is assurance?*
 - b. The conviction of things not seen ... *What is conviction?*
 - i. With both, you feel sure, no doubt, convinced deep in your heart, a settled fact.
2. *Read v. 2 again. What does "commendation" mean? When someone "commends" you for an action you did, what is that person saying? For example, what is a military commendation?*
 - a. Approval, praise, "good job;" your boss is pleased. A military commendation means honorable notice, attention from your superior that you did something well.
3. *How does it feel when someone says "good job," when someone commends you?*
4. *In verse 3, the writer gives an example of faith by pointing to creation: "By faith we understand that the entire universe was created by the word of God, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen."*
 - a. *Can we see where all of creation came from? No ... so how do we have faith in something in creation that we can't see?*
 - i. Evidence – such as with wind, love, stars, the voice of someone on the phone or in another room. We can't see the "thing," but we know it exists by its evidence.
 - ii. Repetition – the morning dawn, the moon, the seasons.
5. *When something happens over and over and you can see its effects, how does this make you feel about the existence of that thing, both now and in the future?*
 - a. Leads to conviction and surety (assurance) – you've seen it all your life, repeatedly, so all signs give you expectation that it exists and will continue to exist.
6. *In verse 6: How does the writer say that we please God? What is required to please God?*
 - a. *faith:* in what?
 - i. that God exists (though unseen)
 - ii. that God rewards those who seek him
7. *v. 6a: In your own life, what evidence encourages you (gives you faith) to believe that God exists?*

8. *v. 6b: What kind of rewards are we talking about here? What kind of rewards have you encountered in your life, that you think have come from God?*
 - a. family, friends, work, health, education, food, patience to bear trials, community, church ...
 9. *So what does faith help us in the day to day, especially when things may be difficult?*
 - a. helps us “keep on keeping on”—we don’t give up
 - b. helps us obey God’s word—act in this world according to God’s direction
 - c. helps us listen and believe that God is good, no matter where we go or what happens.
 10. *How can we encourage one another to look in faith to our reward from God, now and eternally?*
- Ask for prayer requests for today.
 - Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
 - End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

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