

**Monday****Hebrews
11:23-28
Exodus 1-2**

At this point in our study, it is clear that Old Testament saints were able to see God do incredible things through their faith. However, verse 26 of chapter 11 makes a fascinating statement: Moses did not just display faith in God, but somehow was willing to suffer for the sake of Christ. How is this possible? Some scholars believe that the author's point was that like Jesus, Moses went from a place of wealth and prosperity into a position of servitude and suffering in order to faithfully advance God's plan. So many aspects of Moses' actions demonstrate complete reliance on God to visibly move and act in order for events to happen. What is standing in your way to believe Him? What steps can you take to practice fully depending on God to move?

Tuesday**Hebrews 11:29
Exodus 14**

Imagine standing in front of a massive body of water, desperate to escape your captors. Suddenly, the water parts ways and creates a pathway for you and your fellow slaves. At that moment, you have two choices: stay and be re-enslaved or move forward through this path in hope of escape. You may be gripped by so much fear of the unknown that your logic and understanding completely fail, making it seem for a moment that being recaptured doesn't look so bad. But what if you called to mind the many times you have seen miracle after miracle occur? Part of you begins to believe that freedom from your slavery may in fact be on the other side of this pathway. As a result, each step you take is one of faith, that while you cannot comprehend what is happening or what will happen, you know and trust that this will lead you in the right direction. Recall a time in your walk with Christ when your faith required that you move forward without your full understanding. What made you take those steps? The peace we have in getting to know Jesus and seeing God move in the past are often what helps us move forward instead of staying stuck.



Wednesday

Hebrews 11:30
Joshua 5:13-15
Joshua 6

In times of war, especially in this account in Joshua, shouting loudly and blowing horns would never be seen as anything but morale-boosting. To make it even more strange, the voices and horns were only to be used in this instance after a seven-day process of marching around Jericho silently. This was the given method from the angel of God to Joshua. From our understanding of the physical world, how could this cause the fortified walls of a city to fall? This was a preposterous idea then, and it would be a preposterous suggestion now. But, as this actually happened then, what would it take for the same event to happen now? Faith. As we grow to understand Who God is, our faith and obedience to what He asks is not a game. His understanding and ability to control the world is far more powerful and capable than ours. When we evaluate His Word, His ways, and/or what He asks us to do through our flawed human understanding, we will fail to experience what He has in store. In what ways has God been calling you to do something that you struggle to understand? How can you take a step to do that thing?

Thursday

Hebrews 11:31
Joshua 2
James 2

Rahab is a particular interesting character in Scripture. She was a prostitute and a Gentile sinner, and yet when she heard about the God of Israel, she set in her heart and mind an awareness that God would give the Jews the city in which she lived. She had faith in a God who she really had no cultural or religious alignments with, and for that, her life was spared as the Israelites conquered the city. It would be easy to misinterpret this story as one that suggests that faith in God means that He will make good things to happen. Truth is, while the Israelite spies promised Rahab she would be spared, she still had no guarantee other than her belief that their God was real and could spare her if He desired. Therefore, when you take steps in faithful obedience to God, ask yourself: are my steps done in humility and hope, or in arrogance and selfish gain?

Friday

Hebrews 11:32-40
Judges 4:4-10
Judges 6-7
Judges 10:6-18
Judges 11-6
1 Samuel 3,12
1 Samuel 16-17

The author summarizes that the faith of those in the Old Testament was never characterized or defined by the visible outcomes. While the outcomes were at times prosperous, they also resulted in suffering and death. Therefore, those in the Old Testament were faithful because they had a grasp and a belief in God that would shape and define their lives. Even so we now are living in a time that is far superior to them, because we can now have the power and love of God dwell in us through His Spirit, thanks to the work of Christ. Spend time in prayer and thanksgiving knowing that your faith is rooted in God's Spirit Who lives in you and ministers to you, and that the source of your faith neither rests on mere stories nor requires that you see massive supernatural events in order for your faith to be strengthened.

**Saturday****Hebrews 12:1-3****Romans 13:12****1 Cor. 9:24-27****Psalms 110:1****Mark 16:19****Galatians 6:9****Isaiah 40:31****Revelation 2:3**

If we stop at verse 1 of chapter 12, it would carry a tremendous weight at the author's insistence that we put aside the sin in our lives and that we live a life characterized by faith while persevering through trials. This would mean that we would have to create a system by which we could track and try to behaviorally eliminate the bad things we do. Thankfully, this is not the case and the author gives us a solution in verse 2 on how to do carry out verse 1's commands: to we fix and keep our eyes on Jesus. By growing closer to Christ, we become more like Him as we learn to desire what is good in His sight and walk in true freedom instead of legalism. On a scale from 1-5 (1 being "I completely disagree" and 5 being "I completely agree"), answer these two questions: 1) God's rules exist to demand my obedience whether I like it or not, 2) God's rules are evidence and aids of His desire for me to know Him more and to live free in Christ. Share your thoughts with your Connect Group leader or mentor.

Sunday**Hebrews 12:4-11****Philippians 2:8****Proverbs 3**

Christianity does not maintain that God's love, grace, and generosity result in His showering us with earthly gifts or a life that is without challenges. While God does allow for us to suffer, the text covered today puts our suffering into the proper context. We can know that our suffering and trials are allowed so that we may share in the holiness and righteousness of Christ, which works to make us whole. However, so much of our culture has told us that we should not only avoid suffering, but that we should consider our suffering evil. But that is not what the Scriptures say. Scripture says that when we suffer for Christ, we are engaged in a time of refinement and correction that shifts our minds, hearts, and bodies to better understand and further fall in love with the Jesus Christ our Savior. Spend a moment taking the largest source of your pain and asking God to give you a thankful heart in the hope you have to learn and grow in Him from the circumstance. You don't have to be thankful for the pain or bad circumstance itself. But change happens when we put our minds on gratitude for the opportunities that only those circumstances provide for us to grow in Christ!