

HEBREWS

STUDY 12 – HEB 11:1-40

1. What do you think it means to 'have faith' in something? Is it possible to have 'more' or 'less' faith in something?

Intro question to get them thinking about what the word 'faith' really means. Don't simply focus on spiritual faith here.



Read Hebrews 11:1-40

2. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews has devoted an entire chapter to the topic of 'faith'? How does it fit in with the rest of the letter?

A question to set the context. It is included here to further demonstrate what it means to persevere as a believer in Christ (chapter 10). It serves to further encourage the original readers not to return to their old ways.

Verses 1-16 speak of faith in general terms, and give some examples from the book of Genesis of God's people who through their actions displayed great faith.

3. What was it, particularly, about their actions that meant they were demonstrating great faith? *(Consider particularly the focus of their actions)*
 - a. Abel – *His focus was on sacrificing correctly, and giving God what he deserved (he wasn't simply interested in the bare minimum).*
 - b. Enoch – *Don't really know heaps except that he was righteous, and pleased God in the way that he lived.*
 - c. Noah – *He acted upon what God told him to be true, even though he did not have any 'proof' that the flood would occur. It was great trust.*
 - d. Abraham – *Obeyed God in many ways, and in many situations he which he did things that would have seemed to otherwise be foolish. Again great trust.*

4. How do verses 13-16 sum up the main point that is being made by these examples?

They were focussed on God and his commands in all that they did. They were not so much concerned with the 'here and now' as with the future (heaven).

Verses 17-31 provide further examples of great Old Testament figures who displayed great faith in their actions.

5. How is faith in God shown to affect decision-making in the examples of:
 - a. Abraham (v17-19) – *He acted against his better judgment, and in spite of the apparent contradictions that existed.*
 - b. Moses (v24-28) – *He chose to stand up as one of God’s people, despite the disgrace that it would bring.*
6. In what practical ways should our faith in God affect the decisions that we have to make in life?

It should have a serious impact on the choices that we make. Our decisions should not be focussed on what is best for us, but on what God desires. Get them to share some practical examples of how this might or has occurred in their lives.

7. What does the example of Jericho (verse 30) tell us about faith in God?

It shows us that faith must persevere. Read also Heb 3:14; 6:11-12; and 10:35-36 to help arrive at this answer if necessary.

8. In what ways is your own faith weak in this quality?

A chance for some personal application of the above question.

Verses 32-40 conclude the chapter by summarising the achievements and sufferings of further men and women of the faith, and summarises the argument that has been presented.

9. How would you summarise the effect that faith in God and his promises had upon the lives of the people referred to in these verses?

Through their faith they achieved a wide range of achievements in God’s name. It also meant that they suffered greatly as a result of their bold faith.

10. What kind of Christian witness did they present to those around them?

It was a bold and faithful witness, despite the fact that they suffered greatly and were condemned by others.

11. In what ways are we far more privileged than they were?

(verses 39-40) They died before they received the promise of faith – Jesus! We live post-Jesus and so already know of the certainty of the result of our faith.

12. How should understanding this affect the way we live out our day-to-day faith?

A chance for some more practical application of what it means to live as a Christian ‘by faith’.