Basic Bible Doctrine: Lesson # 22

“Our Heroes Are In the Grandstands”

Quotes:

“Often it seems a pity that Noah didn’t miss the boat.” ~~~ Mark Twain

“It pays to plan ahead. It wasn’t raining when Noah built the Ark.” ~~~ Howard Ruff

“Abraham is such a fascinating figure. Three world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam --- all claim him as their patriarch. He was raised in a religious home. And yet He rejected religion in order to pursue a personal relationship with God.” ~~~ Ann Graham Lotz

“Who can doubt that Moses was a better leader of humanity than Machiavelli?” ~~~ Albert Einstein

“Man has made 32,000,000 laws since the Commandments were handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai … BUT he has never improved on God’s law.” ~~~ Cecil B. Demille

“I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had passed them through the United States Congress.” ~~~ Ronald Reagan

From Pastor Keith:

The stories of the Bible are fascinating and dramatic and filled with lessons that will enrich our lives, guide us in difficult times, and teach us how to follow God. The characters in these stories are not saints, but real men and women who lived real lives in a real world. They wrestled with doubts and temptation. They lived in a bloody, war-filled, idolatrous, and misguided world and were often victorious in dangerous situations through faith in God’s Word. I am so thankful that the stories are written down for us in the Scriptures. Romans 15:4 states, “Such things were written in the scriptures long ago to teach us. And the scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.”

Over the next several weeks we will be studying Hebrews 11:1-12:2. This passage of Scripture includes what many have called the “Faith Heroes Hall of Fame.” This passage is very inspiring as it reminds us of the great victories and sacrifices that Old Testament characters experienced by having faith in God’s Word. Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses are mentioned as men who believed God’s Word and did what God wanted them to do. Sarah and Rahab the prostitute were two women mentioned in this fascinating list of giants of the faith. Then there are lesser known names, but still men of great faith like Barak and Jephthah. There are the heart warming and valiant characters like Samson, Samuel, and King David. These characters are pointed out to illustrate to us what it looks like to live by faith.

Furthermore, the writer of the book of Hebrews paints an interesting picture. He imagines that we who are living today are down on the track of a great sports complex. We are running our race like athletes in the Olympics. In the grandstands cheering us on are our heroes who have run before us. Abraham, Isaac, Moses, King David, and others are up in the grandstands watching us run our race. The author of the book of Hebrews challenges us to run our race by faith not allowing anything to weight us down or hold us back. Each week, as we study our heroes we can imagine what would they say to us if they could come down out of the grandstands and encourage us.
So, over the next several weeks we will examine a story from the life of several of these characters. This week, we simply want to become familiar with the content of this amazing passage of Scripture. This will serve as an introduction to our study of the Heroes of our Faith.

**This week:**
1. Read 3 times Hebrews 1:1-12:2.
2. Circle each name in your Bible or on your study sheet.
3. Make a list of the heroes that are unfamiliar to you.
4. Search for and find the definition of faith in this passage.

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**Our Scripture (NLT): Hebrews 11:1—12:2**

**GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH**

1. Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.  
2. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.  
3. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

4. It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.

5. It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—"he disappeared, because God took him." For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God.  
6. And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

7. It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

8. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going.  
9. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise.  
10. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

11. It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise.  
12. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

13. All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.  
14. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own.  
15. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back.  
16. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17. It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac,  
18. even though God had told him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted."  
19. Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.
20 It was by faith that Isaac promised blessings for the future to his sons, Jacob and Esau.

21 It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff.

22 It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. He even commanded them to take his bones with them when they left.

23 It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months when he was born. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid to disobey the king's command.

24 It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

25 He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.

26 He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward. 27 It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king's anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible. 28 It was by faith that Moses commanded the people of Israel to keep the Passover and to sprinkle blood on the doorposts so that the angel of death would not kill their firstborn sons.

29 It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all drowned.

30 It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down.

31 It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

32 How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. 33 By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. 35 Women received their loved ones back again from death.

But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. 36 Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. 37 Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. 38 They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

39 All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. 40 For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us.

GOD'S DISCIPLINE PROVES HIS LOVE

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.
Answer the Following Questions:
1. Read Hebrews 11:1 and fill in the blank:
   “Faith is the ____________ that what we ________ for will actually _____________."
2. According to 11:1 what is faith? ______________________________________________________
3. There is a phrase repeated at least 15 times in this passage. What is it? ______________________
4. Sometimes Christians think they have faith simply because of what they feel. Looking at the statement about each hero, are they described as doing something or feeling something?
5. In verses 4 - 35 we are told of heroes that did great things by faith. But beginning with verse 36 there are Heroes of the Faith whose names are not listed. How does the Bible describe their experience? __________________________________________________________________________
6. Fill in the blank from these phrases in verse 35-39:
   • “But ____________ were ______________,”
   • “Some were ____________ at, and their backs were _______ ________ with whips.”
   • “Others were ____________ in prisons.”
   • “Some went about wearing __________ of sheep and goats, ____________ and oppressed and ______________.”
   • “They were too ___________ for this world.”
   • “All of these people earned a _______________ because of their faith.”
7. According to this passage of Scripture if you have faith will life always be comfortable and without trouble? ______________________________________________________________________
8. Read 12:1-2. According to these two verse we run our race of faith for God by doing two things. One is found in verse 1 and the other in verse 2.

Devotional questions:
1. How would you describe faith in your own words? ________________________________________
2. Do you feel that YOU have faith? ______________________________________________________
3. How do you think one develops faith? ___________________________________________________
4. Is there anything in your life right now that is a challenge to you? _________________________
5. Of all the heroes mentioned in this week’s passage, which one is your favorite? ___________
6. Have you ever known a great Christian who suffered? _________________________________