

WEEK 9



HEBREWS 11-12:3

JESUS IS THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH; WE CAN HAVE A STRONG FAITH THAT IS ACTIVE IN OBEDIENCE

Preface

In the previous weeks...

- Week 1-7: Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation to the world, the promised Son of God and great High Priest, who is superior over all things. He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to purify us, reconcile us with God, and secure our salvation. Through Jesus Christ, we can come to God directly. We are warned to pay attention to God's revelation, firmly place our hope in Jesus, obey His Word, and grow in spiritual maturity.
- Week 8: Jesus Christ died once and for all for our sins and established the new covenant. We are warned to persevere and guard against losing faith, especially amid persecution.

This week...

- Jesus Christ is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who exemplified a faith that is active in obedience. Learning from the forerunners of our faith, we are reminded to fix our eyes on Him and have our minds set on the eternal so that we can persevere in faith.

Observation

1. According to Heb. 11:1, what are the key elements of faith?
2. Based on Heb. 11:6, what are the two beliefs required to come to God?
3. Based on Heb. 11:8-19, how did Abraham demonstrate his faith?
4. What was the shared experience amongst the names listed in this passage? (Heb. 11:13-16)

*Leaders' note: 1) They were still **living by faith** when they died, 2) they **did not receive** the things promised; they only **saw** them and **welcomed** them **from a distance**, 3) they **admitted** that they were **foreigners and strangers** on earth, 4) they were **looking for a country** of their own, **a better country—a heavenly one**.*

5. Based on Heb. 11:23-29, how did Moses' parents and Moses demonstrate their faith?
6. What are the two encouragements that the author was calling for in Heb. 12:1-3?

Interpretation

1. What was the common response displayed by the Old Testament characters as a result of their faith?

*Leaders' note: The Old Testament characters displayed **obedience** and **faith in action**, even though they might not fully understand God's calling for them. They had confidence in God's promises and who He is.*

2. Hebrews 11 outlined the Old Testament characters' faith in action. What are the important qualities/beliefs that could lead to an active faith?

*Leaders' note: This is an open-ended question. To help with discussion, instruct members to identify verbs/adjectives that were mentioned preceding the actions that demonstrated their faith. Example answers are, but are not limited to: **v.6** belief in God, earnestness in seeking God, **v.13** admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth, **v.16** longed for a "better" country, **v.17** embraced God's promises.*

3. How could the lives of the Old Testament characters encourage the original audience to persevere in suffering persecution?

4. How do the concepts of being a foreigner and stranger who long for a better country, foster the faith of believers that lead to actions?

5. How would you explain Hebrews 11:39-40 to others?

Leaders' note: The author was calling the original audience to have greater faith than the faith of the Old Testament characters because they have seen God's promise being fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Application

1. We are foreigners and strangers on earth. How does this truth affect the way we prioritize our thoughts, resources, and actions?

2. How does our current situation of life call for the kind of faith demonstrated in Hebrews 11? How can we act in faith this week, in accordance with what has been demonstrated?

3. Share a circumstance in your life in which you needed to trust God, even though you could not see where it was going to lead.

Optional Prayer Exercise: Praying with Prayers of the Saints

Reading pre-written prayers of the saints may seem unoriginal, but it can be a powerful practice to increase our sense of belonging and connect with the forerunners of our faith. This week, spend some time reading and meditating on some prayers of the saints and practice writing out your prayers as if you are writing a letter to God.

Example: **"My Song for Today"**, Prayer of St Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

My life is but an instant, a passing hour. My life is but a day that escapes and flies away. O my God! You know that to love you on earth I only have today. Lord, what does it matter if the future is gloomy? To pray for tomorrow, oh no, I cannot! Keep my heart pure, cover me with your shadow Just for today. O divine Pilot! whose hand guides me. I'm soon to see you on the eternal shore. Guide my little boat over the stormy waves in peace, just for today. Amen."