

LIFE Bible Study: Hebrews 11:1-40 – Part 1

Faith's Conviction & Faith's Call

For Discussion: What things make it a challenge for you to not just believe privately but to live out your faith? What makes you doubt, even momentarily, the genuineness of your faith? What brings you back from that doubt in the end?

Read Hebrews 11:1-40

Hebrews 11 consists of four sections that encompass distinct periods in history: **v.1-7** – Creation to Noah, **v.8-22** – Abraham to Joseph, **v.23-31** – Moses to Israel's entry into the Promised Land, **v.32-40** – Period of the judges, kings, and prophets. Taken together, the accounts span the whole of the Old Testament and show on a smaller scale the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption: the inception of the nation of Israel, the preservation of the patriarchs and growth of the nation, Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery, their passage through the wilderness, and Israel's entry into the Promised Land and first victory towards fully possessing it.

For review: In Hebrews 10:19-39, the author issued several exhortations for his readers to live a life in keeping with the relationship they had with God in Christ. These included drawing near to God, holding fast to their confession of hope, and setting their thoughts on how they could stir up one another to love and good works. These practices would be protective of their faith given the ever-present pressure from the world to abandon it, which had already affected some among them. He also gave them a stern warning of God's wrath for those who would obstinately turn away to a life of sin after having tasted the blessings of God and of His people. The author ended the section with the key principle, "my righteous one shall live by faith," which introduces the following chapter where he presents a list of heroes of the faith as an encouragement and as examples for his readers.

From the author's accounts, what value is there in having faith (v.1-7)? What are some characteristics of the kind of faith that God values? What is the basis for our confidence in this faith (Heb. 6:13-20)?

To have conviction is to have a firmly held belief. Where do you see examples/evidence of conviction in the accounts given by the author? As a result of their conviction, what attitudes did these individuals have regarding their specific circumstances or life in general?

The author associates some of the figures he lists with unprompted acts of faith, while others are shown demonstrating their faith through obedience to specific calls from God. What were some of God's explicit calls to action? In what ways were people's responses to them a demonstration of faith?

If your story was included in a list of people who lived by faith, what significant event or decision would be given for you? What were you convicted of in that situation and how was that expressed in your response? Give thanks to God for a faith that is real and applicable and be ready to share your experiences with others as a testimony of God's work in your life and a reminder that He honours those who honour Him (1 Sam. 2:30b).

Reflection and application

In pointing his readers to the earlier figures of faith, the author shows that their stature and achievements were not a product of their own greatness but a result of their faith. This was to be an encouragement for them to look to these examples and emulate them earnestly (Heb. 6:11-12). Whenever God gives us something to trust in, that truth is never meant to be far removed from our lives, but is rather given to transform them. Right faith changes our outlook on life as well as our values and priorities. As James has expressed elsewhere, faith and obedience, belief and action, are inseparably joined in God's design. When God brings us to conviction, the unspoken call is to place ourselves beneath the authority of that truth and to seek His guidance in living it out in whatever context He places us. Let us hold our conviction firmly to the end and keep our eyes of faith fixed on the prize that we will one day receive with our spiritual predecessors who have gone before us.