

# FAITH THAT PLEASURES GOD AND OVERCOMES THE WORLD

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## INTRODUCTION:

- A. When the Hebrew writer penned Hebrews 11, he didn't just want people to be impressed with the great faith of same, but to teach principles of strong and enduring faith:**
1. The book of Hebrews was written to a group of people who either already were leaving Christianity to go back to Judaism, or at least the author feared that they would
  2. The key to their remaining faithful, no matter what Satan through their way, was their faith in the Lord and His word (**Heb. 11:36-39**)
- B. While we may not face the struggle of desiring to go back to the Jewish system – We do face struggles that, at the heart, are like what the Jewish Christians faced!**
1. We desire at times to go back to the world or giving up might seem easier at the moment
  3. The kind of faith that the Hebrew writer talks about here is the kind of faith everyone needs if they want to please God and they want to overcome the world!
  4. What does this faith look like? How would this faith impact the way I live?

## I. BELIEVES IN AND PURSUES GOD:

- A. The Hebrew writer begins with a description of what faith is and does: (**Hebrews 11:1-3**)**
1. He tells us that this faith is the substance of things hoped for:
    - a. Substance: "To stand under, to be a foundation" (As a pillar holds up a building)
    - b. It means to have confidence, firm trust, and assurance in something
    - c. Faith is the foundation (that which stands under) the Christian's hope for the future
  2. He also tells us that this faith is the evidence of things not seen:
    - a. Faith simply means "proof, conviction"
    - b. Faith offers us full certainty of proof for what we cannot see
  3. Faith is not blind, irrational, or illogical as some might suppose
    - a. It's blind when you close your eyes to the truth! The irrational thing is to not accept what you know is the truth!
    - b. Faith is not what you do or believe when nothing else makes sense!
    - c. Faith is based upon what we can know and trust – God's word! (**Rom. 10:17**)
  4. An illustration of faith is our belief is seen in how we believe this world came into being:
    - a. Were you there? Are you a witness? Then how do you know?
    - b. **Illustration:** Teacher showing only what you can see is real (cant see her brain)
    - c. Yet we believe what Genesis 1:1 says: God created the heavens and the earth as we can visibly see them – all from things which we cannot see!
- B. The Hebrew writer gives us three examples to help us visualize what this faith looks like:**
1. We first see in Abel how this kind of faith worships: (**Hebrews 11:4**)
    - a. The only conclusion I can draw is that God must have spoken about HOW they were to worship: Abel followed God's word and Cain didn't!
    - b. Cain's problem ran deeper than just missing an instruction of the Lord – He did things Cain's way instead of God's way → He wasn't diligently seeking God!
    - c. When the Lord looked upon Abel's faithfulness the Lord called Him RIGHTEOUS!
    - d. Though dead for many years, Abel still speaks and shows us how faith worships!
  2. We see in Enoch how this kind of faith walks: (**Hebrews 11:5**)
    - a. What better testimony could be given than is given here: "He pleased God"
      - 1) There has been a lot of great things said about people after they died as a summation of their lives; however, very few are as great as this!
      - 2) This brings a thought provoking question to mind: After you have died will the same be said of you? Are you living now so that it could be said?
    - b. Moses summed up his life by saying he walked with God (**Gen 5:22**)

- c. When other men were walking away from God, Enoch walked with Him! He daily drew himself closer and closer to God by the way he lived and thought
- 3. We see in Noah how this kind of faith obeys: **(Hebrews 11:7)**
  - a. Noah took a message that to many might be foolishness and believed firmly that it was going to take place! He trusted God's word & staked everything on it!
  - b. Noah had never seen rain, much less a flood – God's word was all the evidence he needed for something he hadn't seen! God said it, thus making it reality!
  - c. His faith moved Him to do ALL that God commanded **(Gen 6:22, 7:5)**

**C. The first principle about this kind of faith is that it knows and seeks (Hebrews 11:6)**

- 1. Faith that pleases God & overcomes the world begins with firm belief in God's existence:
  - a. The things we observe testify of God's existence and His word that He has left for us teaches us about Him, His nature, and what He wants of us
  - b. Real faith in God's existence and nature will change a persons life! **(Passage)**
  - c. You ask, "Do you believe in God?" They respond, "YES!" → Yet, they don't live a life that demonstrates that belief! Do they truly believe in God?
- 2. This kind of faith doesn't just believe but seeks after, or pursues, the Lord:
  - a. We seek after God with a purpose in mind **(Acts 17:27)**
  - b. "Our goal is to seek God, to find God, and to have fellowship with Him; to the point that it can be said that He is in us and we are in Him" (Bill Hall)
  - c. Think about Paul: His pursuit of the Lord greatly impacted his life! **(Phil. 3:8)**
  - d. Pursuing the Lord in our lives will mean that we want to do whatever it takes to please Him, what He wants from us, what makes Him happy!
- 3. How do we go about seeking God? **(I John 1:1-3; 2:3)**
  - a. We seek after God and find him through carefully studying His word
  - b. We can know God's word and perfectly understand it, and yet if we do not obey what God says, we still haven't sought to know and seek Him!
- 4. This faith diligently seeks God → You will not find God and have a relationship with Him through half-hearted effort! **(2 Peter 1:5, 10)**
- 5. This faith also has a firm trust in the fact that God is a rewarder → God is good!
  - a. **Illustration:** Someone says, "I'll pay you a hundred dollars if you'll go out and work hard for me!" – Why do we do it? We trust that he's a rewarder!
  - b. God offers many promises along the way → Do we trust that He'll follow through?
  - c. Our trust in His being a rewarder will give us strength to go on when the same pressures would cause someone else to give it up! **(Luke 6:22-23)**

**II. EMBRACES THE PROMISES OF GOD AS REALITY:**

**A. Abraham & Sarah's entire lives centered around faith in God's promises: (Heb. 11:8-12)**

- 1. His faith in God led him to obey the Lord when he called him to be a pilgrim: **(vs. 8)**
  - a. Abraham did not know where he was going nor the length of his journey
  - b. The only thing he knew was that God asked him to go and that God would lead him
  - c. He trusted in God and had faith in what he didn't see or know about firsthand!
- 2. Abraham did dwell for a while in Canaan, however, it was only as a stranger: **(vs. 9-10)**
  - a. God showed him what the land of promise was, but it wasn't going to be given to his descendants for over 400 years
  - b. So Abraham dwelt there as a stranger, living in tents – This was a temporary home
  - c. Verse 10 indicates that no matter where he lived it wasn't truly home because he was waiting and looking toward his real home - Heaven
- 3. Sarah showed her great faith by trusting God to bring to her a child in old age: **(vs. 11-12)**
  - a. "Didn't she laugh at first?" – Yes, but she still came to have faith in God's promise
  - b. Biologically, she knew she couldn't have a child – both her and Abraham were dead reproductively – Yet God promised her a son!
  - c. She took confidence in the faithfulness of God and conceived a son!
- 4. I suppose the greatest testing of Abraham's faith in the promises of God came when he was called upon to sacrifice the son of promise! **(Vs. 17-19)**

- a. God had said nothing to Abraham (that we know of) about a resurrection and yet He believed that God would raise Him from the dead!
  - b. How could he reach this conclusion? God must do something like this if He is going to keep His promises! Based on this faith – Abraham obeyed!
5. Paul summed up the faith of Abraham: **(Romans 4:17-22)**

**B. This type of faith wasn't just characteristic of Abraham and Sarah, but also was true about all of the patriarchs: (Hebrews 11:20-22)**

1. Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things of the future:
  - a. This blessing would have included the "handing down" of the promises made to Abraham concerning their becoming a great nation and the land of Canaan
  - b. More than that, but Isaac would have told them about the greatest promise of all, the promise made about the coming of Jesus Christ!
2. Jacob blessed his grandsons as he was dying → He also would have repeated the promises made to Abraham showing his trust that God would fulfill them!
3. The Hebrew writer is more specific concerning the faith of Joseph:
  - a. He told the then forming nation of Israel that they'd leave Egypt's bondage
  - b. Not only that, but he wanted them to carry his bones with them from Egypt to Canaan → This was looking to the future in trust & caused them to do as well!
4. God's promises were as good as done! They trusted God & held them dear to their hearts

**C. The Hebrew writer gives the keys behind such great faith in them and us (vs. 13-16)**

1. Though none of these people ever lived to see the complete fulfillment of the promises they still had total confidence that the promises were being fulfilled!
2. Four keys to their faith is seen here that we must emulate:
  - a. They had complete confidence in the promises that God had made to them
  - b. They embraced God's promises dear to their hearts – They lived by them
  - c. They understood their citizenship was heavenly and readily confessed that
  - d. They refused to look back because their focus was on heaven
3. It's when this type of faith is exhibited that God says, "I am not ashamed to be called \_\_\_\_\_'s God" → What a wonderful testimony of someone's faith!
4. When it comes to the promises God has made us, are we fully convinced that what He promised he is able to perform? **(Romans 4:20-21)**
  - a. In our salvation – We must believe that God gives life to the dead (spiritually) and calls those things which do not exist as though they did (calls us righteous)
  - b. God has promised us that no temptation will overtake us that we are not able to handle and He says there will always be a way of escape
  - c. God tells us to be patient in our trials because something greater is being produced in us! Faith in what God says is crucial to being victorious!
  - d. God has promised us that there will be a resurrection from the dead, a day of judgment, and a home in Heaven if we're faithful!

**CONCLUSION: Faith that will please the Lord and give us victory over the world is the kind of faith firmly believes in God and seeks Him and that embraces God's promises as reality! (I John 5:4)**