

## **Hebrews 11:1-7**

### **Small Group Notes**

#### **Introduction:**

**What is the biggest risk you have ever taken? What influenced you to do it? What was the outcome?**

**Who is someone that you know that is prone to taking risks? Based upon their behavior, what is the relationship between seeing an opportunity and taking a risk?**

**What can be misconceptions that we have about faith? What is the opposite of faith? How does our opinion about risk inform the way we define and express faith?**

Some people confuse taking risks with having faith. Risks generally have no basis for success but faith is characterized by assurance that comes from trusting God. Faith is a biblical concept in which we trust in God with all of our lives, including our future. Faith, more than anything else, is what God is looking for to characterize the lives of His people. An example is the life of Enoch in Genesis. He was someone that simply walked with God and is characterized as someone of faith.

#### **Discuss:**

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-3

Explain: Hebrews 11 provides one of the most beautiful and familiar passages about faith. The writer of Hebrews described faith in terms of trusting God with assurance that the blessings He promised are real and that the events He has announced are certain. A relationship with God begins with faith in Jesus. Jesus is the only means for salvation. People place their trust in their own abilities and other people. They are disillusioned when the inevitable happens or when they are let down. We can draw strength by remembering past experiences when we demonstrate trust in God and His promises. Not only that, but when we see how God worked in others' lives, we are encouraged that He can work in ours.

**Complete the following sentence: "Faith is ...." What can our answers reveal about how we see the nature of faith?**

**How would you describe faith to someone who has never experienced it? How does it compare or contrast from what the Bible says in these verses?**

**How do your past experiences or the experiences of others affect your faith? What concerns in your life do you need to turn over to Him, and in the process exercise the faith that pleases Him?**

## 2. Read Hebrews 11:4-7

Explain: Having presented a definition of faith and examples of it (Abel, Enoch, and Noah), the writer of Hebrews then drew an important conclusion about true, saving faith. Simply put, faith pleases God; therefore, not having faith makes pleasing God impossible! Logically, if people are to draw near to God, they must believe that He actually exists. Biblical faith believes certain and specific truths about God, truths He revealed and preserved in the Scriptures. God is not just a vague notion of “the man upstairs.” He is the Everlasting Creator and Redeemer who has revealed Himself to us in His perfect Word. Therefore, real faith is trusting God with our lives, including our future. Some people may be willing to have faith—as long as it doesn’t go outside the boundaries of their comfort zone. This is not genuine faith. Genuine faith is demonstrated in our obedience to what God says to do. It’s this kind of faith God is looking for in His people.

**Who are some New Testament-age “heroes of faith” (including from modern times) that you would include on a “Hall of Faith” list? Why?**

**Who are the Abels, Enochs, and Noahs in your life? Who has been a model of faith for you?**

**How does seeing someone else exercise their faith help you to demonstrate your faith to others? According to verse 6, what does it take to have real faith? Based on this, how real is your faith?**

## 3. Read John 20:24-31

Explain: Thomas saw and believed—and that was fine. But according to Jesus, blessed are the millions who since that day have not had the opportunity of Thomas and the other disciples and yet have believed. When you consider in the history of the church, all of those that wrong the gospels and including many of the disciples of Jesus were said to have been martyred for their faith. What they saw was passed down to others and since then, has been passed on to us of the authenticity of our faith is not based in ourselves and our experience, but in Christ and Christ alone!

**Do you think it would be easier to have faith if you had walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry? Explain.**

**In what way are those who believe without seeing blessed differently than those who did get to see? How does verse 31 help answer that question?**

**Have you ever, like Thomas, demanded proof from God before you followed Him completely in faith, either by your words or by your actions? What happened?**

**What does this passage teach you about learning to walk in faith?**