



## Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 11/21/21

### Warm Up

Icebreaker: What's your favorite part of Thanksgiving?

### Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 11

Read the passage, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together.

1. This chapter begins with a definition of faith right after the author has said "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls." How do you define *faith*?

Verse 1 defines faith, so we should refer to it whenever we attempt to think of our own definition. Two words that stand out are "assurance" and "conviction," and both focus on things that are not yet realized or experienced. The experience of them is still in the future. One NT scholar, Craig Blomberg, proposes that faith "*means believing God's promises about the future despite the appearances of the present.*"

2. Verse 6 tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Why do you think this is the case?

The rest of the verse explains the answer: "for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." We could break this down a bit by recognizing first that it would be a bit silly to think we could please a being we don't even believe in! Second, faith calls us to believe in God's intention (his will), goodness (his character), and ability (his power) to "reward those who seek him." We could rewind all the way back to Genesis 2 and see how the original sin of Adam and Eve included a failure to have faith the God "rewards those who seek him." Instead, they believed the lie that God was withholding reward or goodness from them.

What has been your experience of faith?

This question is admittedly vague. Feel free to make it more specific if you're not sure people will know how to respond. It's an invitation for an open discussion about faith at a personal level. It could also be a transition to hear someone's testimony (see the "Warm Up" section from last week's guide for more information). This kind of question could help you as a leader learn more about the people in your group.

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and loving others.*

3. As you read through the examples of faith, who in this chapter most inspires your faith? Why?

This is straightforward and could be used to ease into a deeper, more personalized discussion through one of the other questions.

4. What person outside the Bible inspires your faith? Why? It could be a friend, family member, or even someone you've never met but know about.

Hopefully we all have people around us who inspire us to be people of faith in Christ.

This question could be a good follow-up to question 3.

5. Verses 13-16 describe an attitude, perspective, or mindset of faith. What do you notice when you read these verses?

Here are a few things to observe. These faithful examples did not receive in their lifetimes what had been promised. Faith takes the long view, knowing that God's promises extend beyond our short span of time in this life. As a consequence, there's a mindset of living as a stranger and exile, similar to how Abraham lived as he wandered through the land that had been promised to him but was presently occupied by others. Faith is also forward-looking. We don't look back over our shoulder—"that land from which [we have] gone out." Faith also does not look to this present age for what can only be given through the age to come. It calibrates our expectations for this life, knowing that the best is yet to come.

How does the description of these verses compare with your own attitude, perspective, or mindset in life?

Pardon the simplistic stereotypes, but it's easy for us to fall prey to a short-term perspective rather than the long view of faith. It's also challenging to live with the mindset of a stranger or exile, especially if we're full-fledged, natural-born citizens. This is our country, our city, etc.! Finally, it can be difficult to look ahead to future promises when we're surrounded by so many desirous luxuries and comforts in the present.

6. The first 35 ½ verses in this chapter read like a summary of "the victorious life of faith!" What follows, though, balances out the equation with a dose of the suffering and costliness of faith. Is there some way this paradox of victory/suffering, reward/cost should readjust our expectations for a life where we "have faith" (10:39)?

This is asking something similar to question 5. This chapter presents the reality that faith can lead to great cost and suffering in this life that is directly related to the fact that we have faith. Life is hard for many reasons, but we should eliminate some of those challenges when thinking about the scenario of this chapter. We might make a dumb mistake that causes problems or someone around us might make a dumb decision that makes life hard for us. That's not what's going on there. These are consequences directly related to a life of faith that refuses to compromise when pressured or threatened or worse.

## Wrap Up

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