

Faith Works

Part 8

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Review — Faith Works, it produces, *and* it needs to be worked/exercised!

- **Week 1 —**
general observations of faith, defined it, where to start believing God?
- **Week 2 —**
by faith Abel sacrificed, rooted in obedience, dead still speaks...
Enoch by faith walked with the Lord, proclaimed Lord's return, pleased the Lord.
- **Week 3 —**
by faith Noah heard God, feared God, Noah prepared for God.
- **Week 4 —**
Abraham/Sarah imperfect journey, partial obedience, partial truth, laughed, questioned
Satan wants to use imperfections to abort your faith journey!
- **Week 5 —**
Abraham/Sarah didn't let Comfort Keep them, Promise Paralyze them, Delay Defeat them,
Past Persuade them... Heaven Had them!
- **Week 6 —**
Legacy of Faith — Abraham — Lay it Down; Isaac — Hand it off; Jacob — Lean in and Lift Up;
Joseph — Remember Who You are and Where Home Is.
- **Week 7 —**
Moses' parents, ordinary folks, risk and release so God can rescue, return and reward.
Moses — Refuses and Forsakes Worldliness, Repeatedly Reverses God,
Know difference between God-inspired faith and self-willed presumption!

Today — chapter ends with bullet-point summary of people and their amazing faith journey

Defined —

- **Hebrews 11:1**
Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith obeys God's unconventional strategies

- **Hebrews 11:30-31**
By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.
- if you are going to walk by faith — expect unconventional strategies from God!
Walk around walls once a day for 6 days, and then 7 times on 7th day, shout and blow trumpets
and the walls will fall down — really???

- **2 Chronicles 20** — Jehoshaphat, sends singer/worshippers in forefront of battle — enemy confused/defeated
- **2 Kings 5** — Naaman washing in muddy Jordan to heal leprosy... too much...

FACT

**God gives unconventional strategies to bring supernatural results —
so only He can get the glory!**

- **When He speaks, by faith, we must obey the unconventional strategy, walls fell, Rahab saved!**

By Faith...

- **Hebrews 11:32-35a**
And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.
- **Gideon**- Judges 6-7, feared, hid, doubted... destroyed idols/Midianites... 300 men with candles in clay jars — unconventional!
- **Barak**- Judges 4, dramatic victory over Canaanites, only after Deborah's encouragement.
- **Samson**- Judges 13-16, thrashed the Philistines, compromised, unmet potential, death.
- **Jephthah**- Judges 11, step-brothers exiled him; lived shady life as a raider, then defeats Ammonites.
- **David**- 1 Samuel 17, Goliath, Bathsheba, Uriah, and problems with his own kid children.
- **Subdued kingdoms**- Joshua, David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah
- **Worked righteousness**- Elijah against Ahab and Jezebel
- **Obtained promises**- Caleb, Joshua, Rahab, etc.
- **Stopped mouths of lions**- Daniel, David...
- **Quenched violent fire**- Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego, Son of God walked in fire with them
- **Escaped edge of sword**- Moses, David, Elijah
- **Weakness became strong**- Sarah, Gideon, Hezekiah
- **Valiant in battle**- Joshua, David, his mighty men, Adino the Ezrite killed 800 men; Eleazar the son of Dodo, fought until his hand stuck to his sword; Shammah the son of Agee stationed himself in the middle of a lentil field and whipped the Philistines.
- **Women received dead to life**- widow of Zarephath, Shunamite woman

YES, YES, YES — *if we'll only have faith — things will always work out this side of heaven...*

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT — *despite what some "faith preachers preach" — it's not quite that easy...*

The others have been bothered for centuries

In order to understand the following quote — you MUST watch the video of the sermon — and see Pastor Steve's personal story of his Jr. High years in La Habra, CA.

"Nobody bothers the Brothers, because the Brothers bother the others..."

The others have been bothered for centuries...

- **Hebrews 11:35b**

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

- **Tortured** — not accepting temporary deliverance, wanting a better eternal resurrection — they wouldn't sell their soul to save their flesh — in Old Testament, waiting for Messiah, not willing to compromise
- **Mocked/Scourged** — verbally abused and whipped; by faith did not give up or give in
- **Chained and imprisoned** — forsaken and forgotten?
- **Stoned to death** — Zechariah between Temple and altar, Naboth by Jezebel's thugs.
- **Sawn in two** — Isaiah according to Jewish tradition
- **Tempted**- unrelenting; *or* maybe branded, mutilated, burnt, strangled
- **Slain with sword**- wait others escaped sword... Doeg killed 85 priests, Jezebel slew the prophets!
- **Wandering, destitute, afflicted, tormented, deserts, mountains, dens, caves-**

Listen — *there was every visible sign that God had forgotten or forsaken these faith warriors — and yet — their faith strengthened them to endure and not escape their troubles!*

FACT

**It wasn't their lack of faith that caused these troubles,
it was their strength of faith that kept them through their troubles!**

Affirmation from heaven — the world was not worthy of them! These bothered, troubled, destitute, afflicted, tormented, faith-filled souls were and are glorious in the eyes of God, while being despised in the eyes of the world... we need to really consider who we esteem and celebrate!

- **Luke 16:15**

For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Close

- **Hebrews 11:39-40**

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

- good testimony through faith, while enduring excruciating circumstances
- didn't receive the promise — of deliverance from troubles... or of seeing promised Messiah
- *God provided something better for us — we have had the privilege of hearing and seeing and knowing the Messiah, we have experienced the ultimate promise!*

FACT

**If they endured all they did without seeing Messiah's arrival,
how much more can we, *after seeing their testimony and experiencing Jesus' power?***

IT'S TIME — for a faith explosion in our lives

IT'S TIME — to start hearing what God is saying to us

IT'S TIME — to start believing Him for greater things in us and through us!

IT JUST IS!

"I am an old man now. I've been at this a long time,
and you don't have to tell me this thing works.

I know it works... Faith works!"¹

~ J. Vernon McGee

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a favorite person mentioned in Hebrews 11? Who and why?
2. In 2 Chronicles 20, the worshipers led the warriors into battle.
How could that apply to facing hard challenges in your life today?
3. Have you ever operated under the principle that if you have enough faith, things will always work out this side of heaven? What do you believe today? What changed?
4. Does reading Hebrews 11:35b help you have greater faith in facing your troubles?
Or are those stories of just old Bible guys, and not relevant in today's world?
5. How should being believers who knows the Messiah give us an advantage in our faith?
6. At the end of eight sermons on "Faith Works," what has fundamentally changed in the way you personally experience faith?

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Hebrews II* (Thomas Nelson, June 30, 1996)