

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Hebrews 11:8-19 aloud.

1. What were some actions in this reading that Abraham and Sarah took because they believed God?

Look for the words “by faith...” Left his homeland, lived like a foreigner, became Isaac’s father, offered Isaac.

Which of these do you think was the most difficult?

What are some common themes in these four events?

How often was Abraham in the dark about the details of God’s plan?

How often do you think Abraham and Sarah found it stressful to live by faith?

Several centuries later, Hebrews makes it sound like Abraham and Sarah were calm and confident. Read Genesis 12-22 and you see a different picture of struggling believers.

2. What do verses 13-16 say about living by faith?

How do these verses argue against the “health and wealth gospel” – God will fulfill all of a believer’s dreams?

Hebrews 11 has a theme of people who were faithful even when God was slow to provide blessings.

How do these verses argue against the American dream – work hard and you’ll get a happy family living in a nice house?

What are some reasons to base your life on the hope of a better country that you’ve never seen?

God’s track record, absence of satisfaction on planet earth.

3. What advantages did Abraham have over us when it comes to living by faith?

Talking to God face to face.

What advantages do we have over Abraham?

Knowing the end of Abraham’s story, and the end of the Bible story.

4. What is faith? How does Hebrews 11:1 define it?

How is faith different from grace or blessings?

Grace and blessings have been poured out on us in abundance. Faith trusts that the blessings and the grace will be there tomorrow.

How does gratitude deepen our faith?

Count your blessings, and you see that God has an astounding track record. Gratitude helps you sleep better.

5. What is a promise from God that gives you hope?

When is it difficult for you to believe God’s promises?

6. What are some events from Abraham and Sarah’s life that had ripple effects on other people? Any that still have a ripple effect today?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Hebrews 11 talks about people whose main dream in life was to pursue God. What are the three most significant aspirations of your life? How does faith help?

Resources

Bible notes

The first readers of this letter were going through a tough time (skip back to 10:32-24). Undoubtedly, they wondered if God had forsaken them, and perhaps they were ready to give up. The entire book of Hebrews is devoted to commending God's faithfulness through Christ.

Chapter 11 has a theme of people who were faithful even when God was slow with the results. Abraham gets the longest description because his entire story involves waiting on God to keep his word. He and Sarah are the model for faithfulness.

Genesis 12-22 would be good background reading.

Prayer ideas

Thank God – go from A to Z and tell something you're thankful for.
Ask God for faith to persevere when you are disappointed.
Pray for someone who is waiting to enjoy the promises of God.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play the "hidden fun game."

Prepare several envelopes. Each envelope should contain an instruction of something fun to do. If you end up with more kids than envelopes, let them do this activity in pairs.

Examples: eat chocolate, give someone a hug, 10 jumping jacks, tickle someone, see how fast you can run around the house, imitate your favorite animal, turn a flip, put a dollar or ice cream coupon in an envelope, squirt a grown-up with a water gun, etc.

Ask the kids to draw an envelope one at a time and follow the instructions in front of the group. If they don't want to do the activity, they can select an adult to do it for them.

How did you feel when you drew the envelope? Who worried that it might be something bad or embarrassing, even though I told you it would be fun?

Ask older kids to read Hebrews 11:8-14 aloud. What did Abraham and Sarah know about God's plan? What did they not know? Why did they follow God, even though they did not know the ending?

What can we learn from Abraham and Sarah?



May 30, 2010

LIFE Group Guide

Hebrews 11 – Living faithfully

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: Living faithfully means trusting God to provide. It's an amazing adventure with ripple effects that will touch your grandchildren.

This week, Kevin begins a new sermon series looking at people in the Bible and how their actions had a ripple effect. We start by looking at the faithfulness of Abraham and Sarah.

Leadership tip: Meet regularly with God in private prayer. Pray for your strength and growth as a spiritual leader. Pray for the health of your group. Pray for your group members.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Gimme five...favorite summer fruit?
- ❖ Are you a pessimist or an optimist? Would your family agree?
- ❖ List 10 things you are thankful for today. How does it feel to have a grateful heart?

You might hand out paper so that everyone can write down ideas.