

HEBREWS 11:1-3

If you haven't already, read through Hebrews 11:1-12:3.

Memorize Hebrews 11:1

Re-read Hebrews 11:1-3, then notice especially verse 1a (the first half of verse one).

1. a. What basic things do you think people hope for the most (for themselves and those they love)?

b. What are some of the things people do as they try to make these hopes a reality?

c. Why do you think people often come to the point of hopelessness?
2. In Hebrews 11:1a, the word translated "assurance" (NAS), "being sure" (NIV) or "the substance of" (KJV) comes from a Greek word meaning the basis, foundation or underlying reason.
 - a. With this in mind, what is the only starting point for real hope -- according to God -- given in this verse?
 - b. In simplest terms, how would you define faith in God?
3. From the following verses, what are just some of the great "hopes" God promises to you as you put your faith in Him?
John 3:16

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV or NAS)

Romans 8:28

II Corinthians 4:16-18
4. What do we usually mean when we say we are "hoping for" something?

But what do you discover about biblical hope, from Romans 5:5a (NIV or NAS) and Hebrews 6:17-19a?

5. Personal: In what specific situation(s) do you need real hope today?

Think about where you have been looking to find hope for these areas of your life. In a few sentences, write out your response to God's personal message to you in Hebrews 11:1a.

Now let's go on to re-read and dig into Hebrews 11:1b. NOTE: The word translated by various versions as certain, conviction or evidence has its roots in a word common in courtroom proceedings. It implies a process: a conclusion that has been reached by examining statements, putting them to the test and finding them to be true.

6. Verse 1b tells us that people of faith have a unique philosophy of life. They've come to believe that 1) things aren't always what they seem and 2) what we do see isn't all there is.

a. Briefly explain some of the current popular philosophies of life you're hearing from the world around you.

b. What sources of information and/or personal abilities do people generally rely upon in order to form these philosophies?

7. What's the problem with this approach according to God in Romans 1:18-22 and Proverbs 14:12?

8. The person of faith turns to a different source to discover the unseen realities that actually govern life. From the following verses, describe this resource.

II Timothy 3:14-17

Psalms 18:30; 119:130, 160

Romans 15:4

Now, putting it all together...

The first part of verse 1 shows us that the result of faith (relying or depending on God) is sure hope. The second part of verse one clues us in to how faith works and grows: it's a process centered on "trying out" what the Bible says to be true (putting those alleged unseen realities to the test). You may have observed in reading through Hebrews 11 that that is exactly what these folks were asked to do!

9. To encourage you in the process of putting God's Word to work in your life (and growing in faith!), do one or both of the following:
 - a. Read Luke 6:46-49 and tell what helpful truths you find. (You may find it interesting to put yourself in the man's shoes and imagine his possible feelings and reactions.)

 - b. Read Psalm 119:18 and Philippians 2:13 and tell what particularly encourages you.

As we learn to dig down and build our hopes on the truth of God's Word, an incredible wealth of encouragement, guidance, comfort and joy begins to open up to us. That's because the Bible shows us our God, in all the beauty and perfection of His character. The more you see Him revealed in Scripture, the greater your delight and confidence in Him. And He delights to show you His heart for you. As a matter of fact, you will discover that you are seeking Him because He has been seeking and drawing you to Himself all along.

Read Hebrews 11:2. Notice that, in the end, faith in God is what it's all about! With that in mind, let's put what we've learned into practice and "feed our faith" by getting to know our Lord through His Word.

Read Hebrews 11:3

10. What facts are emphasized in this verse?

Turn to the creation account in Genesis 1 and read Genesis 1:1-2.

11. Just to stretch your brain, what do you discover as you also read Hebrews 1:1-2?

- a. How is the earth described in Genesis 1:2a?

- b. What do you imagine you would have seen, felt or heard if you had been on the scene?

12. Despite all appearances, what else was happening in Genesis 1:2b? Note: The word used to describe the Spirit's action (hovered, moved) comes from a word meaning to flutter or brood over.
- a. What happens next? (verse 3)
13. As you or those you love face into times of emptiness, darkness or chaos, how does this first glimpse of "God at work" encourage you?
14. Now go on to read Genesis 1:3-31. As you read, write down in one column the repeated phrases you find in this passage, and explain their significance. (What do you think the author wants you to know about God?) In the other column, make note of any details that you find particularly interesting or significant.
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| <u>Repeated words/phrases and their significance to me</u> | <u>Notes of interest to me</u> |
|--|--------------------------------|
15. In Hebrews 11:3 and in this tremendous Genesis passage, you've been given an awesome picture of your God.
- a. What did you discover about Him that especially helps or encourages you?
- b. How will knowing this make a difference in your life this week?
16. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews 11 started this faith building chapter with the story of Creation?

To bring this lesson to a close, read and enjoy Psalm 33. Take some time to pour out your heart to the Lord of the Word and of Creation. You may find it helpful to write out your thoughts to Him.

His Word is a lamp unto my feet, A light upon my way
 And I do well to pay it heed, Until the final day
 Until the day dawns and the Morning Star, Arises in your heart
 Take this lamp to light your way, To your eternal home.

John Fisher