

Discussion Guide: Hall of Fame of Faith -- Part 8

Let us examine the Scriptures like the Bereans who "received the message with the great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." Acts 17:11 (NIV)

July 27, 2003: "Hall of Fame of Faith - Part 8" by Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church. Pastor Kimber began Part 8 of the series on Hebrews 11 by distinguishing the difference between a Christian and non-Christian's worldview.

The Christian, says Kimber, has a Theo-centric view of life in that God is the center of the universe. By contrast, the non-Christian has an anthropocentric view of life meaning that man is the center of life. The anthropocentric worldview sees God as a being to make man happy. A Christian lives by faith in things they cannot see, whereas a non-Christian only values empirical data.

Starting at verse 8 in Hebrews 11, Pastor Kauffman points out that Abraham is the father of all who believed. In verses 8-9 we find that Abraham left his homeland by faith in God even though he did not know where God was taking him. Verses 11-12 state that Sarah and Abraham had faith that they would give birth to a son even though their bodies were physically incapable of reproduction. In both sections we find that Sarah and Abraham did not make decisions based on empirical data, rather had faith in the *promise* of God. Verse 13 indicates that both Sarah and Abraham did not in their lifetime get to see God's promise fulfilled, namely that their descendants would be as innumerable as grains of sand, but they continued to live by faith regardless of the seen.

From this we find the intent of the writer. We see that the writer of Hebrews is showing how all these men before the time of Christ lived by faith in the *promise* of Christ even though they did not see that promise fulfilled in their lifetime. But we, having benefited from the fulfilled promise of the Messiah, should be able to live a stronger life of faith.

Faith as it pertains to Christian living is expounded upon in more detail in verse 16. Here we find that Abraham and Sarah were living as "exiles on the earth" and were seeking a "heavenly country." Thus, Kimber concludes that the life of faith looks to the promise of God that we will be living with Him in heaven. What propels the Christian through life is the thought that you live now in light of eternity; whatever we do in this life will effect our eternity. As Christians, we are to set our affections on things that are above and not on this earth.

Kimber concluded his sermon with focusing our attention on the glory of heaven. Christians need to realize how glorious heaven is. Christians need to be heavenly minded and make their decisions based on faith in the promise of heaven.

We need to serve Christ on earth so that in heaven we will not be ashamed. If we are not looking back to God creating the universe and looking forward to the promise of heaven then we are not pleasing God. Christian life boils down to living by faith in the *promises* and *commands* of God. Christians look to heaven and store up their treasures there instead of working hard to gain the temporal pleasures of this life. When Christians realize how infinitely more pleasurable the joys of heaven are when compared to the temporary pleasures of this broken world, then and only then can they live by faith in God and please Him.

Discussion Questions:

Prayerfully read Hebrews 11:8-17 before engaging in the application discussion.

- 1) Describe specifically the process of faith in decision making as pointed out by Kimber according to Hebrews 11.
- 2) Discuss instances and examples in your life where people lived by faith in the promises of God.
- 3) In light of Kimber's message on Hebrews 11, discuss this quote by John Piper:

"Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some *promise* of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Psalm 63:3). Which means that the power of sin's promise is broken by the power of God's." (*Future Grace*, pp. 9-10; emphasis added)

- 4) Discuss Philippians 1:21-30 as it pertains to Paul's understanding of the life of faith.
- 5) What are some of the ways we can get our minds on heaven and eternity rather than on a temporal perspective?