

Discussion Guide: Hall of Fame of Faith - Part 10

*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)*

August 31, 2003: "What IS Faith?" by Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church. Pastor Kimber spoke broadly this morning on "What IS Faith?" As his text he used Hebrews 11:29-30 and Exodus 14. Some aspects of faith are:

1. Belief in God's Word combined with action: David believed he could take out Goliath, but he also picked up some stones. Other times faith is demonstrated by just letting go and let God do it: as in the birth of a baby, or when the Israelites went through the Red Sea (which is a figure of sins forgiven). At times like these there is nothing that you can do and you simply let God do it all. God redeemed His people in Exodus 14 that they might worship Him in Exodus 15. In like manner, God delivers us from sin, saves us and protects us as he did the Israelites from the Egyptians...to God's glory.
2. In Exodus 14:13-14 we see the keys to Biblical leadership. According to Pastor, such leaders think Biblically faster than anyone else. And besides that, they believe God first, put their faith and confidence in God and go forward.
3. The Christian life begins with faith (as at the Red Sea) and must continue in faith in order to please God. Between Hebrews 11:29 and 30 is a 40 year gap in which the covenant people of God gripped and complained and did not follow him. They didn't continue in the faith, as shown in that all males over the age of 20 at the time they crossed the Red Sea, later died in the wilderness, because of their disobedience. Those entering the Promised Land did so by faith and demonstrated such by becoming circumcised on the first day, despite all the surrounding enemies.
4. God loves for you to look in faith to Him for deliverance. When you are up against impossible situations and you cry out to God, he will hear you. God is an expert in deliverer of his people, and does so "as a bass that is drawn quickly to a lure."
 - a. Cry out to Him. God can deliver you no matter how great are your problems

Illustration: Kimber frantically searched his house for two hours, but was unable to find his pain medicine until he fell on his knees and cried out his need to the Lord. Then within one second the medicine was in his hand. If you have a daunting obstacle—such problems are just fodder to Him.

God is just as creative and powerful in delivering you as He was in His creation of the world. You may have big trouble caused by 70,000 stupid decisions but He will still hear your cry. He loves to come to the aid of His people.

God loves you as no one else does or can. "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me," (Psalm 27:10). God cannot resist the cry of a broken heart! In fact, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us," (Romans 5:8).

- b. Obey God's instructions. If you see no progress, or way out of your situation, obey God. He can get you out of your worst problems, even though it was your own sin that got you there.
- c. Draw near to Him. Commit to daily reading of God's word and spending time in prayer...it will change your life.

Remember, all the heroes of faith had defects, and God still used them.

Discussion and Application Questions

As you begin your discussion with prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to illumine the hearts and minds of your Flock and to protect your thought from Satan's interference as you study and apply God's Word.

Open your Bibles together and read Hebrews 11:29 and as much of Exodus 14 as you plan to use in your discussion.

Begin with several content related questions to stimulate your Flock's thoughts into action.

1. Does someone have some word or illustration from Kimber's sermon that especially stood out in your mind that you will share with us?
2. Kimber read a long list of Heroes of Faith along with their moral defect. Can you remember some of the defects? How does it make you feel knowing that God uses people with blemishes?
3. According to the Scriptures, faith is the only thing that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). Why do you think that this is so?
4. Can you relate in your own words what you think Faith is? You might look at Noah and Abraham's faith, how it arose and what they did because of it (Hebrews 11:7-8).

Continue the Group Discussion with your focus on applying God's Word specifically.

1. All Israelites exercised faith by stepping into the Red Sea (Hebrews 11:29). But not all entered into the Promised Land. Why did they fail to enter (Hebrews 11:14-18)? Can you apply this truth to the Hebrews in Rome (recipients of the letter)? To your own walk with the Lord Jesus?
2. Think about and discuss some characteristics of biblical leadership as exhibited by Moses in Exodus 14:13-16, 26-28.
3. Discuss what effect it has on God's people when they see their leaders acting in a godly and biblical way (Exodus 14:31).
4. What does it mean to you knowing that when God delivers you from an especially trying situation, He gets glory from it (Exodus 14:18).
5. Discuss from Exodus 14:13-14 how that sometimes faith is just "Let go and let God."

Helping your Flock members to apply and act

1. Can you discuss some areas of your life where you need to exercise faith?
2. Would you like to ask your group to pray for you for God's strength and help in relation to questions #1?
3. Does it take a great deal of faith for you to witness verbally to others? Will you give it a try sometime in the next 4-6 weeks?
4. Relate to the group what builds your faith. Can you resolve to do more of this in the coming week?

Pastor's concluding challenge

Are you facing impossible things in your life? If so, cry out with a repentant heart...God deliver me.

Notes:

1. If you'd like to use John Piper's prayer that was used during the Worship service, it is available at http://www.desiringgod.org/library/fresh_words/2000/112000.html.
2. Consider opening your worship time tonight with Ephesians 1:18-19 and singing "Open the Eyes of My Heart."
3. All Scripture quoted in this discussion guide were taken from the NIV.

The next time you feel like God can't use you, just Remember -

Noah was a drunk.

Abraham was too old.

Isaac was a daydreamer.

Jacob was a liar.

Leah was ugly.

Joseph was abused.

Moses had a stuttering problem.

Gideon was afraid.

Samson was a womanizer.

Rahab was a prostitute.

Jeremiah & Timothy were too young.

David had an affair & was a murderer.

Elijah was suicidal.

Isaiah preached naked.

Jonah ran from God.

Naomi was a widow.

Job went bankrupt.

John the Baptist ate bugs.

Peter denied Christ.

The Disciples fell asleep at prayer.

Martha worried about everything.

Mary Magdalene was, well, you know.

The Samaritan Woman was divorced many times.

Zaccheus was too small.

Paul was too religious.

Timothy had an ulcer.

Lazarus WAS DEAD.

No more excuses now. God's waiting to use your full potential.

[Author Unknown]