



Legends  
OF THE  
Faith

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This is what the ancients  
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Hebrews 11:1-2

# Legends OF THE Faith

**This series is based in Hebrews 11, learning from the ancients that lived by faith as to how we can live by faith today.** We will identify what they did to be commended by God because of their faith and how we can develop the same confidence to respond to God in the same way. The ancient legends were commended by God not because of their extraordinary human ability and achievements, but because of their faith in His power to do the impossible. They obeyed what God told them to do even though they could not yet see how God was going to do it. They believed that in the beginning, God was able to form the universe out of nothing and that He could do the same in their time. They had such confidence in the nature and the power of God that they acted by faith and not by sight, discovering that God is faithful along the way.

We will unpack the stories of the legends listed in Hebrews 11 by looking at other passages in Scripture that describe their story of faith more fully. Each of their stories reveals to us the nature of God and points to the eternal plan of Jesus to redeem mankind. When ordinary people live by faith in Gods power, God does his best work.

# Faith PLEASES GOD

*"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.*

*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him". Hebrews 11:1-6*

**God loves faith.** God rewards those who live by faith. There have been many through the ages that have received a reward from God because of their faith in God. Abel was commended as righteous before God because of his faith to bring a living sacrifice to God. Enoch was rewarded with eternal life with God because of his faith that pleased God. The writer of Hebrews tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. There is no substitute for faith.

We are encouraged to join this long list of legends of the faith by living by faith today. By faith in Christ, our living sacrifice, we are made righteous before God. And like Enoch, we will be rewarded with life after death because of our faith in Christ who overcame the grave and defeated death.

## **LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS**

**Read:** Hebrews 11:1-6

What do we learn about faith here?

What are some of the foundations of faith?

Have you ever taken a bold step of faith? How did it feel and what was the outcome?

What does it mean to live by faith? Discuss practical examples.

**Read:** Genesis 4:1-7

- What can we learn from the faith of Abel?
- Discuss how God's warning to Cain in verse 7 is relevant to us today.

**Read:** Romans 8:18-25

- In what ways does faith give us hope?

**Other Scriptures to Explore:**

## **PRAY**

What do you find most challenging about living by faith? Pray for one another.

## **FAMILY FOCUS**

Talk about people in your family or friends that you know who could be described as being legends of the faith. This might be grandparents or special friends. Talk about the way they have stayed faithful to God in different situations. Call them up as a family and ask them these questions: When and why did you first become a Christian? Tell us about a time God has particularly answered a prayer.



# Noah BY FAITH WE ARE SAVED

*"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith." Hebrews 11:7*

When Noah was warned of Gods coming judgement of sin in the world, there was no sign of a flood. It had not started raining. No one else on earth had warned him of the consequences of sin. No one else was paying attention to God in the culture that He lived in. Noah was not acting on a hunch or human advice when he built an ark. **Noah heard the voice of God and he had faith that God had a plan to save his family.** By faith in God, Noah's family was saved from the punishment of sin, as was the future hope of all mankind.

We may not ever build a thumping big boat to save our family, but like Noah we can be become a legend of the faith. We live in a culture that has turned away from God, filled with violence and corruption. **As we listen to and obey the conviction of the Holy Spirit to turn away from sin, we too will be saved by faith in Christ.** By faith, we can build a Godly legacy in our family in a culture that is ignoring Gods coming judgement.



## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

**Read:** Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:9–7:5

- How does our culture resemble the culture in the time of Noah?
- What can we learn from the faith of Noah?
- Noah had a profound relationship with God. What are practical ways that we can be listening to God?
- Noah's faith saved his family. How can we build a Godly legacy in our church? Our family? Our community?
- How did Noah's faith condemn the world?

**Other Scriptures to Explore:**

Ephesians 2:4-10

## PRAY

How is God calling you to live by faith in our culture? Pray for one another.

## FAMILY FOCUS

As a family, read Hebrews 11:7. Talk about the different obstacles and hardships that Noah would have experienced as he built the ark.

- What are the ways we may be called to act on our faith?
- What are some of the obstacles or hardships that we might face for our faith?

**FAMILY FUN:** Animal Charades: (Younger children can use noises as well as actions)



# Abraham BY FAITH WE ARE SENT

*"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God". Hebrews 11:8-10*

When Abraham was called by God to leave everything that he knew behind and go to a new place, he obeyed and went. **By faith he went in the direction that he was sent even though he had no idea where he was going.** As unlikely as it seemed for an old childless couple to become a nation through which the world would be blessed, Abraham believed in the vision that God had given him. He couldn't see how it would happen but because he obeyed by faith, the vision became reality. Through Abrahams offspring came Jesus and through faith in his death and resurrection, all the people on earth can be blessed with eternal life.

Those who place their faith in Jesus are like Abraham, sent people. We have all been blessed to be a blessing to others. Some are sent to deepest darkest Africa and some are sent to level 7 of the Suncorp building **but we are all sent somewhere to fulfil God's vision for the church to be a blessing to the world.** We won't always be able to see what God will do through us, but if we move by faith in the right direction we will see the vision that God has given us become reality.

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

- **Discussion Starter:** When you go on a trip, do you plan a detailed agenda, or do you leave room for spontaneity?

**Read:** Hebrews 11:8-10; Genesis 12:1-9

- What can we learn from the faith of Abraham?
- What are the things that make it difficult for us to step out in faith?
- God's call to Abraham came with a promise. What promises of God in scripture build your faith to obey God's call?
- Do you have a vision that you believe God has given to you?

**Further scriptures to explore:** James 2:14-26

## PRAY

Where is God calling you to go? Pray for one another.

## FAMILY FOCUS

As a family, read Hebrews 11:8-10.

Discuss/explain what the words "inheritance" and "heirs" mean in this story. Talk about how it would feel to move to an unknown place. (If you have moved cities before, reflect on your experience.) Those who put their faith in Jesus are like Abraham, sent people. As kids in school, we are sent to bless those around us. Even when you do not know what a day will bring, we still follow God.

**FAMILY FUN:** Use a blind fold and create an obstacle course through your house. Just like Abraham followed God's voice, follow the voice of someone in your family to get you through the course.

(Older kids: play Marco Polo in the dark)



# Sarah BY FAITH WE ARE ABLE

*And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.” Hebrews 11:11-12*

Sarah was a most unlikely royal mother in a most dysfunctional family. She was old and past childbearing age when she was told by God that she would have a son and that she would “*be the mother of nations; kings of people will come from her*” (Genesis 17:16). Sarah had been unable to bear children, so she had given one of her slaves, Hagar, to her husband to sleep with to bear him a child. She then became jealous of Hagar, mistreated her and the slave and her son ran away from home. Sarah and her family seemed like perfect candidates for a Jerry Springer episode not the Hebrews 11 hall of fame. **Despite Sarah’s old age, God was able to bless her with a child and despite her many mistakes, God was faithful to the promises He made to her family.**

All mothers face heartaches, make mistakes and have moments of doubt in Gods promises. **By faith, God still enables imperfect mums to raise great kids and bless their families.**

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

**Read:** Hebrews 11:11-12; Genesis 17:15-19, 18:10-15, 21:1-7

- What can we learn from the faith of Sarah?
- Have you ever felt like you have received a promise and not had it fulfilled?
- How do you think Sarah felt during the time of waiting?
- What are the circumstances in Sarah's life that may have discounted her from God's promise?

**Read:** Genesis 16

- What can we learn from Sarah's mistakes?
- What are the mistakes that Sarah made that may have discounted her from God's promise?
- What does this teach us about God's purpose and character?

## PRAY

Have difficult circumstances or mistakes you have made caused you to doubt the promises of God? Pray that God will give you the faith to believe that He is able.

## FAMILY FOCUS

Everyone go around the table and make a promise of something you will do in the next two days. It can be a behaviour or a way of blessing your family. Think about how hard it is for people to make a promise but how God will always keep his promise. We can rely on Him. Later in the week reflect on how you all went with your promises.





# BY *Faith* WE SEE AND SPEAK

*All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.*

*<sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them...*

*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones". Hebrews 11:13-22*

**The legends listed in Hebrews 11 all had a faith that looked beyond the grave.** They had a firm conviction that even death could not stop the purposes of God. Even when faced with circumstances that would have challenged their faith in God's plans for the future, they stood firm in their belief. They had such confidence that what God had said to them would come to pass that they spoke a blessing over the next generation when they knew their life was coming to an end. By faith, their words spoke hope and confidence into the next generation.

**By faith, we can see God's purposes for the future and speak the blessing of God over the next generation.** We will constantly be faced with circumstances that oppose the word of God. By faith, we can choose to stand firm in the promises of God and speak hope and confidence into the next generation.

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

**Read:** Hebrews 11:13-22

- What does it mean to live as foreigners and nomads on earth?
- How does this effect the choices we make and the way we live today?
- What challenges do the next generation face?

**Read:** Genesis 27:28-29, 39-40; 48:12-20; 50:22-26

- What can we learn from the faith of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph?
- What are the promises of God that span across generations? How do they bring encouragement and hope for you?
- How is God calling you to stand firm in your faith, regardless of challenging circumstances?
- What is God calling you to do to pass on a blessing to the next generation?

## PRAY

Pray a blessing of hope and confidence into the next generation.

## FAMILY FOCUS

Go around the dinner table and take it in turns for everyone to give an encouragement to each family member.

Read Hebrews 11:20-21. Parents: think of a way God has gifted your children. (E.g. Joy, kindness, gentleness, encouragement, passion, drive etc.) Bless your children by praying for that gifting in them and for the growth of that gift as you affirm God's amazing purpose for them.



# Moses BY FAITH WE PERSEVERE

*"By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.*

The Israelites living in Egypt had endured much hardship at the hands of the Egyptians. **Moses actually chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.** By faith he persevered when it would have been easier to blend in with the culture or run away from his responsibility. By faith he came out of hiding, endured opposition and persevered through hardship for the sake of Christ.

By faith we are called to endure hardship rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. The enemy will constantly tempt us to blend in with our culture or run away from our responsibility. Like Moses, those temptations have the potential to steal your family, your faith and your future. **By faith, we are called to persevere in the midst of opposition and overcome temptation to receive an eternal reward from God.**

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

**Read:** Hebrews 11:23-28; Exodus 6:1-8, 12:24-42

- What can we learn from the faith of Moses?
- “The call of faith is a call out of comfort.” Is this a true statement? If so, why and how?
- In what ways are we called to endure hardship?
- In what ways does the enemy tempt us to blend in with our culture?
- What are practical ways that we can overcome temptation?

**Further scriptures to explore:** 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

## PRAY

What opposition and temptations are you facing? Pray for perseverance for each other.

## FAMILY FOCUS

Read Hebrew 11:13-22 as a family and talk about ways that we need to persevere today. Maybe we are praying for a family member who does not know Jesus yet. Maybe we are studying to be able to work in a job God is calling us in to. There are many things that require our perseverance. Pray together that you will have the faith to rely on God through these times.

**FAMILY FUN:** Do some baking together and talk about the perseverance required to wait until it is cooked. If we ate all of the batter, we wouldn't have the cakes available the next day.



# BY *Faith* WE ARE STRENGTHENED

*"And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; **whose weakness was turned to strength**; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies" Hebrews 11:32-34*

Ordinary people like Gideon and Samson became legends of the faith not because of their physical strength or worldly power but because of their **faith in Gods strength and power to do the impossible**. Gideon's weakness initially stopped him from walking in His calling but he received strength from God to win a remarkable victory. Samson received incredible strength from God to overcome opposition but his weakness eventually brought about his downfall.

**God is still using ordinary people to do extraordinary things.** We need to be aware of our weaknesses so that we don't allow them to take us down but we must never allow our weaknesses to stop us from walking in our calling. **By faith, God can turn our weaknesses into strength to overcome impossible situations for His glory.**

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

**Read:** Hebrews 11:32-34; Judges 6:11-16, 7:1-22

- What can we learn from the faith of Gideon?
- What factors made Gideon an unlikely victor?
- How did Gideon overcome his weaknesses?
- How can we rely on God's strength to walk in our calling, despite our weaknesses?

**Further scriptures to explore:** 2 Corinthians 12:6-10

## PRAY

In what ways do you feel weak? Pray for God's strength for one another.

## FAMILY FOCUS

Read Hebrews 11:32-34 together.

**FAMILY FUN:** An arm-wrestle challenge. Who is the strongest in your family? (Younger kids: thumb wrestle)

Talk about how even the strongest person in your family still has weaknesses. With God by our side though, we can rely on His strength. He used ordinary people to do amazing things because they relied on God's strength and power and not their own. Pray about the hard things that are happening or coming up for the people in your family. Pray over those situations and ask for God's strength to help you blitz those things.



