

“God-Pleasing Faith”

Hebrews 10:35-11:6

The kind of people who please God are those who wait patiently for Him to fulfill His promises, no matter how long that may take. Over the course of chapter 11 we will be reminded of person after person who continued to trust God in the face of difficult circumstances, even when God’s answer did not arrive in their own lifetime. They were men and women with enduring faith, and that’s what made them “well-pleasing” to God.

Things which do not yet exist become real to these people. They are able to see the realities of the spiritual world so clearly, and they believe God will do what He promised so strongly, that they live their lives accordingly. The author of Hebrews tells us that this is the kind of faith which serves as a “foundation” for our hopes. And then he immediately adds that this kind of faith also “rebukes” us, meaning it keeps correcting the doubts and fears which assail us. By faith we are able to look into the unseen spiritual world and refuse the devil’s lies.

Today the author will remind us of the kind of faith that pleases God and challenges us to endure in faith like the great men and women of Israel’s history.

A. What do these verses say? (He 11:1-6)

These verses list a number of truths upon which our faith rests. Faith knows:

1. (v 1) – Good things are coming for those who wait for Jesus Christ (hope)
2. (v 1) – The doubts and temptations which attack our minds must be corrected by the truths of the unseen spiritual world.
3. (vs 2, 4, 5) – Throughout history God has shown He is “well-pleased” (gives eternal life) with those who have faith.
4. (v 3) – The unseen spiritual worlds exists and powerfully affects our physical world (see comments on v 3).
5. (v 6) – No one can expect to please God or receive eternal life if they do not walk in faith.
6. (v 6) – The kind of faith that pleases God not only believes that He exists, but that He is good and will reward those who seek Him out (pursue).

B. What is faith? (Heb 11:1)

Faith is a stubborn refusal to doubt God. It trusts His promise even in the face of conflicting evidence and is willing to die without seeing it’s fulfillment. The presence of real faith is proved by what someone does, not by what they feel. A person can feel very discouraged and yet continue to walk in faith. (Heb 11:1 Faith believes God exists. And it believes so strongly He will do what He’s promised that we live as if we have already seen those promises fulfilled.)

1. All faith starts with a revelation from God to the heart. (“I know God spoke to me”)
2. Then a person chooses whether or not to obey that revelation. (“I acknowledge what He said to me and choose to act on it.”)
3. Then that person must live a life obedient to that revelation. (“I often reaffirm my choice to act on what He said”)
4. To do this a person must deliberately reject doubts and temptations which try to convince us that God does not exist, or did not promise, or lied. (“I refuse to listen to the voice that wants me to doubt”)
5. Finally a person decides to die believing God will do what He said. (“I will trust Him even if I don’t see the answer before I die”)

C. What must I know to endure in faith? (Heb 11:6)

Faith sees not only God’s existence, but also His character. It knows He is good and will always fulfill His promises.

1. Hebrews 10:36 - It’s not enough to obey God, I must continue to obey God in order to receive what was promised.
2. Luke 11:5-13
 - Parable of contrast: a) God is not like your selfish neighbor; b) God is not like an earthly father, He is much better.
3. But: still you must endure to receive
4. Why? He doesn’t tell us. There are spiritual realities we don’t understand. And we don’t need to because He has shown us all we need to know to receive what was promised: God is our loving Father and wants to bless us.



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D. Here's an example of someone who endured in faith

Genesis 28:10-15 - God spoke a promise

Genesis 28:20-22 - Bargaining in suspicion

Genesis 32:9-12 - Trusting God's promise

Genesis 32:24-32 - Pursuing God

- "I won't let you go until you give me my promised blessing"
- "You win!"

E. Conclusion

Ultimately, faith knows that God is good and the eternal life He offers is better than anything this world has to offer. So faith holds on to His promises until we see Him face to face.

F. Questions

1. Name a time when you know God spoke to you. If it's not too personal, tell us what He said.
2. How did God's speaking to you change you? What changes did it produce?
3. Are you still waiting for a promise to be fulfilled? How do you deal with the doubts that come?