

The Church Is Sent to Demonstrate Faith

Summary and Goal

God requires us to follow Him in faith. He expects us to believe what we cannot see and act on promises not yet fulfilled. That faith should be evident at all times, including the difficult times of life. Persevering in faith is not easy in the face of trials and suffering. In those times, it is wise to remember believers who have gone before us. Knowing their stories of trust, seeing their faith in action, and watching God use them in mighty ways can compel us to press on in faithfulness. Our supreme example of faithfulness to God's work, though, is Jesus. Following Him, we must persevere in God's work, trusting Him in faith. Thus, we should strengthen our faith through studying stories of others and turning our eyes to Jesus.

Session Outline

1. Defining Faith (Heb. 11:1-2)
2. Being Approved Through Faith (Heb. 11:32-40)
3. Enduring in Faith (Heb. 12:1-2)

Background Passage: Hebrews 11:1–12:2

Session in a Sentence

God approves those who place faith in Jesus Christ.

Christ Connection

While a source of great encouragement, all the examples of faithful men and women in Scripture pale in comparison to the life of Jesus Christ, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame. Because of Christ's work, our faith and hope, and that of all who have gone before us, will be fulfilled when He returns. We have assurance of the reliability of God's promises.

Missional Application

Because Christ has worked in our lives to bring about salvation and transformation, we draw courage from the example of the faithful through the centuries as we focus on Christ and fulfill God's will.

Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph on page 38 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) to make the observation that people are often confused about how to define the term *faith* because churches seldom explain what faith is.

Our focus in this session is faith. One of the reasons people in our culture do not understand the term *faith* is that many churches often talk about it but seldom define it or explain it. Yet God's church is to demonstrate faith by the way we trust Him and the way we live. Thus, in looking at the passages for this session, we should first define faith and then take up the challenge of walking in faith as Christ's church.

Illustration: God saved me when I was thirteen years old. I quickly began to devour the Word, and I attended church every time the doors opened. I listened intently and learned excitedly. I began memorizing Scripture some months later, and God radically changed my life as I dug into the Word and hid it in my heart. Ephesians 2:8-9 were some of the verses I memorized: "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." Not long thereafter, though, I realized I could say these verses but I did not really understand the terms. I knew enough to know that Jesus died for me and saved me when I trusted Him and turned from my sin. Coming to understand "grace" and "faith," however, was a process. It was probably years before I had a firmer grasp on either one of those topics so important in our Christian walk.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



How has your understanding of what faith is changed over time? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

SUMMARIZE: God requires us to follow Him in faith. He expects us to believe what we cannot see and act on promises not yet fulfilled. That faith should be evident at all times, including the difficult times of life. Persevering in faith is not easy in the face of trials and suffering. In those times, it is wise to remember believers who have gone before us. Knowing their stories of trust, seeing their faith in action, and watching God use them in mighty ways can compel us to press on in faithfulness. Our supreme example of faithfulness to God's work, though, is Jesus. Following Him, we must persevere in God's work, trusting Him in faith. Thus, we should strengthen our faith through studying stories of others and turning our eyes to Jesus.

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Point 1: Defining Faith (Heb. 11:1-2)

SAY: Hebrews 10 concludes with a call to live by faith and a caution not to draw back from a commitment to Christ (Heb. 10:37-39). Chapter 11, then, quickly follows with a simple definition of faith and a long list of examples of faith. This entire chapter takes us on a journey through Old Testament history, and it highlights faith in such a way that the reader is surely encouraged to walk with God—even when the consequences of faithfulness are painful.

READ Hebrews 11:1-2 (DDG p. 39).

¹ Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. ² For by this our ancestors were approved.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 39) to show how Hebrews 11:1 defines faith, and contrast this definition with the idea of a subjective feeling or wishful thinking.

Hebrews 11:1 provides us with a definition of biblical faith. Faith is not simply a crutch for the weak-minded, nor is it a false assurance based on a weak foundation. It is not a subjective feeling or fleeting hope. It is not based on opinion, wishful thinking, or elusive optimism that something will happen according to our plans. Rather, it is a solid certainty that God always keeps His word.

- Faith is “the proof of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The words seem almost contradictory; “proof” usually assumes some kind of empirical evidence. But that is the nature of faith. In contrast to the adage of “seeing is believing,” Christian faith is believing whether or not we have seen. It is an inner conviction, a strong persuasion, that we can trust the things of God without having to see them.
 - We trust without question that Jesus rose from the dead not because we were at the tomb but because God’s inspired Word tells us so (Matt. 28:1-10).
 - We can believe that God is working all things together for our good not because that plan is always obvious to us in our fallen world but because God gave us that promise (Rom. 8:28).
 - We believe in the reality of eternal life not because we have been on the other side of death to experience it but because God has promised everlasting life to whoever believes in Him (John 3:16).
- God has spoken, and we trust Him, as Paul said, “for we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). In particular, faith clings to God and His Word for the things we hope for, that is, for the fulfillment of God’s promises and plan in the days to come. We look forward to, for example, the resurrection of the body as our eyes watch with certainty for the return of the Lord. Being with Jesus in the new heaven and new earth is our future as believers, and we anticipate that day with joy. Faith allows us to face the future with sure hope because we know God is in charge of the future. We have unshakable confidence that He will bring His plan to pass—that is what faith is. We simply stand on the rock-solid belief that God will keep His word.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 39).

Faith: Biblical faith is the **resting**, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation. More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and **confession** of the truth of the gospel, followed by a **receiving** of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life. Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Essential Doctrine "Faith": Biblical faith is the **resting**, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and **confession** of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a **receiving** of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



How would you contrast the way the Bible presents faith with how our culture thinks about the notion of faith today? (in our culture, faith requires concrete evidence; faith is seen as a crutch to help weak-minded people cope with life; biblical faith is dismissed while culturally approved forms of evidentiary faith is favored, such as science)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 39) to explain that God commends trust in Him and to show how this passage sets the stage for the list of faith heroes that begins in Hebrews 11:4.

The writer of Hebrews reminded his readers that Old Testament followers of God also lived by faith, and by faith they "were approved" by God. This idea leads into the list of faith heroes beginning in Hebrews 11:4, but it also shows that faith brings God's approval. He looks with favor on those who walk by faith; He delights when His people trust Him with full confidence and follow Him accordingly. We will see in the remainder of Hebrews 11 the names and stories of multiple men and women whose lives illustrated this kind of trust. They followed God in the present tense as they trusted His promises for tomorrow.

Application: Faith is a present-tense reality. Faith believes God *today*. It walks obediently *today*. It gives sacrificially *today*. It denies self *today*. It says no to temptation *today*. We live differently *today* on the basis of faith in the truthfulness of God's Word and His promises. Faith is not just a one-time, past-tense act at the point of conversion; it is an ongoing, life-transforming, active part of a believer's life in the present and into the future (Gal. 2:20).

Point 2: Being Approved Through Faith (Heb. 11:32-40)

READ Hebrews 11:32-40 (DDG p. 40).

³² And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead, raised to life again. Other people were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 40) to highlight that the focus of this passage's discussion on faith turns from the names of people to the actions faith heroes took in following God.

Often called the "Hall of Faith," Hebrews 11 echoes with the words "By faith" and the stories of many who followed God with remarkable obedience. The focus of this discussion on faith turns from the names of people to the actions faith heroes took in following God. The actions are striking and powerful, inviting us to walk beside these faithful men and women even as we desire to do some of the same powerful works they did.

- The faith of the Old Testament heroes is active and apparent, evidenced in their actions based on their trust of God and His word. For example:
 - Abraham set out for a land and a city he had never seen (Gen. 12:1-5).
 - Moses left prosperous Egypt behind to identify with his people Israel (Ex. 2–14).
 - Rahab welcomed the Israelite spies in Jericho (Josh. 2).
 - Gideon led a reduced army to rout the Midianites with a strange battle plan (Judg. 7:7-25).
 - Barak was the military leader serving with Deborah to defeat Sisera and the Canaanites (Judg. 4:8-16).
 - Samson failed much in his story, but he was instrumental in the defeat of the Philistines (Judg. 13–16).
 - Jephthah, known for his foolish vow, still defeated the Amorites and the Ammonites (Judg. 10:6–12:7).
 - David defeated the giant Goliath and later became the king of Israel (1 Sam. 15–2 Sam. 24).
 - The judge and prophet Samuel spoke truth to kings and anointed David (1 Sam. 1–25).
 - Finally, the general reference to "the prophets" likely refers to all the Old Testament prophets.
- None of the persons in this list were perfect, but all were people of faith—a fact that gives us hope as imperfect people. These and others believed what they could not see because they trusted in God.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

 What Old Testament figures have inspired you to live by faith? Why? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 40) to emphasize that the writer of Hebrews did not limit his illustrations to powerful, miraculous pictures because he also wanted to illustrate that faith can be *costly*.

The writer of Hebrews did not limit his illustrations to powerful, miraculous pictures. Instead, he shifted to include examples that illustrate that faith can be *costly*. Some followers of God lived in undesirable circumstances; others endured, pain, persecution, and execution. Yet these too lived—and died—by faith. They accepted their fate because their faith pointed them to the promise of resurrection; their future-tense assurance gave them strength in present-tense persecution.

Application: We have seen the fulfillment of a promise the Old Testament believers did not see fulfilled: **Christ has come to provide salvation.** They knew the prophecies and the promises, but they did not live to see Jesus on earth. They died looking forward to “something better,” to the fulfillment of God’s plan through the coming Messiah. At the end of time, God will make complete all the believers in Christ, including these heroes noted in this chapter. Someday, all of us will see what we see today only by faith.

Commentary: The writer ended this list of faith heroes with an epilogue that summarizes the chapter. In so doing, he used a literary device called an *inclusio* to end his discussion and emphasize his point. In Hebrews 11:2, he writes, “For by this our ancestors were approved”; in 11:39, he echoes the same idea related to those in his list: “All these were approved through their faith.” Raising the idea of “approved” at the beginning and ending of the passage colors the interpretation of the whole passage. By emphasizing this point, the writer is challenging his readers—including us—to walk in faith in the same way the Old Testament saints did, knowing God always approves and commends those who follow Him in faith.

PACK ITEM 6: FAITHFUL SUFFERING: Read the **Andrew Murray quote** on this poster and ask group members the following question.

 How does faith in God transform our suffering? (we know all suffering is filtered through God’s loving hand to accomplish good in our lives; suffering becomes a means to turn our eyes to God and to shape us to be more like Jesus; sharing in Jesus’ sufferings assures us of sharing in His resurrection; we recognize that suffering is only temporary)

Point 3: Enduring in Faith (Heb. 12:1-2)

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 12:1-2 (DDG p. 41).

¹ Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ² keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 41) to speak to the writer's metaphor of a sports arena and the significance of the large cloud of witnesses.

Chapter 12 begins with “therefore”; the writer wanted to connect what he had previously written with his direction to run the race well. The setting of this race imagery is a sports arena, a grand amphitheater with a large crowd watching the racers. The great “cloud of witnesses” includes the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, whose lives and deaths reflected deep faith that persisted to the end, a testimony of the grace and power of God demonstrated through these examples of faith. Therefore, the readers of Hebrews are encouraged to press on in faith because they know others before them have persevered to the end.



Voices from Church History

“The cloud of witnesses had a course to run, and they ran it to the end. But their running cannot suffice for others. The picture is that of a relay race. Those who have run have passed on to us the redemptive purpose of God which must be carried forward in our generation, at the end of which we, in turn, shall pass it on to others.”¹

—Herschel Hobbs
(1907-1995)

- The writer of Hebrews describes the Christian life as a “race” in which present runners are following in the steps of previous runners (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 4:7-8). Like runners who receive and hand off the baton, believers learn from others before them and in turn teach others after them (see Heb. 11).
- The call to endurance reverberates throughout the Book of Hebrews (e.g., Heb. 10:32-39). The word translated “endurance” suggests arduous effort, even with ongoing struggle and strong opposition. The race is a long one rather than a sprint, and believers are to keep driving toward the finish line. Thus, the original recipients of the Book of Hebrews would have heard this reminder not to give up or turn back; they were to press on even in the midst of opposition. Their goal was to say, like Paul, at the end of their lives, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



How has the Christian life resembled an athletic competition in your experience? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 41) to apply the author’s athletic imagery to our obligation to rid ourselves of anything that gets in the way of our following Christ.

To run this race, it matters that we listen to the guidance of the writer of Hebrews. We must lay aside anything that might hinder us from running well. In athletic imagery, the “hindrance,” or “weight,” might have been excess body fat or needless clothing that slowed the runner. In our spiritual life, we are to rid ourselves of anything that gets in the way of our following Christ. The image forces us to examine our own lives to see what things—whether good or bad—distract us from running with God.

- The writer says we should turn from the “sin” that hinders us. He doesn’t specify what that sin is, likely because all of us deal with our own individual sin struggles. What he does indicate is the power of sin: it wraps itself around us and binds us up like a long robe wrapped around our legs. Progress in our Christian walk is impossible as long as we keep returning to our habitual sins, yet most of us need not look long to find that kind of sin in our lives. According to this passage, we have a conscious and intentional role in severing that sin from our hearts to help us run the race.
 - In addition to setting aside our sin and hindrances, we must keep our eyes on Jesus. He is the reason we are in the race in the first place, and He stands at the finish line to welcome us, even as He runs with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, running the race well requires us to turn from our distractions and look to Jesus, the Son of God, who is greater than all. He is, in fact, the originator, sustainer, and completer of our faith. We believe because He has enabled us to do so, and we run the race with faith because He lives in us. The One who has run the race before us will guide us step by step, leading us as our champion all the way into eternity.
 - The race is not easy, but it wasn’t easy for Jesus either. His cost was heavy as He endured an agonizing death on a cross, one of the most degrading punishments in the ancient world. The people mocked Him as a common criminal. They gambled away His clothing. Still, He despised the shame of the cross, meaning that He ignored or dismissed that shame because He had a greater purpose. Jesus’ death was an act of obedience to the Father, and Jesus knew that the story was not over with His death. He would be faithful to the end, conquer death, be resurrected, exalted, and provide salvation for the nations, and the fruit of His obedience—His church—would bring Him joy. Trust in the Father’s plan compelled Him to obey with endurance. Now He is seated at the right hand of God’s throne, a position that shows He has finished the work of our atonement.
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My Mission

EXPLAIN: Faith is not a blind leap into the dark, at least not when defined biblically. Faith is a confident trust in God based on His character, promises, and proven record. According to Scripture, faith reaches to the past, affects our present lives, and provides concrete hope for our future. As we have seen, the writer of Hebrews reminds us that Old Testament followers of God also lived by faith, and thus we should also. He did not limit his examples and allusions to positive ones, however. Rather, he drew attention to the reality that faith is sometimes costly. The costliest example of faithful living, of course, was Jesus, with His willingness to endure the shame and suffering of the cross. It is to Him we look ultimately for motivation to finish the race that lies before us, and it is Him we proclaim so others will join us in the race of faith and reach the blessed prize at its end.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 42), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because Christ has worked in our lives to bring about salvation and transformation, we draw courage from the example of the faithful through the centuries as we focus on Christ and fulfill God's will.

- **What actions will you take because of your faith in Jesus as the Son of God who endured the cross for your salvation?**
- **What are some ways your group can encourage one another as a cloud of witnesses to the joy and blessing of living by faith?**
- **How will keeping your eyes on Jesus impact your efforts in sharing the gospel with the people God has placed around you?**

Voices from the Church

"Ultimately, Jesus accomplished the perfection of our faith by his sacrificial death on the cross. In keeping with the race imagery, he has cleared the path of faith so that we may run it. The way is open, and although hurdles exist, the roadblocks have been removed."²

—George Guthrie

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, great is Your faithfulness, and the faith of Your saints throughout the ages testifies to this reality. Thank You for preserving Your people despite their faults, flaws, and frailty both until and beyond the coming of Your Son, Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who endured the cross for our sake. Fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we can joyfully run the race that lies before us. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 43-45), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 46) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God's Word.

Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 43-45) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 46) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 43-45) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 1** as a part of point 1 in the session: **Faith is keeping our eyes on Christ, trusting a perfect God to keep His Word, and following Him every step of the way.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 2:** "God works His plan through His people even when His people have much room to grow. That truth ought to make all of us hopeful and grateful."
- **Day 5:** "Enduring to the end also requires that others pray for us and we pray for them."



Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 46) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to point out aspects of one another's individual faithfulness to Christ that they admire.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

Additional Commentary

Point 1: Defining Faith (Heb. 11:1-2)

“We sometimes do not see the forest because we are intently looking at the trees. So it is with this great “faith chapter.” It is easy to get lost in the details and to miss the big picture. The heroes and heroines of faith have much in common. Often their faith is directed to the future, which is unseen: ‘Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen’ (v. 1). Why this emphasis? The answer lies in the historical occasion of the book. The writer motivates those who have professed Christ under the threat of persecution. He wants them to endure to obtain God’s unseen, future promises. This is the accent when he introduces the concept of faith in 6:12: he wants his readers to be ‘imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.’ That is what Abraham did (11:15) and that is what the witnesses to faith in chapter 11 do too. ‘By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household’ (v. 7).”³

“Faith and confidence in God’s promises are important, for the ancestors recorded in the OT gained approval for their faith, and the writer is about to give us a litany of those ancestors in the forthcoming verses. The word translated ‘won approval’ often has this meaning (Acts 6:3; 10:22; 16:2; 22:12; 1 Tim. 5:10; 2 John 3:12). In the context of Hebrews 11, the author means they won approval before God. Clearly, the author’s desire is for the readers to imitate the example of their illustrious ancestors so they will obtain favor before God on the last day. We don’t have a dissertation on faith here that is unrelated to the rest of the letter. Faith is introduced because the flip side of apostasy is faith. The author doesn’t ask the readers to look to themselves and to summon up all their energy to persevere until the end. What it means to endure is to keep trusting God until the end. Endurance comes when we look to God for strength and put our trust in his promises. Faith means we put our trust in what God has promised, even if those promises seem impossible to us.”⁴

Point 2: Being Approved Through Faith (Heb. 11:32-40)

“In conclusion, the author points out to his readers that, despite keenly waiting for and believing in the fulfillment of God’s promises, none of those he has mentioned *received what had been promised (11:39)*. The reason is because *God had planned something better for us (11:40)*. What he means is that God has given the new generation of believers the privilege of seeing the fulfillment of his promises in the coming of the Messiah, whose atoning death makes believers perfect. This is the sense in which he can say that *only together with us would they be made perfect*. At our Lord’s return we will all be united with him.”⁵

“The lives of those mentioned in this passage serve as examples for us. Were they perfect examples? No. Luther’s dying words, which underscore our need, apply to them: ‘We are beggars. This is true.’ Gideon demanded signs from God and led Israel to sin when he made an ephod (Judg. 6:36–40; 8:24–27); Samson was sexually promiscuous and broke his covenant with God (Judg. 13–16); Jephthah vowed to sacrifice his own daughter (Judg. 11:30–31,34–40); David committed adultery with a woman and tried to cover it up by arranging the death of her husband (2 Sam. 11). Even so, the author does not remember them for their flaws. He commends them for their faith. Though they sinned, their lives were ultimately marked by their faith in God, which the author highlights in verses 33 and 34. They failed yet accomplished each of these feats by faith, so they serve as examples of remarkable trust in God. Verses 35–38 shift our attention to those who suffered for the sake of Christ by faith. The women receiving back their dead is probably a reference to the work of Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17–23 and the work of Elisha in 2 Kings 4:18–36. These women trusted God and so received back their dead. Those who experienced the terrible suffering the author details did not fail in their faith, even in the midst of their persecution. They believed God would not fail to give them the promised land and trusted he would raise them to life on the last day. Though they were counted righteous by their faith, they were despised by the world for their devotion to God, so ‘the world was not worthy of them.’”⁶

Point 3: Enduring in Faith (Heb. 12:1–2)

“Let us look not toward human beings for the perfection of our faith. In fact, among them one is good for something, but the other is not. Rather let us look into ‘Jesus Christ, the pioneer of faith,’ who was made our leader and ‘the perfecter’ of our faith, because he began from the Jordan the fight against the enemy, then continued it in the desert, and finished it in Jerusalem through the cross, which was erected by the persecutors on Golgotha.”⁷

“Because Jesus Christ is the **source and perfecter** of the Christian faith, the author called on Christians to keep their eyes on Jesus. The Christian who has faith will **lay aside** every sinful weight and run toward Christ. Just as Jesus **endured the cross, despising the shame**, in order to attain the joy of rejoining the Father on his throne, so should Christians run their race with **endurance**.”⁸

References

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3. Robert A. Peterson, “Hebrews,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1670, n. 11:1–40.
4. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, in *Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2015), 340–41.
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8. Malcolm B. Yarnell III, “Hebrews,” in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1961, n. 12:1–2 [Wordsearch].