

EXAMPLES WORTH IMITATING

Heb. 11:1-7

“O may all who come behind us find us faithful—may the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe, & the lives we live inspire them to obey.”

How should *WE* respond to message of Jesus' greatness?

Heb. cites examples from history of great men & women of God who trusted God in the face of adverse circumstances, to encourage us to follow in their footsteps.

These people risked their lives & were willing to pay a price, because they trusted God.

How will we respond to His greatness?

WORKING DEFINITION OF FAITH 11:1-3

Heb. clarifies what genuine faith looks like:

Faith is assurance of things hoped for 11:1 *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for & certain of what we do not see.”*

Faith starts with discontent with status quo.

It yearns for something more in life

It's confidence that what God has promised is certain to come to pass.

Faith is a conviction about things you can't see—certainty, even though you can't see it!

Circumstances may look grim.

What we see may not be encouraging.

Faith believes there's something more significant than things you can touch & see

Faith celebrates *now* the reality of what God has promised in the future, even though we can't see it.

By faith, godly people gained approval from God 11:2

“This is what the ancients were commended for.”

Faith counts on unseen God for approval—not on tangible things nor man's opinions. Nor does it depend on our efforts—God's approval comes by **faith!**

By faith, we understand the real force behind the universe. 11:3 *“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what's seen wasn't made out of what was visible.”*

People without Christ will never come to same conclusions because it's faith that enables us to understand what life's about.

Many people are like the piano mice who lived all their lives inside a piano. Music filled their “piano world.” They marveled that someone above, yet close to them, made such beautiful music. They loved to think of the Great Player whom they could not see.

One day a daring mouse climbed up the piano & returned pensively. He discovered how music was really made. Tightly stretched wires trembled, making music. They must revise their out-dated beliefs. Only blind conservatives continued to believe in the Unseen Player. Later, another explored & found that hammers danced & leaped on the wires. This was more complicated, but showed they lived in mechanical world. The Unseen Player was myth,... while the pianist continued to play.

For those who know THE Pianist, it is clear: *“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what's seen was not made out of what was visible.”*

Examples of people who trusted God 11:4-40

These heroes teach *us* about living in adversity.

By departing from Christ & returning to Judaism, they aren't turning *toward* these people, but *away from* them!

They modeled faith he desires *us* to follow.

Key aspect of their faith is *their endurance*. When they couldn't see how things were going to work out, they trusted God & waited for Him to work.

2 EXAMPLES OF FAITH 11:4-6

Abel 11:4 *"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. & by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."*

Because he trusted God, he offered a better sacrifice.

Because he trusted God, God declared him righteous

Abel gave 1st & best of his flock.

He didn't cheat God or say: *"Any thing will do."*

He gave God the first and the best!

Abel stands out as man of faith; because he trusted God rather than his flocks & his own income, God was pleased with him.

Like Abraham, God says Abel's ***"faith is counted to Him for righteousness,"***

Enoch 11:5-6 *"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. ⁶& without faith it's impossible*

to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists & that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

*** Because He trusted God, Enoch pleased God.**

*** Because He trusted God, He didn't experience death**

Gen. 5:22, 24: Enoch walked with God for 300 years.

What was it like to walk with God?

Enoch was God's friend & liked His company;

he was going the same direction as God.

In a passage where everyone lives & then **dies**, here's a person who doesn't just live, he walks with God.

After 300 yrs, he doesn't die—he walks with God. God takes him with Him!

Enoch teaches importance of faith 11:6

*** Without faith, you can't please God.**

He doesn't say that without faith it's *difficult* to please God. It's *impossible!*

If we're going to live godly way—that pleases Him— we'll need a different perspective on life: FAITH!!!

*** The only way we ever come to God:**

1. Believe He exists

2. Believe He rewards those who seek Him

—that it pays to walk with Him!

Lessons from those who walked by faith:

1. Faith was basis of their pleasing God.

They trusted Him, and pleased Him.

2. The desire of their heart was to walk with Him.

3. They weren't afraid to be different

All these people testified to their faith in God and His faithfulness.

Like silent shadows, the heroes of the faith pass beside us, pointing us toward God, whispering words of courage, reminding us of His faithfulness.

What will *our* response be? Will we join them, in faith?

Will we escape, in unbelief? Which do we prefer?