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## Facing Our Fears

*Rahab*

*Hebrews 11:30-31;  
Joshua 2:1-21*

In college I led a Bible study that started as a small group but then grew until anywhere from thirty to fifty students would come each week, crowding into a classroom where we'd pray and study God's Word. There was one student on campus, however, who ridiculed, intimidated and mocked anyone who was or wanted to be part of the group. One day I had heard enough from him and blurted out, "Why don't you just come one time and see what it's all about?" I couldn't believe his response. He said, "No one's ever asked me to come." So the next week he attended—and the week after that. In time the critic believed in Jesus and began to invite other students to come. The least likely person became an ardent follower of Christ.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** What person or kind of person would you feel most uncomfortable talking to about Jesus? Be honest about your fears.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** When do you find your commitment to Jesus to be most embarrassing or unnerving? Think about a

situation you have faced when you were reluctant to share or were silent about your faith.

Rahab, the last person the author of Hebrews talks about in any detail in his gallery of faith heroes, is the one who seems least likely to be included in the list. For one thing, she was a woman. In the Jewish culture from which the book of Hebrews emerges, men were usually picked first as models of holy living. Moreover, Rahab was a non-Jew (a Gentile). Why would a Jewish teacher writing to a Jewish audience pick a non-Jewish woman as an example of fearless faith? But the main reason she seems least likely to appear in Hebrews 11 is that she was a prostitute. Some biblical scholars have tried to get around that moral issue, but the language of Scripture is clear. What's also clear from Scripture, though, is that Rahab demonstrated outstanding trust in God in a remarkable act of courage. *Read Hebrews 11:30-31 and Joshua 2:1-21.*

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**1.** What character traits of Rahab emerge from this encounter in Joshua 2?

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**2.** The unbelieving Israelite generation that had left Egypt had all died in the wilderness. Now the new generation was ready to enter the land God had promised long before to Abraham, which is why Joshua, Israel's new leader, sent the two spies into the land. Why do you think the two spies went to a prostitute's house?

3. Rahab's first work of faith was a lie! Was Rahab right or wrong to lie about the presence of the spies (Joshua 2:4-6)? Explain your answer.

How would you have handled the dilemma?

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4. What did Rahab want from the spies in exchange for concealing them on the roof (Joshua 2:12-13)?

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5. If Rahab was simply bargaining for her safety, why does the writer see Rahab's willingness to welcome and hide the spies as an act of extraordinary faith (Hebrews 11:31)?

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6. What acts of faith were required of Rahab after the spies left the city (Joshua 2:17-20)?

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7. Explain what Rahab's obedience reveals about her relationship to the Lord God.

8. Rahab's action led to her family's deliverance. What steps can you take that might lead to the spiritual deliverance of your family or circle of friends?

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9. Rahab's story reminds us that no one—not even our enemy, as Rahab initially was to the Israelites—is beyond God's reach. What groups or individuals in your circle of acquaintances—or outside—have you written off as unreachable?

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10. What can you do this week as an act of faith to begin to reach one of those people?

*Commit your fears to the Lord and trust him to give you the courage to act in faith.*

#### **Now or Later**

Rahab is mentioned two other times in the New Testament. James points to her as a model of believers who demonstrate true faith by their works, even declaring that she was “considered righteous for what she did” (James 2:25). The other reference is in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:5. One of Jesus' ancestors, a man named Salmon, married Rahab, the former prostitute. What does that fact tell you about God's grace? What hope does it bring to you about how God can work through you? When you see a prostitute or someone else on the margins of society, will you write them off as unreachable, or will you think of Rahab?