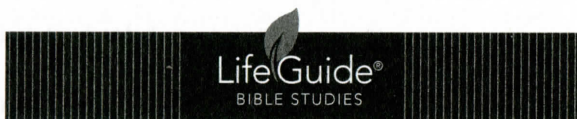


HEROES OF FAITH

8 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



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IVP Connect

An imprint of InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois

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1

Pleasing God

Abel

*Hebrews 11:1-6;
Genesis 4:1-12*

The little girl stood on the edge of the playscape looking down at her father, who was standing with his arms held out. “Jump,” he said. “You know I’ll catch you.”

For just a moment indecision crossed her sweet face. She glanced back at the ramp she had just walked up to get to this level and briefly considered walking back down to the ground. But then a wide smile broke across her face as she looked back at her daddy—and with a squeal of delight she leaped into the air.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Tell the group about a time when you had to trust another person for safety or rescue. Were you “caught” (like the girl in her father’s arms), or did you come away disappointed?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. In what circumstances do you find it most difficult to trust someone else? How do you respond to that sense of mistrust?

The author of the book of Hebrews wants to challenge us to a life of active faith in our faithful God. He closes chapter 10 by pointing out that we are not among those who shrink back from a courageous commitment to Christ but instead are “of those who believe and are saved” (10:39). We have personal confidence in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to make us right with God. Then, in chapter 11, the writer encourages us to live out that faith in the decisions and experiences of life. This kind of living faith springs from our will—our willingness to trust God even when we cannot see what the future holds. *Read Hebrews 11:1-6.*

1. Though we don’t know for sure who wrote the book of Hebrews, what observations can you make about the author based on these opening verses of chapter 11?

2. What words stand out to you in the description of faith in verse 1? Explain why each is significant to you.

What words would you use to describe the level of faith in your life right now?

3. What are the things you hope for as a follower of Christ?

4. What does faith help us grasp about the universe around us (v. 3)?

Read Genesis 4:1-12.

5. What do you learn about God’s character from this account?

6. What do Cain’s responses both to God’s rejection of his offering (v. 5) and to God’s warning (vv. 6-7) reveal about this man?

7. Hebrews 11:4 says that “by faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice.” How was his sacrifice better than Cain’s?

In what sense does Abel still speak to us?

8. Verse 6 of Hebrews 11 sets the tone for every example of faith that we will explore in this passage. Why does faith please God?

9. In what area of your life is it easy for you to take on Cain's attitude toward God or others?

What practices could help you walk in Abel's way to please God in your life?

Ask God to give you the kind of faith that produces faithful obedience to him.

Now or Later

Verse 5 of Hebrews 11 addresses one more "hero of faith": Enoch. His life is summed up in just four verses in the Old Testament (Genesis 5:21-24)—fifty-one words in the New International Version! Yet the author of Hebrews singles him out as a man of great faith. What marked Enoch out was that he "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24) and he "pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). Enoch's relationship with God was so close that his removal from earth to heaven didn't interrupt a thing! What would you ask Enoch if you could interview him today? What desires does Enoch's walk of faith prompt in you?