

Hebrews 11:5-7
June 19, 2016

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Last week I shared that Jordan Spieth was playing in his first WGC match play event soon after he won his very first PGA tournament, the John Deere Classic. He was playing against Ernie Els for the third match, and he kept emotionally reacting to missed shots or putts, and Ernie took advantage of him. Every time Jordan beat himself up, Ernie would stay calm and keep stroking in putts. When Jordan was interviewed after his loss to Ernie, Jordan candidly called himself a “mental midget.” He admitted to letting missed shots get to him such that he had a hard time “forgetting” about it and just focus on the next shot that he controlled.

I raised the question, “Does our life reflect a large faith or small faith in God?” Do we have the faith of a midget, or the faith of a giant?

Transition: Today, we continue our study of the inductees into the Hall of Faith. We need to keep hearing inspirational stories of God-followers who exercised great faith in God. We all appreciate good examples to follow, and the writer reminds us of key people whom exercised a large faith in God! Regardless of where you are on the continuum of small faith to large faith, **all of us can improve living by faith by following the EXAMPLES of those whom God commended.** Let’s study some more EXAMPLES of those who lived by faith and be inspired!

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Heb 11:5-6]

V.5:

- 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.

V.6:

- And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Process Observations/Questions:

X-Ref: Gen 5:18-24

Irony: Enoch was the son of Cain.

Q: Why was Enoch commended for his faith? [He walked with God in the wicked world, before the Flood came. He was able to keep his life pure.]

Application: Our faith in God grows as we fellowship with God. We must have both the *desire* to please Him and the *diligence* to seek Him. Prayer, meditating on the Word, worship, discipline—all of these help us in our walk with God.

[Read Heb 11:7]

V.7:

- By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Process Observations/Questions:

X-Ref: Gen 6:9-22

Q: Why was Noah's faith commended by God? [He did what God commanded him to do without questioning it.]

Q: Can you imagine the talk around town? What do you think Noah endured as he started build this huge ark? [ridicule!]

Q: How did Noah's faith impact his family? [His faith influenced his whole family and they were saved.]

Application: We can improve living by faith through our obedience to Him and be willing to trust in the results later.

LOOK:

Q: What did we learn from those who were inducted into the Hall of Faith that we can apply to help us improve living by faith?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 318). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Demonstration of Faith (Heb. 11:5–7)

Enoch—faith walking (vv. 5–6). Our faith in God grows as we fellowship with God. We must have both the *desire* to please Him and the *diligence* to seek Him. Prayer, meditating on the Word, worship, discipline—all of these help us in our walk with God. Enoch walked with God in the wicked world, before the Flood came; he was able to keep his life pure. Enoch was taken to heaven one day (“translated” = “carried across”) and seen no more. Abel died a violent death, but Enoch never died. God has a different plan for each one who trusts Him. Some see in the translation of Enoch a picture of the Rapture of the church when Jesus Christ returns (1 Thes. 4:13–18).

Noah—faith working (v. 7). Noah’s faith involved the whole person: his *mind* was warned of God; his *heart* was moved with fear; and his *will* acted on what God told him. Since nobody at that time had ever seen a flood (or perhaps even a rainstorm), Noah’s actions must have generated a great deal of interest and probably ridicule as well. Noah’s faith influenced his whole family and they were saved. It also condemned the whole world, for his faith revealed their unbelief. Events proved that Noah was right! Jesus used this experience to warn people to be ready for His return (Matt. 24:36–42). In Noah’s day, the people were involved in innocent everyday activities and completely ignored Noah’s witness (2 Peter 2:5).

Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 807-808). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2. THE DIVINE ACCEPTANCE OF FAITH (11:5–7)

11:5–6. **Enoch**, on the other hand, reflected the kind of life that pleases God since he walked with God by faith (as the readers also should). If Christ had come in their lifetimes (cf. 10:37), the readers also would **not** have experienced **death**. In any case they could only please God by continued confidence that **He exists and ... rewards those who earnestly seek Him**.

11:7. That God does reward those who seek Him is suggested by the career of **Noah**, who became an heir of righteousness by faith. What he inherited was, in fact, the new world after the Flood as the readers might inherit “the world to come” (cf. 2:5). The reference here to Noah saving his household recalls the writer’s stress on a Christian’s salvation-inheritance. It further suggests that a man’s personal **faith** can be fruitful in his family, as they share it together.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 1835). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

11:5 Some see a discrepancy in this verse because Jn 3:13 teaches that no one has ever ascended into heaven. But this assertion neglects the fact that John’s Gospel has a different context than does Heb 11:5. John was adamant that no one had ascended to heaven so as to return to explain heavenly things, namely, to reveal God the Father to humanity. But Jesus is able to do so because He came from the Father in heaven (see Jn 1:1, 14, 18). Hebrews 11:5, on the other hand, says that Enoch was taken out of this world without experiencing death (see Gn 5:21–24); his faith was pleasing to God.