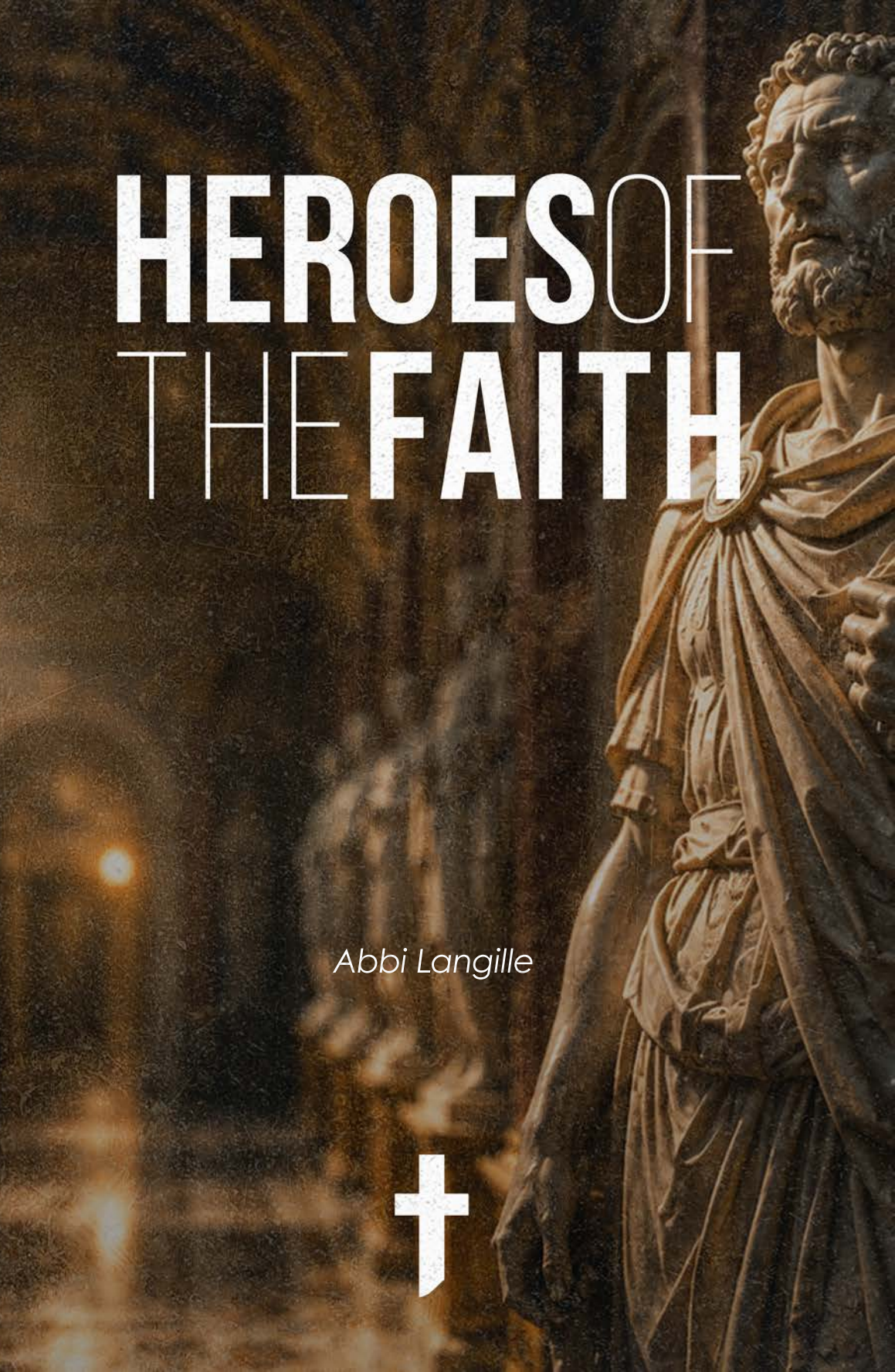


HEROES OF THE FAITH



Abbi Langille



HEROES OF THE FAITH

Cultivating a Life of Faithfulness
Through Hebrews 11

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”

HEBREWS 12:1, NIV

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Heroes of The Faith*, a devotional journey through the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews. This passage presents many incredible men and women who are introduced to us in the Old Testament, men and women who lived lives faithful to God. They were imperfect and made mistakes, but they also knew that the one they put their faith in was perfect and made no mistakes.

In taking a deeper look at the actions and destinations of these men and women from the past, we as modern believers can gain a broader understanding of what it means to live a life of faithful obedience to the God who is always faithful to us. My prayer is that as you take this journey through scripture over the course of the next nine weeks, you would not feel intimidated by the faith of those like Noah, Rahab, and David, but instead feel encouraged and less alone.

God always honors our faith in Him, whether that be faith in times of blessing and abundance; faith in the face of fear; faith in the face of uncertainty, loss, or longing; faith in the face of mockery, abuse, or even death. Because those who stand firm when they are surrounded by a culture that glorifies evil, fails to protect the innocent, and sells lies on every street corner are the real Heroes of the Faith, and they will always be rewarded.

Abbi Langille

WEEK ONE

DAY 1

WHAT IS FAITH?

HEBREWS 11:1-3, NIV

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

CONSIDER

Have you sat and stared at the ceiling, wondering what God is doing? Maybe things are going right, and you wonder what you could have done to deserve it. Maybe things are going so, so wrong, and you wonder if anything will ever be okay again. Maybe everything is silent; your life has been like a flat line, and your soul has fallen asleep. We might not understand what God is doing. Or maybe we struggle to see where He is working. But our faith is most powerful when we cannot see clearly. Those are the times when our faith in God can grow the most. We didn’t see God create the universe; the mountains, the oceans, the stars, but we have faith that He did. We see the evidence all around us. God commended the people of old for their faithfulness to Him, and He will commend us for our faith too, even when we have faith without seeing (especially then). Faith is your confidence in God. It’s a confidence that lives beyond the circumstances. It’s a confidence in who God says He is. It has nothing to do with us and everything to do with Him.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, you are always working, even when I don't see it. Help me to have faith in you, no matter what. Remind me that as long as my hope is in you, my hope is never in vain. When I struggle with doubt and confusion, remind me of your character, of your power, and your past faithfulness. Amen.

ACT

This week, spend some time in nature. Look up at the night sky, out at the ocean, around at the towering trees. The God who made all of these things is the God who is guiding your life. All of creation depends on Him and is held together by His hand. Be inspired that this God can also hold together the pieces of your life

WRITE

Look up Exodus 34:6 and make a list of the character qualities of God found in this verse. Meditate on them for when you need to remember the kind of God you put your faith in.

Write down something specific from your life that you can't see God in and pray that He would use it to increase your faith.

NOTES

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DAY 2

HE STILL SPEAKS

HEBREWS 11:4 AND 6, NIV

“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks... And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

CONSIDER

Many of the people listed in Hebrews 11 have promises for the future to keep in the forefront of their minds in order to bolster their faith. Abel had no such thing. Abel had no motivation to offer his gifts beyond pleasing God. But God being God was enough for Abel. Verse 6 says that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. However, if you know anything about Abel's story, it doesn't seem like he was rewarded for his faithfulness. He was murdered. He met an untimely death at the hands of his jealous brother. His blood was the first of the martyrs to cry out from the ground. God's definition of reward looks different than ours. God's timing for rewards looks different from what we might hope. Sometimes, the reward for faithfulness comes partially on this earth, and sometimes we don't receive the reward until we enter our heavenly life. Verse 4 says that even though Abel died, he still speaks.

The voice of his faith has echoed through time, and we can still hear it today, thousands of years later. When we live a life that is faithful to God, we too can speak beyond the grave and inspire those who will come after us.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to care more about pleasing you than finding any reward. Help me to live a life focused on drawing closer to you, just because of who you are. When my life is hard, give me the strength to hold onto my faith in the face of it. Amen.

ACT

As you go about your week, focus on acting in ways that will please God, not because of how it will look to other people, or any benefit it might bring to you. Just do it to make God smile. Even the smallest things can cause Him to say, “Well done.”

WRITE

Have you ever felt like your faithfulness has not been rewarded? Where has your faith brought you suffering instead of reward (not as severe as Abel’s, but still a seemingly negative consequence)?

NOTES

[illegible]

DAY 3

HE DID NOT SEE DEATH

HEBREWS 11:5-6, NIV

“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

CONSIDER

In contrast with Abel’s story, Enoch’s reward seems rather obvious. We don’t know much about Enoch, as the Old Testament is very brief in mentioning him. What we can know is that he sought God, and he sought Him with all of his heart. Enoch, like Abel, lived a life of faith that pleased God, and his reward was that he did not see death. This is the same reward that awaits all those who put their faith in God and live lives that are pleasing to Him. We, like Enoch, will not truly see death, as our ultimate reward is life eternal. The God we put our faith in is the God who defeated death. If we live a life of faith, simply for the sake of pleasing God—not just hoping He will make good on His word but embracing a stalwart confidence in who He is as God—we too will not just speak beyond the grave, but live beyond the grave. This is the ultimate reward for faithfulness.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, as I go about each day, help me to remember that I am living for a heavenly reward, not an earthly one. Remind me that you have paid the ultimate price for this reward. Help me to live every day to please you, not to try to earn this reward, but to thank you for it and point others to it. Amen.

ACT

When we live lives that point other people to the life beyond the grave, we live lives that will speak beyond the grave. As you go about your week, intentionally look for ways to turn your eyes away from earthly rewards and towards eternal ones.

WRITE

Where in your life are you focusing more on earthly rewards than eternal rewards? How can you start readjusting your priorities and thoughts?

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WEEK TWO

DAY 4

YET UNSEEN

HEBREWS 11:7, NIV

“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

CONSIDER

When Noah built the ark, there was no rain, no waters rising, and no flood in sight. No evidence existed to back up his actions, and yet he worked. Noah followed God’s instructions and was faithful to His command, despite the fact that those around him would have been confused about the purpose. Building a massive boat made no sense in Noah’s circumstances. He was probably ridiculed, mocked, and called crazy. But when the sky and the ocean broke open, he was the only one prepared. Sometimes God asks us, like Noah, to do things that don’t make sense, that others will look down on us for, mock us for, or challenge us on. But despite all this, God wants us to be faithful. He wants us to take Him at His word. We might question the commands of God from time to time, but faith comes when we trust even when we don’t fully understand or see the outcome. If we cannot have faith when the ground is dry, how will we have faith when the waves of life knock us off our feet?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to obey you and remain faithful even when it doesn't always make sense. Help me trust you and put my faith in you when the ground is solid under my feet, so that when the waters rise, I will not drown, because you are my salvation. Don't let me give in to mockery; pleasing you is what matters, not making sense to everyone else. Amen.

ACT

As you go about your week, look for opportunities to remain faithful in the little things. Not all of us will be asked to do something crazy like build a giant boat for a flood that no one sees coming, but we are all called to do small, everyday things that don't make sense to the world. We are all called to put others first and live sacrificially, to love our enemies, to do what is right instead of what feels good.

WRITE

Are there things God is calling you to do that you are avoiding because they don't make much sense? Have you ever faced pressure to not remain faithful to God and His commands? Have you ever remained faithful, even when it didn't make sense?

NOTES

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DAY 5

SAVING HIS HOUSEHOLD

HEBREWS 11:7, NIV

“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

CONSIDER

Noah’s faithfulness did not just result in his own salvation. His faith saved his wife, his children and their wives, and ultimately entire future generations. His faith impacted more than just him; God used it to change the world. Your faith does not just make a difference in your own story. When you live a life of faithfulness, it will make a difference to everyone around you. A faithful husband impacts his family. Faithful parents leave a legacy for their children. Faithful children form faithful generations. When one generation says, “This changes now,” the generation that follows can stand on the ground they gained. You may not change the world, but you can bring change to the people around you.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, guide me into living the kind of faithful life that affects those around me. Help my faith change things through example,

encouragement, and compassion. Illuminate opportunities in my day-to-day life to demonstrate this kind of faith. Amen.

ACT

As you go about your week, look for opportunities to not just live a life that pleases God, but do it in a way that impacts those around you. Look for ways to point your family and friends to God and change their lives for the better.

WRITE

Who are the people in your “ark” that you can impact with your faith? How can you as a spouse, parent, sibling, or friend live a life of faith that overflows into the lives of those closest to you?

NOTES

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DAY 6

CONDEMNING THE WORLD

HEBREWS 11:7, NIV

“By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

CONSIDER

Noah is a great example of a man who stood faithful to God in a wicked generation and culture. Genesis 6:5 says, “The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.” This may not seem so different from how the world around us looks today. There is so much perversion and evil everywhere we look. But this is all the more reason for us to lean into living a life pleasing to God and seeking after Him with all of our might. If we let ourselves get swept away in the immorality or passivity of it all, we might find ourselves getting swept away in the judgment one day. Noah didn’t let himself get swept away. He condemned the wicked world around him. His righteous example left no excuse for those who looked on. Noah remained faithful to God, and God remained faithful to him. God will honor our faithfulness. When we follow His word despite the evils of the world, He will reward us.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me remain faithful in the midst of all the evil going on in the world around me. Don't let me get sucked in. Help me to stand firm and be a light in a culture of wickedness, exposing lies and perversions instead of being taken in by them. Amen.

ACT

Noah condemned the world through his righteousness. We might be tempted to condemn the world with our words, pointing fingers and shouting in the comment section, but this was not the way of Noah. We ought to condemn with our faithfulness, live in such a way that makes others look at themselves and want to be different. Actions speak louder than words, and goodness is more effective than accusations.

WRITE

Are there places in your life where you have been swept away by the immorality of the world? What are some things you can do to change that? How can you better “condemn” the world with your faithfulness instead of self-righteous words?

NOTES

[illegible]

WEEK THREE

DAY 7

NOT KNOWING WHERE

HEBREWS 11:8-10, NIV

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

CONSIDER

When God called Abraham, he took God’s promises to heart and set out, having no idea what he was doing or where he was going. God had promised him something invisible, and it stayed pretty invisible his whole life. When he finally did reach the land God was promising him, he lived there as a sojourner in tents... it wasn’t *his* land. We don’t always get to see the fulfillment of God’s promises. Sometimes we, like Abraham, will sit on the edge of ‘almost’ until the end of our earthly lives. But Abraham lived as if someday was already true. He lived a life of faithfulness even without seeing all the fruit. We ought to live trusting in God’s promises even when we don’t see the fruit... just like Abraham.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I'm reaching for things that aren't quite mine, when I'm seeking the promises more than the promiser, when the fruit doesn't look the way I had hoped it would, when I don't know where I'm going, help me to have faith in you. You are always faithful, even when I can't see the destination. Amen.

ACT

There will be days when it feels like we are following God into a bank of fog. We have no idea where we are going. All we know is that He wants us to follow. There will also be days when it feels like we did exactly what God asked us to do, but nothing is happening. We don't see the point. On those days, think of Abraham and rest in the fact that God knows the destination.

WRITE

Can you think of a time in your life when you felt like God was leading you nowhere? How can you find hope in Abraham's story at times like this?

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DAY 8

PROMISE KEEPER

Hebrews 11:11-12, NIV

“By faith, with Sarah’s involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, ‘as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.’”

CONSIDER

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations... and this might seem odd to us. He was a very old man, his wife wasn’t exactly young either, and he had no children. This promise seemed impossible. But God gave Abraham a son. He was like the seal on the promise. Abraham might not live to see the full promise of ‘innumerable descendants’ come to fruition, but he could see one son. And that was enough. Sometimes all we get is a whisper of fulfillment and we have to trust God with the rest. God is faithful to us when we have faith in Him. Always. No matter what. He will not let his promises go unfulfilled, even if it isn’t the way we hoped or if it isn’t in our preferred timing. His ways are always best. His timing is always perfect. He might keep us *waiting*, but it is often in the waiting that the most transformation occurs. All we must do is have faith.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to put my hope in you and cling to the blessings you give me every day, even when they aren't the blessings I wanted. Help me to remember that your plans are better than my plans and your timing is perfect. Amen.

ACT

When you find yourself discontent and wondering when God will answer a prayer, fulfill a longing, or keep a promise, take a step back. Look at all the things God *has* done for you in your life, all the things He *has* given you. Sometimes they are things you never thought to ask for. Don't take those blessings for granted.

WRITE

Make a list of the blessings God has given you, even if they look different than what you might have hoped. Are there any points of growth you have observed in yourself through times of waiting?

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DAY 9

HEAVEN COME TO EARTH

HEBREWS 11:13-16, NIV

“All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.”

CONSIDER

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that we are in a land that is not our home, just like the ancient people of God lived in a land that was not their home. When we have an ache in our chest and feel like we don't belong (even if surrounded by friends or family) it isn't something on earth that we are longing for. It's not a country we fly to, a house we can buy, or a community we can be a part of. It's the place and person our souls were always made to be with. It's a longing for an earth that isn't so broken. They longed for home, and it was a heavenly longing. We, like them, belong in the heavenly restored creation. God promises that, someday, heaven will come to earth, and everything will be made

new. When no earthly or material thing fills the void, we should turn to the one who always satisfies.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I feel lost in my own home, when I feel lonely with my own friends, when nothing I do satisfies the craving... help me to remember that there is something deeper at work. Use those moments to turn me toward you, to remind me that you are where I belong and that the Kingdom of Heaven is coming soon. Amen.

ACT

Instead of being confused, trying to push down the feeling or filling it with other things, when you feel lonely or out of place or grieved at the brokenness of the world around you, stop and take time to intentionally thank God that there is more than this. The earth will be renewed, and heaven is coming.

WRITE

When/Where/What causes you to not feel at home in this world? How can you regularly remind yourself that heaven is your home? Are there ways you can live that will bring a piece of heaven to earth in the present?

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WEEK FOUR

DAY 10

FAITH IN SACRIFICE

HEBREWS 11:17-19, NIV

“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”

CONSIDER

Have you ever prayed for something, begged God over and over for something, and then He gave it to you? The joy is unmatched. God saw, God heard, and God answered. The longing of your heart is fulfilled. But then God does something else, He asks for it back. No explanation, no promise that He will return it, just a hand reaching out to retrieve the thing you wanted most. He holds His hand out to you. “Do you trust me even with this?” He asks. You know you have to say yes, but do you really mean it? This is how Abraham was feeling when God gave Him Isaac, only to ask him to offer him as a sacrifice. God doesn’t just want us to have faith that He will give us what we long for. He wants us to have faith even if He takes away what we long for. True faith wants the Giver more than the gift.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me trust you even when it feels like the things I treasure in this life are slipping through my fingers. Help me put my faith in you as the One who gives, not just in what you can give me. Help me to hold things loosely instead of tightly. You are all I really need. Amen.

ACT

Whatever season you may be in, whether it be one of blessing, loss, or somewhere in between, practice a posture of holding loosely to the things God has given you and holding tightly to God Himself. This is how we, like Abraham, can demonstrate true faith in every situation.

WRITE

Has there ever been a time when God seemed to be taking away something He had given you? How did this situation affect you and your faith?

NOTES

[illegible]

DAY II

FAITH IN RESURRECTION

HEBREWS 11:17-19, NIV

“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”

CONSIDER

Abraham had faith in the promise that God would make Isaac's offspring into many nations, and because of that he believed that even if Isaac died, God would return him. We can so often forget God's promises as soon as something goes wrong. Abraham had faith that God could bring dead things back to life, and He can. Not only can He resurrect dead people, but He can resurrect dead relationships, dead situations, dead hopes and dreams. Sometimes when God asks for something, it isn't for forever. He will give it back to us, like He returned Isaac to Abraham. But our hope can't be in that possibility. It must always be in Him, because sometimes He won't. Sometimes we lose things we love, and we don't get them back. It is in these moments that our faith is so often truly tested. Will we trust God even when we

lose the blessings we love instead of seeing the resurrection we hope for?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I lose what I love and you don't give it back, help me to see that you know what you are doing. When I hope for a miracle and don't see it coming, help me have faith that you have a better plan. When you ask for my Isaac and I offer it up, help my faith be in you, not the hope that it will come back to me. Amen.

ACT

The next time you feel like something you love is slipping through your fingers, don't put all your hope in the idea that it will not be lost. Pray, always pray; beg God to let you keep it. There is nothing wrong with that. Believe in the possibility of resurrection. But don't get so wrapped up in it that your faith is lost if it is lost.

WRITE

Has there ever been a time when life was restored to something you had lost? How did this situation affect you and your faith?

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DAY 12

FAITH FOR FAMILY

HEBREWS 11:20-22

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.”

CONSIDER

By faith, the Patriarchs trusted God with the people they loved, even though they couldn’t watch over them anymore. We live in a world full of goodbyes and changing seasons. People move, children grow up and move out, and those we love can often be far from us. Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph had faith in God and His promise over their family even in their deaths. They placed those they loved and their hopes and fears for them in God’s hands. God doesn’t just want us to trust Him with ourselves and our lives, but with our families too. This can sometimes be even harder, especially for parents. We can be in pain, we can lose things, we can sacrifice, but we don’t want to watch it happen to them. What we have to remember is that God loves those we love so much more than we could ever love them. His hands are the safest place we could ever leave those we love.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me trust you with the lives of those I love. Help me to remember that just like you promise to take care of me, you promise to take care of them too. Please bless and watch over those who are far away from me. You are far better at taking care of them than I could ever be. Cover them with your protection and your love. Amen.

ACT

Instead of worrying about things you can't fix or trying to take care of everything for everyone, spend some time in prayer for those you love. Pray specific prayers. Pray bold prayers. Pray even when you are fearful. God loves them and He loves you; you can trust that He hears your prayers and have faith that He will do what is best.

WRITE

Has there ever been a time when someone you loved was suffering and you couldn't do anything about it? How did you handle it? How did it affect you and your faith?

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WEEK FIVE

DAY 13

DISGRACE FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

HEBREWS 11:24-29, NIV

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”

CONSIDER

Moses could have easily fallen into a life of comfort and ease. He could have wanted for nothing. He could have had power and prestige. He could have lived out his days as a prince. But he didn’t. He chose instead to be faithful to God. We could easily choose to live the kind of life our culture idolizes. We could do things the easy way, think only of ourselves, and do whatever we want to do. But we are called to faithfulness. Sometimes this means saying no to things that might feel really good, things others don’t understand why we avoid, things they might even mock us for avoiding. But, just like Moses, we ought to keep our eyes on the reward waiting for us. Following Jesus faithfully might look disgraceful by the world’s standards, but that disgrace is infinitely more valuable than anything the world has to offer us.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when the things of this world try to tempt me away from faithfulness, remind me of the infinite worth of your Son. Help me to live with my eyes on eternal things, not earthly things. Help me to not be afraid of looking foolish to others but instead focus on pleasing you. Amen.

ACT

We will always be faced with opportunities to do what is easy and normal or to do what is right and please God. Every day, be intentional about choosing faithfulness to Jesus, because he was faithful to you, even to the point of mockery and death.

WRITE

What is something you do that is of the world instead of God? How can you go about leaving this practice behind, even if it means others might mock you?

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DAY 14

FAITH THAT PRESERVES

HEBREWS 11:24-29, NIV

“By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.”

CONSIDER

When we choose to be faithful to God instead of giving in to sin, God preserves us. Moses’ faith not only preserved his life in the desert after he fled Egypt, but it preserved his life—and the lives of his people—when death passed them over. It is important to note that it was not the faith itself that saved and preserved their lives, but the One whom they put their faith in. Our faith is in a God who preserves life. He isn’t going to abandon us or ask us to make it on our own. He is always going to be present with us, covering us. By faith, we can trust that God has our lives in His hands, that our eternal destiny is sealed, and that we will never have to truly face death because of the blood that covers us. Health fails. Accidents happen. Our bodies age. But those who put their faith in God are always passed over by true death. We never have to be afraid. Faith in the blood preserves.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I am afraid, remind me that you are the God of preservation. I never have to wonder what will become of my life because you always hold it in your hands, and it is sealed by the saving blood of your Son. Even if my body, my mind, or my heart fails me, you never will. Amen.

ACT

Maybe you have made it a habit of worrying about what will happen to you after you die. Maybe your energy is draining away. Maybe you are losing hope. Stop worrying, stop striving on your own strength, stop trying to find light within yourself. God is ready and waiting to preserve you. The blood of Jesus preserves your life. The power of the Spirit is there for you to lean on. Our faithful God is where we find our hope. When we persevere in our faith, God will preserve our lives.

WRITE

In what area of your life do you feel you need to be preserved? How can you begin to seek God's hand in this area?

NOTES

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DAY 15

FAITH THAT PROVIDES

HEBREWS 11:24-29, NIV

“By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.”

CONSIDER

When we choose to be faithful to God instead of giving in to sin, God provides for us. From the perspective of Moses and the Israelites, there was no way out. The sea was before them, and an army was behind them. They were trapped between two kinds of death: swim until they get too tired and give up or face a massive army. But our God is a way maker and He provided a way out. They didn’t do anything. They didn’t have to build boats or gather weapons. They just had to have faith, and God took care of the rest. Sometimes we too will face impossible odds. We might try to strategize or fight our way out, but ultimately, we can’t fix everything and we can’t escape everything. We can’t think our way out of every problem, but we can always pray our way out. Whether rescue looks like something as miraculous as a parted sea or something as simple as renewed hope, God will always provide.

We don't just put our faith in a God who preserves, we put our faith in a God who provides.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I face hard times, help me to remember that you always provide. Whether that means you provide a way out or the strength to carry on, help me to turn to you and rely on you instead of my own understanding and efforts. Thank you for being a God who always makes a way. Amen.

ACT

Next time you face a struggle or a problem, instead of trying to solve it first, pray first. Don't try to think your way out of what you are facing but rather turn to God. He sees, He hears, and He knows what you need.

WRITE

Have you ever faced a struggle that no matter how hard you fought, nothing seemed to go right? But then as soon as you gave it over to God and sought Him in prayer, things started to fall into place? How did this affect you and your faith?

NOTES

[illegible]

WEEK SIX

DAY 16

WALLS FALL

HEBREWS 11:30-31, NIV

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.”

CONSIDER

By faith the walls of Jericho fell. Not by catapults or battering rams, but by faith. Sometimes when we have faith, impossible things happen. Not because of our faith, but because of the One we put our faith in. The Israelites did nothing to make the walls of Jericho fall; they were faithful and obedient, and God did the rest. We all come up against walls in our lives, ones we can't go around or bust through. When we hit those walls, we don't have to pound our fists against them, try to climb them, or sit and give up. Sometimes walls show up in our lives not to test our skills, our intelligence, or our stamina, but to show us the incredible power of the One we follow. We worship a God who makes walls fall. Faithful obedience is what He wants from us, and He will take care of the rest.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to see the walls in my life not as barriers but opportunities to see your love and power displayed in my life. Help me

*to remain obedient and faithful even when I feel stuck and trapped.
Thank you for being the kind of God who breaks down walls for His
people. Amen.*

ACT

Next time you come up against a wall in your life—maybe a relationship is stuck, maybe your lease is up and you have nowhere to go, or maybe your health is failing you—whatever it is, turn to the God who has the power to make walls fall and say, “God, I can’t break this wall, and I can’t go around it. Make your glory known in it.”

WRITE

Is there a wall standing in the way of your life right now? How can you remain in faithful obedience despite this barrier?

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DAY 17

FOUND FAMILY

HEBREWS 11:30-31, NIV

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.”

CONSIDER

She’s heard the stories. Stories of rescue and provision and victory. She knows what the God of Israel can do. She knows how He takes care of His people. She wants that. There has always been something missing, and she’s tried to fill the hole with the things her culture said would work. But none of it has. In the story of Rahab presented in the book of Joshua, we can see that she is a prostitute, but we can also see that she is alone. She’s trapped in a culture of immorality, idolatry, and fear, and she wants out. There are walls up in Rahab’s life and she can’t go around them or break through them on her own. But God is about to make them fall. Because of her faith and desire, God is about to make the evil around her come crashing down, and He’s about to give her a new home, one that has everything she is looking for. Because when you put your faith in the God who is Father, walls come down and you receive the kind of family that will never leave you alone.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to have faith in you even when I feel alone in my own home, my own community, my own culture. Help me to remember that I am never alone because you are my Father. Thank you for the family you have surrounded me with. They may not be mine by our blood, but they are by yours. Amen.

ACT

Maybe you, like Rahab, feel alone in your own home. You want to be obedient to God, but you are surrounded by sin. You feel out of place, like you don't belong. Have faith that the one you belong to will surround you with people you belong with. Maybe He already has, and you just didn't notice.

WRITE

Make a list of the found family God has provided for you and thank Him for each one of them.

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DAY 18

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

HEBREWS 11:30-31, NIV

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.”

CONSIDER

When we consider the story of Rahab there is something we must remember: when she hides the Israelite spies by helping them escape from the city, and they promise to protect her when Jericho falls, she doesn't just need to have faith in God. She needs to have faith in *them*. When God puts people in our lives and surrounds us with a new family, the kind that chooses us just like He chose us, we have to trust them and have faith in them. We need to trust that they will have our backs, that they will be there for us when we need them, and that they won't forget about us even when they aren't around. Of course, everyone makes mistakes. They will hurt you and disappoint you. No one is perfect. But mutual faith in the God who is Himself faithful will bind you together.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to trust the people that you have placed in my life. Help me to trust them with who I am. Help me to trust them with

my fears and doubts. Help me to trust they won't leave me, just as I wouldn't leave them. Show me how to be the kind of person they can have faith in, on the good days and on the bad days. Amen.

ACT

Be intentional about building the trust and bonds between you and the people that God has placed in your life. God gives us people we can lean on when we need it most. He doesn't want us to keep them at arms length, he wants us to (with discernment) let them in, help us heal, and do the same for them.

WRITE

Who in your life can you intentionally be a faithful friend to? What are some things you have been holding back that God may be asking you to trust people with?

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WEEK SEVEN

DAY 19

DOUBT DIES

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

When we examine the story of Gideon, he doesn't strike us as a giant of the faith in the beginning. He is quite literally hiding, and he doesn't take God at His word right away. He tests Him, asking for signs that He is who says He is and will do as He promises. We can all be a bit like Gideon, afraid to step into the things God calls us to. Worried we aren't good enough. Scared God won't be with us or help us. But something clicked in Gideon part way through his story. Suddenly he wasn't afraid anymore. He destroyed idols and took on armies when the odds were against him, and he wasn't afraid to make the odds even more

unbalanced if it meant bringing God the glory. When we have doubts, we don't have to sit with them. We can press forward through our doubts. Because when God moves, doubt dies, and incredible faith grows where doubt once had its roots.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when fear and doubt overwhelm me, help me to look to you instead of hiding. Show me your power and strength in the face of things I could never handle on my own. Remind me that I can trust you with anything, even when I am afraid and feel small. Amen.

ACT

Go read the story of Gideon in Judges 6 and 7. Contemplate how God draws near to us and is patient with us when our faith is weak.

WRITE

When have you been afraid and doubted God? How did He show you that you can trust Him?

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DAY 20

BROKEN HEROES

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. Three judges whose lives are marked with doubt, failure, and tragedy. Barak was too afraid to lead the people, so Deborah was given his mantle. Samson valued his relationship with a treacherous woman more than his calling from God. Jephthah lost his daughter because of a rash vow. Each of these men seems like a failure in one way or another. But God didn't give up on them. He didn't turn away from them. He still used them to rescue the nation. They are still heroes, albeit broken heroes, but heroes nonetheless. Sometimes our faith falters. Sometimes we will be so

afraid or so wrapped up in our own desires that we stray from our obedient faithfulness to God. But He never abandons us, and He never stops wanting to use us. All we have to do is turn to Him, and just like He returned Samson's strength, he will give us the strength to press on in faith.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I am distracted or afraid, help me remember that you never give up on me. Don't let me get too ashamed to come back to you. Don't let guilt stop me from returning to faithfulness. You still used these men, and you can still use me. Help me remember that. Amen.

ACT

Think about your own life and evaluate what might be putting a cap on your faith. Are you afraid of something like Barak, or are there things you are just not willing to give up, like Samson?

WRITE

Contemplate a time when you failed, but God did not abandon you and still used you.

NOTES

[illegible]

DAY 21

FAITH THAT WAITS

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

A lot of things come to mind when we think of David, the first and most obvious one is his battle with Goliath, which clearly took a lot of faith. But I want to draw your attention to something a little bit later in his life. God has anointed him to be the next king of Israel, but he isn't living in a palace. He is living in caves on the run for his life. Then Saul arrives, and David has the opportunity to kill him. Saul, the one who betrayed him. Saul, the one who has been hunting him down. Saul, the one sitting on the throne that God promised to give to David. It would have been so easy, and to many, justified for David to kill him. But

David let Saul live. He chose to put his faith not in his own actions or the opportunity before him, but in God, God's timing, and God's purposes. When God promises us things, we might be tempted to make them happen our own way and in our own timing. But, like David, we need to choose to trust God instead of taking shortcuts that may lead to something good, but not what is best.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, teach me to have patient faith like David. No matter how long I have to wait for things, help me to trust your plan and your timing. When I feel stuck or like life is moving backwards instead of forwards, help me to have faith in you and in what you can do, not in myself or my actions. Amen.

ACT

Read 1 Samuel 24 and 26 to see how David put his faith in God instead of making all his problems disappear the easy way.

WRITE

Are there any places in your life where you feel stuck? How can you have faith like David instead of taking them into your own hands?

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WEEK EIGHT

DAY 22

A LONG ROAD

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

God did a lot through Samuel over the course of his life. His own birth is a reflection of his mother's faith. God spoke directly and audibly to Samuel when he was just a boy, and then He used him to lead the people of Israel as a prophet when he was a young man. Later on, He had him anoint not just Israel's first king but also its second king. Samuel didn't always know what God was doing, and what God asked him to do didn't always make sense. Samuel's life is an example of one that was built on faith from the very beginning to the very end. And God was faithful from the very beginning to the very end. Through

easy times and hard times, through good times and bad times, Samuel's faith remained as a stalwart confidence in the God he served. Sometimes the road feels long, but it is in the long suffering that our faith will grow the most.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when I feel like I'm trudging through life and there are so many seasons of confusion, help me to remember that my faithfulness is what you desire. When I persevere in my faith, you remain faithful, and you always reward those who are faithful. Amen.

ACT

Take time to read Samuel's story in the book of 1 Samuel. He often gets overshadowed by David, but his story holds so much we can learn from.

WRITE

Have you ever felt like life is a long test of your faith? How has God used circumstances in your life to build up your faith and prove His faithfulness?

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DAY 23

FAITH WITH A TASK

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

When we think of prophets, we often picture fortune-tellers, people who see and predict the future. But that's not what it means to be a prophet in the Bible. When God chose a prophet, He was choosing the person who would condemn the sin of those around them and call the people to repentance. They were members of a remnant faithful to God in the midst of rebellious and often completely wicked generations. They were often alone and they were disliked because they not only refused to take part in the sins of those around them but condemned them for it. Their faith came with a heavy responsibility that often

included dire consequences. Sometimes, our faith will require such things. Sometimes we will be faced with a choice: Faithfulness or fitting in? Faithfulness or comfort? Faithfulness or safety? But even though it's hard, God will be with us to the very end.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to be a member of a faithful remnant in the midst of a culture that is far from you, even if it means standing out in ways I don't like. Help me to obey if you tell me to speak. Open my eyes to areas in my life where you might call me to be a prophet. Help me to always speak the truth with grace and love. Amen.

ACT

The next time you are tempted to lie low and fly under the radar, stop and ask yourself if you would actually be wise to explain your life and choices to those around you. Maybe instead of squirming uncomfortably in your chair, speak up against what is wrong.

WRITE

What places in your life might God be calling you to be His prophet? How might you answer this call?

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DAY 24

ULTIMATE GOAL

HEBREWS 11:32-35 AND 38, NIV

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection... the world was not worthy of them.”

CONSIDER

All the people we have been learning about for the past several weeks were used by God in amazing ways because of their faith. However, they also went through hardships, loss, and even death. Having strong faith does not mean your life will be perfect or that everything will go your way. Having strong faith means God will ultimately make it all worth it in the end. Verse 35 says that they went through all of these things so that they might have an “even better resurrection”. The ultimate goal of our faith is to please God, and the ultimate reward for our faith is spending eternity with Him. Anything we could suffer here

on earth will be worth it, and any comforts we forgo here on earth would never compare. The author declares that the world is not worthy of those who are declared righteous by their faith.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, no matter what I go through or what I might give up, help me remember that you are worth it all and that you will make it all worth it in the end. Help me to live with the holiness of Jesus, in a manner that makes sin shrink back. Amen.

ACT

When you are faced with struggles, instead of giving up or questioning your faith, face them head on. View them as challenges to bolster your faith and ultimately both please God and increase your reward.

WRITE

Have you ever felt that if you only had stronger faith, your life would be better? How can you take courage and remind yourself that faith will make it worth it in the end?

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WEEK NINE

DAY 25

OUR TURN

HEBREWS 12:1-3, NIV

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

CONSIDER

All the men and women we have examined over the past several weeks aren't there to intimidate us or look impressive. We aren't supposed to look at them and feel like we can't measure up, like they were special and we are just *us*. They are there as an encouragement, as forefathers who blazed a trail we can follow, as a cloud of witnesses cheering us on as we face our struggles. Their perseverance should inspire our own perseverance, and their faith our faith. From Abel to the prophets, they ran the race, and they finished. Now it is our turn. We will have our own battles with sin and doubt, just as they did, but we cannot let that stop us. Instead, we ought to do everything in our power to cast off those hindrances. Some days it will be harder than others. Temptation

and distraction have a way of crowding in. But when we live in obedient faith, God will be faithful.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, on the days when I am distracted and tempted to sin, help me to remember that just as you helped the heroes in Hebrews 11, you are helping me too. Teach me how to run with endurance, drawing hope and inspiration from those who have gone before me. Amen.

ACT

Next time you feel tempted to fall into sin or follow distractions, remember there are people ready to welcome you in with cheers when you finally cross the finish line.

WRITE

What sins or distractions might you need to cast off so that you can run without any hindrances? What first steps can you take to ensure this happens?

NOTES

[illegible]

DAY 26

PERFECT FAITH

HEBREWS 12:1-3, NIV

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

CONSIDER

Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of faith. All the other examples we have looked at are flawed. They fell into temptation, distraction, and they faltered and doubted. Jesus' faith was perfect. He never once questioned God's plan or tried to do things the easy way. He never once took shortcuts or stayed silent because of what others would think of Him. He never once tried to prevent or escape the torture and death he faced. His faith in God and faithfulness to God were completely flawless. He is our ultimate example, the ultimate Hero of the Faith, and the person watching us whom we should ultimately be trying to please. He didn't just *cross* the finish line. He *is* the finish line. It is

only by keeping our eyes on him, not on the world around us, that we will not grow weary or lose heart.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help me to remember that your Son is not just the object of my faith, but the example of my faith. I know I will never be able to reach the kind of perfect faith he had but help me to look to him when I am struggling. Amen.

ACT

It might seem strange to think of Jesus as one who had faith because he is the one we put our faith in. But we must remember that Jesus wasn't just God, he was also a man, so he faced temptation and distractions just like we do, but he never gave in. We might never reach that level of faith, but we should always try.

WRITE

How can you regularly remind yourself that Jesus is not just the object of your faith but also the example? How might this impact your faith?

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DAY 27

GROUNDED FAITH

HEBREWS 12:1-3, NIV

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

CONSIDER

Not only is Jesus the object and example of our faith, but he is the only reason our faith is possible. Without his obedient faith on the cross, our faith would be for nothing. The faith of those listed in Hebrews 11 was in something that was coming... something yet to happen. Our faith is in something that has already come to pass but not yet finished.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, our faith means something and leads to something. Our faith and their faith alike would be meaningless without his. His is the act of faith that all others, before and after, are grounded in. His is the act of faith that makes all others matter. Abel's faith is grounded in the faith of Jesus. Your faith is grounded in the faith of Jesus. And he is the ultimate picture of God's faithfulness in return.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for making my faith possible through the faith of Jesus. Never let me forget the significance of the sacrifice of your Son. He is the example, he is the finish line, he is the prize. Remind me of this daily when I struggle with my own faith. Amen.

Act

Because our faith is made possible by the faith of Jesus, our faith is also made stronger by the faith of Jesus. The one we trust is strong, even when we are not. So, the next time you are struggling with sin or doubt, turn to him for strength instead of trying to make it through on your own.

Write

Reflecting on all we have learned about faith over the past several weeks, what is one thing you have felt shift in your life? Is there a lie you stopped believing? A narrative that changed? A fear you were able to release? A sin that loosened its hold on you?

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