

*Sweeter
than
Chocolate!*[®]

*An Inductive
Study of*

HEBREWS 11

A Big-Picture Guide to the Bible

by

pam gillaspie

Dedicated with all my love to . . .

Brad and Katie. Don't settle for the summary!

Acknowledgements

Thank you David, Kay, Tom, and the rest of the Precept team for supporting this project. Pete, thanks for the extra energy it takes to manage something that doesn't fit the standard paradigm. Special thanks to my editor, Rick, for your careful logic and expertise.

Jan, thank you for being my mentor, encourager, and general cheerleader. Your example makes living in wisdom so appealing.

My Bible study ladies, thank you for riding through the rough terrain of development and giving feedback along the way.

Pastor Joe, thank you for trusting me to teach the flock at Immanuel and supporting my gifting.

Cress, thank you for your eagle eyes and your willingness to scour the manuscript so I can sleep peacefully at night.

Dave, Brad, and Katie, thank you for putting up with the time it takes to write and edit and write some more. I love you more than you'll ever know!

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Sweeter than Chocolate: Hebrews 11

Copyright © 2010 by Pam Gillaspie
Published by Precept Ministries Interna-
tional
P.O. Box 182218
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422
www.precept.org

ISBN 978-1-934884-80-5

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Printed in the United States of America

2012

Sweeter than Chocolate!

An Inductive Study of

HEBREWS 11

A Big-Picture Guide to the Bible

Let me sum up *Sweeter than Chocolate!*[®] Bible studies for you in two words—flexible and joyful!

This Bible study series is designed to flex with your life and give you the option to go as deep as you desire each week. If you're just starting out and feeling a little overwhelmed, stick with the main text and don't think twice about the sidebar assignments. But if you're looking for a challenge, take the sidebar prompts, roll up your sleeves, and dig to your heart's content! As you move along through the study, think of the sidebars and *Digging Deeper* boxes as the elastic that will help this study fit you perfectly.

Did you know that a little flexibility can bring a lot of joy? When a study has the ability to flex to meet you, an amazing thing happens. Guilt starts to melt away and pursuing God through His Word takes on a new sense of joy. What was once a hard obligation becomes a sweet opportunity to commune with God.

So whether you're new to the Book or have been studying it for years, this joy-based study will flex to meet you where you are and push you as far as you care to go . . . and maybe even one step further!

Life has a way of ebbing and flowing and this study is designed to ebb and flow right along with it!

Enjoy!

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How to use this study

Sweeter than Chocolate![®] studies meet you where you are and take you as far as you want to go.

1. WEEKLY STUDY: The main text guides you through the complete topic of study for the week.

2. FYI boxes: For Your Information boxes provide bite-sized material to shed additional light on the topic.

FYI:

Reading Tip: Begin with Prayer

You may have heard this a million times over and if this is a million and one, so be it. Whenever you read or study God's Word, first pray and ask His Spirit to be your Guide.

3. ONE STEP FURTHER and other sidebar boxes: Sidebar boxes give you the option to push yourself a little further. If you have extra time or are looking for an extra challenge, you can try one, all, or any number in between! These boxes give you the ultimate in flexibility.

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Word Study: *torah* / law

The first of eight Hebrew key words we encounter for God's Word is *torah* translated "law." If you're up for a challenge this week, do a word study to learn what you can about *torah*. Run a concordance search and examine where the word *torah* appears in the Old Testament and see what you can learn about from the contexts.

If you decide to look for the word for "law" in the New Testament, you'll find that the primary Greek word is *nomos*.

Be sure to see what Paul says about the law in Galatians 3 and what Jesus says in Matthew 5.

4. DIGGING DEEPER boxes: If you're looking to go further, Digging Deeper sections will help you sharpen your skills as you continue to mine the truths of Scripture for yourself.

Digging Deeper

What else does God's Word say about counselors?

If you can, spend some time this week digging around for what God's Word says about counselors.

Start by considering what you already know about counsel from the Word of God and see if you can show where these truths are in the Bible. Make sure that the Word actually says what you think it says.

Week One

The Secret to Pleasing God

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.”*
—Hebrews 11:1

There is nothing quite like the sinking feeling of being lost. Think for a moment how the GPS is changing the way people drive. Sure we love them because they make our lives easier than maps do, but they also give us that insurance against getting lost. Lost wears many faces—a toddler in a grocery store, a person behind the wheel of a small car in a big city, a teenager facing final exams only two weeks along in his reading for a 16-week class.

Lost is also the condition of many people who sit in pews around the world on any given Sunday. We're not talking theologically lost here, although some are that too; we're talking lost in regard to understanding the entire Bible. Many endure this lostness in silence not knowing quite how to correct the situation. After all, how do you “catch up” on one Book that contains 66 smaller books? A book that very few of even the most committed read through in a year. The question can be overwhelming, especially when you find yourself surrounded by others who seem to have a grip on everything you don't!

And let's be candid here: if you don't have a working knowledge of the whole Scripture, studying the parts becomes tougher—a lot tougher! But how do you acquire that working knowledge of the whole when the Bible is such a *big* book? It can be like trying to jump into the middle of *LOST* four years in. Have you ever wished God would publish a set of *Cliff's Notes* or *Spark Notes* for His Word? Something to get us up to speed on the overall message?

Well, Hebrews 11 is it! It's not the only summary God gives us in the Bible, but it is the most comprehensive and it can bring us into the flow of the story of the Bible and up to speed quickly. Does it replace reading the whole story? Of course not! But it sure will help you feel more comfortable as you gain your bearings in this epic revelation of the love of God!

FYI:

If You're in a Class

Complete **Week One** together on your first day of class. This will be a great way to start getting to know one another and will help those who are newer to Bible study get their bearings.

CONSIDER the WAY you THINK

How well do you know the overall story of the Bible?

What kind of success or failure have you had in trying to read the Bible?

How have you gone about reading and/or studying?

Have you ever gotten confused by an epic or involved story anywhere else? (Think *The Lord of the Rings*, *LOST*, etc.) If so, how did you clear things up?

How much affect does context have on understanding a story?

FYI:***The Lord of the Rings . . .***

A few years back a dear missionary family lived with us for several months. We were one big happy family of four adults, six kids, three dogs, and two and a half bathrooms. The Myers love Jesus, they love people, and they love *The Lord of the Rings* books, movies, and everything else. One weekend they decided it was time to introduce our family to this epic series. I'll never forget how lost I felt for the first hour of the movie, especially as the Myers kids kept trying to bring me up to speed on who everyone was and how they were all interrelated. I thought my brain was going to explode. The only thing I even mildly connected with in the early going was the opening setting in the Shire which struck me as bearing a curious resemblance to TeleTubby land. By the end of the first movie I had enough context to enjoy the second one, but it was a hard go.

This is very similar to what happens with many of us when we try to study the Bible. We jump in with little or no context and try to figure out how everything fits into the story. More often than not, we feel like we're coming up short, and without all of the special effects wizardry we often give up quicker than we do with a movie or a television show.

Hebrews 11 is a quickstart summary, if you will, to at least bring you up to speed on many of the major players in the Bible and it is so much more worthy of your time investment than *The Lord of the Rings* (as good as it is to some) or perhaps the hard-to-follow mystery television shows that are coming into your mind right about now!

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

READ Hebrews 11 in your Bible mentally noting key words, which we'll mark later.

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

What characters and events are clearly recorded in Hebrews 11?

What other characters and events does the author allude to?

What key words did you note?

FYI:

Key Words

A key word unlocks the meaning of a text. Key words are sometimes repeated and are critical to the message of the passage. While several important words are repeated in Hebrews 11, the main key word will become obvious as you read.

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Get the Context

If you're looking to take an extra step this week, read the book of Hebrews paying close attention to and recording every mention of Jesus and His superiority. I'll start you off:

Hebrews 1 - Jesus is better than angels.

HEBREWS 11 as a SUMMARY of GOD's STORY

While there is no way to glean the overall message of the Bible without reading the whole Bible, the book of Hebrews is about as close as it gets. We've already talked about Hebrews 11 as a chapter that gives us a quick overview of the Bible. Beyond this though, the author shows his audience the supremacy of Jesus Christ and how the entire Bible relates to Him. Hebrews 11 traces a great deal of Old Testament history, but the rest of Hebrews shows how the Old Covenant's ritual and worship relate to Jesus.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The epistle (letter) to the Hebrews is included in a section of the New Testament typically referred to as the General Epistles. The General Epistles were not written to specific churches but rather to the Church in the general sense. Although grouped differently by various scholars, they usually include Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. Based on the content of the letter, Hebrews was probably written to a more specifically Jewish Christian audience, but because no recipient is listed much about Hebrews remains a mystery.

QUESTIONS of AUTHORSHIP and DATE

The real rub with this letter, however, comes not so much in regard to audience as to authorship. Why so? Because when the church fathers decided the canonicity of books that became parts of our Bible, one of the leading criteria was authorship. Hebrews is in the Bible largely because the church fathers thought Paul wrote it. Today, though, the prevailing view is that Paul did not write it. These scholars justify their view from both the style of writing and the fact that the author does not claim to have first-hand revelation. According to Hebrews 2:1-4, the author appears to have heard the message from those who heard it directly from the Lord. Paul always claimed to have first-hand information. Hebrews could be Paul's message without being his direct authorship. Some other names floated about in the discussion are Luke the physician, Apollos, Barnabas, and Priscilla either with or without Aquilla. There are tempting reasons to include each of these people in the discussion, but we need to end this with words from third-century theologian Origen: "But as to who actually wrote the Letter, God alone knows."

Mystery also surrounds the date of Hebrews, again because the author gives us no direct information. Indirect information from the book, however, strongly suggests a date prior to 70 AD. This date is critical in biblical history as it marks the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple under Titus (not Paul's Titus!). Because of extensive references to temple worship rituals it is hard to imagine its being written after 70 AD without any mention of the destruction.

SO WHO WROTE HEBREWS?

Maybe only God knows who wrote Hebrews. But God *does know* and God sovereignly saw to it that it became a part of the Bible we use today.

FYI:**Think Civil War!**

In the next *FYI* box, I'm going to explain three dates you need to know in biblical history. Before that, though, I want to give you a little more information to help them stick.

In America we associate two directional words very strongly with the Civil War... the North and the South. In the history of Israel, these same directional terms carry tremendous weight.

Although Israel broke apart for different reasons than America did, the short-term result was the same—two separate countries. Under Saul, David, and Solomon, Israel was a United Kingdom, not unlike the United States prior to the Civil War. After that, they were a Divided Kingdom, the North and the South, again, not unlike the U.S. during the Civil War. The big differences? Although the North and South did fight from time to time in Israel, they coexisted as separate countries and never made up, both eventually being taken captive by foreign nations. More on this later!

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

READ Hebrews 11 and **MARK** every occurrence of the word *faith*. Watch for other repeated words and word groups.

Hebrews 11

- 1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
- 2 *For by it the men of old gained approval.*
- 3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*
- 4 *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*
- 5 *By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.*
- 6 *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*
- 7 *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*
- 8 *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.*
- 9 *By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;*
- 10 *for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*
- 11 *By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.*
- 12 *Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF THE HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.*
- 13 *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*
- 14 *For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.*
- 15 *And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.*
- 16 *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

FYI:

Three Dates You Need to Know

There are three critical dates you need to know as you begin to build your knowledge of biblical history. I won't bait and switch or add more later. We'll review these throughout the course, so you can relax. Next time you see these dates in a sidebar, they will be a little more familiar and by the time we're done, they'll be old friends.

722 BC - Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Don't know much about Assyria? The capital is associated with a famous fish story.

586 BC - Babylon captured Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom, and deported its people.

70 AD - Titus destroyed both the temple and Jerusalem. Hebrews was most likely written prior to this event.

FYI:

BC and AD

BC = Before Christ. Those not so inclined to Jesus sometimes use BCE meaning Before the Common Era (i.e. Before Christ).

AD = *Anno Domini*, Latin for "In the year of our Lord."

FYI:

Sophisticated Greek

The New Testament of the Bible was written in the common language of the day, Koine Greek, *koine* being the Greek word for common. Hebrews, while still written in the common language, ranks as a very sophisticated piece of writing. Its style is an evidence to some that Paul did not write it.

- 17 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;*
- 18 *it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."*
- 19 *He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*
- 20 *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.*
- 21 *By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*
- 22 *By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*
- 23 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*
- 24 *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,*
- 25 *choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*
- 26 *considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.*
- 27 *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.*
- 28 *By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.*
- 29 *By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.*
- 30 *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*
- 31 *By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.*
- 32 *And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,*
- 33 *who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,*
- 34 *quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*
- 35 *Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;*
- 36 *and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.*
- 37 *They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated*

- 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.
- 39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,
- 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

What is the main theme of this chapter?

What initial observations can you make from your first read-through of Hebrews 11?

Based on a cursory look at Hebrews 11, what is faith? How does it act?
 What consequences can it have?

What other words from the same Greek root as faith appear in verses 6 and 11?

FYI:

Key People & Events

Key People	Key Events
	Creation
Abel	
Enoch	
Noah	Flood

ONE STEP FURTHER:

It's Greek to me!

Tired of relying on someone else to transliterate Greek words for you? Why not learn the Greek alphabet as you study Hebrews 11? If you studied *Sweeter than Chocolate: Psalm 119* and learned the Hebrew alphabet, you'll find Greek to be much easier, unless of course you're a native Hebrew speaker. As one of my favorite Greek profs always told his classes, "Greek is a very regular language!" Just think about it this week. Next week we take the plunge.

Digging Deeper

What does it mean to gain God's approval?

Being able to read the Bible in English is a gift! We do, however, miss some of the nuances of the original languages if we don't set out to dig. If you're up for digging a little deeper this week, take some time investigating what *to gain God's approval* means. In the NASB we find this phrasing appearing in Hebrews 11:2 and 11:39, but the Greek word actually shows up four times in the first five verses. As you investigate, you'll also want to watch for the noun form of the word that frames Hebrews 11 showing up in Hebrews 10:28 and Hebrews 12:1.

What is the original word for *gained approval* in Hebrews 11:2? What part of speech is it?

What related word appears in Hebrews 10:28 and Hebrews 12:1? What part of speech is it?

How else are these words used in the book of Hebrews? In the rest of the New Testament?

According to the author of Hebrews, how does one gain God's approval?

FYI:

Who done it?

Who doesn't love a good mystery? Of course, mysteries related to the Bible can have unsettling effects if we're not careful about our thinking. Take Hebrews for instance. Among other reasons, this letter was considered for canonization based on Pauline authorship. But suppose Paul did not write Hebrews; what do we do with this?

Here's what I do: I trust that the God who was sovereign over the writing of Scripture was also sovereign over canonization, the process by which the books were recognized as inspired and strung together to make the Bible.

Now, who are some of the candidates for author besides Paul? Here they are in no particular order:

- Barnabas
- Apollos
- Priscilla, with or without Aquilla
- Luke
- Silas
- Clement of Rome

Is there anything in your thinking or behavior that needs to be realigned based on this truth?

For non-digital natives . . .

If you're using www.blueletterbible.org you can take the following steps:

1. Type in Hebrews 11:2. Change the version to NASB. Click the "Search" button.
2. When you arrive at the next screen, you will see six lettered boxes to the left of Hebrews 11:2.

Click the "C" button to take you to the concordance link.

3. Click on the Strong's number, in this case 3140, which is the link to the original word in Greek.

Clicking this number will bring up another screen that will give you a brief definition of the word as well as list every occurrence of the Greek word in the New Testament. Before running to the dictionary definition, scan places where this word is used in Scripture. Examine the general contexts where it is used.

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Make your case!

If you're looking for a real challenge this week, spend some time investigating the possible authors of the book of Hebrews. Make your case for who you think wrote it and why!

TRUE STORIES:

Creation, Abel, Enoch, Noah

Here's where you can find the main stories:

Creation - @Genesis 1-2

Abel - @Genesis 4

Enoch - @Genesis 5:18-24

Noah - @Genesis 6-10

To find other references to Abel, Enoch, and Noah try using the online concordance at www.blueletterbible.org. Just go to the web address and type in Abel, Enoch, or Noah as your search term! Amazing! It is always helpful to see the Bible's commentary on itself and a concordance is a great resource for doing this.

OBSERVE the TEXT of SCRIPTURE

READ Hebrews 11:1-7 and **MARK** the name of every person that occurs in the text. Also **MARK** any words that refer to *sight* or *seeing*.

CREATION, ABEL, ENOCH, NOAH**Hebrews 11:1-7**

- 1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
- 2 *For by it the men of old gained approval.*
- 3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*
- 4 *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*
- 5 *By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.*
- 6 *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*
- 7 *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

DISCUSS with your GROUP or PONDER on your own . . .

How does the author of Hebrews define faith?

What is the first event referred to in this chapter? How did the things we see come into being? What evidence does he give?

FYI:**Asking Questions of the Text**

The key to exegesis (that's the fancy word meaning *to draw out*) is questioning the text. The basic investigative questions Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? will be your framework. Not every question can be addressed to every verse, and some verses require several variations of the same question. Although we're only focusing on one chapter of Hebrews, realize that we will not exhaust the questions that can be asked. Don't let that stop you from asking other questions and exploring further on your own. We will never run out of questions to ask and answers to glean from God's Word! And that's good news!! There will always be more to discover, apply, and live out!

On what basis do we accept this as true?

While there is scientific evidence for creation and holes in the theory of evolution, we know that God created *ex nihilo* (Latin for “out of nothing”) on the basis of revelation from God. Can you rest in this fact? Why or why not?

ABEL

What does the text tell us about Abel’s faith?

Remember, Hebrews 11 gives us summary versions. We’re going to look a little closer at this account in Genesis 4:1-16. What’s the rest of Cain and Abel’s story?

Much has been made over the years about why Abel’s offering was accepted and Cain’s rejected. How does the author of Hebrews explain the acceptance of Abel’s sacrifice?

FYI:

Keep your brothers straight!

Ever get Cain and Abel mixed up? I don’t. It’s not because I have a great memory; it’s because I have a little, inaccurate poem my Dad was taught years ago in Sunday School.

Cain killed Abel with the leg of a table.

Remember, I told you it was inaccurate! I doubt there was a table leg involved, but the saying will help you keep from getting Cain and Abel mixed up!

Week One: **The Secret to Pleasing God**

How was Abel's sacrifice offered? (This is not a trick question. Go for the obvious answer!)

ONE STEP FURTHER:

Word Study: *Pleasing*

If you have some extra time and/or energy this week, check out the following Greek words related to pleasing: *euaresteo* / *euarestos*; *aresko* / *arestos*. The first in each set of words is the verb, the second the noun. Record what you learn below.

What tie does the author make between faith and righteousness? Can you think of other places in Scripture where you've seen this connection? If so, record them below.

ENOCH

Okay, I probably shouldn't tip my hand here, but Enoch is one of my favorites in the Bible! So, if you're trying to do this lesson while at all groggy, go get a cup of coffee!

What does Hebrews tell us about Enoch?

Let's take a look Enoch's story in Genesis 5:18-24 to find out how he pleased God. When you've read the account, record your findings.

What does Genesis 5:24 tell us about Enoch and God? How does Hebrews comment on them? What does the author identify “walked with God” with?

According to Hebrews 11:6, how can we please God? What two beliefs are necessary?

How do you try to please God? Take some time to think about this before answering. Further introspection may change your answer.

Is your “God-activity” more walking by faith or striving to please God in your own power? Explain.

Spend some time talking to God about this and asking Him to help you walk more and more by faith alone. Record additional thoughts below.

NOAH

What does Hebrews 11 say about Noah?

If you have time to read the entire account of Noah in Genesis 6 through 10, that's wonderful! If not, read at least Genesis 6:9-22. What did Noah and Enoch have in common?

Was Noah called righteous before building the ark or after and because of building the ark? Cite your reference.

We are inclined to think of Noah's big deal as ark building, and make no mistake; it was a big deal. But the bigger deal that led to the ark opportunity was that Noah, like Enoch, walked with God. God called him to build an ark as a result of faith that he already had. (See Genesis 7:1.)

Take some time to consider how you can more intentionally walk with God moment by moment. Record your thoughts below.

Digging Deeper

Looking at the *Sight* Words

Throughout Hebrews 11, the author uses a variety of *sight* words. If you have time this week, investigate these words and record your findings below.

How often are words related to sight used in this chapter and where?

According to Hebrews 11, how are faith and sight related?

What's hard to believe because you can't see it?

What actions are hard to take because of limited visibility?

How can this chapter inform your actions?

@THE END OF THE DAY . . .

Based on what you have learned this week, how are you doing at living a life of faith?

ONE STEP FURTHER:

The No-Guilt Pre-Test

Can you remember back to grade school? The pre-test was always the one you took at the beginning of the week that didn't count. You took the test so you could see your progress. You'd start the week not knowing half the spelling words, but by Friday afternoon, you'd know considerably more, if not all of them. Take a few minutes and list to the best of your ability the major characters from the Bible you learned so far. Consider Hebrews 11 as your cheat sheet. Go!

One question we will return to throughout this study is how to walk when we can't see clearly. After all, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Is God calling you to walk when you can't see light all the way down the path? If so can you at least see where the path is lit for your next step? You may not have a clear answer now. If you don't, don't force one, but do keep the question in mind. Tell you what: I'll remind you of it as we continue on!

As you close out your study this week, take some quiet time (30 minutes to an hour) to take a walk with God. When you finish, write down new thoughts God brought to your mind from His Word.