

Studies in Hebrews



Lesson XVII

Text: Chapter 11:1-16 (NASV)

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ² For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “*and was not found, because God had taken him*”;^[a] for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But 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 diligently seek Him.

⁷ By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

¹¹ By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child^[b] when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them,^[c] embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a

better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Footnotes: a. Genesis 5:24 b NU-Text omits *she bore a child*. c. NU-Text & M-Text omit *were assured of them*.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. What dynamic spiritual principle has God introduced into our physical reality? (vs. 1)
2. What is a good “working man’s” definition of faith? (paraphrase verse 1)
3. What does faith obtain? (vs. 2, 4)
4. What does faith understand? (vs. 3)
5. What does faith enable? (vs. 4)
6. What does faith see? (vs. 7)
7. Without f_____ it is i_____ to please God (vs. 6, cf. vs. 7). Why do you suppose it is this way? Why can’t we be pleasing to God on the basis of something else (say giving or religious observance)?
8. Does God always give us what we ask for, when we ask for it? What does he give us? (vs. 13)
9. How did faith work mightily in the lives of Old Testament believers? How does faith keep us going through tough times? (vv. 11-16)
10. How can we get faith? How do we nurture and grow our faith?