

## LIVING BY FAITH

(Hebrews 11:17-12:3)

### DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup>even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." <sup>19</sup>Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

<sup>20</sup>By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

<sup>21</sup>By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

<sup>22</sup>By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

1. *Would you offer your child as a sacrifice if God told you to?*
2. *Does Abraham's faith make sense?*
3. *Why does it take faith to bless future generations?*

### DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

<sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup>He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. <sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

<sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

<sup>31</sup>By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

1. *Why did it take faith to hide Moses? Did his parents act from faith or fear?*
2. *How did Moses see him who is invisible? How do we see him?*
3. *Why is Rahab an unusual example of faith?*

**DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:**

<sup>32</sup>And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup>who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>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. <sup>35</sup>Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup>Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— <sup>38</sup>the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup>These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. <sup>40</sup>God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

1. *What great things did some accomplish by faith?*
2. *What terrible things did some suffer because of their faith?*
3. *Why does it say that none received what had been promised? Did not some receive it?*

**DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:**

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

1. *Who is the cloud of witnesses that surrounds us? How does that make you feel?*
2. *How do we fix our eyes on Jesus?*
3. *What was the joy set before Jesus? What joy is set before us?*

**DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:**

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *What makes you grow weary and lose heart as a Christian? How can we keep from losing heart?*
2. *Who is the real hero of all the biblical stories in this section?*
3. *Did Jesus have to have faith? Didn't he have sight of God?*

**MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 11:17-12:3**

Believing into the future. Trusting even in the face of death. Continuing the race when all is lost. Keeping on when it makes no sense keeping on.

This is what we are called to do as Christians. How can we do it? Who is strong enough for this? How can we possibly keep from growing tired and losing heart?

By looking at those who finished the race. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and countless others. All continued to trust God in the face of death. All looked to God's promise in the future, after their lifetimes. All withstood opposition and struggle and still remained faithful. All of them now stand on the sidelines and cheer us on, "We made it, so can you."

How can we be faithful when it seems all is lost? By looking at Jesus. Fixing our eyes on him. He too faced death, even death on the cross. He too had to trust that death, shame, and defeat were not the last words. He believed God would raise him from the dead. In the middle of agony, he knew there was joy before him.

We do not hang on literal crosses, but we do grow tired and discouraged. But no opposition should keep us from trusting the One who gave his own Son for us.

"God of love, when we cannot see where our lives are headed then fix our eyes on Jesus. Give us endurance in the race of life. Remind us of the joy before us."