

## CONFIDENCE

(Hebrews 10:32-11:16)

### DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

<sup>32</sup>Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

<sup>33</sup>Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.

<sup>34</sup>You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

<sup>35</sup>So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. <sup>36</sup>You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. <sup>37</sup>For in just a very little while,

“He who is coming will come and will not delay.

<sup>38</sup>But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back,

I will not be pleased with him.”

<sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

1. *How do we respond to those who insult us because of our faith? How should we respond?*
2. *Why is perseverance so important for Christians? Why is it so difficult?*
3. *What does it mean to shrink back? Why might we be tempted to do this?*

#### DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. <sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for.

<sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

<sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1. *What is it we hope for but do not see? How does faith make that hope certain?*
2. *Can we prove God made the world or is it a matter of faith? Why?*

3. *What happened to faithful Abel? What happened to faithful Enoch? Does faith bring immediate rewards?*

#### DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

<sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>8</sup>By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

<sup>11</sup>By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup>And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

1. *What did Noah have to believe? Why was that hard?*
2. *Do you ever feel like Abraham, that you don't know where you are going? How should we live in light of that feeling?*
3. *Abraham believed the impossible, that he would have a child in his old age. What promise of God do you have difficulty believing because it seems impossible?*

**DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:**

<sup>13</sup>All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup>People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

1. *How did these people (and how can we) keep their faith when they did not receive what was promised them? Were they foolish to keep their faith?*
2. *How are we aliens and strangers on the earth?*
3. *How does looking forward to a better city and country help us live now?*

**DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:**

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *How does trust relate to being mistreated?*
2. *Who in this passage was immediately rewarded for faith? Who had to wait to receive what was promised? Why should we wait?*

3. *What is harder to believe, that God exists or that he rewards those who seek him? Why?*

**MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 10:32-11:16**

Sure. Certain. Confident.

Perhaps we feel like this often. Perhaps rarely.

Do we feel that way about our relationship to God? What gives us confidence before God? Are we confident because we are obedient? But we don't always obey. Are we confident because we see God's blessings? Then what happens when defeat and tragedy strike?

It is trust that makes us confident before God. Trust assures us of our hope. We trust that God rewards us for seeking him. We trust even when (especially when) reward does not come.

Abel trusts God and is murdered. Enoch trusts God and never dies. Noah believes in a flood like no one had ever seen. Abraham believes in a land of promise, a land he never gets in his lifetime. He believes he will have a child when he's near a hundred years old.

Sometimes God's people trust him and he delivers. Sometimes they trust him and they die as strangers and foreigners in the land of promise.

How can we be confident when trouble comes? When people mistreat us? We continue to trust. We persevere in faith, believing that God will keep his promises if only we wait for them. Wait just a little while longer.

"Father God, we wait for your promises, but for now they do not come. Increase our faith! Give us patient endurance! May we be faithful as those in the past have been."