

Leaders: Consider starting your discussion time with something celebrating God's faithfulness to Harvest for 4 years of ministry. It may just be open sharing of how God has changed lives, or a "Go around the room and share how you originally got connected to Harvest" time of sharing. Celebrate God's goodness together!

LEARN

What stood out to you from the sermon on Sunday? What was most helpful, encouraging or challenging to your walk with Christ?

Read Hebrews 11:1-3. How do the characteristics of faith in verse 1 differ from common perceptions of "faith" as it is talked about today?

(Today, Faith = blind faith to many; Faith = wishing upon a star; Faith = meaningless hope; Faith = uneducated reliance, compared to a "crutch" in a bad way)

"Assurance" is the idea of reality, or a guarantee. How does it encourage you to realize that faith in Jesus is "the real thing" or "a guarantee", instead of faith being wishful thinking or an uninformed opinion?

(Consider reading Heb 1:3 where "nature" is the same Greek word and 3:14 where "confidence" is the same word, "hupostasis". We place our confidence in the real thing, Jesus. All our eggs go into the metaphorical basket of Jesus, and we have certainty that he saves us, sin is forgiven, eternal life is ours, etc)

Verse 3 starts with "By faith we understand..." Why does it not say "By faith we *believe*..."? Why is it important to remember that faith provides understanding (knowledge), and not only belief in something?

(Christian faith is correctly seeing, or understanding, things as they correspond with reality. Since faith is the tested/ approved conviction of things not seen, we can rightly say we know certain things objectively by faith, as opposed to saying we merely believe them to be true)

PRACTICE

What is an example from your own life of a "By faith..." statement? Meaning, what is something you have done that clearly showed your faith and hope was in the God of the universe who you cannot see?

How are you practically exercising faith in God in your life right now?

What are the real-life differences of someone who views faith as "positive thinking" and someone who views faith as a rock-solid confidence on God's truth in the Word?

(Positive thinking cannot give certainty and gets dashed in the face of real life hardships. True faith in Jesus is increased in hardship, proven in experience as we trust him)

CHANGE

Is there anything challenging your faith in God right now? What is it? What does God's Word say about the situation (or fear, sin, etc) that you need to believe?

(The goal would be that when people share "This is challenging my faith in God's goodness", for example, as a group use the Word to reassure that person's heart that God is good. Or if it's a struggle to know and feel God's presence and love, read a passage like Romans 8:31-39 to reassure faith in God's love. Use the Word to answer faith struggles.)

(Leaders, here is an accountability time prayer suggestion: With thankful hearts together, spend time praising God for the things you know by faith in him and his Word. Use it as a time for praise... "God I praise you that through faith I know you forgive sins... you reconciled me to yourself... you are Creator and Sustainer...")