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This week is a standalone message about how we can give God a gift that He will be pleased with. He gives us so much, and finally we can offer something that is something worthy of Him. That gift is faith.

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times."

[Martin Luther]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Hebrews 11 is often called the Hall of Faith or Hall of Heroes, because it lists people from the Old Testament who exhibited lives or moments of extraordinary faith. From it, we learn that faith isn't about following a set of rules—each of these people placed their hope and heart's treasure in God, and it changed the course of their lives.
- **Book of Hebrews Summary**
 - This brief video gives a summary of the book of Hebrews in general. It is useful for context or for someone unfamiliar with the book.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.*

Who is an example of faith you look up to?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

Lord, make us mighty people of unwavering faith. Test it, try it, grow it through waiting on You.

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

[James 1:2-3]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.*

Faith is more than wishing, more than hope. Faith is being assured.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || **Leader Note** *Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!*

1. Tell me the stories of what God has done this past year. It can be a testimony of what He's done in your life or Bible stories that really meant a lot to you or jumped off the page or you saw them in a new light this year. We're going to reflect back on this year with God together. *If this takes up the entire time, that is okay. This is a chance for everyone to tell the story of this past year, but through the lens of faith—what God is doing, what He has done, and His word. You may want to think through what passage has really gripped you and what you learned from meditating on it or wrestling with it, to set an example.*

Have someone read aloud Hebrews 11. Consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation to gain another perspective (i.e. CEB, the Message, Amplified).

2. Who stands out to you in this passage? *There are some characters here! People we would not expect to have been giants of faith made it into the list. There are also some less popular folks, so if someone is like "this is the first I've heard of this person," be willing to go back through and see their story as written earlier in the Bible.*
3. If your story were included here, what would it say? "By faith, (your name) _____." *Sometimes faith isn't very visible while we're waiting. It just looks like being faithful for a long time, and that's because faithfulness is just holding onto faith as you move forward through life.*
4. What is different about your life because you believe God? *This one is not about what ideas you have that are different because of believing God, so work to keep it from becoming about politics or ideology or philosophy. It's about what is different in your walk, your daily life, how you move and act. Faith is more than what we think, it's being taught (disciplined) to walk a new path.*
5. What part of your life could use more faith? *We all have places where we could believe God instead of the world, our own desires, or our family of origin.*
6. In that area of your life, what do you need to believe instead of what you have been believing? *Answers will definitely vary, and you may have to help guide them to scriptures, but an example might be: I've been believing that my kids' behavior makes me look bad, so I have to control them and make them do what I want. But God is a perfect Father, and He says, "let the little children come to Me," so I want to show them that they can come to me, and I'll direct them to Jesus for teaching and forgiveness.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) Where could I have faith like Hebrews 11? 2) What do I need to believe from or about God, instead of what I've been believing?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Step of Faith Ideas

1. Ask God “I believe; help my unbelief” when you’re struggling to find traction in faith
2. Re-look at the places in your life that need change and ask God to choose what He wants to work on first.

PRAYER FOCUS || **Leader Note** *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another’s personal requests!*

Evidence of the Unseen

Let’s give God the gift that pleases Him and grow in faith together, believing in Him more fully this next year.

- Look back on this last year and ask God to show you what He has been doing.
- Invite Him to grow your faith in the coming year, even in the difficult things ahead.
- Pick a song of trust in God as your anthem to close out this year and welcome the new one.
- Close your time by reading this prayer together:
 - *“Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be Your name
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*