

Pause Group - Hebrews 11:13-40

Begin your time together by sharing highs and lows from the past week. Pray together with gratitude for the joys of the week in the lives of your group members and the world. Pray for those dealing with struggles. Pray for the world's struggles.

Study Questions: Address the questions your group desires

1. What stood out to you in the readings from the *Hebrews for Everyone* book this week? (pages 135-146)
2. Faith, it now emerges, is not only the assurance of unseen realities and the backbone of hope, as in verse 1; it is not only the belief that God exists and rewards those who seek him, as in verse 6; it is also the badge that marks people out as members already of God's true people. Faith enables his standing, this "righteousness," to be affirmed in the present time. Hebrews thus agrees more or less exactly with what Paul means by "justification by faith," one of the New Testament's more powerful, encouraging, and comforting doctrines.
 - In 11:13-16 the writer says God wasn't ashamed to be called the God of the people mentioned so far in chapter 11. Why might some think God would be ashamed to be called "their God"?
3. Hebrews 11:17-19 recalls the story of Abraham and Isaac (from Genesis 22) and 11:20-22 mentions Isaac and Joseph (from Genesis 27 & 48-50). What further themes about faith, obedience, and hope are developed in these stories?
4. What encouragement do you draw from the example of Moses in verses 23-31?
5. In verses 32-40, there is a long catalogue of people who faced terrifying situations, and in many cases were persecuted to within an inch of their lives, if not beyond. Why, if God was at work in the lives of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and those who were stoned and so on – why, if God was calling them and was with them, did they have to go through all that?
6. What does the writer mean by saying in 11:38 that the world didn't deserve them?
7. Considering the heroes of faith in this chapter, what might it mean specifically, to live by faith in God's future world while the society all around is living as though the present world is all there is or all there will be?
8. Describe one way that you can live by faith in this coming week and trust that God will give you strength to live this way.

Closing prayer – The following is a prayer from St. Patrick.

May the strength of God pilot me,

May the power of God preserve me,

May the wisdom of God guide me.

May the hand of God protect us.

May the way of God direct us.

May the shield of God defend us.

May the host of God guard us

 Against the snares of the evil one.

 And the temptations of this world.

May Christ be with us.

Christ above us.

Christ in us.

Christ before us.

May the salvation O Lord,

Be always ours.

This day and for evermore.

Amen.