

# On UrbanFaith.com

Our September 2022 issue has several mentions to links or videos online. You can find everything in one place at [UrbanFaith.com/magazine](http://UrbanFaith.com/magazine).



## ► Living Our Faith

Excerpts from our [urbanfaith.com](http://urbanfaith.com) interviews that share lessons on how to live out our faith in spite of challenges in our daily lives.

## ► Overcoming Challenges

Sermons and devotionals on overcoming the challenges in our lives on [urbanfaithstudy.com](http://urbanfaithstudy.com)

## ► Follow Us!

Our social media pages are growing every day! Be sure to like us and comment on our posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We want to hear from you @UrbanFaith!



### MISSION STATEMENT

*We are called of God to create, produce, and distribute quality Christian education products; to deliver exemplary customer service; and to provide quality Christian educational services, which will empower God's people, especially within the Black community, to evangelize, disciple, and equip people for serving Christ, His kingdom, and church.*

Urban Faith® Teacher, Vol. 10, No. 1, September, October, November 2022. ISSN: 2576-6635. Published quarterly by UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.), PO Box 436987, Chicago, IL 60643-6987. Founder: Melvin E. Banks Sr, LittD; CEO: C. Jeffrey Wright, JD; Managing Editor: Daschell M. Phillips, MS; Editor: Allen Reynolds, MDiv; Writers: Ed Ford Jr, Chriska Francois, Mwikali Munyao, Maina Mwaura, Allen Reynolds. Lesson Development. Copyright © 2022 by UMI. All rights reserved. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. All proper names mentioned in this publication are fictional unless otherwise indicated. Printed in South Korea. \$6.19 per copy. Single subscriptions: one year \$44.19 (postage included). **To order:** Contact your local Christian bookstore; call UMI at 1-800-860-8642; or visit our website at [www.urbanministries.com](http://www.urbanministries.com). **NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.**

# Features

## **1 On UrbanFaith.com**

Have you checked out our website yet? UrbanFaith.com is your online destination for relevant and stimulating conversations about news, faith, and culture.

## **12 Divine Disruption**

UrbanFaith sat down with influential pastor and theologian Dr. Tony Evans and his daughter award winning author and speaker Priscilla Shirer to discuss their book *Divine Disruption* written as a family holding onto faith in the midst of grief.

## **24 Battle Cry**

UrbanFaith interviewed Jason Wilson about his book *Battle Cry* which shares insights and principles for becoming the man he is and helping others become the holistically healthy people God has called them to be.

## **34 A Living Faith Devotional**

If faith is the substance of things hoped for, should our faith outlive us? Living faith should be a tangible faith that moves us to action.

## **48 Type Faith**

A Poem: A brown man taught me how to love and He taught me about faith, too.

## **56 How to Live Out Your Faith in the Public Sphere**

As a Christian, you may ask yourself at times how to live out your faith in the public sphere. Here are some ways we can approach it.

## **68 3 Rules to Follow When Dating Gets Serious**

Early on in dating it's great to simply have fun and learn compatibility. But when things get serious and head toward marriage, we have to ask different questions as believers.

## **80 Ready to Raise Your G.P.A.**

UrbanFaith interviewed Jonathan Banks, author of *Raise Your GPA* about how we can have success this school year and beyond.

## **90 Parting Shot**

Final words from the Editor.



## ENGAGE .....

[verb: in-gaj—to come together and interlock]

- 4** Lesson 1: Praying to Believe
- 8** Lesson 2: Feeding Faith
- 16** Lesson 3: Help Wanted
- 20** Lesson 4: He Didn't Have to Do It
- 30** Lesson 5: Arguing About Love
- 40** Lesson 6: Basketball Blues
- 44** Lesson 7: The Inheritance
- 52** Lesson 8: Favors vs. Favor
- 60** Lesson 9: God Speaks in Many Ways
- 64** Lesson 10: A Cause to Be Crazy
- 72** Lesson 11: Hard Times
- 76** Lesson 12: Stop, Drop, and Pray
- 86** Lesson 13: Company Policy



# Lesson 1





## Where We're Going

We will *discuss* how Jesus' sacrificial death opens the way to experience God's presence, *reflect* on the importance of holding on to faith in Jesus, and *explore* the value in believers spending time with one another regularly.



## Get Them Going

Open your class on an encouraging note. Share with them that the enemy would have them suffocate in their doubts, whereas, the Lord wants to forgive, cleanse, love, and continue to use them for the glory of His Kingdom. Ask them to share about a time when they felt distant from or particularly close to God.



## Praying to Believe

**T**he pastor's office was always very cluttered. The look of the office made Phil feel as if the man who led their church since Phil was a third-grader was always extremely busy. Phil came into the office and sat down across from the desk and waited for the pastor to return. Reverend Shell came in quietly and started telling stories about the picture directly in front of Phil. When he finished his thought, he chuckled and turned to ask Phil, "What are you doing here? You never come to see me anymore."

"It's been hard to visit, Reverend," Phil said as he smiled.

Reverend Shell chuckled back, then asked, "How have you been? What can I help you with?"

They both sat down. A long sigh left Phil's chest and he looked around again before saying, "It's hard."

"What's that, Phil?"

"Faith."

With an assuring smile, Reverend Shell said, "It's the hardest."

Phil perked up. His eyes asked the question before his mouth could mutter it. "Huh? What?"

Reverend Shell repeated, "It's the hardest. Having complete faith is the hardest thing you'll ever do."

"Do you ever lose your faith? Can I lose mine?" Phil asked.

"Well, I do have struggles with doubt from time to time."

"What?"

"You heard me right," he said. "I fight with doubt often, sometimes more than I think most people do."

"Pastors don't doubt. Are you just trying to make me feel better?" Phil was so confused.

"I have never lied to you, have I, Phil?"

Phil thought about it and when he couldn't recall such an instance, he said, "No."

"Pastors can be the worst at doubting because we have to help everyone else with their doubts. This usually doesn't leave anyone to help us with ours."

"What do you do?"

"It's simple. I keep praying to believe. I keep trying to be faithful."

"Then that's what I'll do. I'll keep trying and keep praying," Phil responded with relief.



## Real Talk

1. Like Rev. Shell, what's the first thing Christians should do when faced with doubt?
2. Today's passage teaches us that anyone who refused to obey the Law of Moses was put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How does that help us bring into focus the holiness of God and how God views sin and disobedience?
3. Why do you think prayer is a key component to overcoming doubt?



## The Big Picture

This passage of Scripture introduces us to the magnitude of the "power" in Jesus' blood and the implications of how that power manifests itself in our lives. Readers will discover the responsibility we have in respecting every aspect of His holiness and the weight of judgment for those who take His holiness lightly. Some of the themes discussed are how God responds to sin and sinners, and Christians' responsibility to connect with one another.



## The Players

**Holy of Holies.** It was located in the innermost sanctuary of the temple. Separated from the other parts of the temple by a thick curtain, the Holy of Holies was specially associated with the presence of Yahweh, God. In the early years of the existence of the temple, the Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant, which represented God's presence with the people of Israel.



## Make It Stick

“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.” (Hebrews 10:23, NLT)



## The Word (NLT)

**Hebrews 10:19** And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.

**20** By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.

**21** And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house,

**22** let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

**23** Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

**24** Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

**25** And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

**26** Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins.

**27** There is only the terrible expectation of God’s judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.

**28** For anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

**29** Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God, and have treated the blood of the covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy, and have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God’s mercy to us.

**30** For we know the one who said, “I will take revenge. I will pay them back.” He also said, “The Lord will judge his own people.”

**31** It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**High Priest.** He was the one in charge of the temple worship. It was a hereditary position based upon descent from Aaron. Normally, the high priest served for life. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and only on the Day of Atonement.

**Hebrews.** Because there are references to religious sacrifices and ceremonies, the book of Hebrews was probably written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The name of the author is not given, but the person is a “brother” of Timothy (Hebrews 13:23). The setting for the book is a period when Jewish Christians underwent severe persecution from the Romans and Jews, both socially and physically. It’s clear that the author was knowledgeable of the Old Testament because there are direct quotations from it as he argues the superiority of Jesus Christ and faith.



## Backstage

Sacrifices were practiced from the earliest of times in the Old Testament. Sacrifices from the produce of the land and firstborn of the flock were offered by Cain and Abel; Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices after he left the ark. The Mosaic sacrifices were prior to Christ’s ultimate sacrifice on the Cross. Animals were imperfect sacrifices that could not completely purify and atone for the sins of the people. If they could, they would have ceased. The annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was a visible reminder of the sins of humanity.

The writer expressed the importance and superiority of Christ’s priesthood and the New Covenant to the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic covenant. The Levitical high priest could only enter the Holy of Holies, which was the most holy place (inner sanctuary of the temple) one day a year, the Day of Atonement, the 10th day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar (September-October). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest made reconciling sacrifices for the sins of the entire nation. The images that the writer revealed about the Day of Atonement emphasize the superiority of the priesthood of Christ.

In Chapter 9 of Hebrews, the writer explained that the diatheke—the Greek word for agreement, covenant, or arrangement—was placed into effect when Christ died (Hebrews 9:11–12, 24–28). The new covenant, which was initiated when Christ died, frees believers from the bondage of the first covenant. God took away the Levitical sacrificial system, which was the first arrangement, when He established the perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ.



## Combing Through

### 1. The Priesthood of Christ Is Superior (Hebrews 10:19–21)

In chapters 5 through 10 of the book of Hebrews, the writer has explained that the priesthood of Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood, which was made at Mount Sinai. The Levitical priesthood could not bring the people to perfection. There was no permanent reconciliation between the people and God through the temporary animal sacrifices. The people needed the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who gave His life once to restore the people to a relationship with God. The Levitical high priests atoned for all sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. Every year, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies where he made a sacrifice for the nation’s sins. A curtain prevented anyone from seeing the inner sanctuary. When Jesus died for the sins of humanity, the curtain was torn open, permitting anyone to enter the holiest of all—God’s presence. The high priest was no longer required for believers to be forgiven. By a “new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20), believers can go directly to God through faith in Christ.

During biblical times, the high priest passed through a veil to enter the inner sanctuary where God’s presence existed. Because of Christ’s sacrificial death on the Cross, believers can now personally come before God. Christ shed His blood to give humanity the ability to come before God’s presence by faith. Our High Priest is Jesus Christ, who experienced the pain, temptations, and trials that we experience as believers. By the righteousness of Christ, the Superior Priest, we can approach God with “boldness . . . by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19). Through the shed blood of Christ, we can come before our Creator by faith. Have you accepted Christ by faith and experienced a relationship with God that is only available through Christ, the Superior Priest?

### 2. The Priesthood of Christ and Our Profession of Faith (vv. 22–25)

Through Christ, we can freely enter into the presence of God. Through faith in Christ’s work on our behalf, we have “full assurance,” or certainty, that our sins are forgiven. There is an allusion to Christian baptism when the writer refers to “our hearts sprinkled” and “bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22). Because of the eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ, our consciences are cleansed. When the high priest entered the “holy place . . . He shall put on the holy linen coat . . . the linen breeches . . . a linen girdle . . . these are holy garments” and he must be cleansed; therefore “shall he wash his flesh in water” (Leviticus 16:3–4). Likewise, the believer must be cleansed before he or she can come before the Holy One. While we are declared “not guilty” because of the work of Christ, we need to cleanse ourselves daily by turning away from sin and turning to God to experience the fullness of relationship with Him. We must give ourselves completely to God and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus.

The writer encourages believers to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). God reveals His promises and truths through His Word; thus, we must embrace God’s Word and resist temptation and opposition. His promises are our treasures that we believe with a confident expectation. The foundation of our faith, therefore, is based upon the integrity and righteousness of Christ. We have hope because “God is faithful” (1 Corinthians 1:9). Although the Jewish Christians were experiencing persecution, the writer urges the believers to resist the temptation to apostasy. He wants to reassure

the believers by calling them to remember, “He (God) is faithful that promised”; God will do what He has promised (Hebrews 10:23).

The writer instructs the believers to “consider”—which means to observe or contemplate—each other (Hebrews 10:24). Believers must provoke or stir up the qualities of love and good works toward each other (Hebrews 10:24). The writer knew believers could have an impact on one another by loving and doing good deeds for each other.

Because of the fear of persecution, some of the believers had stopped attending worship services; therefore, the writer encourages believers to pull together to stir up loving and active faith. The fellowship of believers is a source of encouragement; it is an opportunity to share faith and grow stronger. The writer urged the believers to get involved in encouraging or “exhorting one another” with the truth (Hebrews 10:25). The fellowship of believers promotes accountability; it is the opportunity to worship and pray with others. As you fellowship with the body of believers, encourage someone today!

### 3. The Priesthood of Christ and Knowledge of the Truth (vv. 26–27)

The writer of Hebrews reminds believers that if they “sin willfully” they deliberately reject Christ (Hebrews 10:26). It is a conscious rejection of God after receiving the truth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The writer does not refer to an occasional act of sin. God sent Jesus to die for our sins; “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Believers should not willfully rebel against God’s provisions after receiving and fully understanding the “knowledge of the truth,” which is Christ’s offer of salvation (Hebrews 10:26).

The consequences of rejecting God are “judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries,” and there is no hope of forgiveness (Hebrews 10:27). Thus, those who reject Christ and disobey God are His adversaries. There is one certain judgment, death and destruction, for obstinate apostates. The apostates will experience the wrath of God because there is no other help for sinners who reject their only remedy—salvation through accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

### 4. The Priesthood of Christ and How God Will Judge His People (vv. 28–31)

The Old Testament refers to the sin of idolatry that requires “two witnesses, or three witnesses ... (to) be put to death” (Deuteronomy 17:6). The judgment for idolatry was death by stoning, but there is a worse punishment for someone who rejects the word of Christ. If someone considers the “blood of the covenant ... an unholy thing,” the person grieves the “Spirit of grace,” the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29). The person that rejects the Spirit of God will receive a punishment greater than a physical death.

Judgment belongs to God for “the LORD shall judge his people” (Deuteronomy 32:36). There is no other sacrifice for sin except Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. If someone rejects God’s mercy, he or she will receive God’s judgment. The writer of Hebrews states, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). The apostate will experience an eternal punishment from God’s hands. Believers, who have received the mercy of God through Christ, are saved and have nothing to fear.



## Diving Deeper Quiz

Have the participants read Hebrews 10:19–31, BACKGROUND, and IN DEPTH from the BIBLE STUDY GUIDE. Then, have them answer the following questions:

1. Specifically, according to today’s passage, what has Jesus done for us?
2. In what kinds of situations do you find it most difficult to trust God? How do you handle your doubt?
3. What personal value do you place in “meeting together” with other Christians? Why do you think meeting together with other believers is so important to God?



## Next Steps

1. Take time to recognize places where you struggle with trusting God or doubting God’s call for your life.
2. Consider ways to encourage yourself in faith and remind yourself that your doubt cannot disqualify you from God’s love and presence.



## Put It Out There

### A. Group Application

The judgment of God is different from the world’s judgment, and followers of Jesus look forward to His return for that judgment to receive their eternal rewards. Ask your group members to consider how they think the world will be different at the second coming of Jesus and how they feel about those changes.

### B. Personal Application

Have your group members discuss times when their faith was challenged, and when they felt like the thread that was their faith might snap. Encourage group members to share what they did in response to that time, guiding them in such a way that their sharing can communicate helpful truths to the group.



## Wrap It Up

### A. Daily Bible Reading

Present the DAILY BIBLE READINGS listed in the BIBLE STUDY GUIDE.

### B. Prayer

Close in prayer, asking God to help you stay encouraged in your faith even when you face doubts.



## Say Word?

Abihu. uh-BAHY-hyoo.  
Nadab. NAY-dab.

**SWAIG**  
(Spiritual Wisdom and Guidance)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace... where there is doubt, [let me sow] faith;—St. Francis of Assisi

## Lesson 2







## Where We're Going

By the end of this lesson, participants will have delved deeply into the meaning of faith and its implications for their lives, developed an appreciation for God's constant presence, and learned how to continue to develop a practice of relying on God for positive change.



## Get Them Going

Ask students to read Hebrews 11:1 aloud. Follow up by asking them to think of something they cannot see but of which they are assured. Provide an example, such as the level of faith required for someone to eat right and exercise, believing they will lose weight even though it takes weeks to see the slightest results. Then transition into how even though sometimes we can't see God's promises being fulfilled in our lives right away, true faith will yield a harvest that is better than anything we've ever prayed for or expected, because God said it would. Point out how our faith is our evidence.



## Feeding Faith

**A**fter Bible study, Jackson approached Deacon Alan. "I have questions about some of the stuff you said in there," he said.

Deacon Alan held his hands up as if to surrender. Jokingly, he said, "Fine, just don't hurt me."

They laughed. Jackson said he was trying to calm down, but his questions were just that pressing.

"Let me hear them," Deacon Alan said, sitting down on the bench in the hallway outside the sanctuary.

"You said we should nurture our faith."

Alan nodded in agreement.

"How do you do that?"

Deacon Alan looked puzzled. His cheeks tightened and then he began to grin. "I'm glad you asked me that question," he said. "Do you know how many times I've said that and watched people nodding their heads and smiling, acting as if they knew exactly what I was talking about? I bet over half of them have the question you asked me locked inside their own mouths. Jackson, you are very courageous."

"Thanks Deacon Alan, but are you going to answer the question?"

"Yes, of course!" The deacon twisted the knot in his necktie until it loosened. "I'll tell you four things," he said. "This is not a precise recipe, so even if you add or take away one or two ingredients, you'll still have something good."

"Okay."

"Numero uno is that you need to talk to the Lord just like I'm talking to you. Pray!"

"Right," said Jackson.

"The second thing is that you need to learn the Scriptures. Read and study them. Also repeat them when you're doing the first thing. You remember the first thing, right?"

"Talk to the Lord," Jackson said.

"Good," the deacon said. "Another one is you need to be around other Christians regularly because Christians have a way of strengthening one another, and the Bible clearly states that we need to fellowship with each other. And lastly ... hmm ... what's lastly?"

Jackson looked at his deacon friend. He said, "I know this one. Repeat all three things as much as possible."

"Amen!" shouted the deacon.



## Real Talk

1. God doesn't just tell the believer to be still; He says that we are to be still and know that He is God. What does it mean to you that God says, "... know that I am God"?
2. In today's passage, the Bible states that God will be honored by every nation and throughout the world. In what specific ways do you honor God?
3. What would you add to Deacon Alan's list and why?



## The Big Picture

Psalms 46 is a song written by the sons of Korah, who were temple assistants. This psalm encourages the believer that God is always there to help us. He provides peace, refuge, and security.

Hebrews 11:1-3 teaches us the definition of faith. Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen, and it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. These two passages complement each other because they help us to see that faith is assurance.



## Make It Stick

“Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.” (Hebrews 11:1, NLT)



## The Word (NLT)

**Hebrews 11:1** Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

**2** Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.

**3** By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

**11:6** And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

**Psalm 46:1** God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

**2** So we will not fear, even if earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

**3** Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

### Interlude

**46:8** Come, see the glorious works of the Lord: See how he brings destruction upon the world.

**9** He causes wars to end throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

**10** “Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.”

**11** The Lord of Heaven’s Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.



## The Players

**Sons of Korah.** Psalms 42 through 49 were written by the sons of Korah, who were temple musicians and assistants. The Korahites were among the chief Levitical families; they were listed as “gatekeepers.” Korah was a Levite who led a rebellion against Moses. Although Korah was killed, his family remained faithful to God and continued to serve in His temple. King David appointed men from the clan of Korah to serve as choir leaders. Later, the choir leaders continued to serve as temple musicians for hundreds of years.

**Psalms.** The book of Psalms is a series of five collections: Book I (Psalms 1–41), Book II (Psalms 42–72), Book III (Psalms 73–89), Book IV (Psalms 90–106) and Book V (Psalms 107–150). Several authors wrote the collections, and some are anonymous. David wrote at least 73 psalms, and Asaph, sons of Korah, Moses, Solomon, Ethan, and Heman wrote others. Psalms was written over a period of more than 1,000 years, which included the time of Moses (around 1440 B.C.) to the time of captivity in Babylon (around 586 B.C.). The majority of the books were written during Israel’s wilderness experience and time in Israel, Judah, or Babylon. The title “Psalms” was first used in the Septuagint. The traditional Hebrew title is *tehillim*, which means “praises” but most of the psalms are *tephillot*, which means “prayers.”



## Backstage

The readers of the book of Hebrews knew Scripture and professed faith in Christ. Because of doubt, persecution, or false teaching, the believers, who were Jewish Christians, considered giving up Christianity and returning to Judaism. The writer emphasized the superiority of faith to encourage the Christians of the first century to stand by faith.

Christians were demoralized and discouraged because centuries of tradition were replaced with spiritual freedom based upon faith in Christ. As a result, the believers experienced the wrath of the Jewish religious establishment because they believed in God’s greatest promise—Jesus Christ—the Messiah, who fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. The writer wanted to prevent believers from rejecting Christianity and returning to Judaism.

The writer explained the superiority of faith by examples of people who demonstrated greater faith. The heroes of faith were intended to encourage the power of faith as the believers adhered to their profession of true religion. Through examples in biblical history, faith is revealed through assurance in God’s future promises with the implications that inspire believers to persevere. Through the summary of Jewish history, the heroes of faith challenge believers to grow in faith and live in obedience to God. Psalm 46, which was written by the sons of Korah—who were temple assistants—was a celebration of God’s deliverance. The psalm may have been written when the Assyrian army invaded the land and surrounded Jerusalem. As the psalm speaks to ancient Israelites, it speaks to believers today. We need not fear if we trust God. Through faith we can give thanks for God’s constant presence in our lives. Because God is with us, we can be rescued. The writer refers to a “river” (Psalm 46:4), which is the tunnel that King Hezekiah built to guarantee a continuous water supply for Jerusalem during times of war. Like the tunnel, God’s presence is constant for believers.



## Combing Through

### 1. Faith Is Confidence and Certainty (Hebrews 11:1–3)

The writer of Hebrews begins chapter 11 with a description of faith as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). The reality of faith is what is “hoped for.” Our prayers and hopes are based upon the promises of God. With a firm persuasion and expectation, the writer encouraged the believers to trust that God will perform what He has promised through Christ. We cannot see the future, nor do we know what will happen tomorrow, but our confidence is based upon the certainty of God’s trustworthiness. To encourage struggling believers to hold to the superiority of their faith in Christ, the writer refers the believers to the elders of the Old Testament (Hebrews 11:2). The “elders” received a “good report,” which was the evidence that they would receive the promise of participating in God’s kingdom when it arrives in its fullness. Their actions revealed a genuine faith that will bring honor to the ancient believers.

Many Jewish teachers believed the material universe was created

based on God’s invisible pattern exemplified in His Word or wisdom. By faith, we believe God created everything out of nothing. Moses detailed the story of creation in Genesis chapter 1; there was a majestic display of power and purpose. With each creation, God “saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21). By faith, we believe God spoke and created the entire universe. Our faith is based upon who God is; our response should be a confident and certain hope in God because He is ever present. Do you have certain and confident faith in God?

### 2. Faith Is Necessary (v. 6)

Faith reveals the reality of God. “It is impossible to please God” without faith because faith is necessary to have an active relationship with God; it is necessary to walk with God (Hebrews 11:6, NLT). By faith, we believe in God and trust with certainty the future promises that He has revealed.

The heroes of faith believed and obeyed regardless of the conse-

quences. In the same way, we can believe with a willing trust and please God. Our steadfast confidence is based upon who God is—the creator of the universe. God will recognize and reward our faith because we “diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). By faith, we realize our own insufficiency and depend on God to work within us and through us. By faith we have confidence in the continual promises of God.

### 3. Faith Is Trust in God as Our Refuge (Psalm 46:1–3)

The sons of Korah were temple assistants who wrote Psalm 46. The psalmists recognized God as their source of help; they realized God’s complete power and ability to rescue His children. As believers, we do not need to fear because God’s presence is constant. God is our refuge; therefore, we can flee to Him and find security.

Life presents temporary destruction, doubts, and uncertainty, but God’s presence is constant; “therefore will not we fear” (Psalm 46:2). We can appreciate God’s constant presence because He is our mighty fortress. The earth swallowed up Korah, but the psalmists did not fear. We can be fearless with God as our present help, too. God is not a temporary resource; instead, God is our eternal refuge. The psalmists

remind believers, “Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake,” God’s power is complete and victory in Him is certain (Psalm 46:3). We should not be troubled when the earth is unstable because our confidence is not found in the earth. Our confidence is based upon God, our sound eternal footing.

### 4. Faith Is Trust in God Whose Presence Is Constant (vv. 8–11)

The psalmist urges the believers to “behold the works of the LORD” (Psalm 46:8). Recognize the presence of God and His ability to save His children. He is the creator who cares for nature and all living things. As believers, we can trust in God’s strength and His constant presence. Those who oppose God will experience desolation and face His judgment. But believers can stand in awe of God’s power.

The psalmist encourages believers to respond with a generous heart. We can, as the psalm states, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Even though war, destruction, and famine are a part of the world, God is still in charge. He is sovereign. Final victory belongs to Him, and He will be exalted. Therefore, we can rest assured and know with comfort that He is Lord.



## Diving Deeper Quiz

Have the participants read Hebrews 11:1–3, 6; Psalm 46:1–3, 8–11, BACKGROUND, and IN DEPTH from the BIBLE STUDY GUIDE. Then, have them answer the following:

1. When does the psalmist say that God is a “very present help?” What does that teach you about the Christian journey?
2. If someone asked you what faith is, how would you define it?
3. Think about how the entire universe was formed by God’s verbal command. How should this knowledge help us with our faith in Christ?



## Next Steps

1. Take some time to write down and reflect on what faith means to you. Why is it important in your life? How does it help you to know God?
2. Reflect on the question: What role does faith have in helping us feel secure or safe?



## Put It Out There

### A. Group Application

Ask your students to do a little research to find three remote countries they have never heard of or know very little about. Then, ask them to find out the unique problems that the inhabitants may have and to pray with someone for the answers to manifest themselves for the people. Pray that God would send help, and that the people would come to know God and constantly grow in their faith in Him.

### B. Personal Application

Ask your students to take a phrase or a verse from the psalm passage and meditate on it, thinking deeply about what it means and memorizing it. Ask them to write the verse on a 3”x5” card or small piece of paper and keep it with them. Tell them to utilize every opportunity during the day to recite it and to invite God to keep them ever-mindful of His presence throughout the day.



## Wrap It Up

### A. Daily Bible Reading

Present the DAILY BIBLE READINGS listed in the BIBLE STUDY GUIDE.

### B. Prayer

Lord, I thank you for your presence in my life. I thank you that my

doubt does not keep you from meeting me where I am. Help me to grow in faith, trusting that you are able to meet my every need and that you are in control of my life.

In Jesus name,  
Amen



## Say Word?

Abel. AY-buhl.  
Cain. KAYN.

**SWAG**  
(Spiritual Wisdom and Guidance)

Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man cannot live in health without them.—Mahalia Jackson