

# Inteen® *Teacher*

## A Living Faith

Dear Teacher,

This quarter the focus is on the definition of faith and the church's development during those early years. *Inteen*® is privileged to equip you with the necessary tools fulfill your calling as a Christian educator. This quarter explores the development of the church and its response to persecution. Unit I asks "What is Faith?" The veil is broken! This is the Good News! No longer are Jews nor Gentiles required to send a representative with a string on their leg, in case of their impurity, which resulted in death. They don't need a priest to stand before God on behalf of man, but Jesus has fulfilled the requirement for access to God. The Hebrew writer continues to state, that because the prophecies have been fulfilled, they, the early Christians, should hold on!

The Fall Quarter continues by examining those who seek understanding. "Who Understands Faith?", is the overarching question that guides the lessons aim. The testimony of the saints who have gone before us, serve as motivating tools, as we press to our finish line.

"What Does Faith Cost?" examines Paul ministry before King Agrippa. Paul's life is an open book serving as witness to the cost of faith. Believers are forced to reconcile their faith in the face of difficulty. There are tough choices that need to be made, but we are not alone. Paul's ministry serves as a testimony of hope.

As always, thank you for partnering with *Inteen*®, as we prepare the heart, transform the mind, and plant spiritual truths that change lives!

Peace and Blessings,  
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Do you have questions, comments or suggestions?

# How to Live out Your Faith in the Public Sphere

By Ed Ford Jr.

**A**s a Christian, you may ask yourself at times how to live out your faith in the public sphere. Injustices are occurring in the world around us every day. Because your faith doesn't allow you to ignore these happenings, you feel a strong desire from within to take productive action. Some people choose to take harmful action but your desire is to take action that heals, that works towards justice and that shows God's love for humanity. This is what we should aim to do, and my goal is to help you begin to think of ways you can live out your faith while having a positive impact on the world around you.

We are called to live out our faith and have an impact on society. A verse in the scriptures that reiterates this calling is Micah 6:8, which says "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" In this verse Micah points out what God requires of us. We are to do Justice. How are we "to do Justice"? What does that mean for us? Justice comes in different forms. We can do Justice by lending help to the parent who is struggling to put food on the table and is earning just enough to put a

roof over their children's heads. We can lend our help by offering to buy them groceries, maybe filling up their car with gas or connecting them to resources that can give them financial assistance and build their credit. We can do justice by assisting the homeless in our community to find shelter and get them connected to resources that will supply them with food and daily necessities. We can do justice by giving our time, talent and treasure to community organizations that give back to youth, those who are less fortunate and those who are struggling to make it each day.

These are some ways we can do justice on an individual basis. To those who already do such acts regularly, I commend you. Continue this good work. However, there's also a need for justice on a systemic level within our society. As Christians, we are to follow the example of Christ, and stand beside those who are looked down on and mistreated by society. We have the capability to do justice on a systemic level by advocating for changes within our systems. We should advocate for opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Whether that be through mentorship programs, academic tutoring, pouring more resources into historically underfunded schools

and giving families more choices as to where their child can attend. We should advocate for those who are battling unfair sentences in the justice system and creating opportunities for those who have paid their debt to society, in an effort to reduce recidivism rates. We should aim to provide more accessible opportunities for employment, educational opportunities, and programs for financial and civic literacy once they are released. More people should focus on advocating for those struggling with mental health issues and substance abuse. These are initiatives that would exhibit justice as Micah 6:8 led us to do.

Our participation in advocating for policy and systemic change in the public sphere is crucial. Many people believe their voice doesn't matter, and as a result they don't bother to vote or advocate for change. I can understand why many feel this way. However, inaction by good hearted people doesn't get us further towards justice at all. Our government is supposed to be by and for the people. That means we the people of the United States have a voice and can move our government through civic engagement to reform laws and systems to deliver true justice. We can have a great impact especially on a local level. For example, after the terrible deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor many cities across the country were pressed by citizens to take action against not only police brutality but racial injustice on a broad systemic level. That means in education, voting, criminal justice, and especially public health as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the inequities in our health care system. With much to be addressed U.S. cities and state governments passed their own policies in an attempt to tackle racial injustice. In my home City of Middletown, CT where I am a member of the City Council, we decided to establish a Task Force on Anti-Racism. This Task Force was given the charge to find policy solutions to systemic racism wherever it exists under our jurisdiction. My colleagues and I received numerous emails from residents

calling for change. The establishment of the Task Force was a response to residents' call to action and would be the beginning of furthering justice within our own community. This is one example of how people can make a difference and move our government from stagnation and lip service to action and moving in the right direction. I encourage you to believe that your voice matters. Someone is waiting for you to stand up for the cause of justice.

With myriad issues that need to be addressed it's easy to feel overwhelmed. You don't have to figure out how you will be an advocate for all of them. I encourage you to look at the example of Christ. He advocated for those who were hungry, sick, outcasts and shamed. He even advocated for you before you were born so that you may have life more abundantly. If you use your time and energy each day advocating for justice, you are advocating for those who are facing current circumstances as well as generations to come. Remember, to do justice is to take action that creates a society where everyone has the opportunities, tools and resources to fulfill their God-given potential. Justice can be restorative instead of further tearing individuals down.

I focused in the previous passages on how we "do justice." However, those actions are to love kindness and walk humbly as well. When we reach out our hand to help and advocate for others who society would rather turn their backs on, we extend kindness. When we set aside our pride and consider the circumstances of others instead of solely focusing on our own, we begin to walk humbly. I challenge you to think about what issues in your community you can begin to advocate for that would further the cause of justice. What Town Hall meetings can you attend to advocate for justice? What issues can you write your Legislator or Mayor about? If you don't know who these individuals are, I encourage you to research them. As you begin to walk in the requirements of Micah 6:8, you will be living out your faith in the public sphere.

## Quarter At-A-Glance September 2022

# A Living Faith

This study focuses on faith. The first unit uses passages from Hebrews to move participants toward a definition of faith, while the second and third units continue the study of faith through the lens of the Early Church.

### **UNIT 1 • What Is Faith?**

These lessons engage learners in responsive obedience to God's love that is revealed in Jesus. This response is an act of faith.

### **UNIT 2 • Who Understands Faith?**

The first two lessons focus on Stephen's message and martyrdom. The third lesson explores the repercussions for those who treat faith as a commodity. The fourth lesson looks at the faith that guides both Philip the evangelist and the Ethiopian seeker to examine the Scriptures together.

### **UNIT 3 • What Does Faith Cost?**

This unit is a four-lesson study of Paul's faith and ministry. The first lesson examines Paul's speech before King Agrippa. The second lesson goes with Paul aboard the ship to Rome. The final two lessons focus on Paul's ongoing ministry even though he is a prisoner.

# BURNT OUT

## FAITH CALLS FOR PERSEVERANCE

### LESSON AIM:

*By the end of the lesson, teens will:*

(1) discuss how Jesus' sacrificial death opens the way to the presence of God, (2) reflect on the importance of holding on to faith in Jesus, and (3) share their faith with others.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Bible, student magazines, pencils or pens, and multiple decks of playing cards/dominoes

### OPEN THE LESSON

Open today's lesson with a game. Divide the students into pairs or groups, depending on the size of your class. Give each group a deck of cards or dominoes. Have the students try to create a house of cards with their decks. Unless the students have experience with this activity, it will prove to be challenging and discouraging. Make the activity a race by timing the students, which will add more pressure to the situation. Some students will give up, while others may not even try. A few may keep trying and even accomplish the task. Afterward, ask the students how they felt during the activity and why they decided to give up or keep trying.

### PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

The writer of the book of Hebrews continues his discourse by providing practical application to the theological truths he previously expounded upon. This section of verses begins with a reminder that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation of a Messiah. In Jesus lies the fulfillment of the messianic promised to the nation of Israel. Paul is not preaching a new message, but he is providing a fresh hope. He describes this hope by illustrating (Hebrews 10:19) the way in which Jesus has connected man to God. The veil is broken! This is the Good News! No longer are Jews nor Gentiles required to send a representative with

a string on their leg, in case of their impurity, which resulted in death. They don't need a priest to stand before God on behalf of man, but Jesus has fulfilled the requirement for access to God. The Hebrew writer continues to state that because the prophecies have been fulfilled, they, the early Christians, should hold on! In verses 22–24, the writer continues to encourage the readers to remain steadfast in their commitment. He says that a way to remain connected to God is to remain connected to His people. This core concept has often been lost in the message of the Gospel, but fellowship is essential for encouragement. Therefore, since we have the evidence of God's fulfillment, those who reject Jesus are guilty of their punishment.

### EXPLORE THE MEANING

Have the students read aloud and discuss the story, "Burnt Out," the Scripture passages, and the Scripture Discussion. Then, have the students answer the questions in the Check It and Think It sections to make sure they understand the lesson. Talk to them about questions they may have about the passage. Ask your students to share their thoughts on today's story and Scripture passage. Ask them to share both their hope and their challenges.

### NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Today's passage requires an acknowledgment of who Jesus was and is, but it is also a reminder to hold on. Jesus did not leave us alone, nor will He fail to keep His Word. Students are

often discouraged and tempted to give up on God. Have students “pair share” their thoughts and provide counseling for one another.

### WORSHIP GUIDE

*For the Superintendent or Teacher*

**Theme: Faith Calls for Perseverance**

*Theme Song: “Never Give Up”*

*Scripture: Hebrews 10:19–31*

*Song: “In Times Like These”*

*Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

### FROM THE STUDENT MAGAZINE

*Burnt Out*

After school, T.J. ran down the sidewalk to catch up with Marcus.

“Slow down, Marcus,” T.J. said, catching his breath. “What’s the rush?”

“Got stuff to do,” Marcus said, fidgeting with his backpack.

“Me, too. Mr. Adams gave my English class a ton of homework,” T.J. said. “Are you still coming to Bible study tonight? I haven’t seen you there in a couple weeks.”

“Naw,” Marcus said. “I don’t think I’m coming back.”

T.J. stared at his friend and tried to read his expression. Marcus simply looked away and kept his head down as they turned the corner and walked down Marcus’ street.

“What’s up with you, Marcus?” T.J. asked. “You haven’t been yourself lately.”

Marcus shrugged his shoulders. “I dunno. Just a little burnt out. That’s all.”

“Bible study is a great place to rejuvenate and focus on the Lord,” T.J. said.

“It’s nice to leave your stress at the door and dive into God’s Word.”

“I guess,” Marcus said. “With all the stuff I’ve been dealing with, sometimes I wonder if God is even there—if He even cares about me and my stupid problems.”

“Of course He does,” T.J. said.

“We can’t let this world get us down. It’s temporary, but Christ’s love is eternal. God wants us to be closer to Him and learn about Him more. He should be the focus of our lives.”

“It just gets so hard, ya’ know?” Marcus said. “School, sports, my job, and issues at home—it’s overwhelming.”

Marcus stopped in front of his house.

“I hear ya,” T.J. said, “but God is in control. We can’t be discouraged. Reading His Word and being in fellowship with one another will help keep us focused on Him. That’s why our weekly Bible study is so important.”

“All right,” Marcus said. “I’ll try to make it tonight.”

*Scripture Discussion*

In today’s passage, the writer of Hebrews discusses the practical implication of the life of Jesus. How do His life, death, and Resurrection affect the religious communities? In the opening passages, it clarifies that the veil has been torn, meaning that everyone who wants to get to God, can have access through His Son. When Christ died on the Cross, He made the ultimate sacrifice and restored the divide that sin had created between human-kind and God. Animal sacrifices, an Old Testament practice, were no longer necessary, and there was no longer a “curtain” separating people from God. It is because of Christ’s sacrifice that we as Christians have hope. The writer continues to explain, how God’s fulfillment of His promises gives us hope, so we must hold on! The early Christian church experienced persecution and pain, but the writer reminds them that our end is eternity. The writer of Hebrews tells us that through faith and because of the blood of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we can experience the presence of God in a new, life-giving way. In our story, T.J. reminded Marcus that God gives people hope to carry on.

# Faith Calls for Perseverance

**Bible Background • HEBREWS 10:19–31**

**Printed Text • HEBREWS 10:19–31 | Devotional Reading • ROMANS 5:1–5**

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW Jesus' sacrificial death opens the way to the presence of God; FEEL the importance of holding on to faith in Jesus; and SHARE our faith with others.

## In Focus

Anthony and Angie dated for one year and had been friends for eight. One Saturday, Anthony met with Mr. Williams, Angie's father. Anthony said to him,

"May I have your permission to ask Angie to marry me? I love and respect your daughter and I want to make her my partner for life. She is my blessing from God. I can't imagine life without her."

Mr. Williams thought for a moment then smiled. "You have my permission, Anthony," he said. "Let's pray for your lives together."

One evening as Anthony and Angie walked through the park, Anthony knelt on one knee and proposed. Angie was speechless. As tears ran down her cheeks, she said,

"I have made too many mistakes in my life. You can't truly love me, because I have not forgiven myself. I don't deserve a life with you. I love you, but I can't marry you!"

As Angie started to leave, Anthony said, "We all make mistakes, but God forgives us when we sincerely come to Him."

*Through faith in Christ, our sins are forgiven and we have a new life. In today's lesson, we can develop a personal relationship with Jesus by faith and enter into the presence of God.*

## Keep in Mind

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;"  
(Hebrews 10:23, KJV)

## Focal Verses

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**KJV** Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

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

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## The People, Places, and Times

**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.

**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.

## Background

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.

### At-A-Glance

1. The Priesthood of Christ Is Superior (Hebrews 10:19–21)
2. The Priesthood of Christ and Our Profession of Faith (vv. 22–25)
3. The Priesthood of Christ and Knowledge of the Truth (vv. 26–27)
4. The Priesthood of Christ and How God Will Judge His People (vv. 28–31)

## In Depth

### 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.

#### **Search the Scriptures**

1. What is the “Holy of Holies” (Hebrews 10:19)?
2. What is the “new and living way” that Jesus has prepared for believers to come into the presence of God (Hebrews 10:20)?
3. Explain the difference between a “willful sin” and an “occasional sin.” (Refer to the “knowledge of the truth” and the effects of deliberately rejecting “the truth” that are discussed in Hebrews 10:26.)

#### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. How can we draw near and remain in the presence of God each day? How can we truly experience God’s presence?
2. When we accept Christ, He responds, “henceforth, I call you not servants ... I have called you friends” (John 15:15). What should be our response to Christ as believers? Does your relationship with Christ reveal that He is your friend?

#### **Liberating Lesson**

Faith is effective when we depend on God and rest in what Christ has done on the Cross. The writer of Hebrews urged believers to recognize the superiority of our faith and live in obedience to God each day. Through Christ, we have an eternal reward and significant privileges that we can experience through our new life in Christ. Through Christ, we can experience God’s presence and develop a relationship with Him. We can grow in faith and experience a deeper relationship with God when we trust and believe without doubts and concerns that the world presents. The world is temporary, but our life with God is eternal. Each day we must trust God and hold on to our faith and then share our faith with others. When we share our love for God, we can encourage others and introduce them to a new life through Christ.

#### **Application for Activation**

The world focuses on tangible rewards, promotions, and recognition with financial bonuses. The world encourages the pursuit of tangible endeavors and earthly wealth with retirement plans focused on life in the world. Retirement plans can be important, but as Christians, our focus is greater. Because we have accepted Christ by faith, we are friends of Christ with a purpose to share our love for Christ through faith. Consider local ministries that allow you to share your faith in God. Volunteer

your time to share your love for God with people who do not know Him or share your faith and encourage believers who are homebound or sick. Help others to remain faithful and experience the presence of God each day. Make a daily affirmation to share your faith. Finally, ask God for boldness to share your faith with others. God will give you the opportunity and bless your desire to be faithful.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

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

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

A Great Faith  
(Matthew 8:5-13)

### TUESDAY

A Saving Faith  
(Romans 10:8-17)

### WEDNESDAY

A Justifying Faith  
(Galatians 2:15-21)

### THURSDAY

An Examined Faith  
(2 Corinthians 13:5-10)

### FRIDAY

An Enduring Faith  
(Romans 5:1-5)

### SATURDAY

An Exemplary Faith  
(1 Thessalonians 1:2-10)

### SUNDAY

The Full Assurance of Faith  
(Hebrews 10:19-31)

# BE NOT DISCOURAGED

## FAITH IS ASSURANCE

### LESSON AIM:

*By the end of the lesson, teens will:*

(1) discuss the meaning of faith and its implications for their lives; (2) appreciate God's constant presence; and (3) develop a practice of relying on God for positive change.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Bible, student magazines, and pencils or pens

### OPEN THE LESSON

Open today's lesson with an activity. Ask your students to tell stories of men and women who stood strong in their faith during difficult times. Historical figures are important, but encourage the class to focus on people from their everyday lives. Ask the students what it meant to them to witness the faith of these people.

### PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

The writer of Hebrews offers a definitive understanding of faith in a changing world, while Psalm 46 is a hymn of praise to God for providing refuge in times of trouble. Hebrews 11, upon cursory observation, seems to be a contradictory passage. On the one hand, it describes faith "as the substance of things hoped for" and then it continues its description of faith by attributing evidence as a part of our faith. Hope and evidence are not mutually exclusive terms. In fact, hope is revealed through the tangible fulfilled prophecies in Jesus. Faith is a substance because it is impossible to look at the creation of the universe and not ascribe a Creator of the universe. The very building blocks of humanity point to God! And as we experience the consequences of the fall of man, Psalm 46 reminds us of our source for everything. Jesus is not a source; He is THE

source. He is a trustworthy source, a deserving source that can be relied upon to answer our call when we need Him.

### EXPLORE THE MEANING

Have the students read aloud and discuss the story, "Be Not Discouraged," the Scripture passages, and the Scripture Discussion. Then, have the students answer the questions in the Check It and Think It sections to make sure they understand the lesson. Talk to them about questions they may have about the passage. Ask your students if any of them can relate to Amanda in today's story. Have them share their similar experiences and how their faith played a role.

### NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

In today's passage, we explore the truth about creation and its implications. Have students discuss various "creation" stories. What does this mean for humanity if any of them are true? Ask your students to consider how does the Gospel complete mankind? (If questions arise from this discussion, please send the editor an email to personally address your questions.)

### WORSHIP GUIDE

*For the Superintendent or Teacher*

*Theme: Faith Is Assurance*

*Theme Song: "Blessed Assurance"*

*Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-3, 6; Psalm 46:1-3, 8-11*

*Song:* “Have No Fear, Little Flock”

*Prayer:* Dear Jesus, I take pleasure in Your creation, and yet, there are times when I struggle with the realities of life and its struggles. Jesus, grant me the faith to believe as I remove any barriers of doubt. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**FROM THE STUDENT MAGAZINE**

*Be Not Discouraged*

Amanda spent every Saturday morning unpacking boxes and stocking the shelves at the local food pantry. She tried to get some of her friends to volunteer with her, but no one ever came. She decided to ask Mr. Winslow, the food pantry manager, for some advice.

“Hi, Amanda,” Mr. Winslow said, as he took inventory. “How are things going?”

Amanda hesitated. “Do you ever get discouraged working here?”

Mr. Winslow looked up from his clipboard. “What do you mean?”

“There are so many people out there who need food,” Amanda said, “and the demand is overwhelming. It seems like very few people are willing to help, and I know donations this year have dropped a lot. How do we keep up?”

“Times may get tough,” Mr. Winslow said, “but that doesn’t mean God isn’t in control. And that doesn’t mean we give up and stop doing His work.”

“But things are pretty bad right now,” Amanda said.

“I must admit that things haven’t been this bad in a long time,” Mr. Winslow said, “but God is here with us. Times change, but God doesn’t.”

Amanda nodded in agreement. “I guess it’s hard to remember sometimes.”

“Very true,” Mr. Winslow said. “We must always remember to trust in God and seek refuge in Him. Not only should we remember, but we must help others remember, too.”

*Scripture Discussion*

God is the Creator of all things, and He is in complete control. This is an important truth because the cause of the universe determines our purpose within the universe. You are not an accident, and neither is humanity the result of a random series of accidental events. No matter what happens—natural disasters, disease, or poverty—God is still sovereign. Our ability to understand the trial does not remove the trial. When we are faced with trials, God is our refuge and strength. We can trust that God is with us. What a comfort it is to have the Almighty God on our side! Therefore, do not be afraid and do not be discouraged.

Because of all the conflicts in the world, people may lose hope for positive change. According to the writers of Hebrews and Psalms, the Lord is with us and remains the source of our hope. In today’s story, Amanda was struggling with the poverty crisis. She was overwhelmed by this huge problem and didn’t know what to do. Have you ever felt this way? The media is filled with negative images that promote despair and hopelessness. No matter what happens, God is in control. It is important to trust in the Lord and keep doing His work, no matter how daunting the task may seem.

**NOTES**

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# Faith Is Assurance

**Bible Background • HEBREWS 11:1–7; PSALM 46:1–11 | Printed Text • HEBREWS 11:1–3, 6; PSALM 46:1–3, 8–11 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 27:1–6**

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW the meaning of faith and its implication for our lives; FEEL God’s constant presence; and DEVELOP a practice of relying on God for positive change.

## In Focus

The students knew today’s lecture was going to be about the terrorists’ attacks on September 11, 2001, but they wondered why it was going to be discussed in their African American Studies class.

Professor Williams started the class by asking the students what they thought of the movie she assigned, “The World Trade Center.” Several students shared their critiques of the movie. When she asked what was missing, the room was silent.

Then a student asked, “Were the Black people on the board behind you also directly affected by the attacks?”

“Yes, Deshawn,” Professor Williams said. “Not only were the stories of African Americans left out of the news coverage at that time but the real life account of Jason Thomas, a former U.S. Marine who helped to rescue New York Port Authority police officers from out of the rubble, was cast as a white man in the movie. It’s as if anyone Black was scrubbed from this event.”

She told the students that over 260 African Americans died in New York; Washington DC; and Shanksville, PA on that day.

Professor Williams continued, “These stories aren’t just important for their families, and the nation at large, but for us as African Americans. Mr. Thomas had the faith and commitment to do the work he was called to do, even though it could have cost him his life.”

*In today’s lesson, we learn that when we experience conflicts in life, we can trust God by faith to see us through.*

## Keep in Mind

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”  
(Hebrews 11:1, KJV)

## Focal Verses

**KJV Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

**2** For by it the elders obtained a good report.

**3** Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

**11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**Psalms 46:1** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**2** Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

**3** Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

**46:8** Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

**9** He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

**10** Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

**11** The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

## The People, Places, and Times

**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.”

## Background

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.

### At-A-Glance

1. Faith Is Confidence and Certainty (Hebrews 11:1–3)
2. Faith Is Necessary (v. 6)
3. Faith Is Trust in God as Our Refuge (Psalm 46:1–3)
4. Faith Is Trust in God Whose Presence Is Constant (vv. 8–11)

### In Depth

#### 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 consequences. 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.

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. How did the writer of Hebrews describe faith (Hebrews 11:1)?
2. Who received a “good report” (Hebrews 11:2)?
3. Why is faith necessary to “understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. The writer explains that faith is required to understand that God created the universe where nothing existed. Genesis 1 details the awesome creation of the universe that was formed by God’s Word. Faith is the beginning of our relationship with God. What qualities of faith are necessary to continue to grow and strengthen our relationship with God?
2. When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram led 250 princes against the priesthood of Aaron and Moses’ general authority, God punished the leaders by allowing their challengers to be

swallowed up by the earth. A fire consumed 250 of them. The psalmists, the sons of Korah, reiterate God's presence and encourage readers not to fear. How can we maintain a quiet confidence in the midst of economic turmoil, natural disasters, and continual wars?

### Liberating Lesson

If we watch the news, listen to the radio or interact with others on social media, we hear about the current state of the world. The pandemic has devastated communities in different ways. Many people are homeless, unemployed, or on the verge of both. Natural disasters occur, and the number of fatalities grows. War and destruction are continually reported by the news. Peace seems impossible. While positive change seems nonexistent, we must not lose hope. God is ever present. If we trust God, we will be rescued, and change will occur through God's strength. We can rely on God for positive change as we realize our faith will be tested. How has your faith in God become stronger or weaker in light of world events, catastrophes, and unrest? How much do you think the world dismisses the constant help of God as a result of abundant negativity, catastrophe, and unrest?

### Application for Activation

To remain faithful with steadfast confidence and certainty, we must keep our eyes on God through continual prayer. We must remain hopeful for positive change, as we believe that God is in control. We can have faith in God's constant presence even today because we know He is our refuge in times of trouble. Make a commitment to regularly attend Bible study and Sunday school to increase your awareness of God's power in troubling times. Join ministries that actively build the community and encourage people who are suffering or do not know God. Allow God's presence to be evident through your actions and words.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Abel. **AY**-buhl.  
Cain. **KAYN**.

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

The Trusting Child  
(Mark 10:13–16)

### TUESDAY

The Trust of the Weak  
(2 Chronicles 14:2–12)

### WEDNESDAY

The Prayer of Trust  
(Psalm 3)

### THURSDAY

The Security of Trust  
(Psalm 4)

### FRIDAY

The Confidence of Trust  
(Psalm 27:1–6)

### SATURDAY

The Patience of Trust  
(Psalm 27:7–14)

### SUNDAY

The Certain Refuge  
(Hebrews 11:1–3, 6; Psalm 46:1–3, 8–11)

## Notes

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