

Introduction to the Lesson

Gameshows like “The Price is Right,” or “Let’s Make a Deal,” both require the same general skillset—you have to know what something is reasonably worth, and you have to believe that you can make good choices without having all the information right in front of you.

The people who are really good at winning in those shows not only have knowledge about prices and value, but they are also good at making decisions on the fly—there’s a large amount of uncertainty about their choice with which they have to cope in order to succeed. They know just enough to have an opinion, but not enough to be absolutely confident.

So they choose door number 1 over door number 3 because *they believe* door number 1 will give them what they want.

We make *millions* of those same kinds of uncertain decisions on a daily basis—most of them mundane and routine, not really changing much from day to day or week to week. Many of them, we really don’t know how our future will be ultimately be affected by them, but we still have to choose... and if the truth were told, we actually don’t give them much thought at all...

But have we ever stopped to consider what makes us choose those choices? How do we decide whether or not to do what we do every day? Whether we wear a jacket when we leave the house, or if we respond to that text immediately after it comes—or wait a few minutes?

What makes us choose the way we choose when it comes to those “small” decisions?

What about the big decisions—like relationships, choosing our classes, or choosing a college?

What variables inform the big choices in our lives—like whether or not to attend church, or to try alcohol?

Whether you’ve ever given it any time or thought, the truth is that each of us make ALL OF OUR decisions on the basis of faith... and I’m not just talking about the big decisions. EVERY DECISION is the result of some tenet of our own faith. This week, we’re beginning a new series to learn exactly what Faith is, how it connects us to God, and how Faith informs how we view the world around us.

Primary Scripture

^{NAU} **Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the men of old gained approval.

³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. ⁷ By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and *he went out, not knowing where he was going*. ⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as

good as dead at that, *as many descendants* as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. ²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though *they were passing* through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

Secondary Studies

Hebrews 11:13-22, 30-4; Genesis 6:1-8:22, 12:1-9; Exodus 12:1-51

Homiletical Idea (The Textual Truth)

Those who are ¹righteous before God ²live their whole lives ³by faith in Him.

Practical Applications (The "Take-Away" Truths)

Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God.

God is pleased by our enduring faith in Him.

Our faith in God is demonstrated by the decisions we make.

Objectives

Define *faith* in terms of everyday decisions.

Demonstrate how *faith* connects us to God.

Develop the foundations for a worldview that begins with *faith* in the God of the Bible.

Main Ideas from the Texts

1. Faith is the prerequisite for pleasing God. (Hebrews 11:2)
2. Faith is the process for approaching God. (Hebrews 11:6)
3. Faith is the premise for obeying God. (Hebrews 11:7-10ff)

Lesson Outline

1. Faith demonstrates there is more to this life than what we sense (Hebrews 11:1).
 - a. We all operate by faith on a daily basis.
 - i. Simply speaking, faith is operating, making decisions without all the facts, or even IN SPITE OF the facts.
 - ii. Faith is making decisions on the basis of more than just empirical evidence, or coherent reasoning.
 - iii. Faith isn't a feeling—it's an assurance, a conviction that we have regardless of proof.
 - b. We make LOTS of decisions without knowing all the facts, or the final outcome of our decisions.
 - i. We choose to jump into our friend's car to go to their house—because we believe (*have faith that*)...
 1. Their parents are good drivers and will get us there safely,
 2. That their house is a safe, fun place to be, and
 3. That we will return safely to our own home at some point.
 - ii. We choose NOT to do our homework—because we believe (*have faith that*)...
 1. We'll have time to scramble and do it right before class starts—or ends, or

- 2. The teacher will not check to see if we did it, or
 - 3. Not doing our homework won't ACTUALLY make us fail the class.
 - iii. We choose to share our most intimate secrets with a close friend—because we believe (*have faith that*)...
 - 1. Our friend cares about us and the stuff that we care about, and
 - 2. Our friend understands who we are, our likes and our dislikes, and
 - 3. Our friend won't share our most intimate secrets with anyone else.
 - iv. Our overall quality of life is dependent on
 - 1. *how well* we make decisions
 - 2. on *what we believe to be actually true*, and
 - 3. how much those beliefs *correspond to reality*.
- 2. Faith is the prerequisite (*first step*) for pleasing God. (Hebrews 11:2)
 - a. Our relationship with God (or *with any god!*) starts with an act of faith (Hebrews 11:6).
 - i. We must first believe that God exists.
 - 1. We cannot, we WILL NOT attempt to please a God *WE DO NOT BELIEVE ACTUALLY EXISTS*.
 - 2. We WILL NOT make decisions about a relationship with God if *WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD*.
 - ii. We must also believe that God is a good God.
 - 1. We WILL NOT decide to follow a God we ultimately believe is going to harm us.
 - 2. We WILL choose to follow a God Who we ultimately believe demonstrates love and good will to us.
 - b. Our faith in the God we believe exists prompts us to make certain choices.
 - i. All that we know and believe about God influences how we decide to live our lives.
 - ii. EVERY decision we make is, at it's core, a function of what we know and believe about God.
- 3. Faith informs the process for approaching God. (Hebrews 11:6)
 - a. Able offered a sacrifice that God accepted. (Hebrews 11:3)
 - i. What Able believed to be true about God informed how Able worshipped God.
 - 1. Able believed that God wanted the very first animals out of his flock.
 - 2. Able offered to God the very first, the very best of his flock.
 - ii. Able's faith prompted him to action—what he *believed* affected what he *did*.
 - b. Moses sacrificed a lamb on the night of the Exodus, and covered the door of his home with its' blood. (Hebrews 11:27-28; Exodus 12:1-13)
 - i. Moses believed that God had spoken, that He had given Moses specific instructions about how to escape Egypt.
 - ii. Moses believed that God would do what He said He would do, so Moses' faith prompted him to act—what he *believed* affected what he *did*.
- 4. Faith is the premise for obeying God. (Hebrews 11:7)
 - a. Noah built an enormous ship on dry land. (Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:13-22)
 - i. His faith in God caused him to act...
 - 1. *He believed* that God was real.
 - 2. *He believed* that God had spoken to Him about the flood that was coming.
 - 3. *He believed* that God would keep His word, and that He was powerful enough to fulfill His word.
 - 4. *He believed* that fully obeying God would save himself and his family.
 - ii. He acted in accordance to what he believed God had said to him.
 - b. Abraham went out without a map, or a plan. (Hebrews 11:8-10; Genesis 12:1-9)

- i. His faith in God caused him to act...
 1. *He believed* that God was real, that He was great, that He was powerful.
 2. *He believed* that God had directed him to leave all that he had ever known.
 3. *He believed* that God had made a great promise to him, and that God was powerful enough to fulfill His promise.
 4. *He believed* that fully obeying God would bring blessing to himself and to his family.
- ii. He acted in accordance to what he believed God had said to him.

Teaching Hints and Tips

- Define *faith* in terms of everyday decisions.
 - Think about all the decisions **you** make in a days' time, and what beliefs cause you to make those decisions.
 - If you brush your teeth, why do you brush your teeth? Do you have complete knowledge about the future consequences of brushing your teeth? What makes you choose to, or choose not to brush them daily?
 - If you obey traffic laws, why do you obey traffic laws? Do you believe there will be consequences to breaking those laws? What makes you choose to obey, or not obey them?
 - Help your students see the cause and effect relationship between what you ACTUALLY BELIEVE to be true, and how that *faith* translates into real-life decisions.
- Demonstrate how *faith* connects us to God.
 - Relate our daily and weekly decisions about spiritual matters (like personal devotions and church attendance) to our beliefs about God.
 - If we believe that following His commands result in good consequences, do we keep them?
 - If we believe God doesn't hear us, then do we actually pray?
 - Ask, ***"Is there a disconnect between what YOU SAY YOU BELIEVE and WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO?"***
 - Just like our everyday beliefs affect the decisions we make about every-day life, so also what we believe about God affects how we respond to Him.
- Develop the foundations for a worldview that begins with *faith* in the God of the Bible.
 - Challenge them to question whether or not what they believe to be true is *actually* true.
 - Challenge them to consider the sources of their faith;
 - Authoritative sources – the Bible
 - Experiential sources – our own, those of our family, friends, church
 - Challenge them to examine what *beliefs* make a difference in their decisions, and whether or not those *beliefs* actually line up with the Scriptures.
- Our life, finally, is the sum total of all of our decisions.
- Every decision we make is a function of our own presuppositions—what we assume to be true in every circumstance.
- Our presuppositions form our worldview.
- Our worldview determines how we make daily decisions.
 - Our Faith → Our Worldview → Our Decisions → Our life
 - If our faith, what we believe to be true about God, is the foundation of our relationship with Him, consider how important it is, then, to think rightly about God.
 - What if we believed something to be true about God actually *isn't true*?

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

1984, Paramount Pictures, PG, Action & Adventure



Director:
Steven Spielberg

Actors:
Harrison Ford, Sean Connery,
Indiana Jones, John Rhys-Davies

Plot:
Indiana Jones, renowned archeologist, returns for the 3rd and final Indy film. Indiana's quest is to find the Holy Grail, teaming up for the first time with his father, Dr. Henry Jones. Once again, the Nazis are hot on their trail and after the same treasure, trying to spoil their plans.

Scene #10 Indy must pass three tests (CV00890)

Indiana Jones' father lies shot and dying. It's up to Indy to acquire the healing ability of the Grail if his father is to live, but he must first pass three tests. Indy relies on his courage and faith like never before.



Time: 4:20
Start Time: 1:47:59
End Time: 1:52:19

Start Cue: "The Grail is mine, and you're going to get it for me"

End Cue: "I knew you'd come. My strength has left me"

Themes:
+ Courage
+ Faith
+ Father-Son
+ Sacrifice

USE YOUR OWN DVD

Small Group Questions and Prompts

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Have you ever tried something completely new? Tried out for a sport you'd never played? Taken a class that none of your friends signed up for? What made you decide to try that activity?

Starting with your alarm going off in the morning (even if that "alarm" is your parents), think about the first 10 decisions you make every day. What makes you decide to do what you do?

What are five truths you believe about which you have NO ACTUAL PROOF? (hint: I have a brain, even though I have never seen it; the ocean is really deep, even though I've never been to the bottom, etc) What makes you believe them to be true?

Is Scripture a reliable source of information about God? How do you know? Does it take faith to believe Scripture is reliable? Does it take faith to believe Science textbooks? Have scientists proven every "fact" they write?

Is God real? Does He exist? How do you know? How does your belief that God ACTUALLY EXISTS affect your everyday life? Do you think He wants to have more influence in your decisions?

HIGH SCHOOL

Have you ever used a GPS to navigate somewhere? Which do you prefer—Apple Maps or Google Maps? Why? What makes you trust those apps?

Who is the most trustworthy person you know? Do you believe EVERYTHING they say? Why or why not? Why do you believe anything they say is true?

Think of a decision you've had to make where you didn't really know all the details, or didn't know how it would end, but you had still to choose. ... Maybe in a relationship? Maybe a decision about early college versus traditional high school? How did you decide which choices were the right ones for you?

Is Scripture a reliable source of information about God? How do you know? Does it take faith to believe Scripture is reliable? Does it take faith to believe Science textbooks? Have scientists proven every "fact" they write?

Is God real? Does He exist? How do you know? How does your belief that God ACTUALLY EXISTS affect your everyday life? Do you think He wants to have more influence in your decisions?

How might a decision to go out with a friend on Friday night be affected by what you believe about God? How might a decision to on what to wear be affected by what you believe about God?

What if we believed something to be true about God actually *isn't true*? How might our every-day decisions be affected? How might our eternity be affected, either way?