

March 3, 2019

Series: Way To Go

Part 2: Becoming A Better Receiver

What most resonated with you about last Sunday's message?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

[Invite one of your group members to summarize the message, allowing others to chime in].

READ: Hebrews 11:1-6

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:1–6 (NIV)

In the New King James Version of the Bible, the words “confidence” and “assurance” are translated “substance” and “evidence”. (*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence or things not seen.*) How do these definitions of faith contrast with popular perceptions of faith today?

What two reasons does the writer of Hebrews point to for why it's impossible to please God without faith?

[A: 1. Because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists
2. And that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

If more and more people were to abandon belief in the existence of God, how might that impact culture? Why?

If God didn't exist, would human life be more valuable than other forms of life? Why or why not?

Jim said “Without God morality is a moving target.” Do you agree or disagree?

Why is it impossible to please God if you don't believe he “is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek him?”

Fill in the blanks: God is a rewarder, not a _____; a giver, not a _____.

Have you ever viewed God as primary a “punisher” instead of a rewarder, and a “taker” instead of a giver? How did that affect how you related to Him? According to Hebrews 11:6, was God pleased?

We typically think God is pleased with us when we give him something. But that’s not always true. What are some examples where God might not be pleased when we give him something?

Hebrews 11 contains dozens of examples of people whose faith pleased God. Their faith was *in* God, but what was their faith *about*? Hint: What word appears in each of the verses: 9, 11, 13, 17, 33, 39? [A: “Promise”]

God is a giver, and as such it delights him to give us many gifts and promises. What are some gifts and promises God offers to all who belong to him?

Jim said that God gives us gifts not just for our enjoyment, but for our [development]. Do you agree?

What are some examples of gifts he gives us for our development?

How does enduring hardship joyfully and confidently please God?

Closing vers: READ: Romans 12:1-12

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” **Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children.** For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.” Hebrews 12:1–12 (NIV)