

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of September 22nd - 28th

Getting Started

1. Do you have any heroes of the Christian faith? If so, who are they? What, in particular, makes them a hero to you?

Digging Deeper

2. Hebrews 13:7 is, among other things, a clear biblical command to cultivate heroes in the Christian life. There are actually three interrelated commands in this verse. What are they? How do we obey them? What does this look like in everyday life? Now re-read Hebrews 13:7 and follow it immediately with 13:8. What's the effect of reading these two verses together? What is the writer to the Hebrews communicating to his readers in placing them side by side?

Open Your Bible to Hebrews 11:1-7...

3. What is faith? Using your own words, how would you define it? Now read Hebrews 11:7. How does the Bible define it? Are your definitions similar or different? Explain.

4. Verse 2 says that “by [faith] the people of old received their commendation.” This word (“commendation”) appears four more times in chapter 11 (vv.4 (2x), 5, and 39). What does it mean? How do you know?

5. What does verse 3 tell us that we understand “by faith” about
the created order? According to *Evangelical Convictions* (the official exposition of the Evangelical Free Church of America’s Statement of Faith) our doctrinal statement entails the following affirmations:
 1. That God is the Creator of all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*)
 2. That he pronounced his creation “very good”
 3. That God created with order and purpose
 4. That God is the sovereign ruler over all creation which, by his personal and particular providence, he sustains
 5. That God created the first human beings - the historical Adam and Eve - uniquely in his image
 6. That through their sin all humanity along with this created order is now fallen

Why are each of these truths critical for us to affirm as a congregation? What would we lose if we did not each of affirm them? Are there any other aspects of the biblical teaching about creation that are precious to you on which we do not demand agreement as a church? If so, share them with the group and why they are important to you.

6. What did Abel do “by faith” (v.4)? Using our definition from v.1, what does it mean to do something “by faith”? Be honest, how much of your life is lived this way (i.e. “by faith”)? How is Jesus the true and better Abel (Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 12:24)?
7. What happened to Enoch “by faith” (v.5)? (Bonus: Who is the one other person in the Bible who escaped death in this way - see 2 Kings 2:11-12)? What future event in history does this prefigure (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)? How much thought do you give to this reality? Do you believe it as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”? Elaborate.
8. What did Noah do “by faith” (v.7)? According to v.7, of what did Noah become “an heir” (see also Hebrews 10:38, as well as Romans 3:21-24 and Philippians 3:9)? How does Hebrews 11:7 clarify what initially looks to be works-righteousness (the mistaken notion that God declared Noah to be righteous on the basis of his performance) in Genesis 6:9 and Genesis 7:1?
9. Scan back through Hebrews 11:1-7. As you close your time in prayer as a group, turn these verses toward the Lord in prayer as you do. If you need some help, look for ways to *rejoice, repent, and request* over what’s here. Be especially sensitive as to how these heroes of the faith point us toward the ultimate Hero in the Scriptures - Christ himself

(Hebrews 12:1-2; 13:7-8).