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PEOPLE OF FAITH

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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CHAPTER ONE

FAITH IS POSITIVE

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 10:32-39; 11

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:1-3

Memory Verse

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

Lesson Aim: To teach my students that faith is being sure that God will do what he promises.

Teaching Aids: Write the Words, "What is faith?" on the chalk board or on a large paper. Have a cloth ready to use as a blindfold.

Background Study

In this book you and your students will study the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. As you study together you will learn what wonderful responsibilities you have as Christians. You will learn, too, of the blessings faithful Christians have.

We are not sure who wrote this letter to the Hebrews, although it may have been Paul or Barnabas. If they did not write it, they probably preached to or taught whoever did write it. The book of Hebrews contains much of their teaching. It was written between 30 and 70 years after Jesus died.

Hebrews 10:32-39: The sons of God must have faith. When a person has become a new Christian, he receives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings a sharp awareness of God which keeps the faith of the Christian strong. This strong faith brings confidence and assurance. A faltering unbelief, however, brings the displeasure of God.

Hebrews 11:1-2: Faith is the absolute certainty that particular events will happen. Faith is not a wavering hope. It is an unshakable, immovable certainty based on our own experiences and experiences of other Christians. God keeps his promises. Millions of people through hundred of years have seen that God does not fail to do what he has promised to do. The men of old had faith, God proved of their faith and the actions that came because of that faith.

Hebrews 11:3: When we believe that God created the world out of nothing, we have faith.

In these lessons we will look at specific cases where men and women of God exercised their faith in actions pleasing to God. Faith and actions must stand together. Faith without actions is dead. (James 2:1) On the other hand, actions without faith have little meaning or gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:3).

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Ask: "What is faith?" Show these words which you have written on paper or on the chalk board. As answers are given, write them down, continuing until everyone who wishes to do so has given his idea. You may receive answers like "belief in God," "believing in Jesus as Saviour." You may get answers such as "believing something you have seen before," or "knowing that rain will come in they season." Write down all their ideas, showing neither agreement nor disagreement. When the class members come to a halt, read Hebrews 11:1. Say: "In the light of this verse, let us read our list and see if our statements agree with the verse." Read the list and let the class decide if each statement agrees. Ask a class member to come to you. Put a blindfold over his eyes. Quietly, so he cannot hear you do it, put a chair behind him or walk him over to a chair. Tell him that a chair is behind him. Do not let him touch it. Say that you want him to have faith in you. You have placed a chair behind him and you want him to show his faith by sitting in the chair. The way he sits down will show how much faith he has in you. If he sits down straight away, he shows that he has absolute faith in you. If he backs up until he can touch the chair with his legs or tries to touch with his hands, he will show that he has little faith in you. Thank the youth for helping to teach the lesson. Tell how he either showed faith or lack of it.

Say: "Faith is believing even though you cannot see what is happening."

Examination

Say: "The letter to the Hebrews was written to encourage Christians to remain true to Jesus. Many of them had been Jews and had generations of Judaism as their background. They had met Christ and had been converted. Jesus, however, had been dead for a long while. The Jewish Christians could slip back into the old ways very easily. This was what the writer did not want the Christians to do.

"He told his readers that faith is believing in something we cannot see. Just as the student (use his name) showed us, faith is believing in something being there even when we cannot see it. Jesus was no longer present upon the earth. To believe in him would be to believe in something the people could not see with their eyes.

"The writer then said that faith goes all the way back to creation. The Christians knew that God spoke the world into being even though none of them actually saw it happen. Because they believed this, they had faith."

Application

Ask: "Do you know anyone who has great faith?" Give opportunities for those who wish to share true life experiences that they or someone they know had had. Ask: "Is it easy to believe in something we cannot see?" Let the students discuss this for several minutes. Ask: "How do we build our faith?" Again allow time for discussion. Lead your students to see that they must try God out, claiming his promises and seeing if he is faithful. Tell your class that if they bind one of their arms to their body for a long time, it will become weak and useless. If they fail to exercise it, it is no good. Faith is the same way. They must exercise faith to make it strong.

Have the students repeat the memory verse with you until they can say it without help. Call attention to the "Things To Do" section of their books and tell them you will ask for these reports the next time you meet.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that the faith of each student will grow stronger as you study these lessons.
2. Pray that those who are not Christians will accept Jesus as their Saviour during this study.
3. Pray that each student will attend class regularly to hear every lesson in this book.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FAITH OF ABEL

PREPARING TO TEACH Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:1-16

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:3-6

Memory Verse

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).

Lesson Aim: To show my class that our love for and faith in God calls for us to give our best to him.

Teaching Aids: Have an item with you that you consider to be very valuable. It may be a book, your watch, money or something else.

Background Study

In listing the people of faith from the Old Testament, the writer of Hebrews skipped Adam and Eve and chose their son, Abel.

Read the entire account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16. Adam and Eve had two sons. The older boy, Cain, became a farmer; but Abel, the younger son, was a herdsman.

Genesis 4:3-6: At a certain time, both Cain and Abel decided to bring an offering to God. This is the first time that we know about when men gave something to God. We do not know what caused them to bring the offering. Perhaps it is only natural for men to express thanks to someone who has given to them. Whatever the case, both Cain and Abel brought offerings of their produce to God. The Bible says that Cain brought of the fruit of the land, but Abel brought the firstlings and the fat of his flock. Abel brought God the best that he had.

When the offerings were brought, God accepted Abel's gift, but he was not happy with Cain's. Some think that Abel's gift was accepted because it was a gift of a living thing. Even as Jesus was our sacrifice because of the shedding of his blood, these animals were a sacrifice because of the shedding of their blood. Whether this had anything to do with God's acceptance of Abel's gift is not as important as remembering that God could look into the hearts of men.

God can see into our hearts. He knows why we do what we do. He saw into Abel's heart and was pleased by what he saw there. In Cain's heart, he saw something else, and he was unhappy. Immediately, Cain became angry, showing that things were not right in his heart. Instead of trying again to please God, he showed the sin that was "couching at the door."

Hebrews 11:4: In this verse Abel received approval from God because he was righteous. To be righteous means to do things because of the right reasons. Even though Abel died early, his faith continues to witness of his life.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Collect the definitions of faith from your students. This was one of their "Things To Do" in their first lesson of their books. Praise those who brought them, and encourage the others to do whatever is assigned each week. Tell them that these assignments will help them grow in spiritual matters. Read the definitions without identifying the writers. Some of the students may want to be recognized for their statements. It is good to acknowledge them if they wish it.

Ask if any have brought their true-life experiences of people who have showed great faith. Ask them to share these. See if any of these show how anyone showed faith by giving something to God. If so, give this story special attention. If not, share the following story.

"Once there was a widow who had only one child, a daughter. Because these two were without close relatives, the love they had for each other was very great. As the time drew near for the girl to go to secondary school, the mother worried about where she could get the school fees to send her. She had no property to sell. All she had was her ability to work. She decided to take the daughter to the town and find work there. In the town, the mother finally found work in a rich man's garden.

"She had to get up early and go to work each day. She had little time for herself. One day, a man working at the same place asked her why she had left the village and was working so hard away from her home. She told him she was earning school fees for her daughter. The man shook his head and said, 'You should not sacrifice your life this way for your daughter. These modern girls are not like girls were before. She will take your money, but you will not be happy with the results of all your labor.' The mother smiled. 'Do not worry,' she said. 'My daughter is a good girl. She works hard in school. I want to give her all that I can to help her in her life. I have faith that she will do well.'"

Ask: "Was this mother foolish or wise?" Allow time for the students to answer, then say, "If we have faith in someone we want to give the best we have for that person. Abel did this."

Examination

Ask your students to open their Bibles to Hebrews 11:4. Have one read this verse. Then turn to Genesis 4:3-6 and read it. Using your own study as the background, tell the students the story of Cain and Abel. Ask: "Why did God accept the gift of Abel and reject that of Cain?" Discuss this for a few minutes. Bring the class to the conclusion that Abel wanted to give the best that he had to God. Show that his motivation was right and proper before God. Cain gave his sacrifice, but he did not have enough faith in God to give him the best that he had. He wanted to save his best seed to plant for the next year's crop. He did not trust God to give him a good crop if he gave away his best seed.

Application

Say: "Do you think you trust anybody enough to give him the best that you have?" Display the item you brought which you consider to be very valuable. Say: "This represents the best that I have. I wonder if I trust God enough to give it to him. On Sunday morning when the offering is taken we can see how much faith people have in God. If you look at the offering, you will see various pieces of money. You will see, however, many more pieces that have little value than pieces of great value. People are afraid to trust God with their best. They are

afraid that if they give him their best, there will be nothing left for them. They do not trust God to take care of them. They save their best for themselves. The same thing is true of our service. Many give their best service to the farming cooperative, to their family or to their job. At church, they attend only the worship services. They have no time for Bible study, prayer meetings or choir singing. They are afraid to trust God with their best. Their faith is too small."

Say: "What about you? What kind of faith do you have in God? Do you give him the best you have, or are you afraid to trust him with your best? Cain was afraid to give God his best and ended up as the world's first murderer. Abel gave his best to God, and his name is written in history as a righteous man."

Prayer Suggestions 1. Pray that your students will give the best they have to God.

2. Thank the Lord for the talents you see among your young people.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FAITH OF ENOCH

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:5-6; Genesis 5:21-24

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:5-6

Memory Verse

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good" (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

Lesson Aim: To convince my students that a daily walk closer and closer with God will lead to a happy and rich life which will last forever.

Teaching Aids: Have this sketch on the chalk board or paper before the class arrives.

Picture

Background Study

Hebrews 11:5-6: Enoch is our second example of those who pleased God by their faith. Like Abel, Enoch showed his faith by his actions. Enoch's act of faith was his close walk with God. God rewarded him by taking him to heaven without letting him die.

We must have faith if we want to please God. The simplest form of faith is believing that God exists and that he rewards those who please him. We believe what we cannot see, and we hope for rewards that we believe God will give. James 2:10 tells us that believing by itself is not enough to please God. Even demons believe in God. True belief or faith leads to daily actions which are pleasant to God.

Genesis 5:21-24: The Enoch of these verses was not Cain's son mentioned in Genesis 4:17. This Enoch is known as the "man who walked with God" or the "man who never knew death." Verse 24 says that Enoch's walk with God ended by his being with God. He lived a life pleasing to God while most of the others around him were living lives pleasing only to themselves.

We need to walk with God. Micah 6:8 says that the Lord requires us to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God. The best way to walk with God is to do it daily. We must allow God to speak to us from the Bible every day. We should read the Bible with the idea, "What does God want me to know today?" Just as Enoch's walk with God was so pleasing that it ended in his being with God, we can walk closer and closer to God until we think of death as being only another happy walk with God.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Show the picture you have prepared as you tell this story: "Once there was a man who was very good at walking on a wire suspended high over the ground. One day he stretched his wire between two tall poles which were on each side of a large waterfall. To fall would mean certain death. While a large crowd breathlessly watched, he walked slowly and skillfully back and forth over the waterfall on the wire. The crowd applauded and cheered. Then he pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him as he walked back and forth across the wire a second time. The crowd cheered as he proved his skill.

"For his third trip the man put heavy weight in the wheelbarrow. Again he walked across and back again pushing the heavily loaded wheelbarrow. At the end of his walk, he asked the crowd, 'Do you really believe that I can push this wheelbarrow across with something heavy in it?' 'Oh, yes!' they shouted back. After all, they had just seen him do it. The man said, 'Since you know I can do this, which one of you will take the place of the weight and ride in the wheelbarrow while I push it across the wire?' Not a sound came from the crowd of people. Their faith in him was not enough to trust their lives into his care. If we really walk with God, we must trust our lives to him.

"Our lesson today is about a man who trusted God with his life so much that his life was described as a walk with God."

Examination

Ask: "Has anyone here seen a group of soldiers march for a special occasion? Perhaps you saw the police force or a band marching." Tell the class that it is always exciting to see such a performance if all the people in the group are marching in step. If just one person, however, is out of step, it makes the whole group look disorganized. It destroys the perfection of the performance. Say: "Enoch was a man who was in perfect step with God." Ask two students to look up the two Scripture references and read them.

Ask: "Just what was Enoch's walk like? How did he walk with God?" As the students give their answers, using their pupil's books if necessary, write them on the board or paper.

Application

When you feel this list is complete, ask the class what problems they have in walking with God. They may say they have no time for daily Bible reading. Discuss this problem with the class and any others they may name. Spend as much time as you can in helping each student to find possible solutions to his own particular problem. Encourage all the class to participate. Often they have better solutions than you, the teacher, have.

Close the lesson by asking each student to say the memory verse, but substituting his own name for the name, Israel. Pray with the class that this verse may become true in each of their lives.

Just before they leave, call special attention to the "Things To Do" section in their books for today. Tell them that having a quiet time with the Lord is a very necessary part of growing up spiritually.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that you and each one in your class will walk closer to God.

2. Pray for any not attending the class who have begun to walk away from God.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FAITH OF NOAH

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 5-9

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:5-22

Memory Verse

"And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him" (Genesis 7:5).

Lesson Aim: To show my class that God expects us to obey and rewards our obedience.

Teaching Aids: Papers and pencils. Have the following questions written on paper or the chalk board before class time: Whom should I obey? Why should I obey? When should I obey?

Background Study

Hebrews 11:7: The third man of faith for our study is Noah. Abel had trusted God and had given the best that he had to God. Enoch showed his faith in the close walk he had with God. Noah's faith is seen in his obedience to God's instructions. God warned Noah of future destruction, and Noah took heed. To take heed is to listen, and then to act upon the words in obedience to the instructions.

Noah built an ark, a large boat, even though there was no sign of rain or flood. To obey God, he had to stop his usual work and use all his energy and time to build the ark. Noah did not neglect to act upon the warning of God. His actions saved not only himself, but his household as well.

The obedience of one person can be the means by which God can save many.

In the last part of the verse, Noah is said to have condemned the world. This means that his action of obedience made the disobedience of others stand out more. Others around Noah probably laughed at him and scorned him. Their mockery made their judgement more severe.

In the last few words of the verse, it says that Noah became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Because he was obedient, God blessed him and numbered him among the faithful. He was saved from the flood because he stood alone with God when everyone else refused to listen. The judgement of the flood is a warning to all of us that sin will be punished and obedience will be rewarded.

Genesis 6:5-22: These verses give evidence that Noah was willing to take God as his word and obey him. God rewards those who are obedient to him, but he punishes the disobedient.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

As the class arrives, greet each one and hand him a sheet of paper and a pencil. Ask him to answer the three questions on the board and write the answers on the paper. Encourage the students to work alone and quietly. After waiting a few minutes so that everyone has had a chance to write down their answers, collect the papers. Ask a student to act as secretary or recorder to write all the responses on the chalk board or on a large paper where the questions are written. As you read from the papers all of the answers to questions number one, the recorder will write them on the chalk board under the appropriate question. For the first question, you may get answers like: parents, teachers, policemen, elder brother. The second question will have long answers which you may need to shorten. Here you may get: to keep from getting punished, to please my parents, to get rewards. Follow the same procedure for question three.

When this exercise has been done, thank your recorder for his good work and the class for their ideas. Say: "Today we will study about a man who obeyed God because he loved God, and he obeyed immediately."

Examination

Have your Bible open to Genesis 6:5-22. Have a marker (a small piece of paper) between the pages where Hebrew 11:7 is so that you can find it quickly. Read both of these passages aloud for the class. Using the pupil's book, assign parts and read the drama. If you have a very small class or only two or three books, you might read the drama yourself. Another idea would be to let the class do a role-playing or an improvisation of the scene as it likely happened. Participating in a drama of this type will be an excellent way of teaching how Noah felt, how his family felt, and how the people around them felt.

Application

Ask: "How did you feel as you pretended to be Noah? Did you feel any anger or resentment because God had put you in a position to be laughed at by your neighbor?" Wait for an answer.

"How did it feel to be Noah's son, trusting your father when it seemed he was being foolish?" Allow time for an answer.

"Do you think it was harder for him to obey his father than it was for Noah to obey God?"

"How did you feel as a neighbor watching a family you knew act in such a strange way?" After each actor has had a chance to answer, draw some conclusions. Help the class to see that what God was asking Noah to do was really unusual. Noah had to have a lot of faith to follow the instructions.

Say: "It was not easy for Noah to obey God, nor is it easy for us at times. The easy way is to follow the world and be one of the crowd. We may not like being different and following a separate path." Help your students to see that Noah set everything aside and got busy immediately to obey.. Say: "You may not think it is convenient to do what someone else wants you to do before you do what you want to do. If Noah had waited, he and his family would have died in the flood. God expects his children to obey him immediately." Help the students to see that Noah's obedience brought rewards. He was saved from the flood. Say: "If we obey, we will receive good rewards. If we refuse to obey, we will be punished."

Ask how many brought their records of their quiet time to class. Let them share as they will. Offer suggestions where they are needed.

Encourage your students to obey the ones in authority in their lives. Remind them that obedience brings rewards, but disobedience brings punishment.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for every person who is in authority over each one of your students.
2. Thank God for the country's government and its authority.
3. Pray that each student will live under authority as God has planned.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19; Genesis 12:1-6; 22:1-19

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:8-10, 19-19

Memory Verse

"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, `Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, `Here am I! Send me'" (Isaiah 6:8).

Lesson Aim: To teach my students that God calls us today just as he called Abraham.

Teaching Aids: Prepare the questions listed in the "Examination" section. Write each one on a separate sheet of paper.

Background Study

Abraham is the next man of faith whom we will study. He was a man different from those around him because he worshipped the one true God while others worshipped many gods. God was able to call him because he was willing to listen.

Hebrews 11:8-10: God called Abraham from his home to go to an unknown land. Abraham heard the call and accepted it. God led him to a foreign land which he promised to give him. Because Abraham realized that life on earth is temporary, he did not build a permanent home in the new land. Instead he lived in tents, but he looked forward to living in a city which God himself would build.

Hebrews 11:17-19: Read for yourself this account in Genesis 22. Imagine what it was like for this father to be commanded by God to offer his only son as a sacrifice. The offering of sons as sacrifices to other gods was a common practice at that time. Perhaps Abraham had thought God would spare him from this grief. But, no, it seemed that God expected no less from his servant than other people willingly gave their gods. Remember, too, that Isaac was Abraham's and Sarah's only son, the son of their old age, their miracle child. Abraham must have been in great shock when he heard what God wanted him to do.

Even so, we do not read anywhere that Abraham argued with God. He did not try to persuade him to change his mind. He rose early the next morning and set off with his son to do what God had ordered.

Genesis 12:1-6: Abram (which means honored father) was called first to move to Haran when he was in the city of Ur. After the death of his father he left this past life behind and followed God to a new land. The past was gone and the future was only a promise from God. Abraham lived in the present and believed in the promise of the future.

Genesis 22:1-19: In this beautiful story of faith, we find Abraham (which means father of many) was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. By following the call of God, Abraham was given his son the second time.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Ask one of the students to read the story at the beginning of the lesson in the pupil's book. Discuss the questions which follow the story. Ask the class to bow their heads while you pray. Ask God to help all of your students understand that he has a plan for each of their lives.

Examination

Divide the class into three groups. Give each group one of the following questions:

1. What does the call of God to leave the past mean?
2. What does the call of God to leave the future mean?
3. How can we hear the call of God right now?

Tell the class that they will discuss the question given to them for ten minutes. They may use their Bibles and their pupil's books to find the answers. Tell them to choose one of their group to lead the discussion and another to act as recorder to write down the conclusions of the group. Encourage them to show in their reports how Abraham heard and answered God's call.

Give the class about fifteen minutes to rearrange their seating, have the discussions and return to the full class seating arrangements.

Use ten or twelve minutes to hear the reports of each group. Give time at the end of each for others to ask questions or add ideas.

Application

Tell this story: "A fourth year student in an African university was living an active Christian life both at school and in his church. Over a period of weeks God seemed to be calling him to be a full-time preacher to his own African people. He answered God's call by deciding to enter the seminary after he received his university degree. He would have to give up the certainty of a high-salary job and depend entirely upon God's people to support him and his family." Ask: "If you were so near your goal of getting a fine job, would you be willing to do as this student did?" Give the students time to discuss this.

Tell this story: "An African girl was a hard working student in secondary school. She did not make top grades, but she always tried to please God and do her best. For many years this girl felt that God was calling her to be a Christian nurse and show the love of Jesus by helping those who were sick or injured. She remained faithful to her call even though there were many temptations along the way. Her loving smile and care for patients in the hospital were a wonderful witness for Jesus."

Ask: "Was it easier for the girl to follow God's plan for her life than it was for the student in the first story?" Emphasize to your students that God expects us to obey no matter when he gives the call, early or late. Tell the class that to hear God's call they need listening hearts which are sensitive to him. Listening hearts are the results of a daily walk with God.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that your students will be listening when God calls them.
2. Pray that they will answer the call and follow God's leading.
3. Thank him for his direction in teaching today's lesson.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FAITH OF ISAAC

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:17-20; Genesis 22:1-10, 27:1-4, 27-29, 39-40

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:17-20

Memory Verse

"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31b).

Lesson Aim: To give my students the assurance that we do not need to fear the future since God is in control.

Teaching Aids: On a large sheet of paper, paste pictures of wrecked cars, people who are being injured, articles about sudden death and injury or death notices from the newspaper. Write at the top of the paper above the pictures: Are you ready for what the future holds?

Background Study

Hebrews 11:17-20: The first three verses of this passage were in the previous lesson. We will study them today from Isaac's viewpoint. Remember that Isaac was old enough to carry all the wood for the burnt offering up a mountain. Remember, too, that he asked an intelligent question concerning where the lamb was for the burnt offering. Surely Isaac was old enough to know that Abraham intended to kill him that day. Isaac, however, knew that God had promised many children to Abraham. In this promise he had peace.

In verse 20 Isaac had lived to be an old man. He still had faith in the future promises of God. He gave blessings for the future which were actually going to take place. God inspired him to speak of these future conditions for his two sons, Esau and Jacob.

Genesis 22:1-10: The exact age of Isaac at the time of these verses is unknown. He could have been twelve years old. This age is important in the Hebrew (Jewish) home even to this day. Isaac, at this time, was certainly old enough to prevent his father from trying him to the altar. There is no mention of any screaming, shouting or struggling on the part of Isaac. Instead, he was a willing participant in the sacrifice of himself to God. God intervened and saved him.

Genesis 27:1-4: In this passage Isaac was an old, blind man getting ready to die. His life had generally been in a happy one. Rebekah, his wife, had given him two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the older and was favored by his father because of his outdoor life and hunting ability. Jacob was favored by Rebekah because he was helpful around the house. Although Esau had rebelled and caused much trouble by marrying two foreign wives, Isaac still planned to give him the best blessings. Isaac had faith in the future of his rebellious son. Rebekah planned a way to trick blind Isaac to give the best blessings to Jacob.

Genesis 27:27-29,39-40: The blessing given to Jacob (thought to be Esau by his father) included the future promises of God first given to Abraham and then to Isaac himself. God would give him plenty of rain to provide large harvests of

food and plenty to drink. Surrounding tribes and nations would follow the instructions of his son and his children. Even his own brother would be under authority. Those who mistreated him would get trouble from God. This blessing of Isaac to Jacob was an accurate prediction of the future. At the time it was given, the descendants of Abraham were few and very weak.

After Jacob tricked his father into giving him the best blessing the rebellious Esau came to get the blessing (Genesis 27:30-38). He was so angry about the trick that he planned to kill his own brother after the death of their father (verse 41). His future blessing showed that he would be his ruler for a while, but later he would be independent of him. The Arabic people of today generally trace their ancestry back to Esau. Isaac still had faith in the future for his rebellious son, but Esau's life would be difficult. This is often true when we rebel. God can still bless us, but our old sins cause us trouble.

Isaac demonstrated a faith in the future because of his faith in God. He showed that we do not need to fear death because we are in the hands of a loving God.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Tell the story: "A fine young girl went to hospital for a minor operation. During the surgery her heart suddenly stopped beating. Quickly the surgeon cut into her chest to massage the heart and start it beating again. During the short time the heart the heart was stopped, however, the brain was damaged. She did not wake up for weeks. Doctors told her parents to forget her as there was no hope for recovery. A Christian doctor, who believed nothing was impossible with God, prayed for her complete healing and told the parents to talk to her and pray with her just as if she were well. Over a period of time she began to slowly improve and return to normal. What was hopeless in the hands of man was possible in the hands of God."

Indicate the death display at the front of the class. Ask: "How sure is your future?"

Examination

Say: "When Isaac was about to be sacrificed on the altar, how do you think he felt? Let us find out." Choose three people to act out the parts of Abraham, Isaac and the voice of God. Do not bother with many aids. Just read Genesis 22:1-19, then let the three act out the drama. When the "play" is finished, ask the students who played Isaac how he felt when it looked like he was about to die. Ask him if he was afraid. Say: "Death is the one thing that even brave men fear."

Ask if someone in the class will tell what they know about Jacob and Esau when they received blessings from Isaac.

Application

Discuss with your class why a parent has hopes for his children. Ask if any of them will share how their parents' hopes for them have affected their lives. Let each person in the class answer the question on the poster, "Are you ready for what the future holds?" Let each explain briefly why he is or why he is not ready. Point out why God and faith in Jesus are so important in thinking about the future. Repeat the memory verse with the class. Say: "If God and we are on the same side, we need not fear whatever tomorrow may bring. We will be ready to face whatever it is."

Collect the reports of the interviews the students did during the week. Read some of them aloud and ask after each, "Do you think (the name of the person interviewed) is afraid about the future?"

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for each student and his future.
2. Thank God for his leading in your own life.
3. Pray for the pastor in the worship service.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FAITH OF JACOB

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Genesis 25:27-34; 28:10-22; 32:22-31; 48:8-21; Hebrews 11:9-21

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 27:36; 28:20-22; 32:27-28; Hebrews 11:9-21

Memory Verse

"Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Lesson Aim: To motivate my students to think about what their new name, Christian means.

Teaching Aids: Chalk board and chalk.

Background Study

Genesis 25:27-34: Here Jacob showed that he deserved his name which meant "one who takes or grabs the place of another." He resented his father's love for his older brother, Esau. He found a way to grab the privileges of being the first born son in the family. While Jacob was cooking a delicious smelling soup, Esau came in very hungry from the fields. Jacob used this opportunity to make Esau give him his birth privileges for a bowl of the good red soup and other food. He tricked his brother to get what he wanted. We see Jacob's trickery again in Genesis 27:1-29 when he stole his brother's blessing.

Genesis 28:10-22: Jacob was fleeing from his brother's anger. Esau planned to kill him after his father died. On the way to his uncle's house, he spent the first night on the ground with a rock for a pillow. In a dream God spoke to Jacob and made some promise to him. Jacob certainly did not deserve God's help. The nature of God to love and bless those who do not deserve his love and blessings is wonderful. None of us really deserve God's love and blessings. This first meeting with God did not completely change the selfish Jacob. He tried to make a deal with God.

Genesis 32:22-31: During his twenty years of hard work in the land of Haran, Jacob was not always faithful to God. He often used trickery and deception to get what he wanted. He increased in wealth, but his heart and his will were far from God. When he met God face to face at Penuel, Jacob became a changed man. After wrestling with the stranger who represented God, Jacob received a new name and the blessings of God. He was injured in the struggle with an injury that would remind him forever that his strength came from God. He was repentant rather than proud when he met Esau again. The new name, Israel, pointed out that Jacob was a new man because of his meeting with God.

Genesis 48:8-21: Israel was pleased to meet the children of Joseph when he arrived in Egypt. Even though their mother was Egyptian, he wanted Joseph's sons to receive God's blessings. Joseph placed Manasseh before Israel's right hand so that he could receive the greater blessing. However, Israel crossed his hands to give the younger son, Ephraim, the greater blessing. The faith of Israel went

with the blessings. God was still in the process of fulfilling his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hebrews 11:9-21: Jacob received the same promise that Abraham and Isaac had held. God promised to make of them a great nation. They lived in a foreign land waiting for the fulfillment of this promise. Jacob had twelve sons who became the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. The promise was passed along even to the sons of Joseph.

In this Bible lesson we see how God works with sinful men to carry out his will. Jacob was the one to continue the line of promise, but he was unworthy. God continued to work in his life until Jacob freely decided he wanted to follow God. It took many years before he finally realized that the way to be pleasing to God was to obey him. When Jacob was willing to listen to God, he was given a new name, Israel. The new name represents a changed life.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Say: "Do you know what your name means?" Let the students answer. Say: "In some tribes and nations, names are of very great importance. When a child is small he has one name, but when he becomes older he gets a new name." Use a few minutes discussing what names mean in your area. If you have several nations or tribes in the class, give each one a chance to tell about names and what they mean in his case.

Ask: "Besides Jacob, whose life we will study today, what other Bible character can you think of whose name was changed by God?" Give the students a few minutes to discuss the names of Peter, Paul, Abram and Sarai.

Say: "Today we will look at the life of a man whose name and whose life was changed by God."

Examination

Holding your Bible open in front of you, tell the story of Jacob using the Bible background material and following this outline. Write the outline on the chalk board as you talk.

1. Early life

A. His character

B. His actions

C. His name

2. The Journey to Haran

A. The reason for the journey

B. The dream and first encounter with God

3. In Haran

A. Laban's trickery

B. Jacob's escape

4. At Penuel

A. The struggle

B. The result

C. The new name

5. Later Life

A. A man at peace

Application

Say: "When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we receive a new name, Christian. The name has great meaning. It means `like Christ.' Do we live like Christ? Are we worthy of his name?" Close with an open prayer, allowing each one to pray as he chooses. Urge the students to live worthy of the name, "Christian."

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that we will live worthy of the name, Christian.

2. Pray that those in the class who have not done so will accept Jesus as their Saviour.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FAITH OF SARAH

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Genesis 12:10-20; 16:1-6; 18:9-15; 21:1-7; Hebrews 11:11

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 12:11-13; 16:6; 18:9-15; 21:1-2; Hebrews 11:11.

Memory Verse

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Lesson Aim: To show my students that God loves us even though we do not deserve his love.

Teaching Aids: Arrange seats for five students as a panel before your class.

Background Study

Genesis 12:10-20: Soon after Abraham and Sarah arrived in the promised land, a severe drought caused a food shortage. They decided to go to Egypt to live until there was food in the new land. Abraham was afraid that Sarah's beauty would get him into trouble. Without waiting for God to plan for their safety, they decided to lie about their relationship. They would say that Sarah was Abraham's sister.

They were not telling the whole truth even though Sarah was Abraham's half-sister. Rather than have Abraham in danger, Sarah was willing to be one of Pharaoh's wives. God rescued her by causing sickness and other troubles to come upon Pharaoh and his family. God told Pharaoh why all this was happening to him. He angrily sent Sarah and Abraham out of the land of Egypt.

Genesis 16:1-6: Sarah had never had a child, even though God had promised that her descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. She decided that God was at fault and decided to get a child without waiting for him. Hagar was a young slave girl owned by Sarah. Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham so that she might have children by Hagar. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she was proud and caused Sarah to hate her. When Sarah asked Abraham what to do about Hagar's pride, he told her to do as she wished.

Genesis 18:9-15: God's messengers met with Abraham. They told him that Sarah would have a child the next year. Abraham accepted the news with joy, but Sarah laughed with scorn. She was long past the age to have children. When she realized that God was speaking to her about her laughter and lack of faith, she was afraid. She sinned again by denying that she had laughed.

Genesis 21:1-7: God kept his word. Sarah had a son. Her faith had been very weak, but now it was much stronger. She recognized that Isaac was a gift from God. Male babies were usually circumcised at the age of eight days. This was a sign that the baby was Jewish, one of God's chosen people.

Hebrews 11:11: In this verse we see that Sarah did not resist God's plan for her. Faith is not gained by constant struggle. Rather, it is simply allowing God to do what one cannot do himself. Sarah was not physically able to have

children, but she allowed God to perform a miracle in her body. She had the faith to believe that God would do what he said he would do.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction Contact five of your students during the week. Ask each of them to take one of the Scripture portions for today's lesson. One will take Genesis 12:11-13, one Genesis 16:6, , one Genesis 18:10-12 and 15, one Genesis 21:1-2 and one Hebrews 11:11. Explain that when you meet together they will serve as a panel of "experts" to tell the class what their Scripture portions mean. They may use their books, Bibles, the teacher's book, commentaries or whatever resources they have access to. Ask each to arrive a few minutes early for the meeting so that together you may arrange the seating before the rest of the class arrives.

Be sure to arrive early for your class. As your panel arrives, welcome them and thank them for their help. Let them help arrange the meeting place so that they will be seated away from the rest of the class. As the others in the class arrive, greet them, then take them up to meet your panel of experts.

Sit with your panel. Introduce them by name to the class after the class time begins.

Examination

Say: "Sarah was a woman who displayed little faith in her life, yet she is listed as one of the faithful in Hebrews. Why? To answer that question our panel will explain what the Scriptures in today's lesson mean." Let each of your panel members share his understanding of the Scripture assigned to him.

When they have finished, ask: "How many sins did Sarah commit?" Let your panel answer this. Ask someone from the class to write these on the chalk board so that all may see them. Ask: "Does Sarah seem to be a faithful person?" Let the panel answer. Ask: "What does being faithful mean?" Again let your panel discuss this.

Application

Say: When Sarah saw that God was able to use her, she became happy and fulfilled. Can our own faithfulness to God and to his plan for our lives bring us the same satisfaction?" Again let the panel discuss this. Say: "God is willing to use us. He is faithful to us. Are we faithful to him?" Thank your panel for their work and participation.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that God will use each of your class members to witness to someone about Jesus this week.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FAITH OF JOSEPH

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Genesis 37; 39; 50; Hebrews 11:22

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 37:5-8, 28; 39:20; 41:41; Hebrews 11:22

Memory Verse

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Romans 8:25).

Lesson Aim: To help my students understand that God can overcome any difficulties they have.

Teaching Aids: Write Romans 8:28 on the chalk board using The Living Bible. "And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans." Have paper and pencils for each student.

Background Study

Genesis 37; 39; 50: We can read the story of Joseph in the last part of Genesis. Joseph was the last great figure in the family of Abraham until the birth of Moses hundreds of years later. God had a way of guiding events, even evil ones, to serve his purpose. (See Genesis 50:19-21.) The life of Joseph illustrates clearly how God can turn evil to good for those who trust in him.

Joseph was the eleventh of the twelve sons of Jacob. He was the first born of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel. Jacob showed how much he loved Joseph by giving him a long, beautiful robe. When he was about 17 years old, Joseph boasted to his brothers and parents about some dreams he had had. This caused his brothers to hate him even more. His brothers mockingly called him "Master of Dreams." They did not realize how true their name for Joseph was.

When Joseph was away from his father his ten older brothers decided to get rid of him. They sold him as a slave to traders going to Egypt as a quick way to make money. You can imagine the dismay of proud Joseph being sold by his own brothers for a cheap price!

When Joseph arrived in Egypt, Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard, bought him. He was put in charge of all the affairs of Potiphar because God helped him to prosper in all that he did. Joseph depended on God, and God helped his work. He was loyal to Potiphar as well as to God. When Potiphar's wife desired him because of his good looks, Joseph firmly refused. She was persistent and tried to make Joseph sin with her, but he fled from her. The rejected woman decided to get even with Joseph by telling her husband that Joseph had tried to lie with her. She expected Potiphar to put Joseph to death. Potiphar was angry and put Joseph in prison.

Joseph kept his faith strong even in prison. God helped him again to prosper in all that he did. Soon he was in charge of all the other prisoners. Two of the king's prisoners had dreams while they were in prison with Joseph. The perplexed men shared their dreams with Joseph who seemed to have the wisdom of God. Joseph told the chief butler that his dream meant he would be restored to favor in

three days. He told the chief baker that he would be killed in three days. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was back in the service of Pharaoh. Joseph was truly the "Master of Dreams" because what he had said would happen did happen, but the butler forgot him.

Pharaoh had two dreams that his wise men could not interpret. The butler finally remembered Joseph who was called. Joseph told Pharaoh that there would be seven years of plentiful harvest and seven of no harvest. Noting Joseph's wisdom Pharaoh made him the second in command of Egypt. The slave, Joseph, became a ruler in Egypt at the age of thirty.

During the good years, Joseph supervised the storage of grain. When the bad years came, people came from everywhere to Egypt to buy food. Jacob and his sons were in want. Jacob sent his sons to buy food. They did not recognize Joseph, so he tested them to see if they were sorry for what they had done to him earlier. The times of testing lasted even to a second trip to buy more grain. Finally, Joseph was convinced the brothers had changed and he joyfully revealed himself to them. Pharaoh gave permission for Joseph's family to come and live in Egypt. So the people of God moved to Egypt. God used Joseph to help prevent God's chosen people from starving. God did not forget that he had promised to give the land of Canaan to the Jewish nation. Jacob was buried in Canaan after his death. Joseph had his descendants bury him there as well when the people of God entered the promised land.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction As your students arrive, give them a sheet of paper and a pencil. Ask them to write down what the verse on the board (or paper) means to them. Tell them they may write a paragraph, a poem or a song to explain what the verse says to them. Collect these as the students finish. Without revealing who wrote which one, read what the students have written. Say: "Our lesson today tells us about a man who had much evil happen to him, but he allowed God to bring good out of it."

Examination

Using the background Scriptures, the background summary in this book and the material in the Pupil's book, tell the story of Joseph and how he trusted in God. This will take quite a long time. You may want to ask during the story, "Then what happened?" Let the students help you tell it.

Application

Ask the students if they prayed for one another this week. Encourage them to keep doing this. Ask if one will share his list of what he is trusting God for. As they share, compliment them for their thought and for their dedication.

Tell the class that there are times when we must wait a long time for God to bring good out of evil. Remind them of the story in their books about a wife's patient trust. Ask them what patient trust is. Tell them that God rewards those who wait patiently on him.

Return the papers that they wrote in the beginning to the students. Ask them to keep them in their Bibles.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Thank God for Joseph and his testimony.
2. Thank God that he never forgets where we are or what our situation is.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FAITH OF MOSES

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Exodus 1-20; Hebrews 11:23-29

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:23-29

Memory Verse

"And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides for ever" (1 John 2:17).

Lesson Aim: To emphasize to my students that God gives each person freedom of choice.

Teaching Aids: Two coins of different value.

Background Study

In all the chapters of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, we can find accounts of the life of Moses. We will study the first 20 chapters of Exodus.

The Exodus event was very important in Hebrew history. It developed the faith of the Old Testament people. It changed a dispirited people living in slavery to a nation of people who worshipped the true God. Moses led his people out of slavery to sin.

The events in the life of Moses noted in Hebrews 11:23-29 are only a few illustrations of the faith that was shown during the time. The "fleeting pleasures of sin" in verse 25 refers to all the privileges and riches Moses had as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. The writer of Hebrews substituted the name "Christ" for "God" in verse 26. Christ is God in the flesh. "The rewarder" is the fulfillment of God's promise to make a great nation of his people and to give them the land of Canaan in which to live. In verse 27, the writer said that Moses was not afraid of Pharaoh's anger. Probably this meant that he had substituted wisdom for fear. Moses was so certain that God would deliver his people that he established a celebration to take place every year in the future. The passover Feast became one of the greatest feast days celebrated by Jews even today. Read Exodus 12:24. God performed the great miracle recorded in Hebrews 11:29.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Take out the two coins you have brought and hold them out to one of the class members. Tell him that he can have either one, not both. After he was chosen, point out that a wise person always chooses the best offered to him. Say: "God offers one way of life and Satan another. Which do you choose? You can have only one."

Examination

Tell the class that today you are going to talk about decision making. Say: "One man in the Old Testament usually made the right decisions. His name was Moses."

Using the events named in Hebrews 11:23-29 as an outline, narrate the life of Moses to the class. Remember that Moses was a man who trusted God for all his decisions. Discuss the following:

1. Moses' parents hiding the baby, Moses.
2. Moses turning away from the life as a Pharaoh's son and choosing to help the Hebrews.
3. Moses leading the people out of Egypt.
4. Moses trusting God to perform the miracle of the plagues and leading the people to establish the Passover remembrance.
5. Moses leading the people through the wilderness and trusting God for everything.

When you finish, have a class member read Hebrews 11:23-29. He will read a verse then stop. When he stops, ask another student to tell what he remembers from your narration about that part of the Scripture. Proceed in this way asking a different student each time to tell what he remembers.

Application

Tell this story: "A young man became obsessed with the idea of earning a large amount of money before the age of 30. He worked very hard to earn money, neglecting his wife and family to have more time to work at his business. He earned more and more money, reaching his goal by the time he was 28. He thought he would be very happy with this large amount of money. He found, however, that he was not satisfied. He wanted still more money. His wife left him. His children felt he was a stranger who only gave them things instead of love. Finally the man became very lonely. He asked God to help him. God told him to get rid of all his riches. He gave his money to orphans, to blind people, to crippled people and to sick people. His family came back to him when they saw he really needed them. The desire to get money did not bring lasting happiness. Doing the will of God brought happiness that lasted forever."

Say: "We are often like this man. We make decisions without taking God into account. We fail to ask him what he wants us to do. When we do this we often get into things we should not. Young people begin to smoke, to drink beer, to go to dances because they want to please their friends. Soon they cannot make good decisions. Their bad decisions have set a pattern for their lives. This is a great danger. When we leave God and make our own decisions, it is easy to leave him further and further behind us in our lives."

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that your students will allow God to help them make the decisions of their lives.
2. Thank God for the opportunity to study God's Word together.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE FAITH OF RAHAB

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Joshua 1-6; Hebrews 11:30-31; James 2:24-25

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:30-31; Joshua 2:1-24; 6:22-25; James 2:24-25

Memory Verse

"The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Lesson Aim: To lead my students to see that God expects both faith and works from Christian.

Teaching Aids: On the board, or on a large sheet of paper, write: $F + W = S$.

Background Study

Joshua 1-6: Joshua became the new leader of God's people after the death of Moses. God assured him of his help (Joshua 1:9). The people prepared to move west across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan. With the help of God they planned to defeat all the cities that resisted them. The walled city of Jericho would not cooperate with the Hebrew people nor listen to God's warnings. They decided to prevent the take-over of their city by staying behind their thick, high walls. They could stay inside in safety for a long time because they had good water from a spring and plenty of food.

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho to find out the strength of the city. Rahab, a prostitute, helped them even though she was not a Hebrew. All of the people of Jericho had heard about the way God was protecting his people. They were afraid of God's power. Rahab confessed that the God of the Hebrews was the true God. She helped the spies and was promised that she and those with her would not be hurt when the city was destroyed.

The spies returned to Joshua on the other side of the Jordan River. God performed a great miracle in helping his people cross the flooded river. The ark of the covenant represented the presence and holiness of God among them. The dedicated priests carried this ark everywhere they travelled as God had commanded them to do. Joshua and all the people crossed the Jordan River on dry ground and entered the land of promise. God had kept the promise he had given to Abraham many years before.

After the people had crossed the Jordan River, they piled up twelve stones representing each of the tribes. God had commanded that they do this as memorial of his care. There Joshua circumcised all the uncircumcised males among the people. This was to show that the people were clean in the sight of God, and they were ready to obey him by capturing Jericho.

God gave Joshua exact instructions about how to destroy the city. Obedience to the strange directions would lead to victory. The people did just as they had been told and easily conquered the city. Rahab and all those with her were saved because of Rahab's faith and actions.

Hebrews 11:30-31: The walls of Jericho crumbled away when God's instructions were obeyed. Silent marching and loud shouting seemed a strange way to fight a battle. However, the people followed God's instructions, believing. Their faith in God was rewarded.

In the same way, Rahab was a woman of faith. When she came to know of the true God, she believed the reports and trusted God herself. She was rescued along with others who listened to her words of testimony about God. Her faith was the means through which all of her family and friends were spared from death.

James 2:24-25: Verse 24 tells about the faith and resultant works of Abraham. He was considered the friend of God because of his faith and his works. To be justified in the sight of God means to be pleasing and acceptable to God. The outward works of man are proof of the inward work of God. Rahab pleased God in the same way that Abraham did.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Call attention to the formula which you have written on the board. Say: "This is a very important formula for Christian people. It means faith plus works equal salvation. Some people say they have faith, but their lives contain no Christian acts. These people say they are Christians. Other people do good things all their lives, but they do not believe in Jesus. They feel they will go to heaven because of their good works.

The woman in our lesson today had both faith and works. Her faith caused her to do certain acts. She saved herself and her family from destruction because of her faith. Let us study this woman, Rahab.

Examination

You will be using a teaching method called Scripture search today. Have the students open their Bibles to Joshua 1. Say: "In this chapter, a new leader is taking over the leadership of the Hebrew people. Who had been the old leader and who was the new one?" Allow the students to answer. Then say: "Who is speaking at the beginning of the chapter?" Again allow time for answers. "What commands did God give to Joshua?" The students will answer. Then, "Is there any message for us today in this chapter.?"

Follow this same pattern through the first six chapters of Joshua. You ask the question, they search the Scripture, they answer the question. Use these questions and any others you wish to include:

Chapter 2: 1. Who was Rahab and how did she help the spies. 2. Why did she help them? 3. What was her reward for her faith? 4. What was the report the spies gave Joshua?

Chapter 3. 1. What preparations did the people make for the march? 2. How were the Hebrews to cross the Jordan River?

Chapter 4: 1. Describe the memorial the people left by the river. 2. Why did God choose the same miracle he had used at the Red Sea?

Chapter 5: 1. What happened to the inhabitants of the land when they heard what God had done for the Hebrews? 2. What did Joshua do when he arrived in the promised land? 3. Why? 4. Who was the visitor in the last few verses?

Chapter 6: 1. What instructions did God give Joshua? 2. What results came from following these instructions? 3. What happened to the people of Jericho? 4. What happened to Rahab and her family? 5. Why?

Ask: "Did God do what he had promised to do? Did the people show their faith by following his commands?" Ask a student to read Hebrews 11:30-31 and another to read James 2:24-25. Explain what justification means (from your background material). Say that Rahab's actions were caused by her faith.

Application

Ask: "Do your acts reflect your faith? The Bible says that Jesus went about doing good. Are you doing as he did? Remember that both are necessary, faith and works." Indicate the formula on the board again. "We must be sure we have both."

Prayer Suggestions

1. Thank God for each student by name.
2. Pray that each student will understand that both faith and works are important.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE FAITH OF OTHERS

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Judges 4-7; 11-16; 1 Samuel 1; 16:1-13; Hebrews 11:32-40

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 11:32-40

Memory Verse

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Lesson Aim: To encourage my students to allow the Holy Spirit to give them the power to witness to others.

Teaching Aids: Write on the chalk board (or paper) the names of the people or the events in the lesson today.

***** D I S P L A Y *****

Background Study

Judges 6-7: During the period of the judges the people often turned from worship of God to worship of idols. When this happened, God allowed their enemies to conquer the Israelites. After the people repented of their sins, God raised up strong leaders to lead them to victory. Gideon's power came from the Holy Spirit. Gideon, after being sure it was really God who was leading him, became the leader of only 300 men who defeated the Midianites to bring peace and prosperity among the people of God.

Judges 4-5: Barak is another who received power from God. They loved Samson very much and wanted him to be faithful to God and his law. Samson had the power of God in his life during the time he had superhuman strength. He lost his strength when sin overcame his life.

Judges 11-12:7: Jephthan was the son of a prostitute and a robber. God used him to defeat the enemies of the people. His oath to sacrifice the first person to meet him when he returned in triumph was not something God required. God's strength and power is a gift that cannot be earned.

1 Samuel 16:1-13: God directed that David be anointed to eventually replace King Saul. Samuel, the great judge and prophet of Israel, was asked to anoint one of the sons of Jesse. God looked at what was inside David's heart before he made his decision. David's power for all his later activities came from the Holy Spirit. (See verse 13.)

1 Samuel 1: Hannah wanted a child and waited for one for a long time. The prayer of Hannah was so emotional that Eli, the priest, thought she was drunk. When God answered her prayer, Hannah freely gave her son back to God for serving. The power of God that enabled Samuel to be born was the same power that would one day make him a strong judge and prophet for the nation of Israel.

Hebrews 11:32-40: Here is a summary of the remainder of Jewish history. The writer places all of these people in the faith chapter. Because of their steadfast faith, they were able to withstand torments and unbelievable sufferings. Some of the people and events listed can be found in the Bible. Others are recorded in that period between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament called Maccabean period. If they had not stood firm in their faith, the hope and expectations of the Messiah would have been lost. They preserved the faith which found its fulfillment in Jesus.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction

Point to the display of events and names on the board. Say: "We are going to take a journey through Jewish history today. These people are some of those we will meet in our journey. The events are some that we will watch happen."

Examination

Ask the students to open their Bibles to Hebrews 11:32-40. Using all the material in the pupil's book, all the background material in this book and your Bible, follow the outline or summary of history of this Scripture. Tell in as realistic way as you can the stories of the people named and the events listed.

If you feel your students will understand, you may want to include the following information:

Many events which involved biblical characters were not included in the Bible. They were, however, written about in other histories. The four hundred years which passed between the close of Old Testament times and the beginning of New Testament times are also recorded in books other than the Bible. This period was called the Maccabean period, and it was a time of great persecution among the Jews. They were torn apart, burned, crucified, sawn asunder, used as human torches, put on the rack and cruelly tortured in other vicious ways.

Christians need to know about this period because the people clung to their faith and endured the torture. Therefore, God worked out his purpose in Israel. The torment that the Jews suffered was so harsh that man can scarcely read the accounts of it without shedding tears. All the events mentioned here in Hebrews happened to the Jews during that period.

Application

Ask: "How does the Scripture make you feel? What does it mean to us today? In some countries in recent years, Christians have had to undergo torture because of their faith. Are we ready to die for Christ? Would we stand firm if we were told to renounce our faith or die? Think about it."

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray that your students' faith might be increased so that they will stand firm when their faith is tested.
2. Pray for God to prepare your students for the next lesson, the last in this book.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FAITH OF TODAY

PREPARING TO TEACH

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-40; 12:1-2

Verses in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 12:1-2

Memory Verse

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings too closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2a).

Lesson Aim: To bring those of my class who do not know Christ to accept him as Saviour and to encourage the Christians to run the race of faith well.

Teaching Aids: Bring along anything you may have that has to do with running: a book on running, running shoes, starting blocks, a sweat shirt, a whistle.

Background Study

Hebrews 12:1-2: These verses conclude the study of faith enough background for these verses. The writer of Hebrews is showing that it is faith which makes us acceptable to God. None of the people in this chapter did anything to earn the favor of God. None were good enough to deserve his favor. All were given a new relationship to God as a gift from God.

Hebrews 11:1-40: The other lessons in this quarterly give The Hebrews writer gives a beautiful summary of what the Christian life is really like.

First, the Christian is "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses." Who were these witnesses? They are the same men and women of faith that we have been studying about. They are the other countless Christians who are living today. They are all there, watching the Christian run his race.

Therefore, we must "lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely." When a runner prepares for a race, he makes sure every gram of unnecessary weight is gone from his body. His clothing and shoes are of the lightest material. What are the weights and sin in our lives? The writer does not make a list of us because what may be a weight for one is not for another. Some are never troubled by drinking or smoking, but others are. Although the weights and sins are not named, they are those handicaps that cause us to run the Christian race poorly.

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us." Have you ever seen anybody walking in a race where others are running? We need to keep on running even when fatigue and weakness come. The crowd of witness is there to cheer us on the end of our race.

As we run we will keep "looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." That is our goal, to become like Christ who was faithful even to the cross and beyond. Of course, we

are going to get blisters, sore knees, shin splints and pain; but our small discomforts are nothing like the cross Jesus died on. If we remember him, his cruel death and his glorious resurrection, our running is easier. No runner who gets distracted by the crowd, his pain or wandering thoughts will keep his eye on the goal. To lose sight of the goal is to lose the race. Our goal is Jesus, whom we will keep in sight.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Introduction Tell this story: "During the Olympic games one year an Ethiopian runner was completing a long race. Somehow he and his trainers became confused about the number of laps he had run. The trainers told him that he was about to go for his last lap, when, in fact, he had two more laps to go. Seeing the signal he poured all his energy into what he thought was his final lap, excitedly thought he had won the race and stopped running. The rest of the runners passed the exhausted and confused man, and one of them won the race. This could have been the humiliating end of this man's running career, but it was not. The very next day, this same man heroically came back to run an even longer race and win a gold medal."

Say: "We are running a race just as the Ethiopian man. Today, we will take a look at that race."

Examination

Have your class members open their Bibles to Hebrews 11. Briefly, review the lessons from this book by naming the person studied in each and a few facts about them. Involve your students in this review by asking questions and encouraging responses.

When you complete this revision, have someone read Hebrews 12:1-2. Using the background study in this book discuss the meaning of these two verses. When you talk about the sin and weights of verse one, let the students name these from their own lives. Write them down either on the chalkboard or on paper. Your list might include pride, selfishness, self-seeking, lust.

Application

As the list is completed, ask your students to bow their heads and close their eyes. Say, "Have we named your sin, the one that is keeping you from running the Christian race? Right now in the silence of this hour, ask God to help you conquer this sin so that you may run the race with honor." Allow enough time for this prayer to be made, then continue. "Perhaps there is someone here this morning who is not in the race at all. You have never accepted Jesus as your Saviour. You have heard this lesson and the others in this series. Now you want this faith we have been studying about. Just now, while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, will you ask Jesus to come into your heart and be the Saviour of your life? I will pray a sentence and you repeat it after me. You may do this out loud or silently as you choose. The other Christian will be praying for you." Now pray this prayer, pausing after each sentence.

"Jesus, I have sinned. I do not want to sin. I am sorry for my sins. I want a new life. I want to turn away from my sin and let you change my life. Please come into my heart right now. Be the Saviour of my life. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen."

As the students raise their heads from prayer, say: "If you accepted Jesus today, I would like to know it, and so would our pastor. We want to talk to you and help you understand what the next step in your Christian life will be. Please see me after the class to tell me of your decision. Now let us sing a praise song to God for all he has done among us today." Sing any praise song that your class know.

Prayer Suggestions

1. Pray for renewed energy as you and your students run the greatest race in life, the Christian race.