**1. Motivate**

What are some things you can’t see but you know are there?

* electric wires behind the wall
* Wi-Fi signals, radio waves
* brakes on your car
* the medicine working in your body
* gas in your tank, water in the pipes in your house
* molecules, atoms

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_dkdoynvi> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download it to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2cn2sd9f>

* bones in your body
* billions of stars in the sky

**2. Transition**

There are many important things we take on faith.

* Everything God does in our lives is designed to increase our faith in Him.
* Discerning and obeying God’s voice calls for faith in Him.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Believe and Rely on God

Listen for a definition of faith.

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NIV) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 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.

Identify the key words in the writer’s explanation of faith.

* being sure
* what we hope for
* being certain
* what we can’t see

Note the two descriptive phrases from other versions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| NIV | KJV | NLT |
| * being sure of what we hope for * certain of what we do not see | * substance of things hoped for * evidence of things not seen | * confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen * evidence of things we cannot yet see |

We see two basic elements:

1. The reality required for having hope
2. Evidence beyond what we see and feel

What mighty act of God does the writer cite as an example of responding in faith to God?

* it was formed at God’s command
* God made it out of nothing
* there were no materials of which to construct all the matter that now exists

How is that different than when we call an artist “creative”?

* the artist uses a medium (paint, canvas, etc.)
* puts them together in a way that displays an image which we can view
* musical artist puts together notes to make something we listen to
* God starts with nothing, not even space, and created “stuff”
* you could say that actually we *innovate* or *transform¸* but only God truly *creates*

Why does believing God is Creator require faith on our part?

* no one was there to see it happen … no firsthand witnesses
* we have the Genesis account
* general opinion is that Moses actually wrote the words – but he wasn’t there to see it happen
* probably it was an orally passed down through generations
* we read it and accept it as truth

How can the creation around us fuel our faith in the unseen God?

* the beauty we see
* the marvel of the micro elements – atomic and subatomic particles
* the marvel of the macro … the immensity of the universe
* we measure gravity and have formulas to describe its effect, but don’t know why it works
* God’s power and authority and creativity are on display everywhere

What else, besides creation, compels you to have faith in God even though you’ve never seen Him? What are some experiences that have increased your faith in God?

* protection in dangerous situations
* miraculous provision
* Scripture
* God’s Spirit speaking to our hearts, impressing on us the reality, the Truth of what God says in His Word
* changed lives, answered prayer

3.2 Faith Responds with Obedience

Listen for names from the Hall of Fame of Faith.

Hebrews 11:4-6 (NIV) By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. 5 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. 6 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.

What proves that both Abel and Enoch pleased God?

* God commended them
* declared them as righteous
* their faith still speaks, is an example
* verse 6 declares it is *only* by faith that we please God
* they believed in God’s existence
* they earnestly sought after God

Our passage says that Abel, “by faith he still speaks.” How does our influence as people of faith live long past us and affect those who follow us?

* the life we live before family, friends, people we work with
* what we teach our children
* our participation in the Great Commission (giving, going, praying)
* things we may write that others will read
* how we model a life of faith in and obedience to God

According to this passage, what is the only way we can please God with our lives?

* faith is the requirement for pleasing God
* must believe that God exists
* must believe that God *will* bless and reward a person who sincerely, seriously seeks Him

What do you think it means to earnestly seek God?

* read what God says, apply it to your life
* talk to God … pray …
* tell God of your awe of who He is, what He is like
* confess to God, agree with Him concerning your sinful attitudes and actions
* tell Him your problems, your needs
* tell Him you are trusting Him to meet those needs, solve those problems

*Why* is faith necessary for pleasing God?

* God says so
* it is required if we are going to obey God (Adam and Eve did not act in faith, did not believe what God had warned them about)
* requirement of faith allows humans the ability to choose or reject God
* if we didn’t have that choice, we would be robots
* presence of faith (or disbelief) in one’s life is how God judges who is justified and righteous (or condemned)
* obedience alone is not enough … a person can obey just to look good or impress others
* faith will result in obedience, but obedience (doing good) does not guarantee one has faith

3.3 Focused on God’s Word

Listen for aliens and strangers.

Hebrews 11:13-16 (NIV) All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

What was the fate of some of these heroes of faith?

* still living by faith when they died
* did not receive things promised
* saw them on ahead in the distance (not in this life)

What desire did the examples of faith have?

* looking for a different kind of existence – a “country of their own”
* they abandon a life absent of faith
* longing for a heavenly home

How would God honor that desire?

* He is not ashamed to be called “their God”
* He has prepared a city for them
* He will receive them into His presence for eternity

What kinds of things do we trust the Lord for but might not see happen while we are still in this life?

* salvation of certain friends and family we are currently praying for
* changes in our country’s policies on issues such as abortion
* peace in certain areas of the world
* the growth and advancement of a certain church

What has helped you remain faithful while waiting for God to fulfill a promise?

* being convinced of God’s power and authority
* convinced of His love demonstrated by Jesus’ work of redemption
* the reality of Jesus coming as fully God and fully human to earth to take the punishment/judgment for our sinful condition
* the reality of the resurrection

In what concrete ways can we demonstrate the truth that we are “aliens and strangers” on earth?

* how we spend our time
* who we associate closely with, who we choose as our friends
* how we spend our resources

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

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Pray.

* Consider the greatest challenge you are currently facing.
* On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your faith?
* Pray each day, trusting God to help you with the challenging situation.

List.

* Make a list of as many promises of God in the Bible as you can think of.
* Identify any promises you may have difficulty believing for your own life.
* Pray and ask God to help you trust Him and claim those promises for your life.

Encourage.

* If you know others who are struggling with faith or with one of God’s promises, encourage their faith.
* Pray for them and with them.
* Remind them that God’s faithfulness in the past means He can be trusted with the future.

Cryptogram Puzzle

Diagram

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Description automatically generatedA picture containing text, crossword puzzle

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This coded message has just come to us in the diplomatic pouch from our consulate in Diani Landzeabourg. We **trust** that it comes to us with some importance. Our normal decoders are at church middle school winter retreat. We need your help. An example of the code is given for “HELLO WORLD” See how the shapes match the patterns in the table on the right? Do your best, please. When you finish the decoding, pass the message along to the chairman of your prayer committee. Help and other Family Activities are available at <https://tinyurl.com/2cn2sd9f>