

**FAITH AND PLEASING GOD**  
**Hebrews 11:5-6**  
**The Faith Chapter – Week 3**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This is week 3 of our study through Hebrews 11, a study we are calling “The Faith Chapter” because Hebrews 11 is all about faith. It begins with a definition of faith, and then in the rest of the chapter it gives us examples of faith by pointing to the heroes of the Old Testament.
2. The definition of faith is found in **Hebrews 11:1**. “Now faith is the assurance of what is hoped for, the conviction of what is not seen.” In other words, faith is confidence in God, that He is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do.
3. Today we are going to learn about faith by looking at the example of Enoch.
4. **Hebrews 11:5-6** “5 By faith Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death. He was not to be found because God took him away. For before he was taken away, he was approved as one who pleased God. 6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

**II. WHO IS ENOCH?**

1. Enoch’s story is found in **Genesis 5:21-24**. “21 Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. 22 And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 23 So Enoch’s life lasted 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.”
2. Enoch<sup>1</sup> is an antediluvian – a person who lived before God flooded the earth.

---

<sup>1</sup> He was the seventh generation of human beings through the genealogy of Adam’s son Seth. Enoch’s life is contrasted with Lamech, who was part of the seventh generation through the genealogy of Cain. Lamech was the first polygamist, taking two wives. He was also a murderer. The NIV describes Lamech as “evil personified,” while Enoch was a man who pleased God.

3. Enoch had several children, and he lived to the age of 365. That may sound long, but back then that wasn't that old.
4. In fact, Enoch's son, Methuselah, went on to live to the age of 969. He was the oldest man to ever live.
5. Enoch was also the great-grandfather of Noah, which means that all of us are related to Enoch. He is the ancestor of everyone who has ever lived since Noah.
6. Enoch was one of only two people who never died. The other was the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12). As Elijah was walking and talking with his successor Elisha, a chariot of fire suddenly appeared and took him to heaven. The Bible doesn't give us that much detail about Enoch.
  - i. **Genesis 5:24** simply says, "Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him."
  - ii. **Hebrews 11:5** simply says, "By faith Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death. He was not to be found because God took him away."
7. Many interesting legends about Enoch were developed by the Jews over the centuries.
  - i. He was said to be the first tailor. He taught others how to take animal skins and cut and sew them into clothing.
  - ii. He was said to be the first cobbler – He was the first person to teach people how to make shoes to protect their feet.
  - iii. He was said to be the first person to put pen to paper and write books.
  - iv. Enoch was said to write three books, which are still in existence today – 1, 2, and 3 Enoch. However, no scholars believe he actually wrote these books, and the books are not considered inspired Scripture by the majority of Jewish and Christian denominations.
  - v. A couple of interesting legends developed over time about the death of Enoch. The Book of Wisdom (or the Wisdom of Solomon, an apocryphal book written around 50 BC; included in the Catholic Bible) says that God took Enoch to himself when he was still young to save him from the infection of this world. In other words, God took Enoch to heaven to prevent him from falling into sin.

Another legend about Enoch is that he made friends with the Angel of Death, and he made three requests of him. First, to die and come back again so that he might know what death was like. Second, to see the abode of the wicked so that he might know what the punishment of the evil was like. Both of these were granted. Third, to be permitted to see into Paradise so that he might see what the blessed enjoyed. This was also granted, but when he saw the beauty of Paradise, he never came back to earth again. (William Barclay, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, 134.)

8. But Hebrews 11 emphasizes three things about Enoch:

- i. He had faith.
- ii. His faith enabled him to please God.
- iii. His faith was rewarded by God saving him from death.

9. Therefore, **the key takeaway from Enoch's life was that he pleased God.**

10. And the writer of Hebrews is saying that he pleased God because he had faith. Faith enabled him, encouraged him, strengthened him to live a life that is pleasing to God.

11. So, the person of faith strives to please God. If you think you have faith but you aren't striving to please God, you are mistaken.

12. We could also say that faith is necessary to please God. **Hebrews 11:6**, "Now without faith it is impossible to please God..." If you want to grow in pleasing God, then you need to grow in faith.

13. So, let's talk about pleasing God.

### III. **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PLEASE GOD?**

#### 1. **Communion with God.**

- i. **Genesis 5:22-24** "22 And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 23 So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him."
- ii. Twice in this passage it says that Enoch walked with God. What does that mean?
- iii. The **NLT** (Gen 5:22) says, "Enoch lived in close fellowship with God."
- iv. The **Reformation Study Bible** (Gen 5:22) says, "The expression... signifies intimate fellowship."

- v. Enoch pleased God because he maintained a close relationship with God.
- vi. God created you for Himself; not just to serve Him, or to obey Him, but to have a relationship with Him. A friendship. In fact, the Bible refers to God as our Father, and our husband. God wants to be as close to us as a father to his child, as a husband to his wife.
- vii. I know a man who, once he graduated from college, he moved away and pretty much cut off all contact with his parents. He doesn't call, write, or visit, not even for birthdays or holidays. And it's not because they did anything wrong. He's just completely selfish. That's a shame. That's not why you have kids. You don't pour your heart and soul into raising your kids so they can grow up never talk to you again. You have kids so you can have a lifetime relationship with them. So, you can love them, and be loved by them. So you can know them and be known by them. That's the same reason God made you. To know and be known, love and be loved.
- viii. So, what are we talking about when we say communion with God. We're talking about conversation. It pleases God when you talk to Him. When you ask Him for things; when you praise Him; when You thank Him.
- ix. The Bible says to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17); to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess 5:18); to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil 4:4); to praise God all day long (Ps 35:28); and to meditate on God's word day and night (Ps 1:2). In other words, God wants you to talk to Him all day long, and if you're not talking to Him, then He wants you to be listening to Him by studying and thinking about His word.
- x. I encourage you to start your day with a Quiet Time. This is thirty minutes or so to spend with God in prayer and Bible reading. And then all during the day, talk to God and think about His word. That pleases the Lord.

## **2. Commitment to the will of God.**

- i. To walk with God doesn't just mean maintaining intimate fellowship with God.
- ii. The **CSB Study Bible** (Gen 5:6-31) says, "The phrase 'walked with God' suggests living a life consistent with God's will as well as experiencing fellowship with him."
- iii. The **NKJV Study Bible** (Gen 5:21-24) says, "The phrase 'Enoch walked with God,' expresses a life of fellowship with God and obedience to the Lord..."
- iv. Both of those study Bibles agree that walking with God refers not merely to intimate fellowship with God, but to obedience to God's will. And that makes logical sense because it would be impossible to maintain an intimate friendship with God if you are not committed to obeying Him.
- v. If you want to please God, you must be committed to the will of God.
- vi. Once again we see the connection between faith and obedience. It's not true faith without obedience.
- vii. **What does it mean to be committed to the will of God?** It means four things.

**1. First, understand the term "will of God."**

- a. By "will of God" I'm referring to God's moral will. His clear-cut moral commands in Scripture.
- b. Let's look at five examples.
  - i. **Ephesians 4:25** "Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another."
    - 1. What is God's will here? Do not lie, ever, for any reason. Speak the truth.
  - ii. **Ephesians 4:28** "Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need."
    - 1. What is God's will here? Do not steal, ever, for any reason.

- iii. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** “For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality.”
  - 1. What is God’s will here? Keep away from sexual immorality. What is sexual immorality? Any sexual activity before or outside of marriage. This would rule out cohabitation, or unmarried people living together and shacking up. If you want to have sex, you need to get married. If you’re not ready to get married, then you need to be sexually pure.
- iv. **Ephesians 5:18** “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit”
  - 1. What is God’s will here? Don’t get drunk. Positively it means pursuing sobriety. This would rule out taking recreational drugs that compromise your sobriety.
- v. **1 Corinthians 7:39** “A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord.”
  - 1. What is the command here? There are two. There are two. “A wife is bound as long as her husband is living.” That’s talking about divorce. You can’t leave your husband to remarry. Marriage is until death due us part. The second part, “But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants – only in the Lord,” is very clear. If you are single and looking to get married, you

can only marry a Christian – a committed Christian.

- c. So, by the will of God we're talking about God's clear cut moral commands in Scripture.

**2. Second, acknowledge the authority of God's moral commands over your life.**

- a. Christians believe that the Bible, from cover to cover, is God's word. It was inspired by God. There were many writers, but one author.
- b. As well, we acknowledge that the commands in Scripture are timeless. Although the Bible was written thousands of years ago, the commands in Scripture are still authoritative for us today.
- c. For example, the Ten Commandments were given originally to the Jews over three thousand years ago, but they are equally binding upon us today. The commands, "Do not murder," "Do not commit adultery," "Do not lie," "Do not steal," etc., are just as binding upon us as they were upon original recipients.
- d. So, to be committed to God's will is to acknowledge the authority of the Bible over your life.

**3. Third, study the Bible to learn God's will.**

- a. To be committed to God's will means that you earnestly and passionately want to learn and understand it. If I believe that the Bible is God's word, and if it is morally binding upon me, then I will really want to know what it says. After all, you can't obey God's will if you don't know it.
- b. People who are committed to God's will are serious Bible students. They read their Bible a lot. They read it with a pencil, a notebook, and a highlighter close by.

**4. Fourth, obey God's will, no matter the cost.**

- a. To be committed to God's will means that when you discover a new command, you obey it. And it doesn't matter how much it costs, or how painful it is, or how inconvenient it is, or how much you have to sacrifice, or how much you have to adjust your life, or how weird it makes you look. You obey God's will no matter what.
  - b. Football coach **Lou Holtz** explained the difference between being involved and being committed. "The kamikaze pilot who was able to fly fifty missions was involved but not committed."
  - c. Many people are involved in church, but they don't have real faith.
  - d. Real faith is like being God's kamikaze. It is obedience to God's will no matter the cost.
- viii. Enoch<sup>2</sup> is an example of this commitment to God's will. He lived in the period of time leading up to the flood. What do we know about that time period?
- 1. The Bible says that "wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time."
  - 2. It was so bad that "the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved (Gen 6:5-6)."
  - 3. Enoch was so committed to God's will that he wasn't pulled down by such an evil society.
- ix. When you are committed to God's will, it pleases the Lord.
- x. So, what have we learned from Enoch?
- 1. Enoch pleased God.
  - 2. Why did he please God? Hebrews 11 says it was because of his faith.
  - 3. The person of faith strives to please God.
3. Let's talk a little more about pleasing God.

---

<sup>2</sup> In fact, not only was Enoch committed to God's will in an evil age, but the Bible says that he tried to get others to repent as well. There's a short passage in the book of Jude that tells us that Enoch preached against sin and warned his generation of the coming judgment (Jude 14-15).



**IV. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PLEASE GOD?** It helps to know why, right? If I were to ask you to do something really difficult, it would help to know why, right? Imagine if I stood up in front of the church and said, “Church, we’re going to have a capital campaign. I’m going to ask you to make a two-year commitment to sacrifice and give over and above your tithe.” Your first question should be, “Why?” It helps to know why. Why is it important to please God?

**1. It is commanded.**

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:1 (NLT)** “Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more.”
- ii. To please the Lord, you have to be obedient to God’s commands. One of God’s commands is to please the Lord.

**2. It is Christlike.**

- i. **John 8:29** “The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him.”
- ii. As Christians our goal is to imitate the character and conduct of Jesus. What was Jesus like? He always did what pleased God.

**3. It is compensated.**

- i. In other words, it is rewarded.
- ii. We see this in the example of Enoch. Enoch was so pleasing to the Lord, that God rewarded him by saving him from death and taking him straight to heaven.

**4. It is correct.**

- i. **Romans 12:1** “Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.”
- ii. Why should we please God? “In view of the mercies of God.” In other words, in view of all that God has done for us, is doing for us, and promises to do for us in the future, it is the right thing to do. It is the only right response to God’s mercies.

**V.** Before we close, let’s talk about how to grow in pleasing God. This passage doesn’t just tell us that faith strives to please God, it tells us exactly what we need to have faith in to please God.

VI. **Hebrews 11:6** “Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

VII. We need to believe two things in order to get the strength to please God.

VIII. **HOW DO WE GROW IN PLEASING GOD?**

**1. Believe that God exists.**

- i. If you don't believe God exists, then you're not going to talk to Him, and you're not going to obey His commands, and you're not going to serve Him, and you're certainly not going to make sacrifices for Him. The starting point for pleasing God is believing that He exists.
- ii. A college professor was an atheist who loved to ridicule his students. He said, “Have any of you ever heard God?” Nobody answered. “Have any of you ever seen God?” Nobody answered. “Have any of you ever touched God?” Nobody answered. The class sat there quietly for a moment until one student raised his hand and said, “Professor, can I ask a question?” He said yes. The student said to his class, “Have any of you ever seen the professor's brain?” Nobody answered. “Have any of you ever touched the professor's brain?” Nobody answered. “Have any of you ever heard the professor's brain?” “Then according to his logic, we can conclude that the professor has no brain.”
- iii. Why do we believe that God exists? Is it just because our parents told us so? If so, that's not true faith. True faith is based on reason and evidence. The truth is that we believe in God because there is too much evidence to ignore.

**iv. Three Reasons to Believe that God Exists:**

**1. Something cannot come from nothing. This is called the cosmological argument.**

- a. How do we know there is a God? Because there is something rather than nothing. Where did the earth and the sun and the stars and the universe come from? The big bang? What caused the big bang? To explain the existence of the universe, there had to be

a first cause, a first mover, a self-existent God to get it all started.

- b. **Frank Turek** “According to evidence, the universe began from nothing – literally no thing physical, temporal, or spatial. Once there was no time, no space, and no matter, and then it all banged into existence out of nothing. What caused this creation event? To answer this, it is important to realize that the Big Bang was not an explosion in space but the explosion of space. It was not an explosion in time but the beginning of time. It was not an explosion of pre-existing matter, but the creation of matter itself. Therefore, the cause of the universe must be something beyond space, beyond time, and beyond matter – a Being who is spaceless, timeless, and immaterial. Those are attributes of God!”

**2. Design is proof of a designer. This is called the teleological argument.**

- a. What are the chances that a tornado might blow through a junkyard containing all the parts of a 747, accidentally assemble them into a plane, and leave it ready for takeoff? The universe is infinitely more complex than a 747. The complex nature of the universe implies that there must have been a designer behind its structure. If you have a watch, there has to be a watchmaker. If there’s order, there must be an order maker.
- b. Or consider the complexity of the human body. There is nothing in the universe that is as densely organized or complex as the human body. When you look at your cell phone, it is obvious that it had a designer. Someone with a lot of intelligence had to put it together. It is so complex. What is more complex -- a cell phone or the human body? The human body. Your DNA, digestive system, nervous

system, and cardiovascular system are infinitely more complex than an iPhone. And so if the iPhone obviously had a designer, then it's obvious that the human body had a designer, too.

**3. The moral law in our hearts proves the existence of a moral law giver. The is called the moral argument.**

- a. The Bible says that God has written His law on the human heart, so that all human beings throughout history have the same basic moral sentiments.
  - b. Who is a better person – Mother Theresa or Hitler? Regardless of your theology, everyone in this room would agree that it is Mother Theresa. But why? How do we know that? Because what we are doing in our minds is comparing Mother Theresa and Hitler to a Moral Law in our hearts; and because Mother Theresa better conforms to that Moral Law, we know instinctively that she is the better person.
- v. To grow in pleasing God, you have to believe that God exists.
  - vi. But this verse is not simply talking about believing in the existence of any god. 74% of Americans believe in God, but not all of them believe in the true God. Being religious and spiritual is not going to help you please God. If you want to please God, you have to believe in the true God.
  - vii. Who is the true God?
  - viii. **The Baptist Faith and Message 2000** describes the one true God like this: “There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.”

ix. To grow in pleasing God, you must believe that God exists.

## 2. Believe that God rewards.

- i. The second thing we need to believe in order to please God is that God rewards those who seek Him.
- ii. **Hebrews 11:6** “Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”
- iii. How does God reward us for seeking Him?
- iv. Of course He rewards us with blessings – deliverance from addiction, inner peace and joy, answered prayers, provision, protection, etc.
- v. But the greatest reward for seeking God is not God’s hand, but God’s face. It is God Himself. It is nearness to God.
- vi. **F.F. Bruce** says, "The reward desired by those who seek Him is the joy of finding Him; He Himself proves to be their exceeding joy (Ps 43:4)." (The Epistle to the Hebrews, 290.)
- vii. **Psalms 16:11** “... in your presence is abundant joy.”
- viii. **Thomas Watson** “The heart is a triangle which only the Trinity can fill.”
- ix. **Augustine** “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”
- x. There is nothing better than a close, right relationship with God.
- xi. Again, Enoch is the best example of this because God didn’t reward Enoch with material things, but by allowing him to go to heaven to be even closer to God.

## IX. CONCLUSION

1. So, what does the example of Enoch teach us?
2. God rewarded Enoch with the greatest gift of all – heaven. Why? Because he pleased God. Why did He please God? Because he had faith – faith that God exists, and that God rewards.
3. Once again, faith strives to please God. If you think you have faith but you aren’t living striving to please God, you are mistaken. We could also say that faith is necessary to please God. If you are struggling to please God, it is because you lack faith.

4. Just as God took Enoch to heaven, God wants to take you to heaven as well. Not necessarily before you die, but the moment you die God wants to take you to heaven to be with Him for all eternity.
5. But there's only one way to heaven. **John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
6. We don't earn our way to heaven by striving to please God. We can't earn heaven, because if God gave us what we deserve, it would be hell.
7. Instead, the gift of eternal life is given to people who have faith in Jesus Christ.
8. When you go to the movies, you must have a ticket. Before they let you in, you have to give your ticket to the ticket man. Have you ever noticed that the ticket man doesn't look at you, he looks at the ticket? All he cares about is whether or not you have a ticket. That's the way it is with heaven. When you stand at the gate of heaven, God won't look at you to see if you are good enough. He just needs your ticket. What is that ticket? It is faith in Jesus Christ. Did you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
9. No matter how bad you are, no matter what you have done, if you will believe in Jesus, inviting Him into your life to be your Savior and boss, God will forgive you right now, and give you eternal life, and give you the power to live a life that is pleasing to Him.