

Review

Hebrews 11

- You may not have ever heard a Bible lesson on review
- Well...maybe the topic of the lesson hasn't been review, but that has often been the intent
- Every Bible teacher, faithful to God's word, knows the importance of review
- The structure of the Biblical outline, and the content in both testaments make this clear

- When we review, we take a second look at information we already know
- Or at least at information we've already heard
- This material is provided to us again, by someone who intends to teach us
- They organize and repackage it for a specific purpose
- Meaning, we already have a certain level of understanding
- But we need to hear it re-expressed, re-emphasized, or re-applied

- Today our topic "Review"
- From Hebrews 11

- There have been many times in my life when I have thought pretty seriously about review
- When you do a Bible teaching radio program every day, you come to understand that you repeat yourself - a lot
- And as I did so, I began to wonder why
- Was I being faithful to the text?
- Was I properly communicating what the Bible taught?
- I wondered this because, though I was using different passages of scripture every day, I was touching on many similar themes weekly, sometimes daily
- My conclusion, basically, is this outline
- The Old and New Testaments in their accounts of people and their commands to men, review
- This is the nature of scripture
- It is, in so many places, a book of review

- The Bible teaches a concept first, then it provides extensive review
- Not every book does this, but so many do - both in Old and New Testaments

- The fact is, we could have chosen dozens of passages to illustrate review
- Instead, we'll just spend time in one today
- It is the "faith" review we find in Hebrews 11

- Here's what we will find
- Hebrews 11 tells well-known stories and mentions familiar names
- It emphasizes character traits and highlights actions that are already understood
- It is an "on-purpose" review, meant to make a difference in the reader's life

- If you know anything about the Bible before you begin reading
- You recognize the names
- You recognize the stories

- You are familiar with the principles they teach
- This is our key phrase today...

"These are stories, lessons, and examples so rich, review cannot exhaust them."

- We'll be jumping from verse to verse, but always staying in Hebrews 11 today
- Let's begin...

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- We understand what this review is focused upon when we read the first verse
- For it defines the topic, faith, for us
- It is logical, then, to assume this passage will highlight (and review) faith
- Specifically, Old Testament accounts of faith
- That is made clear in verse 2

Hebrews 11:2

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

- We're about to hear stories of those who lived long ago, demonstrating faith
- As with most review lessons, it will be incomplete, which means it will leave us with work to do
- This is a key characteristic of any quality review
- Jump down to verse 32

Hebrews 11:32

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

- For the reader, these are the first names to look up after the lesson
- You recognize some, but how about Jephthae?
- Do you know who that is?
- There's no explanation - just go look it up
- This is the case, because no review is complete until the listener has been given a follow-up assignment
- When a topic deserves review, as this one obviously does, time always fails the teacher
- Remember the depth of the topic - faith
- There could be ten lessons or ten thousand
- Yet more could be mentioned and examined
- The writer of Hebrews provides a little insight on why this review is required
- Find the first one in verse 6...

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- We must hear these stories of faith, because without faith, it is impossible to please God
- So, it must not be forgotten that coming to Him in belief is required
- This trust will always be rewarded
- He does not let us down
- And as we walk the narrow path as a disciple we will need this encouragement
- Because things will often be difficult
- The path ahead will not be clear for us, but they will be clear to Him
- That is why we trust

- Did you catch it?
- This is why we have the review, because without faith, it is impossible to please God
- It is an important lesson that must be re-expressed, re-emphasized, and re-applied

- Insight number two on why this review is needed can be found in verse 13

Hebrews 11:13

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- This review may help us to step back and gain some perspective
- To understand that these Old Testament saints were looking forward to a Savior
- They were trusting God for promises they could only see afar off

- On the other hand, we look back at things that have already come to pass
- We benefit from knowing our Savior has already declared "it is finished"
- His sacrifice has already been made

- We can feel a comradery with these Old Testament saints
- They wandered, like we do, in a world that considers them strangers and pilgrims
- Because they were, and we indeed are
- Faith, when we trust and follow God, will make this clear to those who are comfortable in the world's system
- And it will be awkward and sometimes even dangerous for us - as it was for them

- Did you catch this one?
- We have the review to gain perspective, and to put ourselves in the greater context
- In this case, relating ourselves to the Old Testament saints
- But realizing, in some cases, the advantages we have

- So...as any good review lesson would, Hebrews 11 has strong summary verses
- They give us a thumbnail sketch of the people we are meant to be learning from

- The first focuses on Abraham
- Notice this...

Hebrews 11:9-10

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- Abraham took every step in faith
- He spent his time looking forward
- Recognizing God promised something better
- And the journey was not always easy
- He had only temporary dwellings
- This was fitting, because life is only temporary, and shouldn't be comfortable
- Our gaze should fall steadily upon that permanent home, which is prepared for us in heaven - with our God
- Any good review, certainly review we find in scripture, provides these summaries
- They are important - they accomplish the purposes we already discussed
- Another good summary - one of Moses - starts in verse 23

Hebrews 11:23-25

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

- God had a plan in mind for this servant from the very beginning
- From floating in a river under threat of death, all the way into Pharaoh's home
- His mother entrusted him to God
- And though his journey was not a simple or a short one, God directed
- When the time came for Moses to complete the task God arranged for him to complete, he was ready
- The faith exhibited in this narrative is, in its example, very useful for us
- These are the kinds of things that are deserving of review
- A review can also be helpful, in that it may highlight obscure characters and stories we may have forgotten
- Rahab is easy to overlook, but her story is mentioned in verse 31

Hebrews 11:31

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

- God used this woman in His plan to gain victory for His people, Israel
- She heard the stories of Israel's deliverance
- And the mighty works God had performed on their behalf and simply believed
- That belief is worthy of mention in a faith review

- But there is always much more when you approach a topic like faith
- And the writer of Hebrews can only wrap it up this way...

Hebrews 11:32-37

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

- The Bible demonstrates the indispensable usefulness of review
- Both in Hebrews 11 and many other passages
- Now we are left with homework
- Is the person who endured torture, not accepting deliverance not worthy of review?
- Or the others?
- Then we have some work to do...

Why are the people that teach you always insisting on review - and repeating themselves?

- No doubt it is because there are themes so important, so foundational, so key to being a successful disciple, they must be re-packaged and re-emphasized
- Summaries must be made that remind us of the greater context
- We must be reminded of the more obscure points - those we almost forgot about
- And we must be left wondering, curious, ready to do homework to find out more
- Remember...

"There are stories, lessons, and examples so rich, review cannot exhaust them."

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2024