

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

"THE MISSING PIECE OF WHEN"

HEBREWS 11:8-10

This Week's Core Competency

Hope – I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:19, 20, *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.*

People hope for better lives; it makes perfect sense, especially in the case of those who lead hard ones. Those who are homeless and cold yearn for shelter and warmth; those who are hungry and lonely yearn for food and friends; those who are unemployed and poor yearn for jobs and the steady salaries that come with them. But ironically, people who lead no-matter-how-easy lives hope for better ones, too. Those with shelter and warmth want to own bigger houses in better neighborhoods; those with food and friends want to eat like gourmets and run with the upper crust. Those with work and a steady income want to be promoted and earn six-figure salaries. It seems our hopes and dreams, even when realized, only lead to more hopes and dreams and not true contentment.

No one has captured the vanity of our endless pursuits better than Thomas Merton, who writes:

"The earthly desires men cherish are shadows. There is no true happiness in fulfilling them. Why,

*The earthly desires men cherish
are shadows.*

–Thomas Merton

then, do we continue to pursue joys without substance? Because *the pursuit itself* has become our only substitute for joy. Unable to rest in anything we achieve, we determine to forget our discontent in a ceaseless quest for new satisfactions. In this pursuit, desire itself becomes our chief satisfaction. The goods that so disappoint us when they are in our grasp can still stimulate our interest when they elude us in the present or in the past.

"Few men have so clearly outlined this subtle psychology of illusion as Blaise Pascal, who writes:

'A man can pass his whole life without boredom, merely by gambling each day with a modest sum. Give him, each morning, the amount of money he might be able to win in a day, on condition that he must not gamble: you will make him miserable! You may say that what he seeks is the amusement of gaming, not the winnings. All right, let him play for nothing. There will be no excitement. He will be bored to death!'

"So it is not just amusement that he seeks. An amusement that is tame, without passion, only bores him. He wants to get worked up and to delude himself that he is going to be happy if he wins a sum that he would actually refuse if it were given him on condition that he must not gamble. He needs to create an object for his passions, and to direct upon that object his desire, his anger and his fear—like children who scare themselves with their own painted faces The fundamental theme of Ecclesiastes is the paradox that, although there is 'nothing new under the sun,' each new generation of mankind is condemned by nature to wear itself out in the pursuit of 'novelties' that do not exist" (*The Ascent to Truth*, 19-22).

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The only hope Christians have that won't disappoint, that won't lead to the endless pursuit of one vain hope after another is the hope we share with Abraham. We, like him, are "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10), the New Jerusalem on the new earth in which God will dwell forever with his people (Rev 21-22). Hope for a better future isn't bad; it's only bad if it's one's only hope.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Hebrews 11:8-10

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

8 It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. 9 And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith-for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. 10 Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God. (NLT)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Highlight "by faith" in vv. 8, 9.
- * Underline "when called" in v. 8.
- * Circle "inheritance" and "heir" in vv. 8 and 9 respectively.
- * Circle "promised land" in v. 9.
- * Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 9.
- * Draw a line from "tents" in v. 9 to "city" in v. 10.
- * Box "as" indicating *comparison* in v. 9.
- * Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 10.
- * Bracket "the city with foundations" in v. 10.
- * Circle "architect" and "builder" in v. 10.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Compare the account of Abraham's migration to Canaan in Acts 7:2-5. The account in Hebrews 11:8-10 is more *explanatory*. How so?
2. According to verse 8, when he was being called, Abraham "obeyed and went." Explain how the author can say Abraham did this "by faith."
3. According to verse 8, when, or perhaps *as* (see note), he was being called, Abraham "obeyed and went." What do you infer from this?
4. When did Abraham learn that Canaan would be his inheritance—before or after he arrived there? Explain.
5. According to verse 9, Abraham "made his home in the promised land." Explain how the author can say Abraham did this "by faith."
6. Explain the irony in the *comparison* in verse 9.
7. Explain the *reason* Abraham could patiently live by faith in Canaan.
8. "The city with foundations" is called "heavenly" in verse 16. Does that mean this city is heaven or must be *in* heaven? Explain.
9. **Discussion:** Talk about Abraham's hope: earthly or heavenly.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The author of Hebrews moves from his initial description and illustrations of faith (vv. 1-7) to an extended treatment of "the greatest example of faith in the Old Testament, Abraham the patriarch" (vv. 8-19) (George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, 377). Abraham was far from perfect, but rather than diminish his example of faith, his imperfections only enlarged it. Three things more than anything marked him as a man of faith: his call and departure from Mesopotamia, the birth of his son, and the offering of Isaac as a sacrifice (cf., vv. 11-19; Ac 7:2-8; 1Clem 10:1-7). Abraham's faith response to God's call is the subject of Hebrews 11:8-10.

According to verse 8, faith prompted Abraham's rapid response to the call from God. "When called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance," the patriarch "obeyed and went" without delay. He didn't mull it over in his mind; he didn't weigh the risks and the rewards; he didn't ask to put his things in order first. The author's use of a present participle in the opening clause of verse 8 suggests that before God could finish saying, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you . . ." (Ge 12:1) Abraham had made his decision to obey and go. The fact that he knew neither where he was going nor that the place he was going to would be his inheritance makes his faith that much more remarkable. It was only after he arrived in the land that God revealed Canaan would one day be his and his descendants'. One writer explains, "He responded to uncertainty with trust in the word of God. His faith rested, ultimately, in the promise of a future that was assured because it had been guaranteed by God's promise" (William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47b, *Hebrews 9-13*, 349). To paraphrase Philo, Abraham acted like he was returning home from a foreign land not like he was leaving his home for a foreign land (On the Migration of Abraham, 62; cited by F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, 295). By faith, Abraham did this.

According to verse 9, the patriarchs lived in a land promised to them but never owned by them. One commentator writes, "Paradoxically, when he got to the land of Canaan that God had promised to him, Abraham lived in it, not as its owner, but as a

resident alien" (Leon Morris, "Hebrews," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12:118). Abraham never received his inheritance, "not even a foot of ground" (Ac 7:5), and neither did Isaac or Jacob. The author of Hebrews simply says, "He lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country" (the NET Bible). What's more, he lived the unsettled life of a nomad, continuously moving from place to place, having no permanent dwelling. The whole land had been promised to him, and yet Abraham did not even have a proper house in it. By faith, Abraham lived like this.

So what was Abraham's secret? According to verse 10, his faith was sustained by hope. Although his tents had no foundations, the city he was looking forward to did. He did not know the city's name or exact location. He did not know when it would be built. All he knew was God would design it and construct it, and that was all the man of faith needed to know. The city in question is called "heavenly" (v. 16; cf., 12:22; 13:14) but not because it is *in* heaven or is a reference *to* heaven. It is called "heavenly" because God is its "architect and builder" (v. 10). The city in question is most likely Jerusalem, not the one in Old Testament times, but eschatological Jerusalem, the city of God in the kingdom age and by extension, the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:1-22:6 on the new earth in the eternal state. In the words of one writer, "To describe Jerusalem and the country as heavenly is simply to speak of them in their final eternal state, which is the result of God's salvation. The hope of the patriarchs and the prophets for a restored earthly Jerusalem ultimately merged into a Jerusalem of eternal, heavenly quality created anew by the final salvation of God" (Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for progressive Dispensationalism*, 55).

Abraham's hope fueled his herculean faith, which gave him the strength to wait patiently on God to keep his promise. His faith provided the missing piece of "when" he would receive his inheritance. Likewise, faith provided the missing piece of "when" for the Magi on their search to find the one who's birth fulfilled prophecy (Mt 2:1-12). Magi (the Greek word *Magi* used for those who were experts in the stars) first appear in history in the seventh century B. C. as a tribe within the Median nation in eastern Mesopotamia. The exile may

explain how the Magi came to know about messiah. When Judah was taken into captivity in the sixth century B. C., Daniel and the other exiles brought the law and their custom with them to Babylon and introduced them to the Babylonians. Seventy years later many Jews returned to Jerusalem, but others stayed behind. Messianic theology passed from that Jewish community to the Babylonians in general and to the wise men in Babylon in particular. However, even though the exiled Jewish community may have been the ultimate source of their messianic

knowledge, the Magi referred to by Matthew lived centuries after the exile. They were probably more like God-fearing Gentiles such as Cornelius and Lydia (see Ac 10:1, 2; 16:14) whom we meet in the New Testament than the wise men of Daniel's day. Why did they set out to find the messiah? God may have appeared to them in a dream (Mt 2:12) or he may have appeared to them as he appeared to Abram when he was still in the land of the Chaldeans. In any case, their search for the one born king of the Jews was fueled by faith.

The Message of the Passage

By faith, live in this world as resident aliens like Abraham, looking forward to the city whose architect and builder is God.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“The Missing Piece of When”
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 8 **by faith**

The author of Hebrews "sees Abraham as an excellent example of what he has in mind, for the author does not see faith as making a good guess based on the best human estimate of the possibilities. Abraham's faith accepted God's promises and acted on them even though there was nothing to indicate that they would be fulfilled. He 'went, even though he did not know where he was going'" (Morris, 12:117).

v. 8 **when called**

Abraham "exemplified faith by responding immediately with obedience even as he was being called: [*kaloumenos Abraam hupekousen exelethein*] 'as he was being called, Abraham obeyed by departing' (see above, Note a)" (Lane, 348). "'When called' translates a present participle that indicates a very prompt obedience. 'He obeyed the call while (so to say) it was still sounding in his ears' (Westcott, in loc.)" (Morris, 118).

v. 8 **later receive**

"God told him to go 'to the land that I will show you' (Gen 12:1). Yet it was not till some time after he reached Canaan that he was informed that this was the land God would give his descendants (Ge 12:7; later on Abraham himself was included in the same promise, Ge 13:15)" (118). "The promise of the inheritance was not given until he had returned from Egypt and Lot had chosen the well watered circuit of Jordan to settle in (Gen. 13:14ff.); it was reaffirmed to him along with the promise of an heir (Gen. 15:18ff.), and again after the bestowal of the covenant of circumcision (Gen. 17:8)" (Bruce, 296)

v. 8 **where**

"Abraham went out courageously into the unknown, to 'a strange land and an uncertain future' (J. Schneider, 108). He responded to uncertainty with trust in the word of God. His faith rested, ultimately, in the promise of a future that was assured because it had been guaranteed by God's promise. In setting out, 'not knowing where he was going,' Abraham exemplified the faith that invests events not seen with the substantial reality of a demonstration or proof (v. 1b)" (Lane, 349, 50). "To leave the certainties one knows and go out into what is quite unknown-relying on nothing other than the Word of God-is the essence of faith, as the author sees it" (Morris, 118).

v. 9 **made his home**

Cf., "lived as a foreigner" (the NET Bible); "settled as a resident alien" (the NET Bible 9tn). "Wherever he went he incurred the stigma of a stranger and a foreigner. This impression is accurately conveyed in v 9a with the idiomatic statement [*parokesen eis gen tes epangelias hos allotrian*] 'he migrated to the promised land as to a foreign country.' In the LXX the verb *paroikein* and its cognates are used to characterize Abraham's status and experience as an alien who resides in a foreign country without native and civil rights (see Mercado, "Language of Sojourning," 32-41)" (Lane 350).

v. 9 **promised land**

"'The promised land' (more lit. 'land of the promise') is an expression found only here in the Bible" (118).

v. 9 **in tents**

"Year after year he pitched his moving tent amid the settled inhabitants of Palestine, 'in them but not of them', commanding their respect as 'a prince of God', but owning not a square foot of the country until he bought the field of Machpelah near Hebron from Ephron the Hittite as a family burial-ground" (Bruce, 296; cf., Ac 7:5). "Tents and tent-encampments were normative for both nomadic and semi-nomadic people throughout the patriarchal period. The detail that Abraham lived in tents, as did Isaac (Gen 26:17, 25) and Jacob (Gen 25:27; 32:25, 33-34; 33:18-19; 35:21), bears vivid witness to their status as aliens (Michaelis, TDNT 7:377)" (Lane, 350).

v. 10 **looking forward to**

"Both the nuance and the tense of the main verb [*exedechetō*] 'to wait for,' 'to look forward to,' are significant. The verb is intensive in force, connoting 'to expect with absolute confidence' (Spicq, 2:347), while the imperfect tense expresses continuous expectation (Grosheide, 264; Moffatt, 170)" (Lane, 351).

v. 10 **city with foundations**

Cf., "tents" (v. 9), which have no foundations. The city (and country) for which the patriarchs longed is called "heavenly" (v. 16) not because it refers to heaven or is located in heaven but because its "architect and builder is God." The "city with foundations" should not be spiritualized, i.e., taken to refer to heaven.

v. 10 **architect and builder**

"The city owes everything to God, who is its 'architect and builder.' The first of these words, *technites*, means a craftsman or designer. As applied to a city, it may mean an architect or point to what we would call a 'city planner.' The thought is that the city is entirely designed by God. The second word, *demiourgos*, points rather to one who does the actual work. God built the city as well as designed it; it owes nothing to any inferior being" (Morris, 119).

Family Time

Family time will help you take a break from your busy schedule and spend time connecting with your family.
Tips for your Family Time: Keep it simple! Be flexible! Do it often! HAVE FUN!!

"Are we lost?" my son finally said from the back seat. "No, we are not lost. I just don't know exactly where we are", I replied. "Are we going to make it in time?" he questioned. "We will make it there eventually", I said. We were a little more than fashionably late but we did make to our destination that day. Sometimes the journey we are on takes longer than we expect. I remember my mentor saying to me many times when she found me frustrated at home with three toddlers, "The days are long but the years are short." I get it now. Like Abraham, you and I are on a journey called parenting. We are leading our little ones on a pilgrimage of faith, teaching them to trust their Heavenly Father. Some days we wonder if it will ever end. It will. In this season of celebration let's pause and reflect on the course we have chosen to disciple our kids. It might just be time for a family spiritual check-up. Are we attending church as often as we would like? Are we giving our money and time to God's work? Are we praying together? Are we connected to the community of faith? Plan a family meeting soon to evaluate and if necessary reset your course. Let's press on in our journey and finish strong together.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Hebrews 11:8-10

1. Read Genesis 12:1-5. What command did God give Abraham?
2. What promise did He give him?
3. According to Hebrews 11:10, what was Abraham looking forward to?

What Do You Think

1. How do you think Abraham felt when God told him to go on a journey where he didn't know how long it would take or where he would end up?
2. How does this show that Abraham trusted God?
3. In what ways do you need to trust God right now?

What R U Going To Do

Get a calendar and fill it out with activities you will do this week to help you stay on track spiritually. Example: Monday - work on memory verse, Tuesday - memorize core comp, etc. Add prayer requests to each day and then celebrate your journey at the end of the week.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Hope- Coping with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus

Memory Verse

Isa 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
 Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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