

Introduction:

1. Who is your favorite hero of faith in Hebrews 11? Why?
2. What is the most unbelievable thing you have ever seen or experienced? That is, something that, if you hadn't seen it with your own eyes or experienced it yourself, you wouldn't have believed it?

Understanding:

3. Read Ecclesiastes 3:9-14. What is the contrast here between living for the here and now and having a longer term view?
4. There are those who accuse Christians of having a blind faith based on imaginary, wishful thinking. How could you counter that argument, based on examples from today's passage and sermon?
5. Every one of the people in this "Hall of Faith" was highly flawed. Using one of the many examples, explain how God worked through their highly imperfect faith to do something great. How does that encourage you?
6. More than any of the people on that list, Jesus lived a life of faith. Better than anyone else in history. What did he get while ministering on earth for living by faith? What is to be the final end of what Jesus did? How does that encourage us?
7. How does this passage disprove the notion that faith always leads to earthly blessing and a happy, carefree life? Referring to verses 39 -40 especially, explain what is even better.
8. Have you been disappointed when God did not answer your prayers for healing? Did it seem like the Lord did not "come through" in that situation? What does today's passage say about continuing to be a Christian of faith anyway?
9. Why do you think the author of Hebrews said that "the world was not worthy of" the heroes of faith mentioned in verse 38? (Hint: see verse 7 too.)

Application:

10. John Ortberg wrote this: "If I leap, if I trust, I do not know for sure what will happen. What I do know is this: if I don't leap, if I don't trust, if I don't hope, if I don't ask, I will never soar. I will never know. I will live and grow old and die standing on the side of that cliff." Do you have an area of life where you seem to be standing on the wrong side of the cliff? Pray for the courage to step out in faith, now, in response to God's call.
11. Pastor Dave mentioned that for every one of the heroes in Hebrews 11, there was a moment when God tapped them on the shoulder and called them in a very personal way. Are you sensitive to God's personal call? Pray that you may grow in discerning it!
12. Keep in mind that today's teaching does not only apply to major life decisions. When we are living by faith, our everyday life involves little steps of risk. What is an example of how God is challenging you in your life right now in these small yet important steps of faith? Pray for grace to proceed.