

Title: By Faith: Faith and Formation // **Scripture:** Hebrews 11:13-16

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

This week we continued our series By Faith as we focused on Hebrews 11:13-16. In this passage, we saw several characteristics of faith all of the heroes of Hebrews 11 embody. These people were not perfect people, but they practiced their faith in even the most difficult of circumstances. They weren't too easily satisfied by lesser pleasures and they persevered even when it became apparent they themselves wouldn't receive everything they had been promised. In a sense they moved from "having faith" to their faith "having them." Their reward was simply instead of reveling in the gifts of God, they encountered The Giver. Their lives became about something bigger than their lives and "God was not ashamed to be called God" by them. This week Jon challenged us toward this same story of faith by allowing God to discipline our desires and move His promises into practice in order to create a passion and devotion that outlasts our lives.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

Faith forms our devotion by disciplining our desires.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): What characteristics of faith do we see in Hebrews 11:13-16? How do these characteristics describe all the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11? (Think together about all the stories we have heard so far in this series) How do these characteristics stand in contrast to the way most people live? How did Jon say that our practices and disciplines affect our passions and desires? What challenged you most about what Jon said this week?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): What difficulty in your life right now stands in the way of living a life a faith? Where are the promises of God standing at a distance for you? How do you handle the gap of expectation (what God has promised) and experience (what you are dealing with)? What practices and disciplines help you most live out your faith? Why?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): How might it change the way you see God and yourself to move from "having faith" to your "faith having you?" What is the biggest shift that you would need to make in your life for this to happen? Who have you seen in your life best exemplify this way of life? Why?

BE IT – Practice

Change UP // Celebration of Discipline

In his best-selling book, *The Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster invites believers to experience a life of faith marked by spiritual disciplines. These disciplines include not only practices like prayer and scripture reading but also solitude, silence, fasting, and simplicity. In *The Celebration of Discipline*, Foster opens up the Christian's imagination for what the practice of faith might look like in our daily, weekly, and yearly routines, and rhythms. Engage your group in a conversation by having them list out the disciplines and practices (other than prayer and reading Scripture) that most shaped their desires and passion. Encourage the group to share their personal practices and the way these practices have shaped their lives as they learn together new ways to experience God.

Change IN // Stand in the Gap

Invite your group to dive deeper together into the places they are standing in the gap between their expectation and experience. Place half of the names of the group in a hat. Then have each person, in the other half of the group, draw out of the hat one other person's name. Match these groups of two up as prayer partners for the week. Give them five minutes to share where their gaps of experience and expectation lie and pray for each other. Then encourage them to continue praying for that person as they stand in the gap for their prayer partner this week.

Change OUT // Scan Your Life

Have your group take a scan of their life (like Jon was talking about in his message) by asking them to find one person from their family, one person from their work, and one friend to ask this question to: What do you see in me and my life that am I most passionate about? Encourage them to think about the longings of their lives by hearing how people respond to that question.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes*

Take a few minutes to gather any prayer requests and pray for each other to SEE IT and BE IT this week.