

Small Group Guide: UNDER THE HOOD - When Faiths Get Real

Opening Question

If your life had a dashboard warning light right now, what funny or lighthearted label might it have? Examples: Needs Coffee, Low Patience, Check Calendar, Overloaded, or Nap Required.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for bringing us together. As we talk about faith tonight, help us be honest, encouraged, and open to what You want to show us. Teach us to trust You when we cannot see the outcome, obey You when we do not understand the whole plan, and keep going when we do not feel strong. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Real faith is confidence in God's character and promises. Faith is not wishful thinking or pretending everything is fine. It is trusting the God who has revealed Himself and proven faithful.

Faith trusts God even when we cannot see the outcome. Hebrews 11:1 reminds us that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Faith obeys God even when we do not understand the whole plan. Abraham obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. God often gives enough light for the next step, not the whole map.

Faith keeps going even when we do not feel like it. Feelings are real and worth acknowledging, but they make a poor steering wheel. Faith turns back to God through ordinary habits and daily faithfulness.

The measure of faith is not whether we get the outcome we want. Hebrews 11 shows that some people saw miraculous deliverance, while others suffered and endured. Both were commended for their faith.

Jesus is the focus of our faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 calls us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Our confidence is not in our performance but in the finished work of Christ.

Faith becomes practical through trust, obedience, and perseverance. God invites us to take the next faithful step with Him.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Hebrews 11:1.** What does this verse teach us about the difference between biblical faith and simply hoping things work out?
2. **Read Hebrews 11:6.** This verse says that anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and rewards those who earnestly seek Him. What does it look like to seek God earnestly in everyday life?
3. **Read Hebrews 11:7-8.** Noah obeyed before he saw the flood, and Abraham obeyed before he knew where he was going. What do these examples teach us about trusting God with incomplete information?
4. **Read Hebrews 11:27 and Hebrews 12:1-2.** Moses persevered because he saw Him who is invisible, and Hebrews 12 tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus. How can focusing on Jesus help us keep going when life feels difficult or uncertain?
5. The sermon mentioned that we sometimes want a safety-net Jesus, emergency-contact Jesus, or vending-machine Jesus. Why is it tempting to fit Jesus into our plans instead of surrendering our plans to Him?
6. Pastor Eric said, 'Faith does not require you to deny what you see. Faith reminds you that what you see is not all there is.' How can that truth encourage someone facing uncertainty, grief, or unanswered prayer?
7. The sermon challenged us to ask, 'What has God already made clear?' What are some areas where Scripture gives clear guidance, even if obeying is still difficult?
8. Feelings are real, but they make a poor steering wheel. What ordinary habits help keep our faith anchored when our emotions are loud?

Practical Applications (Choose one or two.)

1. **Name one area where God is asking you to trust Him.** Complete this sentence: 'God, I cannot see, understand, or feel like _____, but I choose to trust You.'
2. **Take one clear step of obedience.** Choose one specific step God has already made clear, such as making a phone call, apologizing, restarting prayer time, joining a group, or serving in a ministry.
3. **Practice one ordinary habit of faith daily.** Read a short Bible passage, pray for five minutes, write down one truth about God, or thank God for one specific thing each day.
4. **Invite encouragement and accountability.** Share your next step with a trusted believer who can pray for you and encourage you. Faith is personal, but it is not meant to be lived alone.
5. **Fix your eyes on Jesus when emotions get loud.** When fear, frustration, or discouragement rises, pause and pray: 'Jesus, help me trust You, obey You, and keep going today.'

Memory Verse for This Week

Hebrews 11:1 - 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.'

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for reminding us that real faith is not about having every answer or feeling strong all the time. Help us trust You when we cannot see the outcome, obey You when we do not understand the whole plan, and keep going when we feel tired. Teach us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Give us courage to take the next faithful step this week. In Jesus' name, amen.