

# What Does it Take to be a Christian Hero

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews chapter 11.

You know the book of Hebrews. If you're familiar with the Bible at all, you know the book of Hebrews chapter 11. It is the faith chapter. It talks about Abel. It talks about Enoch. It talks about Abraham.

It talks about Moses. It talks about different ones who had faith. And then it goes on beginning at verse 32. Look with me at beginning at verse 32. It says, And what more?

What shall I say? What shall I more say? Let's put it that way. For the time will fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephtheth and David also and Samuel and the prophets.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of a sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, for that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

They were stoned. They were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with a sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy.

They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.

God, having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which has so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[ 2 : 5 3 ] What does it take to be a Christian hero? That's what this chapter basically is all about. And we know, you know, Abraham and Moses and all those, but what about these other ones he mentions at the end?

There's people there whose names we do not know, but they have faced many, many things for the cause of Christ. Memorial Day.

Memorial Day began as Decoration Day. People would go out and they'd decorate the graves of those who had lost their lives during the Civil War.

Matter of fact, there was a hymn written by a lady in the South. Her name was Nella L. Sweet. The hymn was called Kneel Where Our Loves Are Sleeping.

And had a dedication to it, to the ladies of the South who are decorating the graves of the Confederate dead. 1867. That hymn was written.

[ 3 : 52 ] They were already doing the decorating of the graves and stuff. 1868, General John Logan, who was the commander of the Grand Army of the Potomac, established on May 5th, that there should be a Memorial Day to remember those who had passed away.

And that day should happen on May 30th, 1868. And so, that was the first incident of having a Memorial Day. By 1873, New York had officially recognized Memorial Day as an official holiday that they were going to celebrate.

By 1890, all of the northern states would celebrate that day. Southern states took them a little longer. They had their own day of celebrating until after World War I.

And after World War I, it was established that Memorial Day shouldn't just be for the Civil War. It should be for all wars. Those who had lost their lives in all wars. And so, after World War I, it became an official holiday for all of the country.

It's a special day to remember those who gave their lives in defense of our country. John 15, 13, says this.

[ 5 : 17 ] Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. People who would lay down their life for their country, for their friends and family. It takes some special...

What word I want? It takes something special to be able to do that. Without them doing that, we could be speaking some other language now.

We could be under some other different rule. But we're not. There's a place called the Home of Heroes website. And they have this.

Since 1776, more than 40 million Americans, men and women, have served the armed forces of the United States. Most of them during time of conflict or war.

Since the birth of our nation, no single generation has been spared the responsibility of defending the rights of the human spirit to breathe free from the aggression of enemies, both abroad and domestic.

[ 6 : 21 ] From Lexington and Concord to Fort McHenry. From the mountains of Europe to the sands of the Pacific Islands. On land, on sea, and in the air. America's finest have proudly worn the uniforms of the United States soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.

Freedom is not free. It costs more than one million of our countrymen and women have given their lives since July 4th, 1776.

Think about that. Over a million have done that. Each of them, to each of them, we owe a great debt of gratitude. We should be so thankful for the sacrifice that they made.

But defending freedom is not just facing a hostile enemy. Every veteran, whether they've worn a uniform during combat or during peacetime, they were willing to give of themselves.

And so we need to remember them as well. Heroism. Heroism. It's an attitude. It's one that has an attitude of action.

[ 7 : 40 ] It goes along with it. Those that have proudly served, they did it willingly. They're defenders of freedom.

So, what is a hero? We recognize men and women as heroes. We recognize the feats of courage they did.

But it's more than just feats of courage. It's a, it's a nobility of purpose. They have a purpose. They have something they're doing that they believe in.

You know, today, our definition of heroes has changed. Hollywood has given us heroes. You ask the average young person today about heroes, and they'll probably tell you it's one of the Marvel characters.

heroes. You know, the funny thing about it is, we have so many stories over the last couple of centuries of people who were actual heroes.

[ 8 : 47 ] Yet, we don't tell their stories. We just kind of leave that to the side. Hebrews chapter 11 here, God made sure we knew about some of the heroes.

He made sure we knew that they were ordinary people who did extraordinary things as they followed him. You know, this morning, I want to share with you some things about being a hero.

And these Christian heroes that we're going to talk about, these people in Acts chapter 11, they weren't supermen. They didn't have, you know, abilities and talents and things that other people did not have.

But what they did have was a willingness. A willingness to follow God no matter what. So this morning, I want to talk about us being Christian heroes of the faith.

How do we do that? Well, number one, Christian heroes believe God. Christian heroes believe God. Do you notice I didn't say Christian heroes believe in God?

[ 9 : 54 ] Christian heroes believe God. There's a difference. I can say, I believe in God. You ask the average person out there on the street, do you believe in God?

Oh, yeah. I believe in God. But the difference should be that we believe God. And by that, I mean, we're going to follow him.

We're going to do what he has. We're going to take his word and we're going to accept what it has for us. And we're not going to try to twist it and make it into something that it's not. We're just going to say, this is the word of God.

You know, when we look at this Bible, we read, thus saith the Lord. This is God's word. This is what he has for us.

See, these people who are Christian heroes who believe God, they are people of true faith. People of true faith. They don't doubt. They don't question.

[ 10 : 49 ] They say, this is God's word. You know, there are people who love God. There are people who realize that they are God's creation.

There are people who will honor him and love him. There are people who have dedicated their lives to him and to his purposes. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1, you'll see it up here on the thing.

Beginning at verse 26, it says this. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

You see your calling. God has called you and I believe God has called. God has a purpose for each one of us. Verse 27. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. If God can use us, he's done exactly that. He's chosen the weak. He's chosen those who are not maybe quite as smart, not as wise.

[ 11 : 55 ] Verse 28. And the base things of the world and the things which are despised hath God chosen. Yea, and the things which are not to be brought to not, things that are.

God used people who have messed up. The things that were despised. The things that were... You think of some of the people God used. You look at Moses.

You look at Abraham. You look at David. You look at... They all had flaws in their life. But God was able to use them. Verse 29. That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God has made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. God comes into our life and he changes us.

He makes us something special. He gives us everything we need to serve him. And every individual here in Hebrews chapter 11 followed God and his word.

[ 13 : 00 ] They believed God. Romans chapter 4, verses 18 through 20, talks about Abraham. Abraham's talked about here in Hebrews 11. In Romans it says this.

Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken. So shall I see be. Abraham, I'm going to take you and I'm going to put you in another part of the world.

I'm going to lead you to a place where you're going to establish a country. You're going to have so many offspring, so many people who come from your line. They're going to form an entire nation.

And Abraham's like, okay. That's believing God. He just followed God wherever God led. Verse 19 says, And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead when he was about 100 years old.

Neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. You know the story. They had Isaac. Abraham was 100. Sarah was 90. How many of you would like to have a baby at 90? Look out, Margaret.

[ 14 : 13 ] Fred wants one. He's all set. He's all set. He's all set. Verse 20. It says this. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Abraham was just an ordinary person like the rest of us. But he was one who believed God. Here in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 8, he says, By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should have to receive for an inheritance, obeyed.

And he went out, not knowing whither he went. You think about that. Abraham believed God. And he just obeyed.

Abraham, here's what I want you to do. Okay. Here's where I want you to go. Okay. Here's what I want you to do when you get there. Okay. Do we have that kind of attitude?

God gives you, says, I want you to do this. You sure? I want you to go talk to this person. I'm not too sure about that. They don't like me. I want you to, you know.

[ 15 : 30 ] Abraham's like, okay. Here we go. See, Abraham fulfilled Hebrews 11, 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. Abraham says, I'm going to believe God. I'm going to trust him. I'm going to follow him.

And I know he's going to take care of everything. What is it to have that kind of faith? But that's why we read about Abraham in the Bible. Because he had that kind of faith.

He was a Christian hero. See, we can't take it as a light thing when we're reading God's word. This is God's word. Thus saith the Lord.

You know, God can use anybody. We talk about he uses those that are not wise, those that are weak, and all the... God can use those that have great intellectual ability.

[ 16 : 30 ] As long as their faith is greater. Do they trust God? There are some people out there in the scientific world. You know the scientific world and all the different things. But there are some people out there in the scientific world that says, I believe God.

I'm going to follow God. And when God says he did this, I believe it. When God says he created, I believe it. And they go from there. He is the creator of their life.

See, simple people. Like you and I. Could be great. Could be small. Could be whatever. But do we follow what God has for us?

Christian heroes believe God. Second, Christian heroes are committed to God's will. Committed to God's will.

Hebrews chapter 11, beginning of verse 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.

[ 17 : 33 ] For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better country that is in heavenly. Wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he had prepared them for a city.

He said, if they had been mindful of the country they had come from, they might have gone back to it. But they had their focus on a country that God had. They were committed to God and his plan and what he had for them.

These people saw the promises of God. Notice it says, they saw them afar off. They did not necessarily see them fulfilled, but they saw them coming. They knew that God would keep his word.

And they were faithful to it. They said they were strangers and pilgrims in this world. They accepted God's will for their life. They lived godly lives. They made God proud of them.

[ 18 : 35 ] Someone has said a hero is someone who is sincere and does his duty. He is a man who stands up to be counted ethically, morally, and humanly.

Are you willing to stand up? Are you willing to give all for God? We shouldn't do anything less. Think about who God is and think about what he's done for you.

Jesus Christ is the Savior and Lord. He came. He gave his life. He paid for our sins. He sacrificed himself on the cross that we might have forgiveness of sins and that we might have eternal life.

Do we realize everything he has done for us? And are we willing to believe God and to commit our lives to God?

You remember Joshua? Joshua chapter 24, verse 15, the last part of the chapter, the last part of the verse, it says, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

[ 19 : 40 ] But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. I don't care what else is going on. I don't care what else is happening in the world. I don't care what else. We're going to serve God no matter what.

Phillips Brooks, who's a pastor back in the mid-1800s, he wrote some of the hymns that we sing. He said, it does not take great men to do great things.

It only takes consecrated men. It doesn't take great men. It takes consecrated men. What does that mean? Consecrated. We look at everything as a sacred duty, a sacred calling.

Sacred means that we're dedicated to God's word and God's purposes. So who is a hero? Someone who surrenders his will to God. He allows God to direct him.

And surely each one of us can do that. Matthew 26, verse 29. Think of what Jesus said. And he went a little further, and this is in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

[ 20 : 51 ] Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Jesus in his human form. God, let this go. Let me get through this.

Let me bypass this. He knew what was coming that night. He knew he was going to be arrested. He knew he was going to wind up on the cross. He knew everything that was happening. Let this pass by me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Are we willing to follow God no matter what? Are we willing to do whatever his will is?

Psalm 37, 5. Those of you who are with me on Wednesday night, we talked about this a little while ago. Psalm 37, verse 5 says, Commit thy way unto the Lord. Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.

Commit thy way unto the Lord. John Wesley, I mentioned him a couple weeks ago. He said this, Give me 100 men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world.

[ 22 : 00 ] I care not a straw, whether they be clergymen or laymen, and such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the kingdom of God on earth.

He says, if I can find 100 people, who are dedicated, committed to following God, we can change the world. Those would be Christian heroes, wouldn't they?

People who are willing to do whatever God has for them because they believe God and they're committed to him. This brings me to a third thing. Third thing is, Christian heroes are devoted to God's work.

They're devoted to God's work. James chapter 2, beginning at verse 18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works.

Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well. The devils also believe in tremble.

[ 23 : 07 ] I believe in God. Yea, so does the devil. So does the demons. Doesn't mean they're going to heaven. Doesn't mean they're going to follow God and do the things that God asked them to do.

See, that difference between believing in God and believing God. Believing what God's word says. Following what God's word says. Being committed to it. And devoting yourself to it.

He goes on. In verse 20 of James chapter 2. He says, But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? As not, was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God.

And it was imputed to him for righteousness. And he was called a friend of God. Abraham believed God. And he was called a friend of God.

[ 24 : 12 ] Do you believe God? You want to do something great for Christ? You want to do something great for the Lord in your life? Believe him.

Trust him. Trust his word in what it says. See, to be a hero in the faith, it has to be transformed into action.

Matthew 23, 11 says, But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. That faith has to be put into action. That faith has to show that I'm willing to serve God and I'm willing to serve others to help them come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

William Booth, I don't know if you've heard that name before, he's the founder of the Salvation Army. Salvation Army used to be very good at giving out the gospel.

Here's what he said in a message to his followers one time. He said, Faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of a man walking.

[ 25 : 16 ] First faith, then works, then faith again, then works again, until you can scarcely distinguish one from the other. I have faith and I'm going to do some works.

I have some faith I'm going to follow God. I have some faith I'm going to do what God commands. I have faith I'm going to, he says you can't distinguish between them. They work hand in hand together, or in his case, lake into lake.

You know, there are hundreds of thousands of battles fought daily in the lives of biblical Christians.

Satan is always attacking. His demons are always at work. We are always fighting battles to do what God wants us to do. But in order to do it, in order to be that Christian hero, I believe God and his word.

I'm committed to God and his word. I'm devoted to doing God's work according to God and his word. Satan's out there.

[ 26 : 17 ] He wants to attack. He wants to maim. He wants to destroy us. He wants to take us down. Are we keeping our focus on our Lord and Savior?

Are we watching him? There's no greater life you can live than to follow God and what he has for us. Did you notice verse 38 there in chapter 11?

The first part of verse 38. Of whom the world was not worthy. Those who will follow God, do what he wants, committed to his way, devoted to his work, following him no matter what.

He said the world wasn't worthy of them. But they're there to help the world come to know the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. God's heroes.

You know, there's all kinds of heroes around you. you don't always see. Let me give you a few in my life. My parents got saved when I was three years old.

[ 27 : 24 ] My parents showed me what it meant to be a Christian. My parents showed me what it was to live Christ. My parents showed me how to be faithful and honor Christ no matter what.

My dad was one of those old time guys. Didn't know a lot. Had an eighth grade education. went to work from eighth grade. Wound up in the Navy. Came back.

Went to work. Worked over 50 years in the tannery there in Heartland. My mother, she met him when he was in the Navy. He was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

She was in Martinsville, Virginia. About 200 miles inland. They met through a friend. Got married. And when I was three, they got saved. And their attitude was whenever the church doors were open, we're there.

And guess what? You're going with us. You're going to be there too. Why am I here today? Because of my parents. They made sure I had godly people.

[ 28 : 29 ] We used to have missionaries in our house. We had the CEF ladies used to come in our house. My dad was on the board. My dad and my mom were some of my heroes.

There was a lady in the church there in Heartland. I've mentioned her before being Mrs. Honey. Mrs. Honey rode around in a wheelchair. Her was all crippled up with arthritis and stuff. She hardly ever missed church.

She taught me about the faithfulness of tending God's house. Tending church services no matter what. I was a pastor. pastor we had and different pastors I've had that taught me about being good steward of what God gives you.

One of our pastors, one in Florida, used to say, do you earn to live or do you earn to give? Why do you go to work every day?

Do you earn to live or do you earn to give? And it's the blessings of giving to God and his people. You know, I had a lot of different pastors.

[ 29 : 38 ] I had faithful Sunday school teachers. I had professors in college. I had church members. I had parents. They all taught me about being faithful and committed and trusting God no matter what.

Are you a hero to your children, husband, wife, family, church? Are you setting the example for them? And then he goes on.

He's given us all this here in chapter 11 about these people and all the things that they did. And then he comes to chapter 12 and he says this. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed above with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He says, you've got all these people that have come before you. Wherefore, because you've got such a great cloud of witnesses, such a great cloud of people, you do the same.

They've set the example. They've shown you how God can work. Yes, some of them face death and other things. But they stood true to the word of God. They were Christian heroes. They did what God wanted them to do and they fulfilled it with everything they had.

[ 31 : 15 ] This morning, let me ask you, are you following Christ? Is he the most important thing? Can he use you?

To be a hero to others? Again, we're not going to sing it, but you've heard it so many times lately. I saw Jesus in you. Are people seeing Jesus in you?

So that when you go out, they see Christ. Are you letting him use you because you believe him? Because you're committed to him?

Because you're devoted to his work? Are you letting him use you? Are they benefiting from your faith, from your devotion, your commitment to God?

Do you love him with everything that you have? As I said earlier, he did everything for us. This morning, I want to take time because it is Memorial Day weekend.

[ 32 : 18 ] We remember those who gave their lives. We're going to take a couple of minutes and have the Lord's table. We're going to remember what Jesus Christ did for us. And from that, hopefully we'll stop and think about ourselves.

What kind of a person am I? Am I doing God's work? Am I committed to him and what he has done for us? The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 11, it says that he asked them to examine themselves.

So we're going to take a minute to give you a chance. God, is there sin in my life that needs to be taken care of? God, is there some things in there I need to talk to you about? Lord, cleanse me.

Make me clean before you, committed to you, believing you as I come to this communion time. So let's take a few minutes and examine ourselves.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 34 : 10 ] Thank you. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for the fact that we can come before you and we can remember.

We can remember the love that was shown to us as you went to the cross. We can remember the sacrifice that was made. We can remember the power that brought you back to life.

We can remember the fact that you went back to heaven and you're preparing a place for us and someday you're coming again. Lord, we just thank you that even though you said let this cup pass from me, you also said thy will be done.

Lord, and we thank you for your gift, the body that was broken, the blood that was shed. Lord, I pray that you would help us today as we remember the heroes, we remember the greatest of all, the Lord Jesus Christ who brought salvation to a world that was lost.

Lord, thank you for all that you have done for us. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen.



[ 36 : 30 ] Thank you.  
Thank you.