

APPLICATION

- How have you experienced God's faithfulness in difficult times? How may this empower you to endure present or future hardships?
- In light of eternity, life here on earth cannot surpass the hope we have in Christ. What areas of your life need to be aligned to this truth? How may you live in light of this truth more and more every day?
- Who can you encourage today with the knowledge of a better life in Christ? Commit to talk to this person and present the gospel to him or her.

PRAYER

- Thank Jesus for His finished work on the cross, and pray that you'll have eyes of faith to see the better life in Him that is beyond the victories and hardships of this life.
- Ask God to help you see His presence and faithfulness in your life, whether in a place of abundance and success or trials and lack. Pray that you would grow in your reliance on Him every day.
- Pray for opportunities to encourage your friends and family with the gospel and stories of faith and endurance this week.

JESUS >

Better Life

WEEK 11

WARM-UP

- What is your idea of a perfect movie ending? Why?
- How do you define success? What makes something or someone successful?
- When was the last time you had a day where everything just turned out the way you wanted? How did it feel?

WORD ³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. . . . ³⁹And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

HEBREWS 11:35, 39-40

(Read also **HEBREWS 11:32-34, 36-38; 12:1-2.**)

The letter to the Hebrews was written to an audience who, at the time, were experiencing persecution and hardships. For them, giving up seemed to be the easier option. But the writer urged them to endure hardship in view of the hope of resurrection and everlasting life. In Christ, these are sure, and believers can hold on to these by faith. Because of Christ, even though we may experience suffering and death, we can *rise again to a better life*. What does the better life in Christ look like?



1 The better life goes beyond the victories we experience in this life.

³²And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection. . . . **HEBREWS 11:32-35**

Hebrews 11 is often called the Hall of Faith, recounting the stories of men and women who lived, persevered, and overcame by faith. They had epic tales of victories and awesome feats. While victories are great, they are not the end goal of our faith and not what the better life is all about. In Christ, there is more. How have you experienced victories by faith?

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2 The better life goes beyond the faith that enables us to endure the trials and hardships in this life.

³⁵. . . Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—³⁸of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. **HEBREWS 11:35-38**

On the other hand, Hebrews 11 also tells stories of men and women who by faith endured trials and hardships of various

kinds. While faith propels us to overcome and be victorious, it also enables us to remain steadfast in the face of delayed breakthroughs, defeat, or even death. Trials and suffering are temporary compared to the better life that is promised to those who have faith and remain in Christ. How have you endured the hardships you've faced?

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3 The better life, ultimately, is eternity with Christ.

³⁹And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

HEBREWS 11:39-40

Hebrews 11 ends by giving the readers a reality check: despite their commendable faith, these individuals did not see the full realization of God's promises in their lifetime. There awaits something better, which they look forward to by faith—eternal life with God. Today, we also look forward to and receive this promise by faith on the finished work of Jesus. Beyond temporary suffering or earthly deliverance, we have the hope of resurrection and everlasting life in Christ. Let us fix our eyes on Him, holding onto faith that endures whether or not we see earthly results, and whether or not we get answers to our prayers. How is this faith evident in your life today?

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