Hebrews 11:8-16

Small Group Leader Guide

Hebrews 11:8–16 | "Strangers, Sojourners, and the City of God" With Old Testament Cross-References & Christ-Centered Insights

P Big Idea:

Abraham and Sarah walked by faith, trusting in God's promises even when fulfillment seemed impossible. Their journey wasn't just toward a physical land, but toward a heavenly city. Their lives point us to Jesus, the true fulfillment of God's promises, and our eternal hope.

Key Old Testament Passages:

- **Genesis 12:1–9** The call of Abraham
- **Genesis 15:1–6** The promise of descendants
- **Genesis 17:15–21** The naming of Isaac
- Genesis 18:9–15 Sarah laughs
- **Genesis 21:1–7** The birth of Isaac
- Genesis 23:1–20 Abraham purchases burial land in hope

Discussion Questions With Leader Notes & Suggested Answers

1. What stands out to you about Abraham's response to God's call in Hebrews 11:8 and Genesis 12:1–4?

Leader Notes:

- God's call was vague: "Go... to a land I will show you."
- Abraham obeyed without knowing all the details.

Suggested Answer: Abraham trusted God enough to obey even when the destination was unclear. His faith wasn't in a plan but in a Person—God. This

foreshadows the Christian life: we follow Jesus without seeing the full picture, but trusting His word.

2. Hebrews 11:9–10 says Abraham lived in tents, looking forward to a "city with foundations." What does this reveal about where his hope ultimately rested?

Leader Notes:

- He wasn't just waiting for Canaan but for something eternal.
- The "city" = heavenly kingdom (Rev. 21–22).

Suggested Answer: Abraham hoped not just for land, but for God's eternal dwelling. His eyes were fixed beyond this world—just as ours should be. That city is being prepared by Christ (John 14:2), and Abraham looked to it by faith.

3. In Hebrews 11:11–12, Sarah receives power to conceive "because she considered Him faithful." How does this shape our understanding of faith?

Leader Notes:

- · Sarah's faith wasn't perfect (Genesis 18:12), but God honors trust.
- Faith = confidence in God's **character**, not just the outcome.

Suggested Answer: Faith doesn't mean we never doubt—but it means anchoring ourselves in who God is. Sarah's story shows that trusting in God's **faithfulness**, even through weakness, is what pleases Him.

4. What does it mean that "from one man, and him as good as dead" came descendants as numerous as the stars (Heb. 11:12)? How does this point us to Jesus?

Leader Notes:

- Abraham was too old to father a child naturally.
- God brings **life from death**—a gospel pattern.

Suggested Answer: God brings fruitfulness out of barrenness, and life from what is "as good as dead." This mirrors the resurrection of Jesus—our hope springs from God's power over death.

5. Hebrews 11:13 says they died in faith, not having received the promises. What can we learn about living with an eternal perspective? Leader Notes:

- They saw the promises "from afar."
- Faith embraces delay because it trusts in ultimate fulfillment.

Suggested Answer: Faith trusts that God's timing and eternal promises are worth waiting for. Like Abraham and Sarah, we may not see everything fulfilled in our lifetime, but we trust God's promises in Christ will never fail.

6. Hebrews 11:13–14 says they confessed they were "strangers and exiles on the earth." What does that identity look like for Christians today?

Leader Notes:

- Consider cultural pressures to "settle" in this world.
- Identity = citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20).

Suggested Answer: Living as exiles means we don't fully belong here—we live for a kingdom not yet seen. This keeps us from putting all our hope in politics, possessions, or comfort. We follow Christ, even when it costs us.

7. Hebrews 11:16 says God "is not ashamed to be called their God." Why do you think that is?

Leader Notes:

- God honors faith in His promises.
- The phrase echoes God's covenant language ("I will be your God").

Suggested Answer: God delights in people who trust Him above all else. When we live for His kingdom—even in weakness—He claims us as His own. This ultimately finds fulfillment in Jesus, who says, "I am not ashamed to call them brothers" (Heb. 2:11).

8. How do the promises to Abraham ultimately find their fulfillment in Christ? (See Gal. 3:16, Romans 4:13–25)

Leader Notes:

Christ is the promised seed.

• The blessing to the nations = the gospel (Gen. 12:3, Gal. 3:8).

Suggested Answer: Jesus is the true offspring of Abraham. Through Him, all nations are blessed. Faith in Christ unites us with Abraham's family—not by blood, but by belief.

Christ-Centered Connections:

- Galatians 3:16 The promises were to Abraham and his "offspring"—
 Christ
- Romans 4:13–25 Abraham believed in the God who raises the dead
- John 8:56 "Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day"
- Philippians 3:20 Our citizenship is in heaven
- Revelation 21:1-4 The true city of God