

MIDDLE SCHOOL IDENTITY IN CHRIST

6

UNITE

I AM CALLED

JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH

SERIES:

GOD IS KING –
I AM A DISCIPLE



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SERIES: GOD IS KING - I AM A DISCIPLE

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UNITE: I AM CALLED

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

BIG TRUTH: JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH

BIBLE VERSE: HEBREWS 12:1-2

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

BIG IDEAS

- Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- Faith creates gratitude in every victory, and endurance in every loss.
- Faith is grounded in Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

BIBLE PASSAGE: HEBREWS 11-12:1-2

SERIES AIMS

[KNOW] Every student should know that...

- Jesus is the One True King
- Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen
- There is a cost to following Jesus

[DO] Every student should strive to...

- Examine their own heart and repent of how they have followed false saviors
- Pray regularly asking the Lord to grow their faith in Him
- Endure through discouragement and difficult circumstances

[FEEL] Every student should feel...

- Confident in the steadfastness of the Lord
- Grateful for the cloud of witnesses that we have as a model for faithfully following Christ
- Grounded in Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith

[WANT] Every student should desire to...

- Devote themselves to pursuing holiness
- Suffer well for the glory of God
- Use their lives to point others to a better Savior, King, and treasure

STUDENT WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

Following Jesus requires us to have faith. This week we will ponder what faith is and we will pray for faith to follow Jesus no matter what. We will practice living by faith.

FAMILY WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

Jesus followers live by faith. This week we will consider how to discuss with our son or daughter what living by faith is. We will pray for them to grow in their faith and we will lead them to practice living by faith every day.

SERIES: GOD IS KING - I AM A DISCIPLE**JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH****BIBLE VERSE: HEBREWS 12:1-2**

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

Believers are an example to other believers.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..."

- The author of Hebrews lists faithful believers in chapter 11 and begins chapter 12 by reminding his readers that these believers are witnesses to other believers. We can look at the lives of believers who have lived before us and gain hope and encouragement from their endurance.
- Knowing that past believers are examples to us, we, too, are examples for other believers. Believers are connected to one another and we should continue in our faith because it glorifies God and it helps other believers remain faithful, too.

Living faithfully requires a putting off of worldly things.

"let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..."

- We cannot live faithfully if we are pursuing worldly things. If we are content to live in our sin, we will not live a faithful life. We must put off the worldly things inside our hearts and seek to be like Jesus in order to live faithfully.
- The cloud of witnesses listed in Hebrews 11 shows us what it means to put off earthly things and to lay aside anything that might hold us back from serving God. When we lay these things aside, we'll run the race with endurance to the very end.

Jesus is the perfect example of living faithfully.

"...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

- In order for us to live faithfully and to be a faithful example to others, we must model our lives after the life of Jesus. He is the perfect example of what it means to follow God in perfect obedience. He lived the perfect life and went before us to make a way for us to be reconciled to God.
- If we desire to live faithfully, then we must seek to know Christ that we might be like Him. As we seek to be like Him, we will grow in our faithfulness.

**SERIES: GOD IS KING - I AM A DISCIPLE
JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH****BIG IDEA #1: FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN.¹****[THIS]**

Faith is an integral part of the believer's life. Without faith we cannot please God. We cannot know Him or receive His forgiveness without faith. In Hebrews 11, we are given many examples of believers who lived faithful lives. This passage shows us real life examples of what it means to live a faithful life. To be faithful, we must have an assurance of what we believe. To have an assurance means to be confident that your belief is true. Jesus followers live in this confidence. They completely trust God and devote their lives to obeying Him. Jesus followers walk assured that God is who He says He is and Jesus is the Savior of the world. As believers, we can be assured that the eternal life we are hoping for is indeed going to happen. This type of faith leads us to live in obedience to God even when it costs us something.

[THEREFORE]**How does the world often define "faith"? How is this definition different from a believer's faith?**

Faith is defined as a complete trust or confidence in something. The world defines this as a trust of ourselves or another person. We might even trust in our circumstances or material things. Hebrews 11:1 helps us understand how a biblical definition of faith is quite different from the world's definition. Biblical faith is more than just hoping something will happen. It is knowing for certain that what God has promised is what is going to happen.

What situations or circumstances often lead us to doubt God's promises?

The things of this world can weigh us down and lead us to doubt. Luke 21:34 reminds us that our sin and the sin in this world can weigh us down and lead us away from God. Our difficult circumstances can also produce doubt in us. Regardless, we can rest assured that God will do what He says He's going to do. We can walk with faith.

[THIS]

A believer's faith isn't a blind trust in imaginary things. A believer's faith is a conviction that what God has said happened actually did and what He says will happen actually is going to happen. Having a conviction about something means truly believing it is true. This means that a faith that is convolutional leads us to live according to what we are trusting in. For a believer this means that every aspect of our lives changes because we whole-heartedly believe that His Word is true and He is who He says He is. Hebrews 11:1 defines biblical faith as a conviction. We don't center our lives around anything or anyone in whom we don't really trust or believe. Believers live radical lives for Jesus because their faith is convolutional.

[THEREFORE]**Does your life reveal your faith is an assurance and conviction in the Lord? How does it reveal these things?**

Hebrews 11 lists many believers who lived radical lives for Jesus and died trusting in His promise of salvation and eternal life. They did not turn away from their faith when life was hard. When we remain steadfast even under difficult hardships, we reveal that we truly do believe in the Lord and His promise of our eternal reward.

1. Hebrews 11:1: Faith is not just believing in something that isn't real. It's trusting in something that isn't yet seen.

SERIES: GOD IS KING - I AM A DISCIPLE
JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH**BIG IDEA #2: FAITH CREATES GRATITUDE IN EVERY VICTORY, AND ENDURANCE IN EVERY LOSS.²****[THIS]**

The believer's life is full of victories and losses. A closer look at the believers listed in Hebrews 11 shows this clearly. The believers listed in this chapter experienced victories and losses in this life. They were used by God for His glory and their good. Faith creates gratitude during our victories. We understand that the victory was possible because of God's power and work in our lives. We feel gratitude to Him for making any victory possible. When we understand that our victories are not won in our own power, but in the power of Christ, we will not become puffed up or arrogant. Instead, we will feel gratefulness that the God of the universe has worked all things out for His glory and our good. Some of the people listed in Hebrews 11 experienced some of the greatest victories in our Christian history. They experienced the defeat of great nations, crossed over parted seas, and withstood lions' dens and fiery furnaces. They all gave glory to God with thankful hearts. Our faith in God makes this type of gratitude possible.

[THEREFORE]

How has a victory in your own life led you to feel gratitude to God for His work on your behalf?

In Psalm 107:1 and 150:6, we are given an example of what it looks like to praise God and show gratitude. Ephesians 5:20 reminds us to give thanks in every circumstance. These verses teach us that God is in control of all things and every situation. When we are experiencing good things, our true faith leads us to thank God. We see firsthand that God has worked something out for us. This should produce thankful hearts.

[THIS]

God most certainly gives us victories in this life, but we also experience losses. Every believer will experience suffering and loss in this life. God's Word promises suffering on His behalf. We will feel discouraged and defeated, yet in these times, we can endure because of our faith. Our faith will produce an endurance inside of us that allows us to suffer anything and do so for the glory of God. The believers we find in Hebrews 11 experienced losses. Some of them remained faithful during difficult times and did not receive their reward in this life. They died in the midst of great hardships, yet their reward was eternal life with Jesus. They endured during their losses because of their faith. They did not hope in this life. Instead, they hoped in Jesus and the eternal life He provides. Our faith can enable us to endure hard and difficult things. We can experience incredible losses in this life, an extreme lack in this world, and great sorrow, yet remain faithful and true to God.

[THEREFORE]

Is it harder for you to endure during difficult times or feel gratitude during victorious times? Explain.

Romans 5:3-4 tells us to rejoice in our sufferings. This idea can be difficult for us and often, enduring hard times is more difficult than showing gratitude. Sometimes, expressing gratitude can be hard, too. We forget who is the author and finisher of our faith.

How can the church help you endure during difficult times?

The church is the body of Christ and we are meant to encourage and build up one another. Galatians 6:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11 show us the part the church plays in our struggles.

2. James 1:12: Those who remain steadfast under trial live lives of gratitude and great faith.

SERIES: GOD IS KING - I AM A DISCIPLE
JESUS FOLLOWERS LIVE BY FAITH**BIG IDEA #3: FAITH IS GROUNDED IN JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH.³****[THIS]**

Hebrews 12:2 describes Jesus as the founder and perfecter of our faith. Jesus is the author, or founder of our faith because it is only through Him that we can be saved. Through Jesus, we are reconciled to God and only through Him. Jesus lived the perfect life that we could not. He died the death that we all deserve and owed, and because of His sacrifice, He made a way for those who repent and believe to have saving faith. Our faith is grounded in and founded on Him and Him alone. Believing Jesus is our Savior is necessary in order for us to have faith. We cannot separate our belief in God from a faith in Jesus. We get to God through Jesus and when we confess our sins and believe that Jesus is our Savior, we receive faith that enables us to endure and persevere in this life. The cloud of witnesses that have gone before us had faith in Jesus though they all lived before Jesus came to the earth. They all died trusting that God's promise of a Savior would be fulfilled.

[THEREFORE]**What is the difference between believing in God and having faith in Jesus?**

It is easy in this world to believe a higher power, or God exists without truly having faith in Jesus as our Savior. James 2:19 reminds us that even the demons believe God exists, but they do not express saving faith in Jesus. John 14:6 teaches us that no one is reconciled to God the Father without knowing Jesus.

[THIS]

In addition to being the founder of our faith, Jesus is the perfecter of our faith. Because we are all sinful and cannot save ourselves, the righteousness that we receive at salvation is the righteousness of Jesus. He lived the perfect life on earth and because of His perfect obedience our faith is possible. His righteousness is applied to our lives when we have saving faith. God chooses to see the righteousness of Jesus and not our sinfulness. Jesus has gone before us and it is His example that we set our eyes on. Our faith in Him enables us to continue in this life and to remain obedient to God. Just as those who are mentioned in Hebrews 11 endured because their eyes were fixed upon Jesus, we can endure because our eyes are fixed upon Him. Those in Hebrews 11 were looking forward to Jesus' coming, while we trust in His life and death and look for His return when our sanctification is complete.

[THEREFORE]**How does Jesus' example help you live faithfully?**

When we place our eyes upon Christ, we can endure anything. He suffered and obeyed God the Father perfectly. 1 Peter 2:21-24 reminds us of this great example we have in Him.

Read Hebrews 11:1. What are some false ideas about faith that cause you to stumble when times are difficult?

2 Corinthians 13:5 teaches us that we all are to test our hearts to make sure that we do indeed have saving faith. Faith that trusts in anything or anyone else rather than Jesus is not true faith. We cannot be assured or have conviction about a trust in any person or thing on this earth. Our true faith can only be in Jesus who has always been and who has gone before us making a way for everyone who believes to have eternal life.

3. Hebrews 12:2: Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the foundation that our hope is built upon.