

## ***Trusting God while waiting*** (Hebrews 11:32–40)

Having set forth tremendous examples of faith and reminding the readers that living by faith has included enduring suffering, the author brings the focus back to the readers. God had planned something better for believers today, so those earlier saints have had to wait by faith. If they could, should not we also be patient? Whether seeing great achievements or enduring suffering, faith requires that we trust God as we wait.

### ***I. Faith saw great achievement and endured great suffering (11:32–38).***

#### ***1. By faith seeing great achievements (11:32–35a)***

Gideon (Judges 6–9), Barak (Judges 4–5), Samson (Judges 13–16), and Jephthah (Judges 11–12), were judges whom God used to deliver Israel from her enemies. David was the first king in the Messianic line and one who showed great faith. Samuel, both a judge and a prophet, marked a long line of prophets dealing with kings. The achievements of these and others, such as Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, etc., showed a great trust in God.

Their character shows that God-pleasing faith does not depend upon a perfect life. Furthermore, it was often in weakness that they turned to God for help, not trusting themselves but God.

#### ***2. By faith enduring great suffering (11:35b–38)***

Some did not see “earthly” success, but by faith endured suffering and death. They remained faithful to God.

These heroes of faith were no less successful in God’s eyes than those who saw great achievements, but were of the same quality of faith. Some particularly looked forward to a “better resurrection” (v.35b, cf. Joh 19:25–26; Daniel 12:2). Though the world looked on them with contempt, in God’s estimation the world was not worthy of them (v.38a).

Living by faith does not guarantee worldly success nor comfort. Achievements are not what God values but faith. Achievements also cannot compare with the treasure of having your name written in heaven.

### ***II. Faith brought divine commendation but not yet the promise (11:39).***

#### ***1. O.T. saints did not receive “the promise.”***

Though many saw divine promises fulfilled, they did not receive the benefits of the new covenant bought by the promised Messiah. They had to wait to be made perfect (v.40).

#### ***2. Nevertheless they were all commended for their faith.***

God testified to these saints with His approval in the Scriptural record, in keeping His word, in His acceptance of them. He commended them because of their faith.

We who have the record of Christ’s coming, of His sinless life, of the affirming miracles, of His death, AND of His resurrection, are much more responsible to live by faith and seek God’s commendation. Given the hope which we have, we live trusting God in obedience now (cf. 1 John 2:28–3:3).

### ***III. Faith has awaited perfection together with us (11:40).***

#### ***1. O.T. saints had to wait, because God had prepared something better for us.***

They had great faith, but the Messiah had to first come and offer His perfect sacrifice. We benefit from that which they did not have, though we also wait for its consummation.

#### ***2. O.T. saints are made perfect together with us.***

“Perfection” in Hebrews is the total work of Christ for all believers, including such things as our final complete sanctification or glorification. Together with O.T. saints, believers today look forward to that final complete victory.

Believers are called to wait and trust God that He will do all which He has promised. We are to believe God by obeying Him in whatever the challenges He brings, whether in health or relationships or work. Neither trials nor successes should deflect our focus on Christ and the promised, future blessings.

### ***Questions for further thought and discussion:***

- In light of the final examples of faith (vv. 32–38) how would you respond to the accusation – intended to be demeaning – that our faith (or “religion”) is a crutch?
- What is dangerous about the “successes” of faith and what is helpful from enduring suffering?
- What can help elevate the desire to be commended by God over the desire to please people? (What would help you personally?)
- What aspects of being “made perfect” are rightly only future and what aspects should be part of our present experience?