



Hebrews 11 - Living From Substance

by John Himmelberger

Intro

Hebrews 11 reveals that faith is more than belief. It is truth becoming substance within us until unseen reality governs response. Through the stories of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, and others, this teaching explores what mature faith actually looks like in everyday life. Faith moves before circumstances fully align, remains steady when outcomes delay, and stays anchored in God rather than comfort, certainty, or visible results. Hebrews 11 is not celebrating perfect people. It is revealing what happens when people agree with God.

My Intention and Assumptions

I hope that your relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is strengthened through this teaching. My assumption is that you have read or are reading all 66 books of the Bible for context. This is meant to be salt and make you thirsty. You're welcome.

About the Author

John Himmelberger is a teacher, pastor, and lifelong learner. With decades of experience walking with Jesus and leading others into transformational truth, John brings a grounded yet radical perspective rooted in Scripture, personal growth, and kingdom living.

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Walking in Kingdom Maturity

Hebrews 11 – Living From Substance

Hebrews 6 anchored you.

Hebrews 7 secured your access.

Hebrews 8 transformed your covenant.

Hebrews 9 cleansed your conscience.

Hebrews 10 removed the illusion that anything is unfinished.

So now Hebrews 11 answers the next question:

If the work is finished...

If access is secure...

If your conscience is clean...

If you are not shrinking back...

Then how do you actually live?

Hebrews 11 answers that.

You live by faith.

Not vague belief.

Not optimism.

Not spiritual positivity.

Substance.

Focus

Hebrews 11 reveals that maturity is not agreeing with truth intellectually.

It is living from unseen reality until it becomes visible through your life.

Key Truth

Faith is not pretending something is true.

Faith is becoming internally aligned with what God has already said is real.

Teaching Flow

1. Faith Is Substance (Hebrews 11:1)

The chapter opens with one of the most quoted verses in Scripture.

Faith=Substance of what is hoped for + Evidence of what is unseen

But this is not poetic language.

It is defining reality.

Faith is substance.

Not theory.

Not emotional excitement.

Substance.

Something has become so internally real within you that your life begins to organize around it before you fully see it externally.

Truth

Faith is not denial of reality.

It is agreement with a greater reality.

Deeper Insight

Immature faith waits to see before moving.

Mature faith moves because it already sees internally.

Gold Nugget

Faith is not hoping hard enough.

It is becoming convinced enough to live differently.

2. Faith Sees Beyond the Visible (Hebrews 11:2–3)

The writer immediately points backward.

The elders gained approval through faith.

Then creation itself is addressed.

What is seen was created from what was unseen.

Everything visible came from invisible reality first.

Truth

The unseen realm is not less real than the visible one.
It is the source of it.

Deeper Insight

Most people only respond to what they can measure naturally.
Faith responds to what God has revealed spiritually.

Gold Nugget

Maturity begins when unseen truth governs visible response.

3. Faith Produces Action (Hebrews 11:4–8)

Then the examples begin.

Abel offered.

Enoch walked.

Noah built.

Abraham went.

Notice something:

Faith always moves.

Nobody in Hebrews 11 merely agreed intellectually.

They acted.

Truth

Faith that never moves
has never fully become substance.

Deeper Insight

The proof of belief is not intensity of language.
It is alignment of life.

Gold Nugget

Your actions reveal what has become real within you.

4. Noah Built Before There Was Rain (Hebrews 11:7)

Noah becomes one of the clearest pictures of mature faith.

He moved
before circumstances confirmed anything.

No visible storm.
No visible flood.
No visible evidence.

Yet he built anyway.

Truth

Faith does not require external confirmation before obedience.

Deeper Insight

Most people want certainty before movement.
Faith moves because agreement already exists.

Gold Nugget

Maturity is when obedience is no longer dependent on visible reinforcement.

5. Abraham Lived Anchored in Promise (Hebrews 11:8–10)

This connects directly back to Hebrews 6.

Abraham went out
without fully knowing where he was going.

Why?
Because his stability was not geographical.
It was relational.

Anchored.

He was looking for a city
whose builder and maker was God.

Truth

Faith is not confidence in outcomes.
It is confidence in the One leading you.

Deeper Insight

People often want God to explain the whole path.
Faith usually receives the next step.

Gold Nugget

An anchored person can walk through uncertainty without becoming unstable.

6. Faith Lives Beyond Natural Limitation (Hebrews 11:11–12)

Now Sarah enters the story.

What was naturally impossible
became possible through agreement.

This is important:
Faith is not ignoring limitation.
It is refusing to let limitation become final authority.

Truth

Natural limitation does not cancel Kingdom possibility.

Deeper Insight

Mature faith does not deny facts.
It refuses to enthrone them above God.

Gold Nugget

Faith does not ask, “What is possible naturally?”
It asks, “What has God said?”

7. They Died Still Seeing Something Greater (Hebrews 11:13–16)

Now the chapter shifts deeper.

These people died in faith.
Still believing.
Still aligned.
Still seeing.

This destroys the modern idea
that faith is only validated by immediate visible outcomes.

Truth

Faithfulness is not measured by speed of manifestation.

Deeper Insight

Immaturity needs constant visible reinforcement.

Maturity remains aligned even when the timeline stretches.

Gold Nugget

Endurance is faith remaining steady over time.

This directly connects back to Hebrews 10:

“We are not those who shrink back...”

8. Faith Chooses Identity Over Comfort (Hebrews 11:24–27)

Moses had access to power, status, and comfort.

But he chose identity instead.

He chose alignment with God’s people
over temporary comfort.

Truth

Faith often requires choosing eternal identity over temporary convenience.

Deeper Insight

Shrinking back usually happens
when comfort becomes more valuable than alignment.

Gold Nugget

You drift when comfort governs more than conviction.

9. Faith Is Not Passive (Hebrews 11:29–34)

The chapter accelerates.

Walls fall.

Kingdoms shift.

Promises are obtained.

Weakness becomes strength.

Faith is not passive agreement.
It is active participation with Heaven.

Truth

Faith is not waiting for life to happen.
It is moving in agreement with God.

Deeper Insight

Many believers call inactivity “waiting on God.”
But Hebrews 11 shows movement everywhere.

Gold Nugget

Faith moves before feelings catch up.

10. Some Saw Victory. Some Saw Resistance. All Were Approved. (Hebrews 11:35–40)

Now the tension deepens.

Some escaped the sword.
Others were killed.

Some saw miraculous breakthrough.
Others suffered greatly.

Yet all are listed together.

Why?

Because Hebrews 11 is not celebrating outcomes.
It is celebrating alignment. (mic drop)

Truth

Faithfulness is not measured by comfort or visible success.

Deeper Insight

If outcomes alone define faith,
then suffering automatically looks like failure.
Hebrews rejects that completely.

Gold Nugget

Mature faith is not sustained by results.
It is sustained by agreement.

What Hebrews 11 Is Really Doing

Hebrews 6 anchored you.

Hebrews 7 secured your access.

Hebrews 8 transformed your covenant.

Hebrews 9 cleansed your conscience.

Hebrews 10 revealed the finished work.

Hebrews 11 shows what life looks like when those realities become substance.

Immature Life

- Needs constant visible reassurance
- Waits for certainty before moving
- Confuses agreement with action
- Lives governed by circumstances
- Shrinks back when outcomes delay

Mature Life

- Lives from unseen reality
- Moves in alignment before visibility
- Lets belief govern action
- Remains anchored under pressure
- Endures because truth has become substance

Deep Activation

What unseen truth has God already spoken to me?

Where am I waiting for visible certainty before obedience?

What area of my life reveals hesitation instead of alignment?

Where have I mistaken agreement for faith-filled movement?

What would it look like to live this week like Heaven's reality is already true?

Declaration

I live by faith and not by sight.

Truth has become substance within me.

I do not wait for visible certainty before obedience.

I move in agreement with what God has revealed.

My life is anchored beyond circumstances.

I remain aligned whether outcomes are immediate or delayed.

I do not shrink back.

I live from conviction, endurance, and Kingdom reality.

Final Thought

Hebrews 11 is not a chapter about spiritual heroes.

It is a chapter about what happens

when truth becomes substance within ordinary people.

(pause)

Faith is not pretending.

It is alignment so deep

that your life begins moving

before the world around you understands why.

The question is not:

“Do you believe?”

The question is:

Has belief become substance yet?

Supplemental Portion

What Faith Looked Like in Real People

Hebrews 11 is not a museum of spiritual celebrities.
It is a witness stand.

Person after person stepping forward saying:
“This is what it looked like when truth became substance in me.”

Not perfect people.
Not flawless outcomes.
People who allowed unseen reality
to govern visible response.

Abel

Faith changed what he brought.
While Cain brought an offering, Abel brought the first and best of what he had.
His life reveals that faith is not just doing something for God.
It is bringing something from alignment.

Enoch

Faith changed how he walked.
He lived in such continual relationship with God
that Scripture says he “was not,” because God took him.
Faith was not an occasional moment for Enoch.
It became his way of living.

Noah

Faith moved before evidence appeared.
Before rain.
Before storms.
Before visible confirmation.
Noah built anyway.
His obedience reveals that mature faith moves because agreement already exists.

Abraham

Faith left what was familiar.
He walked away from certainty
without fully knowing where he was going.

His stability was not tied to location.
It was tied to God.

Sarah

Faith considered God faithful beyond natural limitation.

What looked impossible naturally
did not become final authority
because she became anchored in the faithfulness of God.

Her story reveals that faith does not deny facts.
It simply refuses to let facts speak louder than God's promise.

Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph

Faith became generational.
They lived looking beyond themselves.
Blessing future sons.
Speaking future promises.
Trusting God beyond their own lifetime.
Faith thinks farther than the present moment.

Moses' Parents

Faith resisted fear.
When Pharaoh ordered Hebrew children killed,
they hid Moses anyway.
Faith often begins by valuing God's purpose
more than the pressure around you.

Moses

Faith chose identity over comfort.
He walked away from the power and privilege of Egypt
because alignment with God mattered more than temporary convenience.
Faith will always ask:
What governs you more... comfort or conviction?

Israel at the Red Sea

Faith stepped forward when there appeared to be no path.
The waters stood before them.
Pharaoh pressed behind them.
Yet they moved through the way God opened.

Sometimes faith is not waiting for every threat to disappear.
It is trusting God enough to keep moving through the path He provides
anyway.

Rahab

Faith recognized God before her circumstances changed.

While Jericho remained opposed to God,
Rahab aligned herself with what she believed He was doing.

Her faith was revealed through action
as she welcomed and protected the spies.

Faith does not just acknowledge truth internally.
It responds to it openly.

Gideon

Faith moved through insecurity.

He began hiding in fear,

yet God called him a mighty warrior before he believed it himself.

Faith is often learning to agree with God's perspective over your own.

Barak

Faith moved despite hesitation.

He did not begin with bold certainty.

But he still moved forward.

Faith is not the absence of weakness.

It is movement despite it.

Samson

Faith still operated through imperfection.

His life carried compromise and failure,

yet even in the end he turned back toward God.

Hebrews 11 does not celebrate flawless people.

It celebrates people who continued turning toward God.

Jephthah – Jeff-thah

Faith rose through a deeply imperfect story.

Rejected by his family
and pushed to the margins,
he still became a deliverer for Israel.

His life carried both victory and tragedy,
reminding us that Hebrews 11 is not celebrating flawless people.

It is revealing what can happen
when imperfect people still respond to God.

David

Faith trusted God in impossible situations.
From shepherd fields to giant battlefields,
David learned to live anchored in God's reality.
Even through failure,
he kept returning to relationship.

Samuel

Faith remained steady over time.
From childhood,
he learned to hear God's voice and respond.
His life became a stabilizing voice for an unstable nation.

The Prophets

Faith spoke truth under pressure.
Rejected.
Mocked.
Persecuted.
Yet they remained aligned with what God revealed.
Faith does not become silence when opposition increases.

And then Hebrews 11 broadens even further.

Some conquered kingdoms.
Some shut the mouths of lions.
Some escaped the sword.
Others were tortured.
Others wandered in deserts and caves.
Some saw miraculous victory.
Others suffered greatly.

Yet all are listed together.

Why?

Because Hebrews 11 is not celebrating outcomes.
It is celebrating alignment.

The point is not:
“Look how amazing they were.”

The point is:
“Look what happens when someone fully agrees with God.”

And now Hebrews quietly turns toward us.

Because this chapter was never meant to end with them.

It becomes a mirror.

What does faith look like
when substance forms in you?