**Authentic Faith** **What is Faith?**
**June 10, 2012** **Hebrews 11:1-3**

There is no subject of greater importance to living as a follower of Jesus Christ than faith. That's why the teaching contained in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is among the greatest in the Bible. Here we find explained and illustrated some of the most pressing questions: What is faith? How do we get faith? What are faith's benefits? What are faith's trials and obligations? Particularly in our present day, when counterfeit faiths abound, a study of authentic faith is essential if we are going to stand on solid ground.[i]

**Discussion Questions:** (Leaders please review each question and pick those that will be most beneficial for your group.)

1. Give some reasons why it's essential that we understand authentic (i.e. Biblical) faith?

2. Read Hebrews 11:1-3. What are the two characteristics of authentic faith described in v.1? Titus 2:11-13, 1 Peter 1:3-4, 1 John 3:2-3 and Revelation 22:5 describe the future hopes for those in Jesus Christ and Ephesians 1:3-7 describes the spiritual blessings that are already true for those who are in Jesus Christ. How does faith give substance to these future hopes in Christ and give evidence of these unseen "blessings" of being united to Christ? If your life does not give substance to and show evidence of these things, then what does this reveal?

3. In Hebrews 11:2 we see that the result of authentic faith is commendation from God. Briefly review the people listed in Hebrews 11 and notice how they heard God's word to them, accepted it and acted on it. The same is still true for us today. The only way we can please God is through faith in God's revelation to us of Jesus Christ. Have you received him and put your complete hope in him?

4. Hebrews 11:3 gives us our first an example of authentic faith – the origin of the universe. Apart from faith, people believe the universe was created from what can be seen (i.e. evolution – that higher forms of life springs from lower forms of life). But only by faith can we understand that the universe was formed out of what was not seen. Looking back at Genesis 1, how many times does it say that God spoke and created something out of nothing to form all that is in the universe? Do you believe this revelation and act on it as such?

5. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the word of God about Jesus Christ. This means that in order to come to authentic faith and to grow in authentic faith we must know what God's word says about Jesus Christ. How often and when do you expose yourself to God's word about Jesus (and tell others what God's word says about Jesus)? What has God revealed to you recently about Jesus Christ? Have you received it and are you acting on it today? If you don't act on it, is this authentic faith? Pray and ask God to increase your faith (see Luke 17:5).

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[i] Richard D. Phillips, Faith Victorious: finding strength and hope from Hebrews 11 (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing Co. 2002) ix.