

# Perfecting Faith

(Hebrews 11:32-40)

Yearly Theme: “Love Does...”

Series Title: *Substance of Faith*

December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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## Something to think about:

As we bring 2019 to a close it's a good time to reflect on our year as a whole and on ourselves. Our focus this year has been “LOVE” and what better way to bring in the New Year than by looking at this next passage. The author of Hebrews has been talking about faith and now, here in Hebrews 11:32-40, he gives a beautiful tribute to his heroes in the faith from Jewish history by talking about how they were able to have such strong and steadfast faith.

Let's look at this passage and see how we also can become superheroes in the Faith. Please turn to:

### *Hebrews 11:32-40 (NLT)*

<sup>32</sup> How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. <sup>33</sup> By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received their loved ones back again from death.

But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. <sup>37</sup> Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half,<sup>[a]</sup> and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. <sup>38</sup> They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup> All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. <sup>40</sup> For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us.

Here's the key point this morning...

**Key Point: “Faith is perfected by persistent waiting on the Lord.”**

What can we discern about the characters in this passage regarding their faith and their determination?

1. God is LOVE.
2. God's TIMING is perfect.
3. God's PLAN is perfect.

## Something to take home:

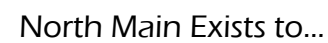
Where are you today? Are you going into 2020 with a firm foundation? Do you persistently wait on the Lord? In our society to have faith is seen as weakness or foolishness, and we get angry about that often, but it should deepen our faith in Christ because he predicted it. He told us that the wisdom of God is the foolishness of man and that we would be persecuted for following God's wisdom. But how do we do it? How can we have faith so strong that we can withstand all that the world throws at us? The answer is LOVE. If we are truly in love with God, if we believe He loves us, then we will seek Him, and in turn, be brought closer to Him and our faith will be strengthened.

Where does your faith sit today? The Bible says that faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains, so what couldn't faith do in your life? We often hold back from God because we fear the refining process that inevitably happens when we get close to God, and yes, this process can be painful. Building faith is hard. However, if we remember that this is a relationship where the foundation is built first and foremost on love, then we should have comfort that any process we must face, any trials, any hardships will be used by God for our good and the good of God's kingdom (that's Faith).

Go into 2020 seeking God and let your faith be perfected by persistently waiting on God's perfect timing and His perfect plans. Remember that the whole thing is built on God's unending love for us.

**Key Point: “Faith is perfected by persistent waiting on the Lord.”**

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



**Know** Christ intimately,  
**Grow** in Christ continually, and,  
**Go** for Christ daily;

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... evidence of things not seen.

(HEBREWS 11)

# Perfecting Faith

(Hebrews 11:32-40)

Series Title: “*Substance of Faith*”

## KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What does the word “Faith” mean to you?
- ⇒ What does persistence mean to you?
- ⇒ If you are able, share a time in your life when you waited on God’s plan.

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

### Hebrews 11:32-40 (NLT)

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## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in that passage?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is waiting on the Lord’s timing hard or easy for you?  
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3. Has your faith ever been tested? What anchored your faith?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does “Love never loses faith” look like in your life?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you believe God loves you? What does your answer mean for your life?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
6. All the heroes in this passage were made heroes not because they were perfect, but because they loved a perfect God and trusted (faith) that he loved them back and that He had good planned for them. What does that, or should that, mean for you?  
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7. What is holding your faith back?  
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8. What’s the next step you need to take in your faith?  
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## SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **TRY TAKING A STEP BACK** next time you face a difficult situation or decision, and lean heavily into God. Pray, read scripture, and seek the advice of those who have evidence of a God- centered life. See how your life is strengthened by the steadfastness of God.
- ⇒ **BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF** and ask the questions, “am I seeking God the way that I should?”, “Do I acknowledge my own weakness so that I can more fully see God’s greatness?”, “Do I trust that in his greatness, God’s plan is best?”. If we begin to think this way our faith begins to strengthen, and it all starts with Love.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Hebrews 11:39 -40.*