

Series: Practice Makes Perfect
Message: Practice for Happiness
Date: June 5/6
Passage: Hebrews 11

This week we started a new series called Practice Makes Perfect. In this five week series, we will look at some key practices to living the life God wants us to. This week Doyle looked at how faith results in happiness.

1. Introduction: Excluding people in the Bible, who in history would you most like to be and why?

Leaders Tip: Allow 8-10 minutes for people to respond. Group members will have fun sharing a person in history whose shoes they would have really wanted to walk in. This question sets them up to talk about people from Old Testament times who found happiness by walking in faith. Try to get everyone to share even if you have to draw them out a little bit. Have fun learning and connecting with the people in your small group as they share a little insight into someone from history that they admire and would want to be like.

2. Observation: Read Hebrews 11:1-12 and 17-40. What do we learn about benefits and difficulties of walking with God from this passage?

Leaders Tip: Allow members to take the time necessary to look through the passage and identify the numerous answers to this question. Your group should have no problem identifying from the verses all the various benefits and difficulties that come in our faith walk with God. Allow at least 12-15 minutes for your group to respond. From the passage we learn that our walk with God;

- requires faith
- instills hope
- mandates sacrifice
- produces patience
- gains the approval of God
- brings about a legacy that lives on
- helps us to understand what righteous is and what it requires
- guides us, saves us, and makes us strong
- gives us a home and a bright future
- it costs us our lives
- facilitates the miraculous
- produces a testimony to the world
- requires a high risk and produces high reward
- defines us as believers
- helps us overcome enemies
- it is hard and is not the path of least resistance
- promotes and stimulates courage

3a. Understanding: What are the characteristics/benefits for those who walk with God in our day?

Leaders Tip: Give your group about 5 minutes to respond. Hopefully group members will find it easy to state the various benefits and characteristics of the walk with faith that would include things like; the admiration of others, the fact that they will stand out in our culture, that there are no short cuts to a walk with faith, the person will leave a legacy of faith, that it demands authenticity, and requires integrity, and they will experience God's favor their own personal lives. Keep in mind your group should still be talking in generalizations and not personalizing their answers.

3b. Understanding: What makes it so difficult to walk with God today?

Leaders Tip: Give your group about 5-7 minutes to discuss the difficulties that come with trying to live out a life of faith in this culture. Things like; there are so few examples, we live in a fast moving short-cut culture, there are temptations everywhere, busyness, consumerism, “affluenza”, broken families and broken dreams.

4a. Application: If someone was to write about your faith walk with God, what would you like them to say? Why?

4b. Application: What is an area of your life where you need to make a faith step? What would your life look like if you took the faith step?

Leaders Tip: Allow your group 10-12 minutes to respond to either or both of these questions. Help the group focus on taking some of the learning they had from Hebrews 11 and how it might look in their life. Encourage the group to be as honest as possible and you need to be ready to set the example and tone of the self disclosure. Be as specific as you can.

Pray: This lesson in particular lends itself to closing the night in prayer. You would hate to leave the evening sharing such personal information and making such personal commitments without the support and encouragement of those in your group. We need God’s help in this faith walk because without His wisdom, power, and support we can do nothing of significance!
