

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Be Faithful to God No Matter What
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #11). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Be sure the facility is ready when people arrive.

Bible Study Leader:

Enlist readers for passages ahead of time.

Worship Time Leader:

Have copies of the music available for everyone.

Music Sources:

Choose from the following:

Cry of My Heart, *The Worship Hymnal* #526; CCLI #844980

In Christ Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #506; CCLI #3350395

Bow the Knee, *The Worship Hymnal* #505; CCLI #2701725

Find Us Faithful, *The Worship Hymnal* #598; CCLI #18259

Let It Be Said Of Us, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Be Faithful to God No Matter What

Focal Text

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13

Background

Hebrews 11:1—12:17

Main Idea

We must keep on being faithful to God no matter what, just as people of faith through the centuries and, above all, Jesus himself did.

Question to Explore

What are the limits of the faithfulness God expects of us?

Teaching Aim

To help the church compare their lives with the lives of people of faith through the centuries and with the life of Jesus himself.

Gathering together:

Sing one or more of the following:

Cry of My Heart, *The Worship Hymnal* #526; CCLI #844980

In Christ Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #506; CCLI #3350395

Bow the Knee, *The Worship Hymnal* #505; CCLI #2701725

First thoughts:

TRUST IN THE LORD

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6, King James Version).

Trust among people has to be earned. It is a learned response to people who are faithful to one another. God's trust does not have to be earned. Those who believe in Him by faith find Him trustworthy all of the time.

Proverbs are truisms. When applied faithfully to life the response is always true. Trust God and He will direct your life.

I. The Believer's Responsibility.

There are three ways in which the believer is to trust the Lord. First of all he is to trust the LORD with all his heart. There is to be a complete commitment to Him. All of life is to be given to God without any reservation.

Secondly, a believer is not to rely upon his own understanding. He is to look at life from God's perspective. A person's understanding is incomplete; God's understanding is complete. When a person relies upon God's understanding he removes himself from the temptation of selfishness.

Third, a follower of God is to acknowledge Him in every area of life. God is to be God seven days of the week, twenty four hours a day. He is not to be compartmentalized.

II. God's Response.

Life will be guided by the hand of God. A believer will experience the Presence of God in all aspects of life. He will be present in the good times and the bad times. This is His promise.

Suppose you get on a bus to take a trip to a nearby town. You sit down and look out the window at the beautiful blue sky, then you look across at the window on the other side and see darkening clouds. You have no control of the weather on either side of the bus. You are only in control of which side of the bus you choose to view the weather.

The lesson is this: you can dwell upon the storms or upon the sunshine. You cannot change the weather. No matter which you choose, the bus is going to take you to the nearby town. Relax, trust God, and enjoy the ride.

All too often we try to change that which is not in our ability to change. We need to heed the writer of the proverb and leave it all to God. Let Him direct our paths. Let Him drive the bus.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Pray for each one's faith and trust in God to be strong and steady. Pray that each one will stay the course.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Be Faithful to God No Matter What

Focal Text

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13

Background

Hebrews 11:1—12:17

Main Idea

We must keep on being faithful to God no matter what, just as people of faith through the centuries and, above all, Jesus himself did.

Question to Explore

What are the limits of the faithfulness God expects of us?

Teaching Aim

To help the church compare their lives with the lives of people of faith through the centuries and with the life of Jesus himself.

Introduction to your personal study:

What are you waiting for God to do? Will it take a miracle for you or can you simply take Him at His word and walk by faith? In this study you will lead your group to study some Old Testament saints and learn how they walked with God. You will begin with the greatest definition of faith found in the Scriptures and follow up with illustrations from their lives found in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the word for faith is often translated belief. It changes with the context. But, both words require action. If a person has faith and believes in God then that person is motivated to action. One's action's reveal what one believes. In the English language of many years ago, the word “faith” was both a noun and an active verb. It still can be used as a verb in some languages.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #11) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

I. FAITH DEFINED.

Hebrews 11:1-2, ***Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.***

Before going into the lives of faithful saints, the author gives a definition of faith. Note carefully the words “confidence”, “hope”, and “assurance”. Hope is based upon experience. (See Romans 5:1-5) Confidence is based upon the Gospel already heard. Assurance means that underlying bedrock upon which one stands. (See Matthew 7:24-25)

It is not possible to see faith except through confidence, hope, and assurance in the life of a believer. Faith is action and is displayed in the ongoing lives of the saints.

The ancients listed both men and women were commended by God for their faith. They trusted God and journeyed on. God’s promise was enough for them. His Word was enough. That kind of faith is a key to understanding this lesson and putting it into practice. Even though they could not with their eyes see into the future, their minds and hearts could embrace it.

Note to leader: These verses assume knowledge of Old Testament leaders. If you are not familiar with these stories, you will need to go to Genesis and read about the people listed in Hebrews 11.

II. FAITH IN ACTION.

Hebrews 11:8-22, ***By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country, he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was able to bear children because she considered him faithful who made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as***

dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

The writer encourages his hearers to keep their faith strong. The first illustration he uses is that of Abraham. All Jews knew him. The life of Abraham was one of faith. When God called him to pick up his tent and move to a place unknown to him he obeyed without hesitation. He was promised a land as his inheritance and the inheritance of his seed but though he lived a long life he never saw the promise fulfilled. He wandered as a stranger in a foreign country because that was God's directive and he obeyed it.

He never took his eyes off the goal. He looked for a city "with foundations, whose architect and builder is God".

Sarah, Abraham's wife, who was well past normal childbearing age believed God would give her and Abraham a son. From such a small beginning, one family, God would raise up a family whose number would be countless. God begins again. The family of Adam and Eve, with the exception of Noah and his family died in the flood. From Noah to Abraham the knowledge of God was passed down from generation to generation. Then one man was chosen to be the patriarch of the nation of Israel. From that nation would come Christ with another new beginning.

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country---a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

None of Abraham's seed up to the time of Christ found the city they sought. But, they did not fail to keep looking forward while admitting that they were strangers. They did not seek to return to Haran or Babylon or any of the countries east of Palestine. They looked for the promised land which would be their own. God is pleased when His people look for Him and the place He has prepared for them. He desires faith in each one.

III. FAITH TESTED.

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring shall be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

This is one of the most amazing stories of faith found in Scripture. Childless until he was 100 and Sarah was 90, they were finally graced with a son whose name was Isaac.

An astounding part of the story is that God tested Abraham's faith by telling him to sacrifice Isaac as an offering. Without hesitation he took Isaac and wood for the sacrifice to Mt. Moriah, which is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem today. His thoughts were this. He gave this child to me when I was as much as dead to having children. If He can give us a child at my age, He can raise up Isaac from the dead if I sacrifice him.

Abraham had taken the materials for a sacrifice and laid them upon Isaac's back for him to carry. When Isaac asked where was the lamb for the burnt offering Abraham responded positively that God would provide.

As Abraham was about to slay his son God provided a ram for the offering. God responded to his faith. Even though God had promised a future with descendants too many to count, Abraham was going to slay the one through whom that future would come. (See Genesis 22:1-14) There could be no greater test than to be told to give his firstborn up to die. This is an example of what God is doing when He gives His firstborn up to die for the sins of man. If God can raise Jesus up from the dead, He can raise all who trust Him.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

Isaac lived and the promise passed from one generation to another. By blessing his son, Jacob, he passed down the promise made to Abraham concerning the Israelites and the Promised Land. Jacob and Esau would not see in their day what was promised, but became wanderers even as their father and grandfather had been. (See Genesis 27: 1-40)

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Jacob did not die in the Promised Land. He died in Egypt. He and all his family had been brought to Egypt by Joseph. It was all according to the plan of God to give posterity to the land that encompassed Palestine, Syria, and part of what is now Iraq.

22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

Joseph believed so strongly in God's promise that he asked that his bones be buried in the Promised Land when his children returned. That would be almost 400 years in the future. He knew in his heart that his children would not remain in Egypt forever. He looked ahead and in so doing gave Israel an example of faith. When the time came for the Exodus they carried Joseph's bones with them.

The phrases “by faith” and “through faith” tell the reader how each of the subjects did what they did.

IV. FAITH WITNESSED.

Hebrews 11:39-40. ***These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. 40 God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.***

The New Testament church and the Old Testament Hebrews are halves that will be joined together when Christ returns. There is coming a time when all will be complete as God planned. That is what “perfect” means. They were not commended for the land in which they dwelt. They were commended because they trusted God for the future. The Greek word that is the basis for commended means to witness with one’s life. We get the English word martyr from it.

V. FAITH FOCUSED.

Hebrews 12:1-3. ***1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.***

Hebrews chapter eleven is God’s hall of faith for saints. They are witnesses to the fact that a life of faith is what God desires of His followers. It is not an on again and off again walk. Once begun it is to be continued throughout life.

One is to throw off all hindrances. Hindrances are worldly things that keep a person from focusing on one’s walk with God. (See 1 John 2:16, Mark 4:18-19, & 1 Timothy 6:10). Jesus told the parable of the sower and indicated that it was a doctrine of supreme importance to His disciples (Mark 4:13). It is impossible to persevere if one keeps looking to the world for peace.

Runners train with weights attached to the legs. But, they do not wear them in competition. They would be a hindrance. Each one who runs a race runs to win. Life is like a race. It has a beginning and it has an end. As is one of the themes of this book, staying in the race to the finish line is important.

Get rid of sin. The writer lists this separate from things that hinder. Sin in the biblical sense is to miss the mark. It is the picture of a man with a bow who shoots his arrow and misses completely his target.

The cross was not the joy Jesus looked forward to. It was unspeakable horror for Him. But, it was not the end. Joy came after He defeated sin and entered heaven. There He sat down at the right hand of God.

It is Christ the triumphant One we fix our gaze upon. One will grow weary of the race if one does not remember Him. Look away from the world and focus all of your attention upon Jesus. Faith will remain strong if one focuses upon Jesus who is the founder or leader of one's faith. Faith comes from Christ.

It is written in Matthew 5:48, ***Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*** (King James Version). Perfect means to be complete or all that God wants one to be. It is in Jesus that a believer finds perfection. Only by knowing Christ can one become all God desires.

VI. FAITH SHARED.

Hebrews 12:12-13. ***12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.***

The context of these verses is the chastening of God's people by the Lord. Believers respond differently when chastened. Some might tend to drop out. Here the believer is challenged to help others who are weaker in faith. The Christian life is to be lived in cooperation with other believers. The church is made up of immature and mature, weak and strong, able and disabled. Each one is literally his brother's keeper.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Look again at the six headings above that chart at the ways faith should be put into action in the life of each believer. Your goal is to encourage each participant to express faith in each of these ways.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Be Faithful to God No Matter What

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13

Background

Hebrews 11:1—12:17

Main Idea

We must keep on being faithful to God no matter what, just as people of faith through the centuries and, above all, Jesus himself did.

Question to Explore

What are the limits of the faithfulness God expects of us?

Teaching Aim

To help the church compare their lives with the lives of people of faith through the centuries and with the life of Jesus himself.

Connect with Life:

Read the following to the group as an introduction to the lesson. “A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passeth knowledge.”

A. W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous* (Christian Publications, 1986); as quoted by Swindoll, Charles R., *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations and Quotes*, (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998); p.77

Guide the Study:

I. FAITH DEFINED. Hebrews 11:1-2.

Say to the group: One church had a bumper sticker made with the church's name and the slogan "Faith in Action". Faith is to be seen. It issues forth in our works. **But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.** (James 1:22, King James Version).

Ask: How is your faith today? Is it weak? Is it strong? Is it visible?

Have a volunteer read Hebrews 11:1-2.

Ask: What are the three words that the author uses to describe faith? (confidence, hope, assurance)

Tell them that faith is something with substance. It is based on the confidence of past experiences and future experiences for which we have hope. This is based on "assurance" which is a word that means the underlying bedrock upon which we stand. "Faith brings the things which God has already prepared for us into the living present and makes them real now. Faith gives us the steady assurance that God's best blessings are still in the future" (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, Vol. 12. Nashville: Tennessee. 1972, p. 69).

Ask: Why were the persons listed in chapter 11? (They were examples of faith defined in chapter 11:1-2)

II. FAITH IN ACTION. Hebrews 11:8-16.

Call upon someone to read Hebrews 11:8-12.

Ask: Who is central to this passage? (Abraham)

Ask: What is a key to Abraham's faith? (Obedience)

Tell them Abraham was a nomad. He lived in tents. Whenever God told him to move he obeyed. He did not know where he was going. He looked for a city built by God.

Ask: Is your faith strong enough to withstand the test of time? How long are you willing to wait for God to answer?

Say: We want our prayers answered right away. The people described in Chapter 11 did not fail to look forward even though they did not see the promise of God fulfilled in their lifetime.

Have a volunteer read Hebrews 11:13-16.

Ask: What was the goal for which each one sought? (A heavenly city prepared by God for them)

Now ask: Do you think God is pleased with such people? (Yes)

Then should saints today have their faith seeking that heavenly city too?

III. FAITH TESTED. Hebrews 11:17-19.

Read Hebrews 11:17-19 to the group.

Say to the group: This is one of the most amazing stories in the Bible. Abraham and Sarah were old. He was 100 and she was 90. Even though they were well past childbearing age God gave them a son named Isaac. He was a joy to them. Then God tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac to Him on an altar.

Preparation was made. Wood was gotten and placed upon Isaac to carry. They journeyed to Mount Moriah, which would one day be the Temple Mount. There Abraham thought that if he obeyed and sacrificed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead.

God had other plans. As Abraham was about to slay Isaac with a knife, God provided a ram for the offering. Abraham passed his test of faith.

Do you see any similarities with the crucifixion of Jesus.

Ask: Which of you could obey such a command?

Have the group think about that question.

Say: notice how faith was attributed to the lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. (Hebrews 11:20-22)

IV. FAITH WITNESSED. Hebrews 11:39-40.

Explain the word commended. It means more than just a word of commendation. The Greek root word for the translation means to witness with one's life. Their faith had been visible.

Ask: Do you think that Israel's saints and the church's saints will someday be together in glory? What is the basis for your answer? (Both had faith)

V. FAITH FOCUSED. Hebrews 12:1-3.

Ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 12:1-3.

Question: What are the two issues that must be addressed before one can focus on Jesus? (Hindrances and sin).

Say: Define each one. (Hindrances are worldly delights, sin is rebelling against God)

Then explain: One is to run a race called life. It is to be run with blinders on. It is to be run with tenacity, nothing hindering. The focus of one's life is to be Jesus.

Ask: How would you define perseverance?

Ask: What does Jesus have to do with our faith? (He is the author and perfecter.)

Now define those two descriptors. As author He is the founder and originator of our faith. As perfecter He brings it all to completion. You will be all God wants you to be.

Ask: What do you think when you read "who for the joy set before him endured the cross"?

Make sure the group understands that the joy was in His anticipation of glory.

Question: Why should you consider Jesus at all? (So you will not grow weary and lose heart.)

Say to the group: It is Jesus who shows us how to compete and complete.

VI. FAITH SHARED. Hebrews 12:12-13.

Tell the group that within any fellowship there are weak and feeble members. It is the responsibility of those whose faith is strong to help them. Remove any stumbling blocks which exist if that is possible. What might stumbling blocks be?

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Encourage Application:

Take some time for each one to examine their faith. Is their faith such that others can see it? Has it been tested? Is it strong enough to be able to reach out and help a weaker believer?

As you close in prayer ask members to pray for others who have turned aside and are not as committed as they once were.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Be Faithful to God No Matter What Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Faithful People

This passage in Hebrews is a review of Old Testament history. Your group will be familiar with some of the historical persons mentioned and less familiar with others. Use your Bibles and your laptops to research those who are unfamiliar to you. These were not perfect people, but they did continue faithful to what they knew and understood about God's commands.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Be Faithful to God No Matter What***
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-22, 39—12:3, 12-13**Beginning the Service:**

Sing one or both of the following:

Find Us Faithful, *The Worship Hymnal* #598; CCLI #18259

Let It Be Said Of Us, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

The lands described in the Scripture verses examined today are important in today's news as they still experience animosity between the Jewish people of today and Palestinians who live alongside of them. Further hatred is exhibited in the Middle East by a variety of terrorist groups whose plans to kill others reach all over the globe. Like the faithful Biblical characters studied in today's lesson, we, too, still search for a heavenly city where war shall be no more. We are grateful for the promise that it exists for those who are faithful to God.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God---this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1,2

The apostle Paul had dealt with theological issues in the preceding chapters of Romans. Now he gets to some practical issues a believer is to embrace. Two words for consideration today are found in Romans 12:1-2. They are sacrifice and transformation. When a believer wants a closer walk with Christ then these must become a necessary part of that walk.

I. A Living Sacrifice is Necessary for Proper Worship.

What is the first practical step Paul calls for the Roman believers to do. Become a living sacrifice. Give one's entire life to and for Christ. Sacrifices are not gauged by what is given but by what is left after the gift is given. Is all of your life given to Christ?

For some, this will be a major change of occupation, home and relationships. This would be true in the case of those who go to another country or location with the purpose of sharing the gospel with others.

But for the majority of Christians, being a "living sacrifice" means dedicating their homes, occupations, recreational choices and financial means to Christ. It means that every business deal is done with integrity. It means that one works to the maximum of his/her ability whether a boss or supervisor is present or not. It means being scrupulously honest in relationships. It means being pure in thought and action as relates to one's sexuality.

When you give your bodies as a "living sacrifice" you get to keep your life. You just turn control of it over to Jesus.

II. A Living Sacrifice is a Result of Transformation.

Transformation is next. If you are familiar with the change from a worm to a butterfly then you have seen a perfect illustration of transformation. The Greek word used is the basis for which we get our English word metamorphosis. In its simplest definition it means change. But, there is a more complicated explanation when watching a worm make a cocoon and then come out as a beautiful butterfly.

Transformation or metamorphosis is what needs to happen in the mind of a person if he wants to please God. The mind is the seat of our will. If we are to change from an ugly

sinner into a beautiful saint it must be a determined effort. Then we will be as different from what we once were as a butterfly is from a worm.

Paul explained it another way in 2 Corinthians 5:17. ***Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*** (King James Version)

A transformed life is a life visibly changed.

Call to Commitment:

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Have you ever thought about testing the will of God to see if you are fit to follow Him? You cannot follow God if you do not know what His will is. You cannot know what His will is for your life until you lay it all on the altar as a "living sacrifice".

The Christian life was never intended to be for the faint hearted, those who are not fully committed. It is for the one who loves Christ so much that he would give his or her all, even their life for Him.

Will you give your life to Him today?

Concluding the Service:

Encourage the congregation to bow together for a blessing upon them from their Lord.

Say: Listen to God's Word from the writing of Paul to the church in Ephesus.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:16-21