

# *Loyal Heart* MINISTRIES

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## A Hebrews 11 Christian - Hebrews 11:13

A Devotion for Men by *Rush Witt*

*Hebrews 11:13 ~ All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*

What is the evidence of success? Think about that for a moment. When you are evaluating your life, work, family, etc., what do you look for as proof of victory? The world suggests that material prosperity, notoriety, independence, self-sufficiency, and instant gratification are evidence of success in life. Unfortunately, much of this reasoning has crept into the Christian mind. This sad reality is being further advanced by proponents of the prosperity gospel movement, secular psychology, new age philosophy, and the like. As a result, many Christians are tempted to pursue prosperity, fame, independence, and self-sufficiency because they are under the impression that the appearance of outward victory is evidence of true success. However, this is not the case.

In Hebrews 11:1-12, we find what has been commonly referred to as the "Hall of Faith." In this passage, we read of five worshipers whose lives reflected the true evidence of spiritual success. By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain. By faith, Enoch did not see death, but was taken up according to the pleasure of God. By faith, Noah prepared an ark for the salvation of his household and, through that faith, inherited righteousness. By faith, Abraham obeyed God's calling to leave his homeland and journey to a place of inheritance, though he did not know where God was leading him. By faith, Sarah received the ability to conceive a child even beyond the age of fertility. The chapter continues in a display of the faithful obedience of many others.

Yet notice how the author of Hebrews describes these worshipers in verse 13. He writes, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."<sup>1</sup> Did you catch that? All of these *died in faith, without receiving the promises*. Isn't it interesting that all these victorious worshipers will forever be known as those who *died in faith*? They will not be remembered as having died in prosperity or fame, wealth or self-accomplishment. Instead, they are forever recorded as those who *died in faith*. Not only this, but they also died *without receiving the promises*. According to today's standards, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah died as complete failures. They did not receive the promotion, retire early, enjoy the accolades, or see their autobiographies on the top of the best-sellers list. Indeed, they died *without receiving the promises*. Before you feel badly for them, notice that this is exactly the reason for their honor in the Scriptures and the key to their success in life. As we can be sure, these heroes of the faith would have it no other way. They did not pursue the pleasures and promises of a *best life now*. But instead were fully intent upon a glorious and heavenly life later, to the pleasure of

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:13

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God. They were neither missing the land they had left nor coveting an earthly domain. Instead, having seen the promises in advance, they welcomed them from a distance and confessed that they were mere strangers and exiles on the earth.<sup>2</sup> These are the Hebrews 11 Christians, who desired a better country – a heavenly one.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, God was not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

As C.S. Lewis pointed out, “If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought the most of the next. . .It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you will get earth “thrown in;” aim at earth and you will get neither.”<sup>4</sup> Are you living the life of a Hebrews 11 Christian? Are you forsaking the benefits of this world in order to achieve the pleasure of God? Do you see yourself as a stranger on this earth who is pursuing a better and heavenly country to come? If you desire success in this life, seek that country and invite others to join you. Therefore, aim at heaven and heaven alone! It is the way of the Hebrews 11 Christians!

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 11:16

<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, New York: Harper Collins, 2001 [134].