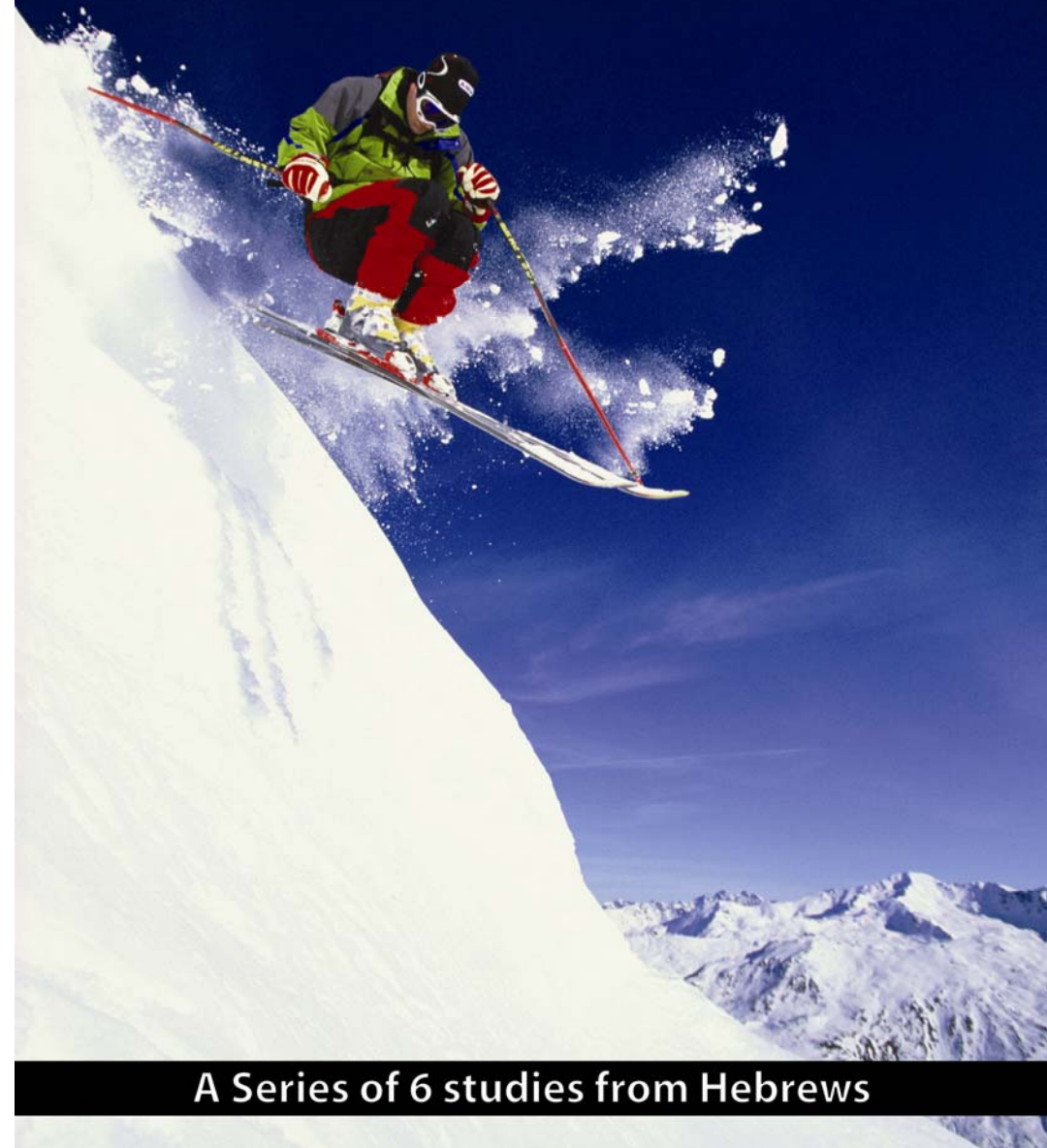


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Risky Business





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5. What sorts of practical things should a Christian be doing if they're going to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles"?
6. What kind of risks for your reputation, career, personal enjoyment, relationships, etc might there be in doing this? What is the risk in not doing this?
7. What things does this passage say will encourage us to do those difficult things?
8. Think back over all the talks and studies. Try to write down the main theme of this section of the Bible in one or two sentences. As you do this, you might find it helpful to write down some verse references too. Share your summaries around the group, and then pray for each other as a result of what you've written.

Study One

1. We all did risky things when we were kids. Share one of your stories with the group.
2. When we read the passage during the session, what was your first impression? What are you expecting to get out of this week?
3. Read **Hebrews 10:26-39**. Do you think these verses were addressed to Christians or non-Christians? (In working out what you think make sure you pay close attention to verses 26 and 32-36.)
4. What do you think the writer to the Hebrews is warning people about in these verses?

5. According to verses 38-39, what is the one thing that will make all the difference between an eternity of joy and an eternity of judgment?

6. What is faith? (See **Heb 11:1**)

7. Why do you think being a Christian in 2006/2007 requires “faith”?

8. What things are likely to come up in your own life, or the lives of your friends, that might tempt you to give up on your faith in Jesus?

9. Get a couple of people to pray for the members of your group. Pray for one another about the things you’ve learnt and the challenges of being faithful in our world. Let your prayers be shaped by verses 35-39.

Study Six

Read 1 Peter 2:24. How does this help us understand the ‘redemption’ idea better?

This section says that as strangers in the world we are to live in reverent fear. But Peter doesn't mean fear of the people round us, he means fear of God! We are to fear God because he is our judge (verse 17), but when we fear him we are not to forget what he did for us! Here Peter shows us the enormous, extravagant cost of our salvation. It was not a financial cost to save us. Money can't buy salvation! We weren't saved with silver or gold. We were redeemed with something much more valuable than that - the precious blood of Jesus. In fact, Peter tells us that even though the gospel message was only fully known after Jesus came, this was God's plan from before the world was made! If you look at Acts 2:23, which are also Peter's words, you will see the same idea!

Spend some time praying and thanking God for the precious blood of his only Son that was shed for you.

The rest of Hebrews 11 is a list of “witnesses to faith”. Read **Hebrews 11:1-3**. What possible reasons do you think the writer of Hebrews might have for starting this list with a discussion of the creation?

3. What were the two important things about creation that Matt drew out from verse 3 of Hebrews 11?
4. See if you can come up with reasons why these two truths from the Bible would be important in thinking like a Christian about the things below (just pick one).

The Environment	Sex	The study of Science	Playing sport on Saturday

Hebrews 7:22-28

22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.
 23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.
 26 Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of his people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests those who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

How does **Hebrews 11:39-40** connect with the overall message of the book of Hebrews? Why do you think 11:39-40 is in the Bible for us today?

4. Read these verses from Hebrews:

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Hebrews 3:1-3

1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. 2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. 3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

5. Split into two groups and debate/discuss whether there are any areas of your life where the statement in **Hebrews 11:3** would have absolutely no impact - one group argues 'yes' and one group argues 'no'. (*Other verses to consider in thinking about this might include Rom 11:36, 1 Cor 8:6 and 10:31, Col 1:15-17 and 3:17*)

6. In the light of what you've seen in this study, go back to question 1 and see if you think you need to change any of your responses.

7. Pick one thing in your life that you haven't previously thought had anything to do with God. Write down what it is and the steps you are going to take to change it (be practical and specific!).

Study Five

1. Read **Daniel 6:1-11**.

* Did Daniel know about the new law that King Darius had approved?

* Did he know what would happen to him if he broke it?

* What did he do as a result?

* What do you think Daniel was asking God to do for him?

2. Read the rest of Daniel 6. Was it worth Daniel taking the risk to remain faithful to God? How did God answer his prayers? Give reasons for your answer from the passage.

3. What's the difference between finding inner strength and the strength being talked about in **Hebrews 11:34**? See if you can explain your answer from the passage.

- What sorts of things make you freak out when it comes to following Jesus wholeheartedly? What does that say about your faith? What can you do to change that?

6. Do this bit by yourself.

- If you are a Christian: Start by praying that God would help you trust all his promises to you. Pick one of the things above that makes you freak out. Then, draw up a plan to deal with it. Decide on some things you can do this month in order to take some steps forward (e.g. in personal evangelism, or being up front about being a Christian with people you study with or work with).

* If you're not a Christian: have a go at filling in this table. Then make sure you talk to someone at camp about it.

Risks in not following Jesus	Risks in following Jesus

Study Three

In this study we are going to look at the story of Abraham in Genesis, as well as what the writer of Hebrews has to say about it. Grab a bookmark so that you can flip easily between the books!

- On a big bit of butcher's paper draw a person. Use the parts of the body to write down the things that Christians do (e.g. with my feet I walk to church)
- What are some of the things that you find hard about being a Christian? (*use your picture to give you some ideas*). Perhaps one or two people could share with the group the reasons they keep on going even though it can be difficult.
- Read **Genesis 11:27 – 12:9**. Then read **Hebrews 11:8-10**. What was it God asked Abraham to do? Rephrase this instruction from God as a challenge to you. What is the reason the writer of Hebrews gives for Abraham's willingness to leave his family and go to a foreign land (see verse 10)?
- What do you think that means? (*You might find it helpful to also look at Heb 11:14-16 and Heb 12:22-24 where the idea of this city is spelled out a little more.*)

5. The promise of children to Abraham was not an easy one to believe. Read the following passages aloud: Genesis 15:1-6, Genesis 16:1-6 and 15-16, Genesis 17:1-8 and 15-22, Genesis 18:1-2 and 9-15, and Genesis 21:1-7. At what points in the story did Abraham and Sarah follow their normal intuition and at what points did they act in faith?

6. How does the writer of Hebrews see this in 11:11-12?

7. Read **Hebrews 11:17-19**. Talk about how Abraham's actions here demonstrate the riskiness (and the certainty) of living by faith.

8. Read **Hebrews 11:16**. What actions are you going to take in your own life from now on that means God will not be ashamed to be called your God?

Study Four

1. What's the difference between believing in something and having faith in something?

2. What kind of faith is being talked about in Hebrews 11?

3. Read **Hebrews 11:23-28**. What were the choices that Moses was faced with? Which one was easier and which one involved greater risk *from an earthly point of view*? And which one was easier and which one involved greater risk *from a heavenly point of view*?

* v24

*v25

* v26

4. What reason does the writer of Hebrews give for the option Moses went for (v 26b)? What do you think he means by that? And how do you think that relates to choosing to live by faith in *our* context?