

SOMETHING ————— BETTER

A Study in The Book of Hebrews

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been specifically and prayerfully created with you in mind. It is designed to complement your personal daily devotion, Sunday service engagement, and Life Group gatherings. Each week also includes unique content for students and our SV Kids; if you are a parent, we encourage you to go through this discipleship guide together as a family!

KNOW

Our desire is that you would come to Know and Be Known by God in a new and fresh way through this study.

SUNDAY NOTES

Designed to complement our Something Better sermon series, this discipleship guide includes designated space at the beginning of each week to capture notes and takeaways from the Sunday sermon content.

For those of you joining us live during the series on Sunday, we look forward to seeing you!

The sermon series will also be available on demand at www.summitview.net/hebrews.

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

The daily devotionals explore the core themes found in each week's Scripture passage. We encourage you to set aside time each day to read the daily devotional, sit with the relevant Scripture, and invite God to speak to you through it.

BE KNOWN

This section is intended to be used in a group setting with questions to facilitate discussion and take a deeper look at the text.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

The Life Group Questions are designed to generate conversation with those in your community also engaging with Hebrews and our *Something Better* series.

If you are not currently in a Life Group, we would highly recommend you join one! We were never meant to do life alone, and we don't want you to miss what God has for you in this season.

Learn more at www.summitview.net/groups.

SV KIDS | SV YOUTH

Here at Summit View, we are passionate about the spiritual development of all ages. Each week's study concludes with age-appropriate prompts from SV Kids for family discussion. Additionally, our SV Youth Pastoral Team has prepared questions for our Middle School and High School students to engage with in small group discussion.

APPLICATION & REFLECTION

Our Be Known section concludes with an Application & Reflection challenge, designed to help you grow spiritually and apply what you learned through that week's study.

A COUPLE MORE THINGS

This resource is designed to function as a guide, not a straitjacket. If you miss a day—it's ok! You may not get through every question with your Life Group. This Discipleship Guide is designed to support your personal growth and spiritual community—not replace them.

We also encourage you to find and incorporate supplementary resources throughout our study. Our desire is that this Guide might be used to facilitate a firmer grasp of Scripture, a stronger connection to Christ, and a hunger for spiritual growth.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

As human beings, we all suffer from ASBS, the Always Something Better Syndrome. Deep down we sense there is more to this life and find ourselves constantly searching for *something better*.

We are frustrated by how far behind we feel in our careers; not where we thought we'd be financially by now, and a voice inside whispers "look for *something better*."

Discontent or discouraged with your living situation and the current housing market? Look for *something better*.

Date night didn't meet your expectations (or didn't happen at all)? Look for *something better*.

Still tired and rundown after finally taking that vacation? Look for *something better*.

We spend our lives searching for the next thing that might leave us satisfied and fulfilled. Yet the moment we find it within our grasp, we are once again left longing for *something better*. Every generation looks to the past and the future, certain that anything but what is in the present must be better; yet we find that the longing for *something better* has always plagued us.

Thankfully, the Bible offers another way; *something better* that meets our every need and satisfies the longings of our souls.

This is the thread woven throughout the book of Hebrews. At a surface level Hebrews can be confusing and a little unclear in its practical application. Yet the resounding message throughout its thirteen chapters is that Jesus is the *something better* our hearts long for. Hebrews makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is superior to all we might long for, hope for, and seek out for the fulfillment of our souls—superior to everything else. Whatever we might pursue to satisfy our minds and hearts, Jesus is better.

How can we be so sure? Journey with us for the next seventeen weeks and discover for yourself an anthology of God's faithfulness and the pitfalls that come with seeking our hope in other places. There may not be a more fitting book for Christians today. Don't consider yourself a Christian? This book is for you too!

The book of Hebrews offers us a rich history and understanding of how God has worked throughout the ages to demonstrate one simple truth: that He knows the deepest longings of our hearts and invites us to look up from all the world has to offer to pursue *something better*, the only One able to truly satisfy—Jesus.

AUTHOR

One of the more heavily debated aspects of the book of Hebrews is the topic of authorship. Throughout the text we find no claim to authorship, nor any key indicators as to the writer. Proposed authors of the book are simply educated guesses; no one knows for certain. It is clear the author is well-versed in the Old Testament due to consistent references to Scripture, and it is assumed that the author was well educated, as indicated by the stylistic choices made in argumentation. The author clearly was familiar with synagogue dialogue and skills in public oration, as many current scholars categorize the book of Hebrews as a sermon. Finally, scholars generally assume the author was a leader in the early church when taking into consideration the exhortations found within the text; the book of Hebrews is not merely a theological excursion, but a pastoral plea to those who received the letter to persevere in the faith despite the real-world challenges they were facing.

Suggested authors include Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, Silas, Timothy, Epaphras, Philip the deacon, Mary (mother of Jesus), Luke, and countless others.

Leaders in the early western church generally attributed the book of Hebrews to the Apostle Paul, while the eastern church typically rejected his authorship. The assertion suggested that the text was originally penned in the Hebrew language by Paul, then later translated into Greek by Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. However, as we trace the debate forward in church history, fewer and fewer people held to Paul's authorship of the book.

When taking into consideration the distinct difference of Hebrews' grammatical structure, vocabulary, style, and imagery in contrast to Paul's confirmed writings, alongside the fact that there is no claim of authorship within the text—also a departure from Paul's prior literary style—most scholars today do not consider Paul to be the author of Hebrews. That said, it is considered likely that Paul was not entirely removed from its influence. It is a commonly held hypothesis that a disciple of Paul authored the book—perhaps a Greek Jew

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR CONT.

turned Christian, as can be inferred by Hebrews 2:3.

Ultimately, we must embrace this mystery of human authorship. The early church greatly valued the book of Hebrews despite this mystery and throughout church history the church has recognized the significance of its contents; its message was needed then and it is needed now. God is still the ultimate source of the contents of Hebrews, and we can trust Him to speak to us through it today.

DATE

Most scholars believe Hebrews was written before 70 A.D. This conclusion is based on the following:

1. Timothy, who was active in pastoral ministry and church planting in the first century, is referenced (see Hebrews 13:23).
2. Persecution is a reality for the recipients of this letter; however, it is still prior to widespread martyrdom. The author references specific examples of persecution in Hebrews 10:32–35 where he celebrates the faithfulness of the believers. The author then acknowledges that while this persecution has been harsh, the recipients have not yet been forced into martyrdom (see 12:4).
3. There is no mention of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (A.D. 70), which would have been a key illustration to further the author's primary point that Jesus was better than what had come before. Its omission indicates the destruction had not yet taken place.
4. Additionally, throughout the book, the author references the sacrifices in the temple as a present-day reality (see 8:13, 10:1–3), which would not have been possible after its destruction in 70 A.D.
5. Early church leader Clement cited passages from Hebrews in 96 A.D., thus validating a distribution date preceding his inference.

PURPOSE

The book of Hebrews is unique among the other books of the New Testament. Not only do we lack clarity as to who penned the letter, it is unclear exactly who the intended recipients were as well. We do know, however, that they would have had some familiarity with the Old Testament. Based on the sheer volume of Old Testament references, it appears the author wrote to a Jewish audience, with the intended purpose of illustrating how much of the Old Testament was meant to foreshadow greater things to come. The purpose of the book of Hebrews is to present Jesus in light of the Old Testament.

While the exact location of the intended readers is unknown, we know the recipients of this letter were facing persecution of some sort. The letter is written to encourage and exhort its readers to stand firm in the face of it all (see 3:6, 14; 4:14; 10:23). Today Hebrews encourages us to consider our own perseverance in the faith in the midst of difficult times.

MAJOR THEMES

SUPREMACY OF JESUS

From angels to the high priest, tabernacle or temple, sacrificial system, Mosaic covenant—Jesus reigns supreme over them all. Hebrews depicts Jesus as greater than anything that had come before and encourages its readers to hold fast to the faith found in Christ.

FAITH

This is the most prominent theme found within Hebrews. In fact, the clearest definition of faith within all of Scripture is found in Hebrews 11:1, in which we are called to develop a mental certainty rooted deeply in convictions borne from our confidence in the things we cannot see. Throughout the book, we find stories of faith and examples to look to.

WARNING!

There are four passages in Hebrews (2:1–4; 6:4–8; 10:26–31; 12:25–29) that warn against seeking our sufficiency outside of Christ. We are encouraged to look to Jesus who not only pioneered our faith, but also perfected it. And knowing this to be true, we can have certainty in holding fast to our faith and His promises.

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

- I) Jesus is Superior (1:1–2:18)
 - i) The Supremacy of the Son (1:1–14)
 - ii) First Warning: Pay careful attention to the Word (2:1–4)
 - iii) The Founder of our Salvation (2:5–18)
- II) Jesus' Superiority to the Law (3:1–10:18)
 - i) Greater than Moses (3:1–6)
 - ii) Warning: Rest for the people (3:7–4:13)
 - iii) Jesus' High Priestly Ministry (4:14–10:18)
- III) The Call to Endurance (10:19–12:9)
 - i) Assurance of Faith (10:19–39)
 - ii) A Life of Faith (11:1–40)
 - iii) A Kingdom to Come (12:1–29)
- IV) Closing Exhortations & Greeting (13:1–25)
 - i) A Life Pleasing to God (13:1–19)
 - ii) Benediction (13:20–25)

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Why Study the Book of Hebrews

Crossway - <https://www.crossway.org/articles/why-study-the-book-of-hebrews/>

Bible Project – Hebrews

Book Overview - <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/hebrews/>

Gospel Coalition – Hebrews

Introduction to Hebrews - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/hebrews-introduction/>

Gospel Coalition – Hebrews

Knowing the Bible 12 Week Study - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/knowning-bible-hebrews/>

Better – Bible Study Book: Hebrews

Jen Wilkin - <https://www.amazon.com/Better-Bible-Study-Book-Hebrews/dp/1535954116>

Exalting Jesus in Hebrews

Albert Mohler - <https://www.amazon.com/Exalting-Hebrews-Christ-Centered-Exposition-Commentary/dp/0805496475>

Hebrews For You

Michael Kruger - https://www.amazon.com/Hebrews-You-Gods-Word/dp/1784986054/ref=pd_lpo_2?pd_rd_i=1784986054&psc=1

MUSIC

Listen to the book of Hebrews – Psallos

Psallos is a movement sparked by a desire to glorify God and proclaim the gospel through adventurous, theologically rich music.

<https://www.psallos.com/hebrews>

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Hebrews 1

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 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. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Week 1

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

INTRODUCTION

Sports team scouts spend countless dollars trying to find the next up and coming star that can put their team on the map. Recruiters comb through resumes and stake out job fairs to find the talent they hope will take their company to the next level. Many in their respective fields are on an endless quest to find the total package, someone they feel can make a real difference.

As we open the book of Hebrews, we find a true “game-changer” in the person of Jesus and discover just how glorious He truly is. He is the exact imprint of God, the agent of creation, the sacrifice for our sins, and the King who rules the cosmos. His name is above all other names and all of creation is subject to Him in worship and service. There is no one greater and none come close to His supremacy.

MAIN IDEA

The majesty of God's splendor is fully revealed in Jesus.

SUNDAY NOTES

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. Hebrews 1:1–2 (ESV)

Have you ever wished God would speak to you the way He does to someone else? What if the reality is that He does, but your ears are simply not tuned to hear His voice? Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a God who speaks—He spoke the world into existence and communicated His word to many prophets, commanding them to write it down so His voice would be preserved for generations. God sent us the vital message of salvation through Christ so we could be saved from our sin. He speaks so we can have life.

We do not worship a God who is distant or removed, but a God who speaks, hears, and sees us! Sadly, His voice often goes unheard. But there is good news! While we can't always hear His voice physically, He is always speaking to us through His Word. To hear God speak, simply open your Bible. He is revealed on every page!

Think on this and marvel: the Creator of the universe has spoken; you hold the very words of life, an invitation to know Him intimately, in your hands. Take some time to allow the weight of this truth to penetrate your heart today and respond by praising God for this gift.

DAY TWO

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Hebrews 1:1–3 (ESV)

Imagine you're meeting someone for coffee for the first time; how would you describe yourself? What do you say to help them recognize you amid the crowd? Accurate descriptions help us identify the one we're looking for and avoid awkward mistakes! For hundreds of years, God described Himself and His Messiah to the children of Israel—He wanted them prepared to identify Him when He arrived. It is precisely because of this that we can know Jesus is Lord! To know God, we look to Christ; they are one in the same. Christ's heart for the marginalized is the same as Father's; His desire for mercy is God's desire; Christ's love of justice is aligned with the Father's. They are one.

How would you describe God? How would you describe Jesus? The Bible tells us that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory—like the light that comes from the sun, and the exact imprint of God's nature—the image of the invisible God; you cannot get an exact imprint if there are any discrepancies. What comfort it is to see God revealed to us in Christ! What joy it is to know Jesus reveals God to us. How kind God is to give us such tangible evidence of His steadfast love.

THEY ARE ONE.

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Devotionals

KNOW

Are there any discrepancies between your understanding of the character of God and that of the Son? Jesus says if we have seen Him, we have seen the Father; they have the same heart and character with no contradictions. Spend some time today prayerfully considering and surrendering to God the areas where you need to internally reconcile your understanding of God the Father and God the Son.

DAY THREE

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

*O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace*

Perspective is everything. When the world around us feels feeble and shaken, matters only seem to get worse by focusing on what is unstable. However, when we lift our eyes to the one who created the world and upholds it, our foundation feels solid. Christ, who made purification for our sins, our greatest need, is our solid Rock; His work is finished. This means, no matter what, we can turn to Him in our physical need. When we focus on the truth that our sin-debt has been paid by Christ, we find that the things of the world grow strangely dim. As we behold the beauty of the radiance of His glory, our perspective shifts from temporal to eternal. It is this truth that Paul proclaims when he says in 2 Corinthians 4:16–18, “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Where is your focus right now? Are you looking at the here and now—what Paul calls momentary? Or are you keeping your eyes on what is unshakable and eternal? Whatever you’re facing, don’t forget to look up, turn your eyes upon Jesus, and allow what you’re facing to be seen through the lens of eternity. Yes, it may sting now—or perhaps “sting” is not a strong enough word for what you’re currently walking through—but it will not always be so. Take time in prayer today to cast your burdens on Christ. He cares for you.

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”
Hebrews 1:5–7 (ESV)

Who doesn’t love a good bargain? There’s nothing quite like the thrill of realizing you’ve scored a good deal. We can so love the status that owning nice things gives us that we’ll even settle for a good knock-off if the price is right.

Not so with God and His redemptive plan. This is no faux savior, hastily thrown together, perhaps looking the part but ultimately unable to stand the test of time. He paid the highest price in full to secure our salvation, choosing to send not just anyone but His very Son. For some of us, familiarity with this phrase can cause it to lose some of its intended weight. Consider the following: who do you love the most? Who would you move heaven and earth to save? Now think of someone you don’t like very much. Yes, we know, that’s not very Christlike, but for the sake of the analogy, call to mind someone who drives you crazy or gets your blood boiling; someone you can hardly stand. Now imagine sacrificing the one you love most to save them. Could you do it? Could you move heaven and earth for them, trading the one you love most to save your enemy?

When God sent Jesus, He sent Him to save those who hated Him. God didn’t send an angel, or some other created being. He sent His Son. Yet Jesus didn’t consider the price too high to pay. Instead, for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross and all its shame to do the work of reconciling us to God.

Take some time today to thank God for His willingness to pay the highest price for you; that there was nothing He wouldn’t do to bring you into His family. Because Jesus paid it all, we are free in Christ!

DAY FIVE

But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” Hebrews 1:8–9 (ESV)

It doesn’t take long to look around before you notice we’re surrounded by brokenness. Heartbreak and injustice seem to invade every space. People are constantly shouting over one another, championing their solution for a better world. But how are we supposed to know who is right? Psalm 45—quoted in this passage of Hebrews—is a reflection on a perfect king. This ruler is the best-case scenario: imagine a president or governor whose rule is equated with uprightness devoid of scandal! A leader who loves righteousness and hates wickedness, ensuring peace and justice for all. This sounds like a movie plot for a utopian society. Yet this isn’t

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Devotionals

KNOW

fiction; this ruler is Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the ultimate ruler in whom we can rejoice. He is the epitome of goodness, justice, and mercy. He always chooses what is right. The best news of all is that Jesus' reign doesn't end after four years. His rule and reign are forever and ever, and no one can take that away.

Reflect for a few moments on what you think would make a good leader. How much do they look like Christ? Christ is the ultimate leader who doesn't seek position for Himself but lays down His life so we might live in Him. Spend some time praising God for His infinite wisdom and perfect rule.

DAY SIX

But you are the same, and your years will have no end. Hebrews 1:12b (ESV)

Familiarity breeds comfort, especially in times of uncertainty. Be it a favorite take-out order, a seasoned, broken-in hat, an old worn-in t-shirt, or family traditions around the holidays, we all probably have a familiar go-to item or routine that steadies us. Unfortunately, the reality is that your favorite restaurant can go out of business—or simply change the menu; your hat could get trampled on or lost, your favorite t-shirt torn, and families change, be it a move, marriage, or loss of life.

As Christians, we should draw great comfort in our God who does not change. He is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow. When we approach Him, we can always know exactly what to expect. Nothing will make God leave or forsake us. He is our God, and we are His people. The next time life feels out of balance or out of control, remember He who laid the foundation of the world. Instead of relying on the temporary things of this earth for our comfort, hear the invitation to come instead to the great Comforter and entrust your cares to His good hands.

Spend some time today considering where you tend to turn for comfort. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sensitivity to this proclivity so when you find yourself in need, you remember to turn to the God who never changes.

How would someone who knows you well describe you?

AS CHRISTIANS, WE SHOULD DRAW
GREAT COMFORT IN OUR GOD WHO DOES
NOT CHANGE. HE IS THE SAME TODAY,
YESTERDAY, AND TOMORROW.

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

1. Read Hebrews 1:1–14. Who is the author talking about and who is he comparing Him to?

2. Look closely at verses 1–4. Who does the author say God has spoken through in these last days?
 - a. What are “these last days”?

 - b. What are some of the ways God spoke before the “last days”? See Genesis 28:10–15; Exodus 3:16; Numbers 12:6; Joel 2:28.

 - c. Why is this voice superior to the previous voices? (See verses 2–3 for His “resume” if you aren’t sure.)

3. What is the significance of sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (see verse 4)?

4. Hebrews 1:5–14 are a comparison of angels to Christ. Why do you think the author desires us to have this clarity?
Look up the following passages to help give you clarity: Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:8–9.

5. Compare and contrast what is said of both the angels and Christ; some descriptions are explicitly mentioned, others are implied.
The first is done as an example for you.

MAJESTY REVEALED | HEBREWS 1

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

Verse	Christ	Angels
1:5	<i>You are my Son</i>	<i>Angels are not children of God</i>
1:5		
1:7-9		
1:10-12		
1:13-14		

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Why is it so important to know who Christ is, and who He isn't? Right understanding of God drives right worship. It also helps us understand who we are, and who we are not. When we know God more fully, our worship should drive us to awe and wonder at His majesty. Christ is not a created being like the angels; He has always existed with God. We invite you to conclude this week focusing on the glory and majesty of Jesus Christ by reading Hebrews 1:1–4 and John 1:1–5 aloud to yourself and meditating on the truths reflected therein.

SV KIDS

Hebrews 1 Review

MAIN IDEA

The majesty of God's splendor is fully revealed in Jesus.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

When your teachers and parents were kids, we used to make trades at lunch. We might exchange our Oreo's for chocolate chip cookies, or Doritos for potato chips—always trying to trade what we had for something we thought was better.

What would you trade? Which is better? Hershey's chocolate bar or Skittles? Pepsi or Coke? Peanut butter & jelly or ham & cheese sandwich?

BIG IDEAS

The book of Hebrews exalts Jesus. In our passage, the first three verses show us that Jesus is high and holy. He is greater—better—than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels.

- Jesus is greater than the prophets.
 - The prophets were men that were called by God. God spoke to the prophets and the prophets told the people what God said.
 - Jesus was not simply a man called by God; He is the Son of God! He does not just say the words of God, He is the Word (John 1:1–3, 14).
- Jesus is greater than the priests.
 - Before Jesus, priests made sacrifices using unblemished animals on behalf of the people for their sins.
 - Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He who did no wrong, took on our wrongs—our sins—and died on the cross for us.
- Jesus is greater than the kings.
 - Jesus sits on the throne at God's right hand. He is equal to God for no man or angel could sit on the throne.
- Jesus is greater than the angels.
 - Jesus is God's Son. After dying on the cross for our sins, He rose again. Forty days later, He ascended to Heaven and now sits at the right hand of God. He is equal with God.
 - The angels worship Jesus and God.

GOING DEEPER

This passage lays the foundation of a repeated idea in Hebrews: Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better. As you read Hebrews, ask yourself, "Who am I trusting? Am I trusting the One that is better?"

SV YOUTH

Week 1 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Think about a time when you were taught a new way to do something you already knew how to do. Was it easy to make the transition? Were you tempted to go back to the old way of doing things? Did you ever question or feel uncertain about the new way of doing it?
2. The author of Hebrews opens with a substantial amount of Old Testament passages; what does this tell us about who the original audience was? Why is it important to frame our reading with an understanding of the original intended audience?
3. Who or what does the author compare Jesus to?
4. What conclusion is the author trying to get his readers to reach?
5. What truths about Jesus are found in. . .
 - a. Hebrews 1:5, 6
 - b. Hebrews 1:7, 14
 - c. Hebrews 1:8, 9
 - d. Hebrews 1:10
 - e. Hebrews 1:13
6. Reread Hebrews 1:11–12. What two things are being compared? How are each of these things described in relation to change or growth?
7. What does it mean to you that Jesus is “immutable” or unchanging?
8. How does serving an unchanging God impact the way you live your life? What change to your life do you need to make to reflect this truth?

FURTHER REFLECTION

Christ and the Angels

Hebrews Passage	Old Testament Passage	How Christ is superior to angels
1:5, 6	Psalms 2:7	Christ is called “Son” of God, a title never given to an angel
1:7, 14	Psalms 104:4	Angels are important but are still only servants under God.
1:8, 9	Psalms 45:6	Christ’s kingdom lasts forever
1:10	Psalms 102:25	Christ is the Creator of the world
1:13	Psalms 110:1	Christ is given unique honor by God.
The writer of Hebrews begins by establishing Jesus’ superiority over the angels. We will see in Hebrews 2 that Jesus became lower than the angels (2:6–7) when He became a man, but this “status” was only temporary. After His resurrection, Jesus was “crowned with glory and honor” (2:9).		

Hebrews 2:1-10

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Week 2

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION

If you've ever found yourself floating in the middle of a body of water, you know just how quickly and easy it is to be carried away by the wind and tide. Without being properly anchored, we can easily drift from where we need to be. Throughout the book of Hebrews, we find stern warnings against spiritual drift. The first warning found in this week's passage addresses the influence and impact that other sources can have on our lives; do the voices we listen to and the worldviews we adhere to come from the irrefutable source of Scripture? We are reminded here that the Gospel message comes from the most reliable source of all—the Lord himself. Not only does this good news come from Him but it originated in Him and continues to be sustained by Him to this day. Comfort and confidence are available to us through the storms of life when we place our anchor and hope in Jesus.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the author, founder, and anchor for our faith.

SUNDAY NOTES

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, Hebrews 2:1-3

WARNING! STOP! SLOW DOWN! Do not pass GO, do not collect \$200.

Do we have your attention? All sorts of signs are used to communicate an upcoming danger—especially on the roads where drivers need to keep themselves and those around them safe. The author of Hebrews wants us to know there is a real danger in neglecting the message of Christ. If we do not pay attention to the warning signs when driving, we drift from the safety of the lines painted on the road. And if we're not careful, we'll find ourselves in the wrong lane at best, or in a ditch seriously injured at worst. The same is true if we neglect God's message in Christ.

The Old Testament is filled with pre-emptive warnings of the consequences of not abiding The Law, but consider the seriousness of ignoring God Himself; the consequences of ignoring the warning signs given to us via the Gospel are far more severe. God is so patient and kind to us to give us His word to warn us and keep us safe. He knows our hearts are prone to wander and seeks to protect us from our own tendencies toward self-destruction.

Where are you prone to wander from God's protective guidance? Sometimes our wandering plays out through inaction—disregarding the gifts He has given us to bless others, and sometimes it looks like ignoring His word all together—or maybe just the parts we don't find appealing. As you spend time in the Word, do you share what you've learned with anyone? If not, what holds you back? As God has gifted you, are you using your gifts to serve others? What instructions and warnings do you ignore? Take some time today to prayerfully consider these questions and confess where needed. Be sure to thank God for His Word and His desire to keep you close and safe!

HOLD TIGHTLY TO THE
TRUTH FOUND IN CHRIST.

DAY TWO

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

Have you ever been lost? Not "call out the search party" lost, but turned around, disoriented, stuck in a dead zone lost? How did you find your way out? Perhaps you asked for directions or retraced your steps. When you finally found your way again, did you notice an increased sense of focus trying to keep track of where you were and where you needed to go?

It is normal to experience a similar re-routing in our spiritual lives when we encounter "new truths" or "new ways of thinking" that spark our interest and distract us from the message of the gospel. It may feel like we're pioneering our own way, and these new thoughts may even have an element of truth to them, but they sway our focus from Christ—the ultimate way, truth, and life—to ourselves and the temptation to live "our truth." In the same way that a short cut on a road trip can turn into a devastating detour, living "our truths" can cause us to veer into dangerous

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10
Devotionals

KNOW

territory, ultimately leading us to deviate from the gospel itself.

This may sound daunting and tempting to never venture out in the first place but take heart! What is lost can be found. By keeping the whole counsel of the Bible and living in gospel centered community, we are empowered to anchor our lives soundly to the Author and Perfector of our faith. Hold tightly to the truth found in Christ and you won't lose your way.

Where have you loosened your grip on the truth of the gospel and depended on your own way? What steps can you take to ensure you don't get lost? Take some time today to praise God for the gift of His words as a light to your feet and a lamp for your path.

DAY THREE

For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, Hebrews 2:2-3

Have you ever overlooked an email because of who it was from—or rather who it wasn't from—assuming the contents were not trustworthy or simply unimportant? As a child, did you ever ignore a certain sibling who decried the infamous, “Mom said...” because the message came, not from the authority, but from a mere child? We all know the sinking feeling we get when it turns out that the unread email held an important to-do item or Mom really did ask that sibling to speak on her behalf. We kick ourselves for our mistake, wondering why we didn't learn the last time.

Sometimes our approach to Scripture and subsequently our faith can be this uninspired as well. As we open our Bible or sit under a pastor's teaching, our hearts can have an indifferent posture due to our perception of the messenger. Did you know that the Bible contains the very words of God? Perhaps that information is not new, but we all need a reminder at times of the significance of this truth. The words contained on the pages are exactly what we need to live out our faith. While it may not answer everything we WANT, it does give us all that we NEED. It is sufficient.

Ignoring the message these words carry comes with a serious consequence—separation from God, misaligned faith, errant beliefs that will lead others astray. God gave us His word so that we can know Him and find life in Him. We must not be so foolish as to ignore His Word or to presume it's meant for others. Nor should we be so arrogant as to dismiss the messenger who carries the message. The message in God's word is for our flourishing—to restore us to right relationship with God and transform us into the image of Christ. In these words, we find life.

We all struggle with this at times; where do you find yourself dismissing the messenger or discounting the message? Are there places in the Bible or authors of the Scriptures you brush off because you feel it doesn't apply to you or to today's modern times? Consider the danger of picking and choosing what we want to apply from God's word. We invite you to spend some time today asking the Lord to help you approach His

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

Devotionals

KNOW

word with reverence and humility. Confess to Him where you've dismissed His word and ask Him to help you trust that His word—all of it—is ultimately for your good.

DAY FOUR

while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Hebrews 2:4

In Western American culture, we love cold, hard facts and indisputable evidence. The “it didn’t happen unless you can prove it” mentality rules our day. We’ll even go to great lengths to find so-called experts to throw their opinion around as if it were a fact to convince others to see the “truth” and win them to our side.

But what makes evidence credible? Who gets to determine the validity of a witness? We even go so far as to proclaim, “as God as my witness” to bring weight to what we’re about to state in our court of law. But what if God really was the testifying witness? What would He say?

The writer of Hebrews knew the true message of the gospel was so vital, reminding readers that this message is sound not because the writer says so, but because of who it ultimately comes from. Jesus declared it—He spoke it while still alive and backed it up with God bearing witness through signs and wonders; if Jesus were a liar or merely a “good person” this wouldn’t have been possible. The Holy Spirit then works in people when they believe the declaration of the truth—He energizes and motivates our transformation into Christ’s likeness, giving gifts as God wills to those who believe. What fantastic evidence! What better witness than the witness of the Trinity?

Do you see evidence of the Holy Spirit transforming you? Do you fully believe the powerful message of the gospel, or are you holding back for better proof? Where might you have drifted from the gospel? Take some time today to reflect on the witness and evidence God has provided; if you’re still struggling to reconcile these truths to your life, we invite you to reach out to a pastor or trusted follower of Jesus to process with them.

DAY FIVE

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. Hebrews 2:8b

Turn on the news. Open your social media feed. Listen for a moment to conversations around you. It doesn’t take rocket scientist-level genius to realize we are surrounded by chaos. How’s your blood pressure? What do you do with the stress of constant change and uncertainty? We’re surrounded by options to self-medicate—food, TV, alcohol, sex, substances, etc. Jesus tells His disciples to take heart because He has overcome the world, and here, in this passage of Hebrews we discover a phrase that should induce a great stress-relieving sigh, “Now putting everything in subjection to Him (Christ), He left nothing outside of His control.”

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

Devotionals

KNOW

As we look around at the state of the world today, it can feel that the remainder of that verse, “At present we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him” more accurately reflects reality. But when we shift our perspective to see reality as God does, we find a world subjected to Christ. He has ultimate power over it. This doesn’t mean our troubles disappear, but our perspective surrounding them shifts. We become aware of His care, able to relax in the knowledge that nothing is a surprise to Him—nothing catches Him off guard. Jesus is in control.

Part of finding peace in Christ’s rule is relinquishing our desire to have all the answers. Only God can know everything. Yet, as promised in Isaiah 26:3, perfect peace comes when we stay our minds on Him and Him alone. We invite you in your time today, to take a few deep breaths and slow exhales as you meditate on the truth that nothing is outside of Christ’s control, and consider the implications of this truth on your life.

DAY SIX

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. Hebrews 2:9–10

Pain often induces isolation, leading us to feel unseen and unknown to those closest to us. We may desire to cry out in our pain, or we may hope someone will sense our need and press in without needing to ask. Asking for help requires vulnerability; you might be rejected or the one you ask may be unable or ill-equipped to respond the way you need—that’s scary!

At our core, our deepest need isn’t physical or emotional; it’s spiritual. All our heartaches and physical ailments point to the reality that we ourselves are broken, live in a broken world, and are powerless to fix either. The good news is that we know someone who can and He didn’t wait to be asked; He pressed in.

Jesus, fully aware of our greatest need for salvation for our sin and reconciliation to God, became a human so that He could do just that through His death and resurrection. Our need became His suffering. Furthermore, Jesus suffered just like we do—heartache, loneliness, hunger, physical needs, temptation. You name it, He suffered it and endured it to God’s glory. Jesus tasted death so that we can taste life! He died to fleshly desires to point us to a more excellent way: satisfaction in God.

When you suffer, whether physically or emotionally, where are you challenged to give up, or give in? We invite you to remember that Christ suffered so that we could be reconciled to God. Take heart and remember Christ in your suffering; God invites us to look to Him in place of physical or emotional release for our satisfaction. When we turn to Him in our pain, we glorify Him in our suffering. Ask God to strengthen you today and commit to meditation the truth that He alone is what your soul needs.

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

If you had a message of paramount importance to share with the world, who would you entrust to share it on your behalf?

1. Read Hebrews 2:1–4. Notice the first word “therefore” and the phrase that follows.

a. What is therefore in reference to? Reread Hebrews 1 if you’re unsure.

b. What is the phrase that follows?

c. Why does it say we need to “pay much closer attention”?

2. Read Deuteronomy 33:2, Acts 7:53, and Galatians 3:19 to establish a context for Hebrews 2:2.

a. What was the message delivered?

b. Who was it delivered by?

3. Pulling it all together, read Hebrews 1:1–2 and compare it to 2:1–3. What message is the author wanting us to pay close attention to now?

DRIFTING NO MORE | HEBREWS 2:1-10

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Why do we need to pay closer attention to this particular message? Can you think of a time in the Old Testament where God's people didn't listen to what He said? What happened?
 - a. What are the consequences for ignoring Christ's message? Are they more or less severe than the consequences found in the Old Testament?

5. Read 2:5–9 where the author quotes Psalm 8:4–6. Who is the author once again measuring?
 - a. This comparison is so important that it's being made repeatedly; why do you think that is?

 - b. Read 2:9 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 to help you gain clarity. What does the author want you to understand?

6. Examine 2:10 carefully. What does it say about Christ? We know that Christ lived a perfect life—one without sin—so how can He have been made perfect through suffering? Skip ahead to Hebrews 5:7–9 for a hint. If you are still unsure how to answer this question, start with what you know it CAN'T mean based on the truths you know.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

God has blessed us with a reliable message of instruction from the most trustworthy source and He desires that we listen to it! How do you tend to approach God's word? The Bible can be challenging to understand but we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, who gives us the mind of Christ, and are blessed with endless resources to help us dive in. How do you need to change the way you approach God's word? What steps will you take this week to take the message of Christ more seriously? Close your time this week in prayer thanking God for the gift of His word and the Holy Spirit's guidance; ask for wisdom and submit your heart to be led by Him. Confess your doubt, and the areas where you have drifted away and commit to being anchored in the truth.

SV KIDS

Hebrews 2:1-10 Review

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the author, founder, and anchor for our faith.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Imagine a house that is neglected. What does it look like? Describe things like the yard, the windows, the roof, and the doors.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- The majesty of God's splendor is fully revealed in Jesus.
- Jesus is high and holy. He is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels.

BIG IDEAS

- This passage tells us to not drift. What does this mean?
 - First, we forget to spend time in God's Word; we neglect it. Then, because it is not a part of our daily life, we not only begin to drift away from God's Word, but from prayer, from worship of God, and from being with other people of God.
 - God sending Jesus is a huge gift to us that comes with great promises and blessings. Why might we drift away from that?
- Jesus came to save man, so He had to take on flesh and blood and become a man.
 - The penalty or punishment for sin is death.
 - Jesus' birth does not rescue us from sin. Jesus' teachings do not rescue us from sin. His miracles do not rescue us from sin. But they do all point to what does—Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - As a man, He never sinned, so He was able to take our place, for our sin. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice to take on the punishment of our sin.
- Jesus is our anchor.
 - Imagine yourself floating in the middle of a lake. It is very easy to be quickly carried away by the wind and tide. Without being properly anchored, we can easily drift away from where we need to be.
 - The warning against drifting from God's Word comes with the reminder of who we ought to listen and attach ourselves to; apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

GOING DEEPER

A repeated idea in Hebrews is that Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better.

- Jesus could not have been a better Savior, rescuing us from our sins, had He not become man and suffered and died.
- Jesus could not have been a better High Priest, paying the price for our sins through His sacrifice, had He not become man and suffered and died.

SV YOUTH

Week 2 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Think about a childhood friend you no longer have because you drifted apart. Why did that happen? Could anything been done to retain the friendship? Do you long for relationships you once had?

2. Think about the original audience of Hebrews again. What documents did they have to remind them of their relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ? What does the author remind them to do in Hebrews 2:1? What is the author concerned about?

3. What two actions were required for the original audience listening? Should this principle be the same for you? For further understanding read James 1:22–25.

4. What different ways has God's truth been communicated according to Hebrews 2:1–5?
 - a. Hebrews 2:2
 - b. Hebrews 2:2
 - c. Hebrews 2:3
 - d. Hebrews 2:3
 - e. Hebrews 2:4
 - f. Hebrews 2:5

5. What happens to your relationship with God when you neglect spending time with Him?

6. When your relationship with God feels distant, is it because God has moved away from you, or you have moved away from God?

7. If Jesus doesn't feel like your everything, what change needs to happen?

WEEK 3

Hebrews 2:11-18

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Week 3

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

INTRODUCTION

Every year for Christmas we gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior. One of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith is the fact that God became man; when we look at Jesus we find someone who is 100% God and 100% man. This concept is referred to as the “hypostatic union.” The unity of the God-Man is one topic that has been highly debated, studied, and examined since the formation of the early church.

We can often find ourselves in error when we over emphasize either His deity—status as God—or overemphasize His humanity—status as man. While it is appropriate to take time and energy to understand all this entails, the author of Hebrews appeals to this truth as a source of comfort and encouragement to a group of believers who needed it. For we have a Savior who has experienced all that it is to be human—everything we experience. As a result, Jesus is able to serve as a perfect high priest, deeply attuned to the need of His adopted brothers and sisters.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is fully God & fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.

SUNDAY NOTES

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, Hebrews 2:11

Genetics are a funny thing. A child can be a cookie cutter replica of a parent, a combination of the two, a throwback to a distant relative, or display mannerisms that are a perfect echo of their mother or father. These attributes all reflect and identify the family to whom they belong. Be it the color of our eyes, the shape of our hands, the sound of our laughter, or the unique pronunciation of a word, the things that make up who we are convey our origins to those around us.

For believers, sanctification communicates the same thing. Sanctification is a heady theological term, but it need not frighten you. Simply put, it means the way we look like Christ. It is a lifelong process that shapes our heart, mind, and actions, aligning them with His. To the outsider who looks at our actions, the quiet inner work of the Holy Spirit through sanctification will reveal to them the family to which we now belong. Just as our gene pool may dictate certain aspects of our appearance, sanctification reshapes our desires and preceding actions to align them with God's.

Romans 12:2 promises that as we continue to grow in our trust of God and lean on His understanding instead of our own way, the Holy Spirit will literally transform our minds to better understand God's will—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Take some time today to reflect on where you need the Holy Spirit's leadership to grow your trust of God.

DAY TWO

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." Hebrews 2:11–12

Who do you consider your family? Are they the people related to you by blood, those added to your clan through marriage, those who chose you as their own, or perhaps the people you choose to spend your time with? Whichever best describes your definition of family, all families have a moment that initiated their origination, be it birth, adoption, marriage, or commitment. One moment you're an individual, the next you're intertwined with other people in significant ways.

Christ's sanctifying work on the cross is the initiation for His new family—a family built on a centuries-old promise. Those who put their trust in Jesus' death on the cross become children of God. It is our adoption into a new family—the family of God! Christ's sanctifying work makes the way for us to enter this family; our sanctification is a marker that we are a part of it. As the Holy Spirit works in us, we all start to think, act, and look more like Christ.

Take some time to reflect: If you have put your trust in Jesus, you are part of the family of God. Has your life been changed by this wonderful truth? Do not be dismayed; we all have room to grow. Sanctification lasts a lifetime. Invite the Holy

SANCTIFICATION RESHAPES US.

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

Devotionals

KNOW

Spirit to reveal the areas He wants to redeem and grow in you next.

If you have yet to place your trust in Christ's work, take some time to reflect on what's holding you back. Commit to having a conversation with someone you trust about what taking that step looks like and means for you.

DAY THREE

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. Psalm 18:1-3

Our salvation is complete in Christ. Just reading the words of this psalm should cause our heart to burst into song! The Lord Himself is our strength; when we are weak and helpless, He meets us in our neediness. He is our rock, fortress, and deliverer—our high ground, security, and defender. In His hands, no one can harm us or take us away from Him. The Lord is our shield, the horn of our salvation, our stronghold; again, He is our protection. Our rescue comes from His strength; it is by His might. In Christ, we are fully and finally secure. Did you catch that? Those who call on the Lord fully belong to Him, and He keeps us! We can rest in Him. Praise the Lord!

We tend to keep our application of texts like these to our daily circumstances, using them to remind ourselves of God's glorious might and sovereignty. While this is good, it falls short; there is so much more! Our physical and emotional comfort pales in importance to the security of our eternal soul. Yes, God cares about our bodies, but He cares far more about that which lasts forever.

Spend some time re-reading this passage from the Psalms with your soul's security in mind, not just your physical, temporary needs. Praise God that your soul is kept by the Rock, our Redeemer in whom we trust!

DAY FOUR

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:14-18

Have you ever encountered a problem you couldn't solve? What did you do? In today's world, you have two simple options: ask someone you know for help, or Google it. Both solutions entail seeking out help from someone you know has successfully solved the problem you're facing. You and I come into this world with a very serious, life-threatening problem: slavery to sin and death. However, we have

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

Devotionals

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help—and no, it's not Google. There is One who has walked through our problem victoriously. He understands our needs, the suffering, and the threat. Christ is the answer to our problem and can offer us the solution because He experienced life as we have. The difference is that in His temptation, He always chose to trust God rather than worldly or fleshly wisdom. Because Christ was made like us, He was able to set us free—He is our atonement; He makes us right before God so that we are no longer subject to slavery and death!

Spend some time today meditating on the following: Christ was tempted in all the ways we are now. Yet every day He chose to trust God's wisdom. Where do you find yourself leaning on your own strength? How can you learn from Christ's example? Take some time to gratefully praise God for making the way to destroy death and deliver you from it.

DAY FIVE

saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." Hebrews 2:12

What joy this passage should inspire! Christ has come and made all those who hope in Him family—we belong to God. Pause here for a moment and consider what it means to belong to God. Belonging entails ownership, membership, or becoming a part of something greater. When Christ died for our sins, He paid the penalty, the price, for our sin. When we place our trust in Christ, we are accepting His payment on our behalf; we effectively become His. But our transformation doesn't end at the point of purchase; He goes further to invite us into His very family. Christ meets our greatest need as a representative acting on our behalf, granting us forgiveness for our sin. We are no longer slaves to sin, and we get a new family!

In your time with God today, we invite you to spend time reading the Psalm quoted in this passage, Psalm 22. Read these words and rejoice knowing it was Christ who fulfilled this promise foretold, and declares you to be His brother or sister!

DAY SIX

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18

No one likes to feel alone, and it's hard to think of a more isolating experience than being misunderstood. When we find ourselves stuck in sin, giving into passions of the world around us, we can easily fall into the trap of believing we're the only ones to have ever wrestled with it. We carry our secrets deep inside where others can't see, certain they won't understand. And so, our silence breeds a cycle of shame and even deeper isolation.

But there is hope. The cycle has been broken by Jesus Christ. We're encouraged in Hebrews 2:18 by the knowledge that Christ suffered when tempted. Consider the implications of this truth for a moment: Christ suffered when He was tempted. What

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Devotionals

KNOW

does it feel like when you are tempted, but you resist? In the moment, be it a split second, an hour, or an ongoing repeated struggle, the denial of our flesh stings. It is not exactly a joyous occasion. That's what makes resisting temptation so hard. It costs us something. We suffer in it.

That's what this verse reveals to us about Jesus. He suffered when He was tempted. He was fully human. With human desires. He felt the sting. However, to Jesus, the denial of instant gratification was worth it. He knew the momentary affliction would lead to glory. Instead of satisfying Himself momentarily, Jesus chose satisfaction in God that cannot be taken. He is our example. He is also our merciful comforter when we are tempted. He knows our struggle intimately. Furthermore, He is interceding, praying, for you to the Father. Jesus, who knows what it's like to suffer, is praying for you that you will see the temptation for what it is, and follow His example, choosing satisfaction in God.

You are not alone in your suffering. In your time today we invite you to turn to Jesus; call out to Him. If you have put your trust in Him, your sins are forgiven, and you are delivered from the threat of death. You are no longer a slave to your worldly passions but have the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead alive in you. Take some time today to confess where you need help and ask for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you where you are weak and to bring Christ's example to mind in moments of temptation.

HE IS OUR EXAMPLE. HE IS ALSO
OUR MERCIFUL COMFORTER WHEN
WE ARE TEMPTED. HE KNOWS OUR
STRUGGLE INTIMATELY.

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

Have you ever received news—good or bad—that changed your life in an instant? If so, what was it?

1. Look at Hebrews 2:11–18 and mark all the words that communicate family (take note that sons/brothers in this context includes both sons and daughters or brothers and sisters). Why do you think the author is talking about family?
2. Look up the word *sanctify* and write down the definition. What does it mean? Who sanctifies? Who is being sanctified?
3. What does it mean in verse 11 when it says, “all have one source”? For deeper insights, check out Acts 17:28.
4. How does one become part of this family?
5. Read Hebrews 2:14–16. What does this passage tell you that Jesus did and for whom? Who are the offspring of Abraham? For more context read Galatians 3:7, 29.

ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE | HEBREWS 2:11-18

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

6. Look at Hebrews 2:17–18. To what does the word *therefore* point? Remember, the word *therefore* connects you to what was previously stated; it's asking you to review what you've learned.

a. Why did Christ have to become like His brothers and sisters in every respect?

b. Verse 17 uses the strange, rarely used term “propitiation.” Look it up and write down the definition.

c. Why do we need a high priest who can make propitiation for us? To understand the role of the high priest, read Hebrews 5:1.

d. Read ahead to Hebrews 4:15. How does this verse help you understand the purpose of Christ's suffering in 2:18?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

This is the greatest news of all time! Jesus died for our sins! His sinless life is our perfect sacrifice because He was like us in every way. His death set us free from our slavery to sin and gives us new life as children of God. This is such good news and it should change everything we do. Just as turning on a light in a dark room gives us freedom to move about freely, so too does Christ's death and life give those who trust in Him freedom for our souls.

Where do you find yourself still living in darkness, lacking freedom? Have you put your trust in Jesus? If not, we invite you to spend time considering why; what questions do you still need resolved for you to be ready to take that step? If you already follow Jesus, are you living in the fullness of the freedom He has given you? Where do you need to take time to recognize that Christ's atoning death has given you life?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 2:11-18 Review

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What is the biggest gift in size you've gotten? What gift have you gotten that meant the most to you?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

Jesus is the author, founder, and anchor for our faith. Without being properly anchored to Jesus, one can easily drift away from the Word of God.

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus became man. To understand how huge this gift is, we have to understand what Jesus did. Read Philippians 2:5–11.
 - Jesus has always existed with God.
 - Jesus humbled Himself and voluntarily took on human form. He was fully man, yet still fully God.
 - This is important to note. Jesus set aside His divine rights and privileges when He became man.
 - He was obedient to God's plan and though He did not sin, He died for our sins.
 - After Jesus died on the cross, God raised Him from the dead after three days. Later, God raised Him to God's right hand, which is not a place, but a way of describing a position of power and favor. Jesus has ruling authority over everything.
- Because He was man, Jesus understands.
 - Have you ever said to someone, "You just don't understand!" Can anybody really understand our unique challenges and what goes on inside our heads?
 - Since Jesus is both God and man:
 - As man, He understands our challenges, including temptation.
 - As God, He knows what goes on inside your head. In fact, He understands because He knows us better than we know ourselves.
 - Jesus is all-knowing and all powerful. He lovingly provides exactly what we need.
- When Jesus became man, took our place on the cross, arose, and conquered sin, He made a way for us to come to God and join His family.
 - When we believe, we become sons or daughters of God.

GOING DEEPER

One Big Idea that runs throughout the book of Hebrews is simply this: You can trust God.

- God sent Jesus to the world in the way He said He would.
- Jesus would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15).
- Jesus would come from the line of Abraham being a descendent, or great-great-many greats grandson, of Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3; 17:4; 18:18, Heb. 2:16).
- Jesus would be from the tribe of Judah, in the family of David, of the nation of Israel. (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 132:11; Matthew 1:1-2)

SV YOUTH

Week 3 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Read Luke 2. What event is described here?
 - a. How is this event described in John 1:14–18?
2. Jesus, the Son of God, takes on human form.
 - a. As Christians we know this, but do we ever consider the sacrifice Jesus made coming from heaven to earth?
 - b. Seeing this sacrifice, does it change how you see God?
3. What is the reason the author tells us in Hebrew 2:17 that “He [Jesus] had to be made like His brothers in every respect,”?
4. What does 2:18 tell us about God's ability to be near to us in our struggles?
 - a. Knowing this truth, how does it shape your prayer life with God?
5. Jesus has come that those who believe would have new life; who is it in your life that needs to hear this truth? Write down their name and begin to pray for their salvation.

FURTHER REFLECTION

Propitiation...Huh?

Propitiation means “averting the wrath of God by the offering of a gift.” It refers to the turning away of the wrath of God as the just judgment of our sin by God’s own provision of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

“Even though God is a God of infinite love, he does not show mercy at the expense of his justice, so propitiation is the way that the loving God shows us mercy justly. In the Bible, propitiation is not something that we provide to God to get right with him again; it is something that God provides to us that we may be justly and mercifully forgiven and accepted, and he does this at his own expense through the loving gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.”¹

– Ligon Duncan

Hebrews 3:1-4:13

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Week 4

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

INTRODUCTION

The author of Hebrews captivates its readers as it draws from the history and stories of the Old Testament, illustrating their foreshadowing of Jesus. We see this greater overarching narrative culminating in the person of Jesus, greater than all that preceded Him. In this week's passage, we are drawn to a connection between Moses, God's chosen leader for His people of old, and Jesus, the ultimate and final leader to which God's people look. While Moses led the Israelites in a physical exodus out of Egypt, Jesus leads us to a spiritual exodus out of death into life. Moses was tasked with leading the Israelites into the Promise Land, but Jesus came to bring us into a place of rest for our souls. As the Israelites wrestled with the temptation to distrust the heart of God, we face the same temptation to harden our hearts, and much like the Israelites, often reject His commands, rationalizing our disobedience. The writer of Hebrews pleads with us to enter God's rest, but will we listen to his words?

MAIN IDEA

Do not harden your hearts towards God.

SUNDAY NOTES

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Therefore, *holy brothers [and sisters]*, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, Hebrews 3:1 (emphasis added)

The word “holy” tends to conjure images of grand cathedrals, high church liturgy, and perhaps odd rituals performed by men dressed in fancy robes. Or maybe you reserve the term for God alone. He is, after all, the holiest of holies, set apart, perfectly good, lacking nothing. But the author of this letter begins his thought Hebrews 3:1 by calling the men and women who put their faith in Christ *holy*. Because of the ongoing sanctifying work of Christ in us, we are part of this holy family. We have new status, no longer called sinner or slave to sin, but holy saint.

By placing faith in Christ’s atoning death, you receive a new identity. Just as if you went to the DMV and got a new license, but instead of your old last name and residence, you get a new last name with a new home address. Your identification changes.

In your time with God today consider the following questions: Do you think of yourself as holy? What sin or hurt from your past taints your view of yourself? If God sees you as holy through the lens of Christ’s righteousness, how do you think clinging to your old identity diminishes the wonder and beauty of the gospel? Spend some time asking God to help you see yourself as He does.

DAY TWO

Therefore, *holy brothers*, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house. Hebrews 3:1–2

We tend to use words incorrectly so frequently they easily lose the impact of their true meaning. In order to be faithful, you must be loyal, steadfast, and unwavering. Yet we often use the word without holding it to such a high standard. Things that fail, fall short, or mess up are still deemed as trustworthy.

Consider traditional wedding vows: “to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, in health, forsaking all others, till death do us part.” This is a vow to remain faithful, no matter how hard life gets. Jesus was and remains faithful to this day. Despite our failure, we see Him holding fast, remaining loyal to His Bride—the Church. Jesus was faithful, even though it cost Him, even though it was painful, even when it would have been so much easier to throw in the towel and walk away. Yet He stayed faithful to what God had called Him to do. We are called to consider Jesus’ faithfulness and so imitate Him in our lives.

In your time with God today, consider the following: Where are you tempted to throw in the towel? It might not be your marriage, but is it a needy friend who isn’t convenient? Living with integrity at your job? Giving up on your church family because they’re too messy? Where do you need to consider the faithfulness of Christ and press in?

LOYAL, STEADFAST,
AND UNWAVERING

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY THREE

but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Hebrews 3:6

Life takes grit and determination because life is, well, hard. We face discouragement dealing with hurt after hurt. So, we distract ourselves with by the latest and greatest thing scrolling through our social media feed; we get to the point where we wonder, is it really worth it anymore?

One of the amazing gifts of God's word is that it doesn't sugarcoat the hard realities of life. God does not shy away from an honest depiction of the troubles we will face. Instead of avoiding the topic as though it didn't exist, the truth of suffering and trials confronts us repeatedly throughout Scripture.

Yet we are not left to despair.

Instead, we are given encouragement. Jesus told His disciples that they would face trials but to take heart because He has overcome the world. This is the confidence to which we hold fast. Jesus died for our sin. He has delivered us and destroyed the one who holds the power of death. If He went to such great lengths to bring us back to Himself, our faith can be encouraged to keep going and believe confidently that He will return for us one day. Because Jesus was faithful, our hope in Him is worth boasting about. Until then, we hold fast.

What is discouraging or distracting you from Jesus' faithfulness? Where do you need to take heart and remember that Christ not only overcame but gently warned and prepared us for the struggles of this life? Spend time in prayer today thanking Jesus for His faithfulness. Let confidence spread throughout your heart and mind as you remember the great love of Christ displayed through the cross. We can be sure that what we're walking through now matters to Him. It is because of this atoning death that we can come to Him in our need today! Praise God!

DAY FOUR

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:12-13

Americans love the freedom of choice. Whether it's where to work or live, who to vote for, what to do—or not do—with our bodies, or simply what toppings to put on a sandwich, we all want options. We recoil at the idea of restrictions and when we are told no, aren't served quickly enough, or sense our "rights" are threatened, we rage and demand justice.

But what if not all restrictions warrant outrage? What if our current understanding of freedom is actually a form of slavery? Because of sin, we are blind to the truth. We've been deceived and don't even know it. That's the whole point of deception, right? For the deceived to remain unaware? This isn't just a reality for the unbeliever; those

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Devotionals

KNOW

of us who follow Christ are susceptible too.

God gives us His word, filled with instruction—including restrictions. It can be so easy to allow the direction found in Scripture to elicit a view of God as some vindictive dictator, out to make us joyless creatures. This could not be farther from the truth! Scripture calls us to a life of flourishing. This week's passage gives us a warning and instruction for guarding our hearts through choosing faithfulness and committing to life in community with fellow believers—the church. We are to be on guard and choose to remain loyal to God's word, lest our neglect foster an evil, unrepentant heart driven by what we want to believe over unchanging eternal truth. The need to be in community is great, filling our ears with exhortation—strong encouragement and urging—to hold fast to our faith. This is one of God's many amazing gifts and protections for His church.

Do you think of your community as a protection against unbelief? Do you have friends who will exhort you and point you to what is true over what feels right? How do you feel about God's word? Do you treasure it as a tool for your flourishing or does it feel more like a restriction to you? Take time this week to challenge where you experience resistance toward God's instruction by asking yourself and God where you might be deceived and unaware. Make sure you practice this in community for encouragement and protection!

DAY FIVE

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. Hebrews 4:1–3

Children learn by example, mimicking mom or dad as they clean the house, or “help” cook a meal. More often than not it turns out to make a bigger mess than actually helping. Adults learn by example as well. We might not ask, but we’ll Google it or head over to YouTube for a quick how-to tutorial. Being shown what to do and practicing it builds our confidence.

In today's passage we're reminded of God's example, given to humanity, of rest. At first blush, rest may seem like a silly practice to require leading by example. Did someone say nap? Yes please!

But what if God's example of rest was pointing to something beyond a good nap or day off?

When God rested from His work in creation, He was showing us we can rest in Him. Think about what it takes for you to rest: you need to feel safe, secure, comfortable, not too cold, not too hot. You need to know those around you won't take advantage of you. God instructed Israel to rest on the Sabbath to exercise and grow in their trust that He would keep them safe. They needed to know experientially that He had done and

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Devotionals

KNOW

was doing the work. What a gift! God says, in effect, show me you trust me by resting.

Just as God finished His work in Genesis, Jesus finished His work of salvation when He died on the cross, resurrected, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, as reflected in Hebrews 1:3—He even said from the cross, “It is finished!” You and I show our faith in Him when we rest from the work of trying to earn God’s favor, knowing Christ has secured us and provided the better rest. We are saved and will one day be glorified with Him.

Where do you find yourself working to earn God’s favor? Is there something you feel God owes you because you’ve worked so hard for Him? Take some time to prayerfully discern your motives for what you do. We can work from a place of joy and worship because of the grace we’ve been given, or we can work and worship in order to “earn” it. God knows the motives of your heart and wants you to enter into His rest with a thankful heart. Remind yourself today, that if God rested and Jesus is sitting down because His work is finished, you can afford to rest in Him!

DAY SIX

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12–13

How do you feel about being naked?

In Genesis 2 we read that God created man and woman and they were naked and unashamed. This physical nakedness is a metaphor for being fully known, vulnerable, and authentic with no shame. They were fully known by God and each other; there was no editing of thoughts, holding back, or posturing for position. No longing for a better body, hiding cellulite, or covering bellies when sitting down.

Fully known.

For some, this is a terrifying thought. And really, to all of us, it should be. Who wants their inner dialogue exposed for all to hear?

Here’s the thing: God knows. All of it. Even though we’re not in the garden, there’s no hiding from Him. All of us are naked and exposed before Him. What are we to do?

God’s word is our hope, our covering. As we submit ourselves, willingly uncovering what we’ve “hidden,” the word acts with the precision of a surgeon’s scalpel, separating our worldly flesh from our spirit. When we are willing to uncover our shame, God’s good work begins.

God’s word is a magnificent tool but be warned: it is dangerous, like a sword that cuts both ways. To those who submit and allow the word to read your heart and mind, there is life! However, to those who refuse, there is death.

Are you hiding from God, for fear of being fully known? Take some time to pray today, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what you’re holding back. When something comes to mind, imagine bringing it in your hands to the Father; tell Him about it and why you have kept holding onto it. Ask God to take it and thank Him for His living word!

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

How do you feel when you're compared to someone else? When is it encouraging? When is it discouraging?

1. Read Hebrews 3:1–6. Who is the author comparing here? What specific trait does he highlight? Considering the audience, why do you think this contrast is so important for them to understand?
 - a. What roles are ascribed to Moses in verses 3 and 5?
 - b. What two roles are ascribed to Jesus in verse 1? What about verses 3 and 6?
2. The author is helping us understand what it means to be part of God's family, or house. Look for all the uses of the word house in this passage. How many times is it used?
 - a. Drawing from what we learned in Hebrews 2:11–14, why is it important for us to understand?
 - b. How do you become part of God's house, or family?
3. Read Hebrews 3:7–11. This quote taken from Psalm 95 and retelling of part of the Israelites' journey in the wilderness is used here as a warning for us today. What is the warning? What are the consequences for disregarding this warning?
 - a. Let's dig deeper. Read Psalm 95. What are the two places of rebellion referenced?
 - b. Look up Exodus 17:3–7. What is Israel's complaint and charge against God?

REST FOR HIS PEOPLE | HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Review Hebrews 3:1–12. Why do you think the author is using the action of Israel as an example of what not to do? Remember, God had delivered these very people by his wonders and miracles in Egypt through Moses, yet they still doubted! The readers of this letter have Christ as their deliverer—just think of the consequence for doubting His work!
5. Read Hebrews 4:1–7. Israel was promised rest through the inheritance of the Promised Land, the good news referenced in 4:2 (see Deuteronomy 3:18–20; 12:9–11).
 - a. What does rest, or Sabbath, symbolize?
 - b. God gives us an example of His own resting from work on the 7th day in Genesis; we see Christ sit down at the right hand of the Father in Hebrews 1:3 indicating that He is resting from His work. How are we to respond to their rest? Contrast 4:3 with 4:6.
6. Hebrews 4:11–13 closes with a warning. What is it?
 - a. What is the role of the word of God? Think of the term “soul” as your human nature and the term “spirit” as being from God? Imagine how tightly joints and marrow are connected. To the original audience these must have seemed inseparable. How does this shed light on your reading of this warning?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Jesus is the better example of what faithfulness in great difficulty looks like. Like Israel, we grumble and complain, quickly forgetting what God has done, and even blame Him for our negligence. Take some time today to reflect: where do you need a reminder of God’s faithfulness to you in Christ? What in your life do you take credit for that belongs to God? Where have you charged Him with being reckless or careless? Spend some time confessing these things in your heart. God knows they are in there; He invites you to hold fast to what Christ has done for you and rest in His good and perfect work. What might it look like for you to rest in this truth?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 3:1-4:13 Review

MAIN IDEA

Do not harden your hearts towards God.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What is a “hard heart”? Think of Pharaoh in Exodus.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.
- When Jesus became man, took our place on the cross, and when He rose again, conquering our sin, He brought us to Himself and into the family of God.
- When we believe we become sons or daughters of God.
- Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels.

BIG IDEAS

- This passage builds on the foundation of a repeated idea in Hebrews: Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better.
 - The author compares Jesus to Moses by taking us back to the book of Exodus and showing that Jesus is superior to Moses.
- Greater as a person
 - Moses was only a man. Moses was called by God.
 - Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was sent to earth by God.
- Greater in ministry
 - Moses ministered to God’s people, the Israelites, under the old covenant.
 - Jesus ministers to the people of God, all believers, under the new covenant.
- The Exodus story and disobedience
 - The author reminds us how those following Moses failed to enter the promised land due to their disobedience and unbelief.
 - A person who has a disobedient and disbelieving heart could result in having a “hard” heart.
 - We need to make Jesus our priority.
- If we do not put Jesus first, we can lose sight of what is most important. Remember “Do not drift” from Week 2?
 - Just like the Israelites, if we take our eyes off of Jesus, we leave room inside us to become impatient, which leads to rejecting His commands and disobedience.
 - The Israelites wandered for forty years in the wilderness because of their disbelief. How much more would we lose if we rejected Jesus?

GOING DEEPER

- Just as God had a plan for the Israelites to enter the promised land, He also has wonderful plans for us. We can rest because our future rests in God. All He asks is that we fully devote ourselves to Him. The question is, are we open to receiving all He has in store for us today and tomorrow?
- Jesus sent His Spirit to help, guide, and instruct us. Will we listen to His Word?

SV YOUTH

Week 4 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Read Hebrews 3:3; what two comparisons is the author making? And what conclusion does He make in 3:4? What significance does this have for believers? Non-believers?
2. Jesus is the greater Moses. If Moses led God's people out of slavery to the Egyptians, so Jesus leads Christians out of slavery to sin.
 - a. What is one temptation or sin you feel enslaved to? Lying, cheating, poor self-image, anger, etc.? How are you seeking freedom from this snare?
 - b. Do you think Jesus ever experienced temptation? How did He handle temptation? For more insight, read Matthew 4:1–11.
 - c. If the answer is found in Jesus, why do we settle for anything less?
3. Read Hebrews 4:12. How is the Bible described? Why such vivid imagery? How does this imagery impact how you see the Bible?
4. The Bible is not just a collection of books about God; it is living and life-changing, able to transform anyone who takes its truths to heart. God's word requires making a choice; will you live by its truth, or will you allow it to be a collection of ideas for you to retain and do nothing with?

THE BIBLE IS NOT JUST A COLLECTION OF BOOKS
ABOUT GOD; IT IS LIVING AND LIFE-CHANGING, ABLE TO
TRANSFORM ANYONE WHO TAKES ITS TRUTHS TO HEART.

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Week 5

DRAW NEAR | HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

INTRODUCTION

It's not uncommon at various points in life to hear someone describe a feeling of detachment and disconnection. It can feel as if there is a large distance, a great gulf in which we are shouting across in hopes to be heard, seen, or even acknowledged. This feeling can present itself within our earthly relationships, but more often these emotions are used to describe our connection, or lack thereof, with God. What's miraculous about the Gospel is that we are invited and called to freely run to God in the midst of it all. What waits for us is not a cranky or uninterested being, but a God who eagerly seeks to greet us with grace and mercy. Whatever state we may find ourselves in, whatever temptations, trials, or difficulties bog us down, we have a great High Priest who is able to sympathize with us in our time of need and give us what we need most.

MAIN IDEA

When we need grace and mercy, we can freely run to Jesus.

SUNDAY NOTES

DRAW NEAR | HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Hebrews 4:14

What makes a plan worth pushing through and seeing every painstaking detail through to the end? Whether it's a DIY house project, an education, or training for our first marathon, we persevere because we believe, somewhere deep down, that it's worth it. And so, we tell ourselves we have what it takes, to muster all the strength we can, and to draw from past experience—often with the help of others who have gone before us.

The same is true of our walk with Christ. He has the perfect resume to be our perfect help. What encouragement to hold fast to our faith! We need not try in our own strength; every need we have is met in Christ. He is the great high priest who goes before us, appeasing our need before the Father; He finished His work and is seated in the heavens. The very Son of God is our help!

The knowledge of who Christ is empowers us to hold fast. Without this knowledge, Christianity is just a bunch of moral platitudes, rules to follow, and pretty verses to put on a coffee cup. It is knowing Christ went before us that keeps us going. He fulfilled His calling. He finished the work. And now Christ intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father. It is not our strength that takes us where we need to go, but His.

Spend some time today considering where you might be working out of your own strength; where do you need to hold fast to the confession that Christ is the Lord, that His work is finished, and it is enough for you? When we strive to make it on our own, we are effectively believing that Christ is not enough. How does this view affect your relationship with God? Where are you striving to do it on your own rather than hold fast to Christ? Spend some time today reflecting and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten the eyes of your heart to see the truth.

CHRIST INTERCEDES FOR
US AT THE RIGHT HAND
OF THE FATHER.

DAY TWO

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

The core desire of every heart is intimacy. We long for connection, to be known, to be understood, to be validated. Yet when we dare to make ourselves known to another, it can hurt. People bring their brokenness to the table, perpetuating misunderstanding as we interpret others through the lens of our own wounds. And so, we shut the door of our heart protecting it from its deepest need, starving it of the intimacy it so craves. We long to be known, but also to be safe. Thus, we sacrifice connection for safety.

Psalms 38:9 tells us that our deepest desires, the sighing of your heart, are known intimately by God who responds by drawing near. Jesus knows these desires, He experienced them Himself and can sympathize with you. The Greek word,

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sympatheo means to be affected with the same feeling as another—to feel for or have compassion toward. And unlike those we draw near to on this earth, He doesn't bring any brokenness to the table; quite the reverse, it's because Jesus has no brokenness, but has been affected with the same feelings as you, that He can minister to you in your deepest need. Instead of judgement, He shows compassion. There is no need to choose protection over connection with Him.

Take some time in prayer thanking God that He is intimately aware of the desires of your heart. Reflect on the truth that you are fully known by Him. Where are you hiding for fear of rejection? Bring those things to Jesus in prayer and remind yourself today that Jesus is sympathetic toward you. Draw close to Him and rest in His compassion for you.

DAY THREE

...yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15c

You know that kid in school that always got straight As? They never missed a day of school, always had the right answer—maybe even a star athlete too; nothing ever seemed to go wrong for this kid. At least from your perspective. When we observe someone else's life, it's easy to forget that they have struggles too. They struggle, and their life is far from mistake free. What we tend to forget is that in order to achieve great things, we often have to learn from our mistakes first.

There is one who never messed up or gave in; one who didn't learn from mistakes but drew strength from doing what was right. Jesus was tempted, in every way just like you and me, except for one major difference. He was tempted yet did not sin. This phrase, yet without sin, should cause us to stop and ask, how did He do it?

When we are tempted, we are faced with a choice: trust God's wisdom or feed our flesh—the pursuit of our own wisdom. Scripture tells us there is a way that seems right to man, but in the end, it leads to destruction. God's way leads us to freedom. Jesus knew this and chose to deny His flesh—His human nature—and found His satisfaction in doing the Father's will.

Where are you currently being tested? Where are you tempted to do things your own way? The world shouts at us from every angle to live "our truth" and find our own path, but the Bible warns us that this kind of thinking leads to destruction. How might you find encouragement in the truth that Jesus was tempted in every way you find yourself tempted today but stood firm? What might you learn from watching how He lived? Spend some time asking God to give you His strength for walking through today's trial and temptation.

DRAW NEAR | HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Isn't it funny, the way we all try to pretend that we have it all together? Think of how you like to be perceived: confident, secure, competent, strong, wise. From job resumes to social media, the clothes we wear, to the house we live in, we like to put on a good front. But that's the thing, it's a façade. Put any pressure on it, and it's going to crumble, exposing the weakness behind it.

Wouldn't it be such a relief to simply walk around being our true authentic selves, mess and all? To live fully aware of our need and completely comfortable with its existence. There is a way.

For the last few days, we've been learning about how Jesus not only knows our weakness, but that He walked in our shoes and understands just how uncomfortable they are. He is sympathetic toward us. His sympathy should embolden us to come close, exposing the vast need we have because we know He gets it. Jesus' resistance in His own temptations did not produce arrogant pride, but gentle sympathy and a tender heart. Instead of placing Himself in the category of winner, He sits on His throne of grace beckoning us to draw near. When we come to Jesus, broken in our need, we can approach Him with confidence that what we ask for—His mercy and grace, His strength, His help—we will receive.

How do you tend to approach the Lord with your needs? Do you come hesitantly, asking as an afterthought, or in fear of being told to go away? Where has fear stolen the confidence you should have when approaching Christ? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and grant you the assurance that when you come to Jesus for His mercy and grace, you may ask with confidence in the knowledge that He will grant it without hesitation.

DAY FIVE

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Hebrews 5:8

Let's be honest. Choosing God's way is hard. As the Apostle Paul laments in his letter to the Romans, we do not do the things we desire to do, but we do the things we do not wish to do. Do you find comfort knowing that he struggled with obedience, too? We find a sense of comradery knowing we aren't alone. It's even better if it's someone that we think has the struggles of life all figured out.

There's a reason that when Christ spoke of following Him, He chose the phrases "die to your flesh" and "pick up your cross." Envision for a moment dying—specifically on a cross; this is graphic language! It isn't pretty. It isn't casual. We're called to be so serious, so focused on becoming like Christ that it looks like we are dying to ourselves. This, like any skill, takes practice.

Jesus shows us what it's like to grow in obedience to the Father and dying to oneself. He demonstrates the practice it takes and that, while it's hard, it is possible to learn

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obedience through the work of His spirit. We see that Jesus learned obedience through suffering. Meaning, as He was presented with choices, He chose obedience, despite the suffering it caused His flesh. But Jesus knew that choosing God's way, despite its discomfort, glorified God. The action of obedience speaks louder than words that God is better than what is in front of me. In such times, Jesus would cry out to God, even to the point of tears—He doesn't make it look easier than it is! We should be so encouraged by this. If Christ suffered and still chose obedience, so can we!

Where do you struggle to see that God is better? Jesus chose satisfaction in God's glory rather than in His own. This is what allowed Him to deny His flesh. The denial was worth it. Where do you need to cry out to God—even if it is with loud cries and tears? He is listening, He is your Helper. Take some time to assess what is before you and ask how God can use it for His glory. Spend some time today asking Him how you can learn obedience by what you are walking through right now.

DAY SIX

And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, Hebrews 5:9

When we hear that Jesus suffered, our minds tend to go immediately to His great suffering on the cross. His death, resurrection, and ascension are vital factors to the Christian faith; without one of them we would not have the beautiful story of the gospel. But there is one more aspect we tend to overlook. Jesus could be the propitiation and make atonement because He was perfect. We are told He was made perfect through suffering in Hebrews 2:10, and that He learned obedience through suffering in Hebrews 5:8. He made choices daily to submit wholeheartedly to God, to walk in His calling, walking humbly and loving mercy. Christ lived the life God intended for us, without sin. He consistently starved His flesh and fed His spirit; He passed every test we failed. When confronted by Satan, Christ resisted. When presented with the opportunity for fame by the people, He walked away. When confronted with the inconvenient needs of the people around Him, He paused and showed compassion. And when He was confronted in the garden with the cup of God's wrath, Jesus submitted His will to the Father's.

Jesus' journey to perfection was the choice of constantly submitting to God's will. He never chose Himself. He never considered Himself too great—His time too important, the task at hand too costly. Jesus laid down this perfect life so that you and I could have eternal life in Him. His perfect life is our ransom, and it is our encouragement.

Close your time today in prayer thanking Christ for His great sacrifice which gave you life in Him. Consider where you need the reminder of this great truth. Write it down where you'll see it or set a reminder on your phone to pause and give thanks throughout the day.

DRAW NEAR | HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

How does it make you feel when someone does not understand you? Or more specifically, when someone misunderstands you?

1. Read Hebrews 4:14–5:10. In your own words, try to summarize what the passage is communicating. Try to keep it to just 2–3 sentences.

2. Look closely at 4:14–16.

a. What is the confession the readers are to hold fast to?

b. What is the job of the high priest? Revisit Hebrews 2:17 and 5:1 if you aren't sure.

3. Define the word sympathize. Why is it important that Christ was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin? How does this help you understand Jesus as fully God and fully human?

4. What temptation do you struggle with that isolates you?

a. How does the understanding that Christ sympathizes with your weakness encourage you?

5. Fill in the blanks from Hebrew 4:16 (ESV):

Let us then with _____ draw near to the throne of _____, that we may receive _____ and find _____ to _____ in our time of need.

a. How does looking at the words you wrote in the blanks adjust your understanding of how you are to approach God in your need?

DRAW NEAR | HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

6. Read Hebrews 5:1–6. What is the role of a priest? Can you think of another way to say, “on behalf of”?
- a. How does the priest interact with people?
 - b. How did one become a priest?
 - c. BONUS: In biblical times, the priest was an intermediary between the people and God. Who is our intermediary now? What does that practically mean for you today? Be as specific as possible.
7. Look at 5:7. Describe in your own words what Jesus did. Be sure to include how He acted, being as descriptive as you can while staying true to the text.
- a. We don’t often get glimpses of Jesus’ emotion, but what do His loud cries and tears tell you? Read 5:7–10 for additional clarity.
8. Read 5:7–10. What do you think of Jesus learning to obey?
- a. How does the text say He learned obedience? Does this encourage or challenge you?
 - b. What does it mean that Christ, who never sinned, was made perfect? Think back to 4:15 where it describes our high priest.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

What a great high priest we have in Christ! While our sin separates us from God, Christ became fully human, complete with all the gritty difficulties you and I face on a daily basis. Because He knows our experience intimately, He is sympathetic to us. He is also our great encourager. Because Christ was tempted but never caved into sin, we can look to Him as we are tempted, cry out for His help, and find comfort remembering He resisted. How can you take this truth and apply it this week?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 4:15 - 5:10 Review

MAIN IDEA

When we need grace and mercy, we can freely run to Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Can you think of a time someone spoke up on your behalf? What happened and how did it make you feel?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.
- When Jesus became man, took our place on the cross, rose from the dead, and conquered sin, He brought us to God, into the family of God. When we believe, we become sons or daughters of God.
- There is a repeated idea in Hebrews: Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better.
 - Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels.
 - Jesus is greater than Moses.

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus is greater than Aaron.
 - Aaron was a “high priest.” Jesus is the great High Priest.
 - Aaron served in the tabernacle. He could only go into the “Holy of Holies,” coming near to God once a year. Jesus serves in the heavenly tabernacle. He sits next to God.
 - When the Israelites needed help, they could not go near God in the temple—only a priest could go in his or her behalf. When believers need help, we can go to Jesus, our great High Priest, and find the help we seek. Through Jesus we can come near to God.
 - As a priest, Aaron offered sacrifices of animals to God. Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice—then rose from the dead!
 - Priests only served for their lifetime. Jesus is our High Priest forever.
- Jesus is our great High Priest enthroned in Heaven.
 - Through Jesus we can come near to God. All that God has for us comes through Jesus.
 - Because of Jesus, we can receive God’s grace and mercy.
 - Grace means that we do not get what we deserve—separation from God.
 - Mercy means we get what we do not deserve—to be heirs to a heavenly kingdom.

GOING DEEPER

Jesus had to be fully human and fully God in order to be appointed to the role as our “great High Priest.” Check out Hebrews 5:1, 5–6; Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33–34 to learn more.

SV YOUTH

Week 5 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. How does Hebrews 4:14–16 shape your view of Jesus?
 - a. What impact does it have on the way you approach your own temptation?
 - b. How do these passages impact how you approach God?
2. Who appointed Jesus as our high priest? Check out Hebrews 5:5.
3. Read Hebrews 5:7. How are we to follow Jesus' example to "offer up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears"?
 - a. What does this require of the Christian?
 - b. Why was Jesus heard? Read Hebrews 5:7.
 - c. What does submission to God look like in your life? Is it present in the way you live your life? If not, what needs to change?
 - d. What did Jesus learn from His suffering?
4. Is there something you know you need to do, or stop doing, to be obedient to God even if it means suffering?
 - a. What steps do you need to take?
 - b. Who can you bring along with you on this journey?
 - c. How can those who love you help keep you accountable or pray for you?

Hebrews 5:11-6:8

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

Week 6

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

INTRODUCTION

Progress or growth in any area of life can be difficult to achieve. It doesn't happen by chance but takes intentional devotion. In the same way, our pursuit of spiritual maturity requires an intentional decision, to seek the transformation that comes from the desire to be more like Jesus. For it is in our maturation that we see and experience more of God's goodness, love, and wisdom and are empowered to embody His love for others. Throughout the early chapters of Hebrews, we are met with a glorious revelation of the person of Jesus: who He is and what He has done for us. As we consider the original readers, we might expect to see such transformation taking place in their lives when faced with these truths, yet that is not what we find in this week's passage. In fact, quite the opposite! We find the author of Hebrews pleading with and confronting his readers in light of their reluctance to pursue maturity. The text soberly warns its readers that staying in spiritual infancy is problematic in its own right, but also cautions that this lack of development could potentially lead to a point of leaving the faith all together. This brings the question to us: are we lazy in our faith or are we pursuing all that God has for us?

MAIN IDEA

Spiritual maturity is gained by pursuing Jesus and staying with Jesus.

SUNDAY NOTES

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8
Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. Hebrews 5:11

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone only to realize somewhere along the line you tuned out? They're asking you a question, but you have no idea how to answer! What did you do? The Bible is filled with commands to hear or to listen. Listening shows we are paying attention. What we give our attention to reveals what matters to us.

Today, we are especially guilty of listening to those we like, while cancelling those we don't. We all do it to some extent—we tune out the voices we disagree with; our hearing, in effect, becomes dull.

Don't like this news anchor? Change the channel.

Don't like this influencer on social media? Unfollow.

Don't like this scripture? Don't read it.

Yes, even what we read or listen to on Sunday is included in our listening repertoire. When our ears become dull to the Holy Spirit, our hearts are in danger of becoming hardened. Nothing good can come from that.

A great spiritual hearing test is found in James 1:22, "But be doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves". How's your hearing? Spend some time with Jesus today prayerfully considering how He might be calling you to sharpen your hearing. How might He be calling you to put into practice what you're learning?

DAY TWO

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
Hebrews 5:11-14

No one likes to be stuck. Yet, we often allow ourselves little to no opportunity to grow in our faith. Content with complacency, we snack here and there on the gospel, attending church with halfhearted interest and quickly lose motivation if we're "not being fed"—or if we simply don't like the music selection, sermon series, kid's program, or even the coffee! What is it that allows us to sit in this kind of heart posture?

In a word, immaturity.

Ouch.

No one likes to think of themselves as immature. Simply put, the definition of the word is "not fully developed".

BUT BE DOERS OF THE
WORD, NOT HEARERS
ONLY, DECEIVING
YOURSELVES.

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

Devotionals

KNOW

When our faith is not fully developed, we are dependent on others to feed us. Have you ever been at a restaurant and seen a grown adult being fed by a server? Of course not! Why then, would we as Christ followers be content to be fed, neglecting our ability to eat on our own? Sure, it'll be messy, at first—have you ever seen a baby try to eat for the first time? It's ok to start out awkwardly; the goal is steady growth toward maturity.

Where do you need to grow into maturity? You may be strong in one area and weak in another. In your time with God today, consider what growth steps you want to take this week toward spiritual maturity. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Paul tells us that envy and strife are signs of immaturity. Spend some time meditating on that alongside Hebrews 5:11-14. Close your time in prayer confessing where those immaturities might be present in your life.

DAY THREE

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. Hebrews 6:1-3

When did you graduate from elementary school? Yes, you read that right, elementary school. Most of us have no clue. Why? Because we moved on. Our primary school years existed to create a strong foundation so that we could graduate to middle school, and then go on to high school and beyond. If you were to misspell a word, or forget long-division, you would never re-enroll in kindergarten! You would simply ask Siri how to spell that pesky word or dust off your calculator.

The same scenario is true of our faith in Christ. As we grow, we move beyond the elementary doctrine—the necessary foundation of our faith—and grow in maturity. As a result, we grow in our ability to read and discern the Scriptures, to know good from evil as depicted in Hebrews 5:14. If we get caught in sin or mess up really badly, just as we wouldn't re-enroll in kindergarten we don't need to go back to the beginning. Just turn to God. Repent and put your faith, your trust, in Christ's better work.

In your time with God today, we invite you to chew on the following questions: When you sin, do you feel you need to earn back your right standing with God? Where do you need to rest in Christ's finished work?

DAY FOUR

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:14

Our favorite success stories are the ones that beat the odds. The underdog rises to the top, toppling any obstacle in the way, often pushing through challenge after challenge that threatens to derail their progress.

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

Devotionals

KNOW

What common thread runs through our rags to riches stories? Persistence. Never losing sight of the goal, never taking our eyes off the prize. Discontent with the status quo, we push, we train, we learn—pushing the boundaries of our minds and bodies. Overnight successes are only overnight to the casual observer. Success in any area is brought on by constant practice.

Consider this: what is your attitude toward your faith, the hope you place in Christ? Was it a one-time decision and you're done? Or are you persistently growing? Our faith does not grow simply by willing it to, any more than your mile time diminishes by staring at your stopwatch. We must, by the Holy Spirit's empowerment, press in, challenge our flesh, choose trust, and obey for this skill to blossom into maturity. There are no overnight faith success stories; but ones born in the blood, sweat, and tears of choosing the better way—trust in Christ.

What goal do you need to prayerfully set? Where do you need to persist? Who will you share it with to help hold you accountable? Spend some time today talking to Jesus about where He might be calling you to perseverance.

DAY FIVE

For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. Hebrews 6:4-6

Picture this: you have just finished building your dream home. The landscaping is pristine, the furniture is in place, and each picture is hung with care. Except, when you moved that bookshelf into your office, the wall was dented a little. Oh, and the carpet did get a touch dirty from the interminable mud tracked in by the movers.

So, you tear the house down and start over, right? What a ludicrous idea!

All that's needed is a little putty to fix the wall—maybe a little paint—and it's good as new. Spot-clean the carpet and you're all set!

This example may feel a little extreme, yet this is how some of us approach our walk with the Lord. We profess our faith, get baptized, and learn some good things, but somewhere along the way we become distracted; we might even do what Scriptures call “falling away.” But one day, by God's grace, our eyes are opened to what we've done. So, we go back, we try to start over, forgetting that Christ died once, for all, and when we place our faith in Him, it can't be taken!

This is good news! There's no need to start over from scratch! Christ died once—we don't need a new salvation; His work was enough. He calls us back and accepts us because we have already identified as His beloved. If you have wandered, just turn around.

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

Devotionals

KNOW

Where do you need to turn around? What's keeping you back? Spend some time confessing—apologizing to God for the areas you've wandered away—and bask in the light of His love and forgiveness. He is patiently waiting.

DAY SIX

For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.
Hebrews 6:7-8

Have you ever visited a fruit orchard? Perhaps a berry farm in the spring or a pumpkin patch in the fall? The orchards and fields produce a bountiful crop after being cultivated by a loyal farmer faithfully pruning, sowing seed, pulling weeds, and fertilizing the ground. Much care and intention goes into preparing for harvest. If the ground is neglected, trees left unkempt, and weeds ignored—the crop is destroyed. It is no good, and its bounty blesses no one.

God's word, when faithfully obeyed, produces everlasting fruit like a well-tended garden. When we walk in step with the truth, we bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Our lives produce fruit that blesses everyone around us.

We are encouraged and warned in today's passage not to give up or fall away. Don't be distracted by the empty promises of this world! But remain faithful to the promise we have in Christ.

If your life was a garden, what is being produced in it? This is a great gauge for where we need tending. God is a Master Gardener and knows just what you need. Take some time in prayer today asking Him where He wants you to focus your attention and welcoming His transformative work.

DON'T BE DISTRACTED BY THE
EMPTY PROMISES OF THIS WORLD!
BUT REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE
PROMISE WE HAVE IN CHRIST.

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

What was your favorite grade in school and why?

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:8

1. What is the problem being addressed in 5:11-14? Try to summarize what you think is being communicated in 2-3 sentences.

a. What should they be doing but are not?

b. What do they still need to do and why?

c. What is the mark of a mature believer?

2. Why is maturing in our faith so important? Why can't we just stay where we are? For help, what did Jesus command His followers to do in Matthew 28:19-20? How are these connected?

3. Where do you need to progress beyond consuming "spiritual milk"? Where are you content to stay comfortable and avoid growth? What does verse 13 say about that?

4. Read 6:1. At first glance this may seem startling. If you're able, look up this verse in multiple translations. What differences do you notice?

a. What is the "elementary doctrine" of Christ? We encourage you not to think of elementary as unnecessary. We go to elementary school, middle school, and then high school; each building on the one before; no one stays in elementary school. Why do we need to move beyond it to maturity?

INVITATION TO DEPTH | HEBREWS 5:11-6:8

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

5. Skip ahead to verse 6. What does the author say we do if we dwell on elementary doctrine?
- a. Read 1 Peter 3:18. How many times did Christ die?
6. Going back to verses 4-6, this passage isn't saying those who have "fallen away" lose their salvation.
- a. Who are they describing in verses 4-5?
- b. Why can't they go back and start all over from the beginning?
7. Look at verses 7-8. The fruit our lives bear reflects our repentance. Read Matthew 3:8. How does this help you understand? Are you bearing a useful crop, or is your life filled with thorns and thistles?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

God created us with lives that bear fruit for his kingdom; that's really breathtaking if you stop to think about it. He has invited his creatures—you and me—into His plan and He wants us to partner with him! He entrusts us with His blessings so that we can bless others! This truth should create a desire in us to grow so we can share more and more. Whether you have the gift of teaching or not, God desires that we all teach others about His good news (5:12). As you conclude your time this week, we invite you to consider where God might be calling you to commit to learning, growing, and sharing. What steps will you take to meet your goal? Who will you share it with to keep you accountable?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 5:11-6:8 Review

MAIN IDEA

Spiritual maturity is gained by pursuing Jesus and staying with Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What are some things you think will be different as you grow up? Is there a difference between “growing up” and “being mature”?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.
- When we need grace and mercy, we can freely run to Jesus.

BIG IDEAS

- A great mistake.
 - In Exodus, the Israelites’ distrust and disobedience led to a whole generation having to wander in the desert instead of entering the Promised Land.
 - We also can distrust and disobey.
 - This begins when we “drift”—when we do not put Jesus first and lose sight of what is most important. Remember “Do not drift” from week 2?
 - It continues when we doubt the Word. Remember “Do not harden your heart” from week 4?
 - It results in us being “dull of hearing.” In other words, not listening to what the Bible says and not applying it to our lives.
- God wants His disciples (that’s us!) to grow in Jesus, and to be spiritually mature.
 - It’s like us as humans. We are born and we are a baby, a child, a teenager, and then an adult or parent.
 - A disciple is first born again. To be born again is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, was sent by God, and that He died on the cross for our sins. When we believe, we put our trust in Him that He alone can save us.
- Spiritual baby.
 - Babies have to learn to walk, talk, and feed themselves.
 - It’s the same with a disciple; like a baby they need to be fed—that’s learning God’s Word. The Bible is the spiritual food they need to eat to be nourished and grow into a child.
- Spiritual child.
 - A child needs someone to watch over them; they do not always make the best decisions and sometimes aren’t aware of dangers. Children can be rebellious and refuse to listen.
 - Spiritual children need teaching and discipline as they grow.
- Spiritual adult.
 - When it comes to a disciple, this stage is for those who have wisdom, knowledge, and experience. These disciples have put childish ways behind them. God’s way becomes their way.
- Spiritual growth.
 - Babies and children grow and change physically. Their senses sharpen.
 - Disciples need to grow and change spiritually too. Their spiritual senses need to be refined.
 - It is important for believers to be able to tell the difference between good and evil.
 - No matter the age—baby, child, young adult, adult—we all need to be fed. Disciples, no matter the stage, need God’s Word.

SV KIDS CONTINUED

Hebrews 5:11-6:8 Review

GOING DEEPER

There is a repeated idea in Hebrews: Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better. So far, we have learned that Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. In further chapters, we will see that Jesus is greater than many other things and persons.

- You would think that when we see Jesus for who He is, that would motivate us to continue to grow in our understanding of God's Word and want to become more and more like Jesus.
- But believers can be lazy and have a "this is boring" attitude. That's why Hebrews 5:11 warns us to not become "dull of hearing." For those who become lazy with their faith may abandon their faith altogether.
 - Ask yourself: Am I lazy in my faith or am I digging into all that God has for me?

SV YOUTH

Week 6 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. The word unskilled in verse 13 conveys an idea of being unacquainted with or unaccustomed to something. In other words, the audience was unfamiliar with Scripture, so they were limited in their understanding.
 - a. What are some practical ways that we can get to know Scripture more and understand it better?
2. Verse 14 talks about discernment that is trained. This word for trained is where we get our English word gymnasium. Gymnasts work hard to train for their sport with effort and repetition. In verse 14, the point is to distinguish—tell apart—good from evil.
 - a. Why do believers need to practice being able to distinguish good from evil? What are some ways that we can tell if something is true or not?
3. The warning in 6:4-8 highlights the serious need to remain faithful to God amidst the temptation to walk away. The intent is not to make true believers question whether or not they are truly saved, but to help them understand the serious need to continue following God. We'll see from the affirmation of verses 9-12 that the author believed he was addressing believers who would continue to follow God. His point is to help motivate them to faithfulness. Even though we know true believers persist as God's children and will not be separated from Him, according to Romans 8:31-39, it is appropriate to remind us that we must continue to faithfully follow after God.
 - a. When believers feel discouraged or tempted to give up on following God, what are some ways that we can encourage ourselves and others to continue living for Him?

Hebrews 6:9-20

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Week 7

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

INTRODUCTION

Trust is necessary in nearly all areas of our lives. You and I exhibit trust in someone—or something—every single day. From relying on map apps in our phones for directions, to the recipe we follow to cook dinner, we place a certain level of trust in a person or object to deliver an expected outcome. For a relationship to thrive, trust must be given. However, trust is hard to define, easy to lose, and not easily earned. It requires long-term faithfulness, reliability, and steadfastness to ensure trust is kept and maintained. In this section of Hebrews, the author appeals to the trustworthiness of God to inspire perseverance. God's trustworthy character alone should elicit our trust, but when we doubt, we can look to the stories of His faithfulness—the countless times in His Word we find Him delivering His people. The promises of God's Word offer a stable foundation for our lives.

MAIN IDEA

God is faithful to his word and keeps his promises forever.

SUNDAY NOTES

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

“Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation.” Hebrews 6:9

*Who Would Win?*¹ is a non-fiction book series that enthralls kids of all ages. Using detailed visuals and facts, it compares and contrasts two ferocious animals and determines the victor. Who would win in a battle between a Komodo dragon and a king cobra? A falcon and a hawk? A hyena and a honey badger?

The letter to the Hebrews is much like a *Who Would Win?* book. Jesus is compared to angels, Moses, and priests—all highly esteemed by the Jewish people. After looking at the evidence, the author of Hebrews makes it clear that Jesus surpasses them all. He wins! Jesus is better because He is the revelation of God’s mercy and grace. He is our salvation—the very best news for us as followers of Christ.

Because Jesus is better, there are better things in store for us too. Because Jesus is victorious over death and sin, we win the ultimate prize of eternal life!

In what earthly circumstances do you find it difficult to trust that there are better things in store for you? We invite you to spend time with God today surrendering them to Him and praising Him for the gift of salvation through Christ. Rejoice in the assurance that Jesus wins, and through Him, so do we.

DAY TWO

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10

The Bible is a book about God. It tells the story of His people, His redemptive plan for all who believe, and His unchangeable character. Hebrews 6:10 provides insight into two of God’s glorious attributes: He is just, and He remembers.

This is wonderful news that should bring us great peace! During a season of great adversity, the author encourages Hebrew believers to remember that God has not forgotten their diligence and the love they demonstrated by helping His people. Though these external works do nothing to save the readers—Ephesians 2:8 reminds us that only grace through faith can do that—they provide visible evidence of a commitment to follow Christ. And because God is just, He sees their faithfulness and promises to remember it.

Do you ever feel unseen? Are you diligently working to further the gospel, but wonder if it’s worth the angst and exhaustion? Are you coming alongside others when they need you, but remain unsure if anyone even notices or cares? In the same way God promised justice to the Hebrews and remembrance of their loving efforts, so does He see and recognize your faith in action—even if no one else does. Continue to endure, dear friend! Continue to love, to help; our God is just and will not forget.

In your time with God today, spend some time thanking Him for His just nature.

GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN.

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Devotionals

KNOW

Express your gratitude that He sees everything you do and ask Him to sustain you as you continue to work, help, and love. Choose trust—He hears your prayer and will fulfill His promises.

DAY THREE

We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 6:11-12

The Hebrew people were in a hard place and needed a pep talk. They faced persecution and imprisonment. Many were ostracized because of their decision to follow Jesus. It would have been easy for them to fall back to their old ways—to lazily rely on the Law, sacrifices, and priests rather than the promise of salvation through Christ. They were commended for continuing to love others and their efforts to work hard even in adversity—yet the author implies that remaining diligent would be difficult. Finishing strong would take persistence and commitment. Still, the writer is optimistic. Readers are exhorted to imitate those who have gone before them—those who remained faithful and inherited the promise of eternal life.

Like the Hebrews, our faith and patience must be cultivated. Faith isn't faith until it's tested, and patience comes from trusting that God fulfills His promises—even in the darkest of times. To remain true to the gospel and avoid falling prey to old patterns of sin and self-reliance, we are urged to look to others for an example. Today's passage encourages us to learn from and imitate faithful followers, both given to us for example in Scripture, and those running the race with perseverance today.

Who do you look to as examples of faith? Who has trusted God's promises and not grown "lazy" in adversity or trial? Is there anyone in your life that you can look to for guidance and wisdom? If so, consider talking to them about the disciplines that help them cultivate their faith and patience. In your time with God today, ask Him to help you remain diligent to the very end, trusting that you will "inherit what has been promised."

DAY FOUR

"And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised." Hebrews 6:15

As you read this today, you're likely in the midst of waiting for something. Waiting to feel known. Waiting to be forgiven. Waiting for healing. Waiting to be understood. Waiting for the fulfillment of a promise. Each one of us is waiting for something.

Consider Abraham's dire situation. He was almost 100 years old, his barren wife at 90. Yet God promised Abraham that he and Sarah would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore! It seemed

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Devotionals

KNOW

impossible, but God was true to His word. 22 years later, the fulfillment of His promise was set into motion through the birth of Isaac.

Like Abraham, waiting tries our patience and hurls us toward self-protection and self-reliance. We can't control the outcome in our current season of waiting and our fleshly desire tempts us to meddle—to rush through the wait in search of a quick solution. But what if we entered our season of waiting with a sense of eagerness in place of anxiety? What if we waited with hope instead of despair? What if we changed our perspective entirely, and began to see the wait itself as an integral part of the promise?

When we look ahead to Hebrews 11:1-12, we see that Abraham was credited as faithful because he learned to trust, endured the test, and believed God. What if we, like Abraham, lived in a way that reflected our trust in God's promises, and a belief in His grander plan? How might that perspective change the way we waited?

Take time to reflect on this today. Invite God to show you where you need to wait more patiently, trusting that you'll receive His promises of sanctification and salvation. Thank our faithful Father for previously fulfilled promises and the assurance of eternal life.

DAY FIVE

God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.
Hebrews 6:18

When we say we *hope* for something, what we're really saying is that we want it to happen but are not sure that it will. We hope someone has a good day at work or school. We *hope* we get the job. We *hope* the cancer goes away. This kind of hope is wishful thinking and not the assurance spoken of in Hebrews 6. There is nothing uncertain about the hope we have in Christ. It is so tangible and true that we can "take hold" of it. We can be "greatly encouraged" by it. Why? Because God made promises to Abraham that extend an inheritance to those who walk with Him today. While earthly circumstances are unpredictable, God is unchangeable and full of truth. His promises are sure and the hope of eternal life for those who follow Him is certain.

As you go through your day and the rest of the week, ponder this truth: If God fulfilled His promises to Abraham, He will fulfill His promises to you. Redemption and salvation will be worked out in your life if you choose Christ and surrender to Him. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY SIX

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. Hebrews 6:19a

Imagine a boat at sea. What do you see? A cargo ship crossing the Pacific? A small fishing vessel on the crest of a rocky shoreline? Wind propelling a sailboat as it cruises back to port?

Now imagine that same boat in the middle of a storm. Are there people on board? What are they doing? Where is their hope? Perhaps they're scurrying, worried, and working to secure the ship—dropping an anchor and hoping it finds a hard place to grasp.

The author of Hebrews gives readers this sweet assurance: Jesus is our anchor. He is our hope—firm and secure. We can rest in the promise of salvation through the revelation of Christ. Following Him, trusting Him, and believing in the certainty of God's Word doesn't mean the storms won't come. Quite the opposite, in fact. We need the anchor because of the storm. It secures the drift. It provides peace. It is our foundation.

When waters rise and winds rage, when night falls and rest beckons, when it seems all hope is gone: rely on the anchor. Put your trust in Jesus. He has you, His vessel, firmly and securely held in the faithfulness of His promises. In your time with God today, prayerfully consider the implications of this hope for your current circumstances. Thank Him that we have this hope in Him and the security and rest found in His salvation.

WHEN WATERS RISE AND WINDS
RAGE, WHEN NIGHT FALLS AND REST
BECKONS, WHEN IT SEEMS ALL HOPE
IS GONE: RELY ON THE ANCHOR.
PUT YOUR TRUST IN JESUS.

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

Who did you want to imitate or be like when you were a child?

1. Read Hebrews 6:9-12. For review, what “way” had the author been speaking to the readers? (See verses 1-8). What is the author seeking to do now? How do you know?
 - a. What are the better things that belong to salvation? Look back to 1:14—what do they inherit? For help, check out a different translation of 6:9 like NIV, ESV, CSB, and NASB.
 - b. Up until now, what inheritance has the author mentioned? (Check out 4:1-3).
2. In verse 10, the author takes a moment to encourage the readers that God sees what they’ve been doing. Why do you think he does this?
 - a. Further in the chapter, what are they encouraged to do and how?
 - b. Who do you imitate? Who is imitating you?
3. After encouraging the audience to imitate the example set for faith and enduring patience, the writer provides an example. What is it?

TO THE VERY END | HEBREWS 6:9-20

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Read verses 13-17. What is the significance of an oath? Why can the readers place their faith in it?
5. Does making an oath or signing a contract help you keep your promise? Why or why not? How is it different when God makes an oath?
6. What are the two unchangeable things? (See verses 17-18).
7. The writer uses two words in these verses that convey security; what are they? “We who have fled for _____” and “We have this as a sure and steadfast _____ of the soul.”
 - a. What do you think he wants the readers to know? See verse 20. Who went before us?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

In times of uncertainty, we tend to cling to what is sure or steadfast. Where have you turned when life flips upside down? The writer of Hebrews wants you to know that God is the only certainty we have. He is unchanging in both His purpose and character. Because of this, we can run to Him for refuge, knowing He is faithful to do what He said He would. Where do you need to step out in faith, trusting the promises of God? What steps will you take this week? If you're not sure, we encourage you to ask a couple of people who know you well to give you honest feedback regarding who they see you imitating—are they godly examples, or do they stir up fear, anxiety, and anger in your heart?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 6:9-20 Review

MAIN IDEA

God is faithful to His word and keeps His promises forever.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Have you ever had someone make a promise to you that they did not keep? How did that make you feel?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both, He is able to meet us in all our needs.
- When we need grace and mercy, we can freely run to Jesus.
- Spiritual maturity is gained by pursuing Jesus and staying with Jesus.
 - No matter our age—baby, child, young adult, adult—we need to be fed. Disciples, no matter the stage, need God's Word.

BIG IDEAS

Spiritual fruitfulness

- A farmer knows if his fields are good by whether or not they are producing good crops—for example, plentiful potatoes, sweet carrots, or juicy corn.
- A believer shows his or her spiritual growth by bearing good spiritual fruit.
 - All believers produce the same kind of fruit—though they may bear different amounts.
 - This fruit is the Fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23a.

Spiritual security

- Though some followers of Jesus may not be as spiritually mature—or produce as much fruit as others—they can be encouraged that God will never leave them.
- God is not an unjust God. He is a merciful God. Go back to the promise He made to Abraham. Abraham's life has some good examples of what it looks like to be patient and to have faith. This encourages us to hold tight to the hope that is only found in Him.
- God will never fail us. God does not and cannot lie. One of the great benefits of the Bible is that it records the real lives of many believers. We can imitate their great faith and learn from them how to deal with different trials and temptations.

GOING DEEPER

This passage talks about the promise God made to Abraham.

- What was the promise? See Genesis 12:1-3.
- Did the promise come true? See Hebrews 6:13-15.
- Who else does that promise include? See Galatians 3:29.

SV YOUTH

Week 7 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. The author balances his strong warning with encouragement. Because of the evidence of God's work in their lives, he is confident in their salvation.
 - a. How does that help us as believers—even when experiencing a strong warning or correction—to be assured of our salvation?
 - b. How does that shape our understanding of how we are saved?
2. Verse 11 says, "And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."
 - a. Who do you know—personally or someone you know about—that has faithfully and patiently persisted to follow God throughout their life?
 - b. In what ways does that encourage you to do the same?
3. God guaranteed His promise of salvation to His people by making an oath based on His unchanging character.
 - a. What evidence do we have of God's trustworthiness?
 - b. How does knowing for sure that God will do what He says help us remain faithful to Him?

FAITHFULLY AND PATIENTLY PERSIST TO FOLLOW GOD.

Hebrews 7

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Week 8

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Hebrews the author makes the argument that Jesus is superior to all who preceded Him—from the angels, to Moses, Aaron, The Law, Joshua, and the entire priesthood. This emphasis was due in part to a rise of Christian believers—formerly Jewish in faith—wrestling with the temptation to return to old patterns and traditions. The author attempts to reveal to readers Jesus’ superiority in every aspect to the old covenant; that it would be foolish to turn back, for the former things were there in anticipation of a greater thing to come. The author continues his demonstration by drawing the reader’s attention to Melchizedek, a priest mentioned in the Old Testament. To many, Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness,” is a mysterious biblical figure. Despite what little is captured in writing, this priest-king serves as a poignant foreshadow, pointing us to an integral part of Jesus’ eternal priestly ministry.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the superior, lasting, & perfect priest we need.

SUNDAY NOTES

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

He (Jesus) has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. Hebrews 6:20b-7:2

Melchizedek is a mystifying figure in much of scripture. He held two titles at the same time: King and Priest of the Most High God. After Melchizedek, the throne and altar were always separate positions in scripture and those that tried to combine the two were judged by God. That ancient unity of priest and king in one person is brought together in Jesus, the Messiah. As a Priest, Jesus sacrificed Himself through His death on the cross—He is the eternal High Priest of the New Covenant. Because He is also the promised Davidic King both offices are united in one Person.

The translation of Melchizedek name is also significant. In the Bible, names are descriptive of the person's character and their meanings are important. The order of his names in this passage is subtle, but important. First, Melchizedek, his given name, translates to "king of righteousness". Then, later in Scripture, he is referred to as Salem or "king of peace". In Scripture the two words are frequently found together in the same order: righteousness and then peace—because there cannot be peace until there is righteousness. You cannot have peace by compromise. You cannot have peace by making deals with your enemy. One must have righteousness before one can have true peace—be it internally or externally. If the order of the names had been reversed, God's beautiful model would have been spoiled. But standing just as they do, the names are in perfect agreement. Peace is the fruit of righteousness.

We invite you to make this your prayer today in your time with God: Lord, in a world seeking justice, not much righteousness is found. But even in the midst of what seems hopeless, you can do your greatest work. Jesus, I lay before you the turmoil of the world in which we live. May your name spread throughout the earth! Give me courage this day to speak of your righteousness and peace to others that I come in contact with. Help me to not dishonor your name by misusing it. May my life today bring only honor to your great name. Amen.

DAY TWO

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means "king of justice," and king of Salem means "king of peace." There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God. Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. Hebrews 7:1-4 (NLT)

This is the very first account in the Bible of tithing, and several aspects to it worth noting: First, Abraham was never commanded by God to tithe. In fact, his choice to tithe predates God's instruction to the Israelites by hundreds of years! Second, he tithes as an act of worship, thanking God for His protection and ability to conquer the enemy. But what does this mean for us today? Tithing has a **purpose, a promise and a place:**

The **purpose** of tithing is to teach us:

- To always put God first, acknowledging His authority over us.
- To trust Him with what we have, recognizing that everything belongs to Him already.

It is an act of worship and exalting God:

- The **promise** of tithing is that the Lord will honor you if you honor Him.
- The **place** is the local church.

Every Christian is on a journey regarding their relationship with money and possessions. We are bombarded on a daily basis by messages

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

Devotionals

KNOW

seeking to influence our money and materials. These messages tell us that money will make us happy, and that the money we have is ours alone to do with as we please. But the Bible tells us something different. That everything – yes, everything – is a gift from God.

God says that when we tithe it unlocks something in the spiritual realm, because the way we give and spend our money often reveals the state of our hearts toward God. God is able to “open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Malachi 3:10). God has given us so much to be thankful for.

In your time with God today, we encourage you to invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the state of your heart. Ask Him to fill you with a generous spirit to be able to open your hands to those in need. Ask Him to help you loosen your grip on the things you cling tightly to. Invite Him to guide you in the way He would have you use your time, talent and money to His purpose.

DAY THREE

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well...For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. Hebrews 7:11-12, 18-19

The Law—God’s divine instruction for His covenantal relationship with His people—was given to the Israelites at the same time they were given the priesthood and sacrificial system. All three were intertwined.

Yet the Aaronic priesthood was incomplete. They were permitted to draw near to God only one day a year—the Day of Atonement—when they were permitted to enter the Holy of Holies. The Law was never meant to save or perfect people, but to foster a self-awareness of need point to the future Messiah. With the coming of Jesus, The Law became “*set aside because of its weakness and uselessness*”. The shedding of the blood of animals could never take away sins, perfect us, or pave the way for access to God’s presence. All the good deeds or rule following in the world cannot save us or make us right with God.

This doesn’t mean The Law was sinful or wrong. God always meant for it to be temporary, and to point us toward the One who would ultimately achieve redemption for us: Jesus Christ. It served its purpose in its time, before finding its completion in a better way:

- A priest that descended from on high is better.
- A priest that is perfect is better.
- A priest that is unchangeable is better.
- A priest that is permanent is better.

Christ lives to die no more!

It can be easy to find ourselves prone to focusing solely on the New Testament—after all, it’s where we find the climax of the story! Yet we find Jesus’ words and revelation of Himself saturated with Old Testament Scripture. The Old Testament is where we find the rest of the story of Christ. We see His presence among the people, His heart reflected through His promises, and His overarching story of redemption interwoven with the history of His people. In your time with God today, we invite you to consider how you might know God’s Word more fully, and learn to develop the discerning eye to see Jesus in every passage.

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

but this one (Jesus) was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’” This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. Hebrews 7:21-22

Every major purchase nowadays seems to offer a money back guarantee. If your product fails, you can get your money back or have your product replaced. Yet sometimes we find the guarantee had fine print that makes it worthless. Or perhaps the guarantee is valid, but the process to request a refund or replacement is so convoluted, we give up in frustration—the product is just not worth the process! Our faith in the brand or company diminishes.

What joy it is to know our guarantor is Christ! God swore an oath that Jesus would be “a priest forever”. He backed up His words with action, through His death, burial, and resurrection, providing a righteous basis on which God can fulfill the terms of this new covenant. His endless priesthood is essentially linked to the unfailing fulfillment of the New Covenant.

And unlike a product or service purchased by human efforts, the guarantee for our salvation is not voided if we fail to follow the “owner’s manual” perfectly—though we might incur the need for repairs when we don’t! Yet even in this we have confidence. Unlike a product advertised with the fine print “actual results may vary”, the New Covenant offered by Jesus has no fine print. There is no “offer does not apply to really bad sinners” warning label. Jesus promises in John 6:37, “*whoever comes to me I will never cast out*”. Christ guarantees our salvation for all eternity if you come to Him.

In your time with God today, consider the implications of God’s promise—there is no fine print, our salvation is guaranteed! Because of Christ’s sacrifice, we are made clean, even if you don’t follow the owner’s manual perfectly. Confess what you need to confess, repent what you need to repent, and rejoice in His great mercy!

DAY FIVE

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:23-25

We have spent much of this week explore Jesus’ position as High Priest and His redemptive work on the cross; but what are the implications for us now? We all have that space in the depths of our hearts where we find ourselves in painful or dark times. We question our worthiness and Jesus’ ability to redeem us; we question our ability to be truly loved by God. Our hearts and minds know the truth: we are the uttermost sinners in need of an uttermost Savior.

The phrase “able to save to the uttermost” means Christ is able to reach even those deep dark crevices of our soul. The Greek meaning of uttermost is “completeness”, “the whole thing”, “perfection”. Webster’s dictionary uses the terms: consummate, maximum, most, paramount, supreme, ultimate. Are you getting the picture? The point is that He saves completely—even those things hiding in the dark crevices.

“He knows us to the uttermost, and he saves us to the uttermost, because his heart is drawn out to us to the uttermost.” ¹

With Christ as our eternal high priest the Christian has an anchor for the soul—a source of stability and confidence in our salvation. Just as a ship has confidence that its anchor will hold in any storm, we too can have confidence in the sufficiency of our great high priest.

Is it not a wonderful thing to know that God bids us come? You can draw near knowing you’ll be welcome and accepted because he saved to the “uttermost”. This great, holy God of righteousness and wrath bids us draw near through His Son, our great High Priest. He calls: Draw near to me. Draw near to me in confession and prayer and meditation and trust and praise. Come. Spend time with me today.

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY SIX

But he (Jesus) holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:24-25

Because Christ “holds his priesthood permanently” and “he continues forever”, “he always lives to make intercession” for us. Redemption is what Jesus did for us in the past. Intercession is what He is doing for us in the present. As Christians we are ongoing sinners in need of atonement; Christ continues to intercede on our behalf in heaven because we continue to fail here on earth. He would not be able to save us forever if He did not go on interceding for us forever.

Intercession is Jesus' heart in action. Throughout the gospels we see Jesus' compassionate heart for His people:

“and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” Matthew 14:14b

“I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.” Matthew 15:32

“he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” Mark 6:34

The Greek word for this compassion expresses an emotion from the deepest part of the inner core. It is this compassion that is reflected in the unfathomable heart of Christ for His people. The intercession of Christ is His heart's compassion, connecting our heart to the Father's heart of compassion.

This very day you are being saved by the eternal intercession of Jesus in heaven. Jesus is praying for you—an act essential to your salvation. He prays for us, and His prayers are answered because He prays perfectly on the basis of his perfect sacrifice.

Think about God's heart toward you today. Are you emotionally, mentally, or physically sick? Jesus has compassion for you! Do you have needs that are going unmet? Jesus has compassion for you! Are you in need of a shepherd? Jesus has compassion on you! As you go throughout your day and needs arise remember that from the deepest part of his core Jesus has compassion for you. He will heal, provide, and teach you many things. He is your Shepherd, and He will care for you with great lovingkindness and compassion. Turn your heart toward His today.

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

When you need help, who do you usually ask and why?

1. As a quick refresher, what is the role of a priest, and why do we need one?
2. Read Hebrews 6:20-7:3. Who is this Melchizedek? For additional context, check out Genesis 14:18-20.
 - a. What did his name mean?
 - b. Names were often used as representative of a person's character. What do you think we are supposed to learn about Melchizedek from his name? Who does he remind you of?
3. According to verse 7, who blesses whom?
 - a. Abraham was highly regarded as the father of the Israelites, if he, who was so great in their minds was blessed by someone else, what does this tell us about Melchizedek's priesthood?
 - b. Why do you and I need to understand that Melchizedek is superior to Levi? What connection is the author trying to help us see between the Levitical priesthood and our own need?
4. Read verse 11. If the Levitical Priesthood was enough, we wouldn't need another like Melchizedek's. Why do we need a better priest?
 - a. Why wasn't The Law enough?

PRIEST OF OBSCURITY | HEBREWS 7

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

5. Read verses 15-19. What are Christ's qualifications as priest? Keeping in mind what you've learned about priests from the previous weeks (see Hebrews 2:17, 5:1), why is Jesus the better priest?
6. Why is it important that this new priest have an indestructible life? What makes him a better hope?
7. Read verses 20-28. What was not "without an oath"? What was the oath and who made it?
 - a. Why does God's oath make Jesus the guarantee of a better covenant?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

This is a hard passage filled with strange customs and a guy with a weird name surrounded by mystery. Yet his life served a beautiful purpose—to point to something better. God promised Israel to give them a priest like Melchizedek—a King of Righteousness and Peace to be great comfort to them. A new, better priesthood with a new, better promise, leading to a better hope. How does the knowledge that Jesus is "something better" encourage you in your faith? How will you apply this knowledge this week?

JESUS IS SOMETHING BETTER.

SV KIDS

Hebrews 7 Review

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the better! Jesus is the perfect priest and king we need. His priesthood and kingdom last forever.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Imagine a bowl of vanilla or chocolate ice cream. Ice cream is pretty great, but a sundae is even better! What toppings would you put on your ice cream to make it even better?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is fully God and fully man. By being both He is able to meet us in all our needs.
- When Jesus became man, took our place on the cross, and rose from the dead conquering sin, He brings us to God, into the family of God. When we believe, we become sons (or daughters) of God.
- There is a repeated idea in Hebrews: Jesus is greater, or Jesus is better. Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. Jesus is greater than Moses and Aaron.

BIG IDEAS

God's people and priests.

- A "priest" in the Bible means a special person who made sacrifices and prayed to God for the people.
- In Exodus we learned that priests were chosen from the tribe of Levi. Moses' brother, Aaron, was the first high priest.
- In the Old Testament, the king and the high priest were different people.

Melchizedek was the King of Salem.

- In Bible times, names were important. In Hebrew, Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" and "Salem" means "peace." So, Melchizedek is not only the "king of righteousness," but also the "king of peace."

Melchizedek is greater than Aaron

- Melchizedek was a king and priest. Aaron was only a priest.

Melchizedek is greater than Abraham.

- Abraham gave Melchizedek tithes. By giving Melchizedek tithes, Abraham acknowledged the authority of Melchizedek. In addition, Melchizedek had the authority to give Abraham a blessing.

Jesus is greater—greater even than Melchizedek.

- Melchizedek points us to Jesus, who was the perfect king and priest.
- Melchizedek and Jesus can be compared because both were priests who were not from the priestly tribe of Levi.
- Melchizedek blessed Abraham, just like Jesus came to bless us.
- Jesus is like our priest because He intercedes with God for us
- This means that because of Jesus, we can be forgiven of our sins and can come to God with our needs.

GOING DEEPER

Read Genesis 14 for the full story of Abraham and Melchizedek.

- As you read Genesis 14 ask yourself, "What did I learn about God in this passage?"

SV YOUTH

Week 8 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. According to Hebrews 7, how is Jesus different from the priests under the Mosaic Law?
2. How do those things make Him a better priest?
3. Read verses 23–25. Jesus’ role as a permanent high priest empowers Him to save those who draw near to the “uttermost”.
 - a. How can that truth shape our perspective of our connection to God? In what ways does having Jesus as our priest give us hope and confidence before God?

HE IS ABLE TO SAVE TO THE
UTTERMOST THOSE WHO DRAW NEAR
TO GOD THROUGH HIM

Hebrews 8

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Week 9

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

INTRODUCTION

A covenant, not a term frequenting conversation today, is a legally binding agreement between individuals. Despite its infrequent use, understanding the definition, what covenants are and are not is vital to grasping the over-arching story of the Bible. Unlike covenants made between humans, when God enters into a covenantal relationship with humans, it is one-sided. Only God can initiate and establish a covenant with Himself. All throughout the Old Testament, we find God choosing people—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.—for covenantal relationship, each established with the promise of blessing for the faithful, and curses for those who failed. Time and time again we see humans fail to keep their side of the covenant, experiencing hardships and consequences for their choices. Yet God is merciful and to the reader, it is clear that the covenants offered by God throughout history still far outweigh the alternative, an existence apart from God. And yet God had more for us. This week's passage in Hebrews illustrates a better covenant between God and humanity, one that is mediated and fulfilled perfectly by Jesus on our behalf.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the mediator of a superior covenant.

SUNDAY NOTES

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 8:1

Our High Priest is Jesus and today he sits on a throne at the right hand of God! This signifies a position of power; it is also a position of honor and of influence.

Jesus is able to sit down because his work is finished, its completed. There were no chairs in the Old Testament Tabernacle because the work of the priests was never finished. Each sacrifice repeated twice a day served as a poignant reminder that none of the sacrifices could ever provide complete salvation. The blood of animals did not wash away sin; it only covered sin until that day when Jesus Christ died to take away the sin of the world.

Jesus sits on a throne. Not only did the high priest of Israel never sit down in the tabernacle, but he never sat down on a throne. Because the High Priest could not also be the King. Only a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" could be enthroned, for Melchizedek was both king and priest (Hebrews 7:1).

Jesus Christ is not just "seated" anywhere, but specifically in a place of honor—a place that adds glory to His person and His work. He is seated on the throne in heaven at the right hand of the Father. This is in contrast to the earthly High Priest who could only approach God in the Holy of Holies one day a year—the Day of Atonement.

Where He is seated is a fulfillment of the promise God made about Him in Psalm 110:1 *"The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"*

Visualize the throne room of God. We encourage you to read Revelation 4 and picture in your mind the physical setting, the breath-taking colors—absorb what is being said and see the strange creatures. Our Lord is very creative and wants us to fully sense His presence. He is worthy of honor and glory! We invite you to close your time with God today by joining us in the following prayer: It is through you, Jesus, that I offer a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming my allegiance to His name. Only in you, Jesus, do I dare to enter and enjoy the presence of God. Thank you for your work on the cross that I might draw near to God every day without fear.

DAY TWO

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 8:1

Today let's continue to give honor and glory to Jesus as He mediates for us.
Sing praises to our great High Priest in your time with God today:

WORTHY OF IT ALL, By David Brymer*

*All the saints and angels, they bow before Your throne
All the elders cast their crowns before the Lamb of God and sing*

*You are worthy of it all
You are worthy of it all, Jesus
For from You are all things
And to You are all things
You deserve the glory!*

*Day and night, night and day, let incense arise
Day and night, night and day, let incense arise!
Day and night, night and day, let incense arise!*

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Devotionals

KNOW

Day and night, night and day, let incense arise!

You are worthy of it all, Jesus!

You are worthy of it all

For from You are all things

And to You are all things

You deserve the glory!¹

*View on YouTube if you prefer singing along with music

Envision it with us, Beloved! Standing before the Lord, kneeling in his presence. Singing with all the redeemed! You are worthy of it all, Jesus! You are worthy of it all, For from You are all things, and to You are all things; You deserve the glory!

DAY THREE

A minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. Hebrews 8:2

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." Hebrews 8:5

Jesus is our priest in heaven—the holy place.

The earthly Tabernacle was built after the Israelites were rescued from Egypt, as they wandered through the Wilderness. In Exodus 25:8 God instructed Moses, “*and let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst*”. God provided very specific details for the construction of the Tabernacle, from what materials were to be used and the exact measurements, to how it was to be assembled, dissembled, and even carried when transported!

Worshippers could only linger outside the tent as they brought their animals for sacrifice on the altar—the Levitical priests alone permitted to enter. It was symbolic of the “true tent” in heaven where God dwells, made holy by His presence.

Later, a permanently placed temple was built by Solomon. First century Jews took tremendous pride in the temple and did so for good reason: it was a spectacular architectural achievement! Yet however as glorious as the Jerusalem temple might have appeared, its visage paled in comparison to the glory of the heavenly temple where Jesus serves today.

Jesus’ sacrifice could not be offered just anywhere; it had to be offered in God’s appointed place—the sanctuary. The conclusion is logical: if Jesus Christ is a High Priest who offers gifts and sacrifices, then He must have a sanctuary in which He ministers. Since He is in heaven, that sanctuary must be in heaven.

Jesus’ priesthood is better—far superior—to the Levitical priesthood because Christ’s sacrifice is presented in the “true tent” of heaven itself, in the very presence of God!

In your time with God today, we invite you to express to Jesus through prayer, that you don’t want to ever take for granted His sacrifice made on your behalf. Offer your thanksgiving and praise for what He has done to set you free from the consequences of your own sin. We invite you to pray the following with us today: Jesus, you are the true sanctuary—the place we can enter freely. You are the true sacrifice giving me direct access to God. Thank you for making a way for us to experience the fullness of who you are!

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one (Jesus) also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

Hebrews 8:3-4

A true sacrifice involves giving up something cherished—a loss must be felt. Jesus sacrificed his place in heaven to become human, then His very life to give us our greatest gift—redemption for our sins. Jesus is not one more in a long line of priests; Jesus is the eternal priest.

Our hearts shudder at the thought of sacrificing a human being. But we would be wise to consider just what happened in the days leading up to his death. He was betrayed by one of his disciples, humiliated, and tried. He was tortured. He was made to carry his own cross to Golgotha. Angels could have come to save Him but, yet He endured and hung on the cross to die. God allowed Jesus to be put to death to pay the price of our redemption. It is what *“this one offered”* referenced in today’s passage.

Have you noticed that Jesus never attempted to enter the Holy of Holies to be in God’s presence? As the Son of God, He would have had every right to be there, but that was not the nature of His priesthood. His priestly ministry was going to be in heaven, not earth.

We must not, however, get the impression that our Lord is offering sacrifices in heaven that correspond to the Old Testament sacrifices. The phrase “to offer” is in a Greek tense that implies “offer once and for all.” On the cross, He offered Himself as the one sacrifice for sin forever. In other words, our Lord is “a living sacrifice” in heaven. He is not offering Himself over and over because His work was completed at the cross.

As you conclude your time with God today, we invite you to pray the following with us: Lord, I thank you for always keeping your promises. Help me to remember that Jesus is the ultimate proof that you have already kept your greatest promise to me. May I cherish what He did for me then, and what He is doing for me now—in this moment, on this day. *“To God be the glory great things He hath done! So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, who yielded His life an atonement for sin. And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.”* Amen.

DAY FIVE

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

Hebrews 8:6-7

How does God, the creator of the universe, relate to man? He uses covenants.

Covenants are an agreement between two parties that stipulates the condition of their relationship. The premise of the Old Covenant for man was The Law which the Hebrews agreed to obey when they were in the Wilderness. It was ratified with the twice daily blood of animal sacrifices at the tabernacle in the Wilderness, and later in the temple.

Before we examine the “better promises” of the New Covenant, we must settle another matter. We must not think that the existence of the New Covenant means that the Old Covenant was wrong. Both covenants were given by God. Both covenants were given for people’s good. Both covenants had blessings attached to them. If Israel had obeyed the terms of the Old Covenant, God would have blessed them, and they would have been ready for the coming of their Messiah.

The New Covenant was ratified by the blood of God’s Son on the cross. The New Covenant in His blood would do what the Old Covenant sacrifices could not—take away sin and cleanse the heart of the believer. We are not saved from our sins by participating in a religious ceremony, but by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior.

In Luke 22:19-20 Jesus *“took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”*

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Devotionals

KNOW

On the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and established the New Covenant. He then became our mediator to God. The essential element at the heart of all of the covenants is God's promise, *"I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

Thank the Lord for His relentless pursuit of His people—including you! He did not stop; He did not cease; He did not quit. He has given you more grace than you can imagine. Join us in your time today, proclaiming, "You will be my God and I will be your people!" This day, let it be as you have said.

DAY SIX

For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their father son the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Hebrews 8:8-13

Today's passage includes a harkening back to Jeremiah 31 where God foretold of a New Covenant intended to reconcile His people to Himself once and for all. The Old Covenant was external and fulfilled through adherence to the Law captured on tablets of stone. Despite man's best attempt, repeatedly God's people found themselves failing their side of the Covenant. A New Covenant was needed.

In place of solitary stone tablets, this New Covenant makes it possible for God's Word to be written on human minds and hearts and goes beyond Israel to offer salvation to all who would believe. God's grace makes possible an internal metamorphosis that transforms a surrendered believer over time into the likeness of Christ. Forgiveness no longer requires the ritual of animal sacrifice but is resolved once and for all at the moment of salvation through our faith in Jesus. We now encounter God on the basis of His grace and mercy in place of the Law, works and merit.

This New Covenant is never in danger of falling into obsolescence. The Greek word used to indicate the "New" of the New Covenant translates to "new in quality," not "new in time." The quality of the New Covenant is uncompromisable; it will never need to be replaced! Yes, our Lord is ministering on the basis of a better covenant—a New Covenant that makes us partakers of the new nature and the wonderful new life that only Christ can give.

Have you entered this new covenant and began walking in the better way? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to transform you from the inside out? Or are you still struggling with the law, works, and merit—a performance based relationship? We invite you to consider the following lyrics as you close your time with God today: *"Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, then to trust and obey."*³

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

Do you tend to like movies that are based on books? Why or why not?

1. Read verses 1-7. Depending on your translation, you may see words like “tent”, “holy place”, “tabernacle”, or “sanctuary”.

a. What is the author referring to?

b. Who serves in the earthy tent?

c. Who serves in the heavenly tent?

d. What are they doing?

2. Looking at verses 3-7, what is being compared? Why do you think the author uses the word “copy”? What does that tell you?

a. In your experience, which is better, the original, or a copy?

3. According to verse 6, what makes Christ’s ministry better?

a. Do you tend to think of Christ’s work as ministry? What does that mean? Use what you know about His priesthood to help you answer.

THE NEW HAS COME | HEBREWS 8

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Read verses 8-12. Why does the old covenant fail? Use the text for your answer.
What does this tell you about God and about humanity?
5. Who does God make this New Covenant with?
 - a. Does this New Covenant apply to us? How do you know? Use any scripture that comes to mind to help you answer.
For reference see Hebrews 2:11-13, Galatians 3:29.
6. What does God promise in the New Covenant? How is it different from the Old?
 - a. Why do we need the New Covenant?
7. Read verse 13. What happens to the Old Covenant?
 - a. Think of Jesus' last words on the cross, "It is finished." How does verse 13 give you greater clarity about what He meant?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

You may have come across the idiom "every promise finds its yes in Christ", which is a nice sentiment, but can be challenging to understand when in reality we don't always get what we want from God. This week's passage serves as a reminder that Christ Himself is the promised answer—the answer we desperately need! God's promises to the children of Israel were always meant to find their completion in Christ and meet our deepest need. Do you think of Christ as your ultimate need? Set aside some time this week to prayerfully consider the practical implications of Christ being the fulfillment of your most significant needs and salvation. Thank Him for this amazing gift!

SV KIDS

Hebrews 8 Review

MAIN IDEA

Through Jesus, we have a better covenant (commitment) with God.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What is your favorite toy to play with? Or your favorite toy you used to play with?

Was it a model version of something much bigger like a car, airplane, kitchen, or animal?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is superior to all who preceded Him, from the angels, to Moses, Aaron, the law, Joshua, and the entire priesthood.
- Jesus is the perfect priest and king we need. His priesthood and kingdom last forever.

BIG IDEAS

The tabernacle God told Moses to build in Exodus helps us better understand heaven.

- In fancy restaurants, people order appetizers to get a small taste of what is to come. In the same way, the tabernacle gave us a small “taste” of God dwelling with His people.
- It also looks to the future where His people—including us—will dwell with God.
- The high priests served in the earthly tabernacle, but Jesus is the High Priest who sits at the right hand of God.
- The high priests made sacrifices for the people, but Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us to rescue us from our sins.

Covenant: a commitment

- When God enters into a covenant relationship with humans, it is one-sided: God initiates it and establishes it.

The Old Covenant

- In the Old Covenant, the Israelites were required to obey God and keep The Law, and in return He protected and blessed them.
- The Old Covenant was external. In other words, it required outward rituals: daily sacrifices of animals as a reminder of the people’s sin.
- Throughout the Old Testament, we see where the people failed to keep their end.

Through Jesus, God made a New Covenant with us—a better covenant to rescue us from sin. It is internal.

- In the New Covenant we get a new heart (Hebrews 8:10)
- In the New Covenant we get a new start—our sins are no more! (Hebrews 8:12)
- In the New Covenant we have a new part; all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus.

GOING DEEPER

Think about your favorite toy again. Would you rather have the small toy version or the real thing? Before Jesus, the priests were basically using a toy version of heaven. Now because of Jesus, we will get to one day experience the real deal!

SV YOUTH

Week 9 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. According to chapter 8, what was the problem with the first (Mosaic) covenant?
What did God do differently through the new covenant to fix the problem?

2. The author quotes Jeremiah 31 to describe God's work in the new covenant. God says that He will, "put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

In the Mosaic covenant, God commanded people to follow laws, which Israel did not remain faithful to do. Now, under the new covenant, God says that He will change the hearts of His people, so that they can follow Him.

- a. What does this new covenant show us about who God is and what He wants from His people?
- b. How can the fact that God works to change the hearts of believers encourage us as we seek to live for Him? In what ways can we recognize this inner work in our lives?

GOD WORKS TO CHANGE THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS.

Hebrews 9

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Week 10

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

INTRODUCTION

At times, The Bible may use language or imagery that cause discomfort for the squeamish or faint of heart. Even those less sensitive might find the sacrifices and blood of the Old Covenant to be uncomfortable—or perhaps simply irrelevant—and therefore warranting exclusion from the text. Whether it causes discomfort, confusion, or is simply deemed archaic, it can be easy to avoid a deeper engagement with these passages of Scripture. In the Old Testament, blood was recognized as a symbol of life and death and served as a sacred substance in various sacrificial rituals for purification (cleansing), consecration (setting aside), and atonement (reconciliation).

In this week's passage, the writer of Hebrews seeks to clarify that, beyond symbolism, there is no comparison between the blood of Jesus and the blood of sacrificial animals. Only Jesus' blood can remove sin and guilt. Only His blood can cleanse our conscience and empower us to serve God. The sacrificial system for God's people in the Old Testament, including its location, all served to point us to the coming better way for man to be purified, consecrated, and atoned for: through the blood of Jesus.

MAIN IDEA

What can wash away your sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

SUNDAY NOTES

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9
Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

“Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. Hebrews 9:1

As we turn our attention to today’s passage, Hebrews 9:1-10, we are presented with the Old Covenant system of worship and sacrifices. As we encounter this system of worship—for the first time perhaps for some of us—this week’s text invites us to come to grips with the following aspects of the Old Covenant:

- 1. It required a specific approach to God
- 2. This approach was comprised of a methodical, rhythmic practice that teetered toward redundancy and monotony.

You and I may dislike monotony, but consider these words from G.K. Chesterton in Orthodoxy on the topic of the life we can gain from such rhythms:

A child kicks its legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do it again,” and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and have grown old, and our Father is younger than we are.

In your time with God today, consider what it might look like to cultivate the practice of mindfully recognizing God in your day to day "mundane monotony"; for in it, you may hear His voice speaking as Chesterton suggests: "again...do it again..."

CULTIVATE THE
PRACTICE OF MINDFULLY
RECOGNIZING GOD.

DAY TWO

“he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” Hebrews 9:12

SECURE: fixed or fastened so as not to give way, become loose, or be lost.

How wonderful is that word? Secure. Nothing can shake away, take away, or break away when something is properly secured. No chance of something falling off the back of the truck when items are properly secured with rope. No chance of something falling off the wall when properly secured with the right fixture or tool.

What is the right “tool” required to secure our eternal salvation and redemption? Jesus' life and blood. We have been brought into right relationship with God for all of eternity through no work of our own and can rest secure in its safety. No one can add to it nor take away from it; it is secure in Jesus' blood.

In the Old Covenant, under The Law, no one could ever be certain of their standing

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

Devotionals

KNOW

with God; sacrifices needed to be made daily and covered a temporary swath of time. When Jesus shed His own blood, everything changed. His blood covers our needs for today in the present, and it promises to cover our needs for tomorrow. It transcends time, reaching back to include the past in its scope. Because Jesus willfully shed His own blood, we are saved immediately and eternally.

This truth has been the cornerstone of our faith for ages, moving saints to humble gratitude throughout the history of Christendom; we invite you to allow it to move you today. In your time with God, we encourage you to spend some time praising Him as the song states below....

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned he stood;
Sealed my pardon with his blood:
Hallelujah! what a Savior!*²

P. Bliss, "Man of Sorrows"

DAY THREE

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 9:22

In 1876, Robert Lowry penned a song that has often been seen as an American classic. If you have spent any significant time attending a church, you've likely sung it at some point. The lyrics beautifully reflect the text of today's passage in Hebrews:

<i>What can wash away my sin?</i>	<i>Nothing can for sin atone,</i>
<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus;</i>	<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus;</i>
<i>What can make me whole again?</i>	<i>Naught of good that I have done,</i>
<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus.</i>	<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus.</i>

<i>Oh! precious is the flow</i>	<i>This is all my hope and peace,</i>
<i>That makes me white as snow;</i>	<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus;</i>
<i>No other fount I know,</i>	<i>This is all my righteousness,</i>
<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus.</i>	<i>Nothing but the blood of Jesus.</i> ³

*For my pardon, this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
For my cleansing this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

The repetition of the line "**Nothing but the blood of Jesus**" is there to hammer home a point. The blood of Christ is precious for not only what it pays, but also because of what it earns us. What else can secure us cleansing, wholeness, purity, pardon, atonement, righteousness, hope and peace? There is nothing apart from Christ's work on the cross that achieves this for us all.

Jesus' blood is powerful, purposeful, and precious. Spend some time today giving thanks to Jesus for the blood He so willingly sacrificed on our behalf, to provide all these things—and more—for us!

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

"for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26

Sin always has a price tag attached to it. From the early pages of Scripture, we see sin costs us our spiritual life and—eventually—our physical lives. But in our day to day lives, we find that sin demands a price to be paid immediately. When we sin against each other, be it friend, spouse, or neighbor, there is always a price to be paid for the relationship to be restored.

The beautiful thing about Christianity is that, in Christ, no sin can be held against you. The requirements needed to restore our relationship to God has been handled by God himself!

Think back over the past week; can you recall an interaction or event that has resulted in regret or mourning? Sin and sorrows pollute our day, but when we come to Jesus, we are reminded His absolution has already taken place. He has put them away for good! Do you live as if you believe this?

This does not mean we are always exempt from the natural consequences of our sin, but we are invited to shake off the fear of a debt hanging over our heads. Jesus has paid our debts. If you have a longing for forgiveness in your life, know with confidence that it can be found in Christ. God deeply desires us to be in right relationship with Him—so much so that He decisively paid for our sins and put them away for good! May be its time for you to do so as well.

Where in your life do you still carry fear, guilt, and shame? We invite you in your time with God today, to prayerfully release them into His gracious hands; He longs to take them from you! May you find yourself at rest in the peace that comes to those set free in Jesus.

NO SIN CAN BE HELD
AGAINST YOU.

DAY FIVE

"for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26

Sacrifice. When you read that word, what comes to mind? Short term pain for long term returns? The giving up of something valuable and precious in order to receive something better?

The likelihood of you and I facing death to prove our devotion to Christ is not high in our modern, western world. But what we are called to in Romans 12:1 is to "present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God".

Which seems harder to you? Perishing in an instant for Christ, or a life lived long in pursuit of holiness? The intent of this question is not to diminish the value of life or overlook the heartache and sorrow that accompanies loss of life, but to consider the

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

Devotionals

KNOW

weight of daily sacrifice. When honestly considering the two, persevering as a living sacrifice requires its own unique hardships in contrast to the momentary pain of a literal life sacrifice.

Our motivation and commitment to persevere as a living sacrifice must be rooted in the knowledge that Jesus gave Himself for us. If Jesus gave Himself for you, would you not give yourself for Him? The Spirit that led Him to the cross and raised Him from the grave is the same that now resides in you. In your time with God today, we invite you to prayerfully consider how you might surrender your life as a sacrifice to Him today.

DAY SIX

"And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him"

Hebrews 9:27-28

The following statement isn't meant to depress or upset you but rather to soberly remind us all of the reality that awaits us: ***You will die.***

This truth is one we often avoid facing and do what we can to control or influence this inevitable outcome. Our houses are filled with products we've purchased to delay the day and inside each and every single one of us is a faint hope that maybe—just maybe—we can avoid it. But we can't.

Even worse, after we die, we will stand before God and give an account for our life. Judgement will be rendered for or against us in light of that account. Facing these hard truths in print and pondering these realities can make even the calmest person feel anxious!

But we must face them! Ignoring them won't make them go away and these two truths are ones we must come to understand and accept. The sooner you and I embrace this reality, the freer we can be. How? For those who believe, know, trust, and love Jesus, there is nothing we need to fear. No need to be anxious. For those in Christ, the judgement is promised to come back in our favor. For those in Christ, we have overcome death through His work on the cross and have eternity with Him to look forward to.

Those in Christ know that while our bodies will ultimately perish, we need not fear the judgement coming. With these two facts in mind, we encourage you to go out and live today! Enjoy this present moment. Enjoy your Savior. Join us as we eagerly await his return, knowing that the pain and suffering of this life are temporary, but eternal joy and hope await us in eternity.

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

So many products and services come with “Terms and Conditions” today. Whether it's detailing the proper ways to use software, or closing a business deal, we are presented with the fine print. Are you someone who takes time to read them, or do you simply sign or accept and move on?

1. Throughout the book of Hebrews, we find the contrasting of the old and the new, the before and the now. We find everything that preceded Jesus to be simply a shadow of something greater to come.
 - a. In verses 1-10, what place does the author turn their attention to? Consider briefly reviewing Exodus 25; 26:1-31; 30 & 37.
 - b. What deeper realities does the tabernacle point us to? What does the most holy place tell us about the character and nature of God? Why would this matter for believers today to understand?
2. When we think about the forgiveness of sins found in Jesus, it's easy to understand its implications for our intentional acts of rebellion. Yet verse 7 speaks to atonement made for the “unintentional sins” of the people.
 - a. What does this statement tell us about the pervasiveness of sin?
 - b. In what ways can this type of sin impact our relationships with others? With God?
3. Hebrews 9 speaks at length to Jesus' superiority to the Tabernacle and temple—the place where sacrifices were completed. But it also makes a point to demonstrate Jesus to also be a far better sacrifice itself. We're told in verse 12 that Jesus entered the heavenly holy place by means of His own blood and that the blood of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were insufficient to provide what you and I need most.
 - a. What does Jesus' blood accomplish that these animals cannot?

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD | HEBREWS 9

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Read verse 11-14 and 24-26. In the Old Testament, the high priest would enter the temple once a year on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the ark of the covenant for the forgiveness of sins (see Leviticus 16). However, this work would need to be repeated year after year.
- a. In what ways did the actions of the earthly high priests foreshadow the work Jesus would go on to do?
 - b. What makes Jesus' work better than the priests of the Old Testament?
 - c. How does Jesus' "once and for all" salvation affect the way you view your relationship with Him? How does this provide security for you?
5. In verse 26-28, the author speaks to Jesus' first coming and his second coming. What is the mission of each one? How do they differ from one another?
- a. When you read "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgement" what thoughts and emotions come to mind? How do you handle this truth? Does this impact the way you live and speak with others about the gospel?
 - b. What does it look like for one to "eagerly wait" for Jesus' return?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

If you only come away from Hebrews 9 with one thing, we pray it is the assurance that Jesus has dealt with our sin once and for all. It is clear in this text Jesus' sacrifice and atoning work is far superior to the previous, temporary solution for the absolution of our sins. Not only superior in its location, but in the very sacrifice given. Our sin has been dealt with forever! There is no longer a need to further self-justify or seek to make up for our blunders and mistakes. Hebrews 9 invites us to find confidence in our salvation and look forward longingly to Jesus' return. As we conclude our week in chapter 9, we encourage you to consider what this means for you. Knowing the work is done, and we can rest in His sufficiency plays out differently for each of us; what does it look like for you?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 9 Review

MAIN IDEA

What can wash away your sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Everyone has blood. We need it to keep us alive. But some people don't like looking at it. How do you feel when you see blood? Why do you think some people might feel squeamish when they see it?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. He is greater than Abraham, Melchizedek, and Moses.
- In Exodus, God gave directions on how to build the tabernacle and what should be in it.
 - The tabernacle helps us better understand heaven. The people experienced God dwelling with His people and it looks to the future when His people (that includes us!) will dwell with God.
- Through Jesus, God made a new covenant with us—a better covenant to rescue us from sin.
- In the new covenant we get a new heart, a new start, and a new part—all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus.

BIG IDEAS

The “old covenant” that God gave Moses and the Israelites had rules the people had to follow.

- Only the priests could enter the tabernacle, and only once a year could the High Priest enter the Most Holy Place.
- Every time the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place there needed to be a sacrifice of blood.

In the Old Testament, blood was used in different sacrifices needed for the covering of sins.

- The priests entered the tabernacle every day to make sacrifices so they and the people would be “clean” or “holy” before God.
- In order for the tabernacle and everything in it to be holy, it had to be sprinkled with blood.

Jesus is better.

- There is no comparison between the blood of Jesus and the blood of the animals used for sacrifice.
- Only Jesus' blood can remove sin.
 - Jesus sacrificed himself with His blood to rescue us from our sins.
 - Jesus only had to sacrifice Himself once. The work of salvation was accomplished.

Jesus is a better priest—our High Priest

- The high priests served in the earthly tabernacle, but Jesus is the High Priest who sits at the right hand of God.
- The high priests made sacrifices for the people, but Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us to rescue us from our sins.

GOING DEEPER

Read Hebrews 9:14. Think about how the blood of Jesus helps us to worship God. How do you feel knowing that the blood of Jesus has the power to make you holy before God and allows you to come to Him whenever you want?

BONUS! To learn more about the Tabernacle God told Moses to build, check out our SV Kids Mini Lesson video online at www.tinyurl.com/svkidsvideo

SV YOUTH

Week 10 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Chapter 9 contrasts Jesus' sacrifice to the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament. What makes Jesus' sacrifice better?
2. In verses 12-14 it says that through the sacrifice of Christ's blood He secured eternal redemption and "purified our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Not only does Jesus' sacrifice provide forgiveness for our sins, but it removes the weight of guilt and hesitation we carry toward God because of our sin.
 - a. When we focus on our sin or wallow in guilt from past things we've done, how can that affect our relationship with God?
 - b. What does it tell us about God that He enables us to experience a clear conscience and freedom from guilt?
 - c. What are practical ways that you "serve the living God" differently when you recognize and receive the cleansed conscience that Jesus provides?

JESUS' SACRIFICE PROVIDES FORGIVENESS FOR OUR SINS,
AND REMOVES THE WEIGHT OF GUILT AND HESITATION WE
CARRY TOWARD GOD BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.

Hebrews 10:1-18

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Week 11

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

INTRODUCTION

Truly believing that God has forgiven all our sins can be one of the biggest struggles we face as believers. Deep down inside each of us fear, doubt, and uncertainty plague us, challenging our confidence that God has truly forgiven all our faults and failures. It is so easy to find ourselves picturing God as sitting in wait, just looking for the opportunity to pounce on our long list of wrongs and unfulfilled rights. Yet this could not be further from the truth! As we delve into this week's passage of Hebrews, we are reminded of the final words of Jesus on the cross: "It is finished." Our salvation is secure, and our relationship with God restored! We have been gently guided back to the good graces of God. And there is nothing that you or I can do to negate that. How can we be so sure? We're told upon the completion of His work, Jesus sat down; there is no more work to be done. We're reminded that God will remember our sins no more. ***Do you believe this?*** Or does it feel just too good to be true?

MAIN IDEA

When Jesus said, "it is finished" He meant it.

SUNDAY NOTES

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure...When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

Hebrews 10:5-6, 8-9

God didn't just think up the Old Testament system of sacrifice—He established it as law. That Law is called holy, righteous and good even throughout the New Testament—see Romans 7:7 for example—and the Law did the jobs God gave it to do:

- It provided a series of hints about the real deal.
- It was a constant, front-and-center reminder that sin necessitates death.
- And it gave God's followers a method of expressing their faith in His desire to cover their sin.

The Law fell short simply because it lacked Jesus. The Law has always been the precursor, the foreshadow, of His coming. He is the one sacrifice that enables us to draw near God with our hearts permanently and fully cleansed. The promise of verse 9: "Behold, I have come to do your will" means He's the only one who ever COULD fulfill our weaknesses and needs revealed by the Law.

That said, why on earth did God keep saying He doesn't want sacrifices—even in the early days before Jesus was born? Psalm 51:16-17, Isaiah 1:11-20, Hosea 6:6, and Amos 5:21-22 demonstrate that what He wanted out of sacrifices then is the same thing He still wants now: our hearts. Those first external ceremonies still required internal faith to make them acceptable. Sacrifices were to be a symbol of faith, not substitutes for it.

What is something you've been doing that may look "Christian," but in actuality comes from a place of obligation and self-imposed pressure—or perhaps simply routine, mindless expression? Today, in your time with God, we encourage you to prayerfully rededicate that activity to the Lord who longs for your heart.

DAY TWO

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Hebrews 8:5, 10:1

C.S. Lewis' surreal fantasy, *The Great Divorce*, portrays a striking contrast of shadows and "good things to come."¹ In the story, new residents of hell have no idea where they really are; they just see a never-ending city that's always drizzling twilight,

SACRIFICES WERE TO BE
A SYMBOL OF FAITH, NOT
SUBSTITUTES FOR IT.

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Devotionals

KNOW

empty except for pockets of quarrelers who endlessly move further away from one another. A rather indifferent sub-group embarks on a field trip to Heaven, a place that feels jarring in its goodness. In its full daylight, the visitors realize in horror that they are not real. They are transparent smudges in contrast against its dense, huge countryside. They can see the vibrant grass right through their own feet. It's too solid to bend beneath their steps, so it feels like nails to walk on. A daisy is too heavy to be plucked. Their feet can't sink to the bottom of the river, so they walk atop it where flying flecks of its foam bruise their legs.

Heaven's inhabitants—old friends from the visitors' earthly lives, now scarily bright, solid, and strong—explain that hell is so small that one of Heaven's butterflies could swallow it entirely without noticing! They invite the visitors further into Heaven, warning that the walk will hurt their feet at first, but promise that they, too, will grow well-suited to reality as they journey in. All will be made well, all questions satisfied, and it will all continue getting better.

Lewis' imagery in this novel lends perspective to the shadows described back in Hebrews 8:5 and here in 10:1. Just as Heaven stands apart from hell as fully real, so Jesus's sacrifice stands in contrast to the Law. Old Testament law gives us a shadowy framework from which to recognize and understand Jesus' true form.

In your time with God today, meditate on what shadowy thinking and lifestyles you've been freed from, and what good things have already come to you through Jesus. Thank Him for all the ways He's brought life to what was dead in your life before your found salvation in Him.

DAY THREE

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified Hebrews 10:12-14

Andrew Peterson's song "His Heart Beats" celebrates the wonder and significance of the moment of Christ's resurrection² —the exact moment He proved that the blood sacrifice He'd just performed was the last anyone would ever need. As celebrated in 1 Corinthians 15:25-27, He completed the legal transaction and set into unstoppable motion all its practical triumphs. Peterson explained the song on his creative community's website, www.rabbitroom.com:

"We don't know exactly how it all went down, but we do know this: Jesus was dead, and then he wasn't. A battered corpse was stretched out on a slab, and then the heart in the ribcage started beating again. Jesus inhaled and at once the heavy air in the tomb became more than air; it became breath. The New Testament tells us again and again that Jesus triumphed over the grave, that his body was (and is) corporeal, that he is the firstborn from the dead. Just as sure as daybreak, springtime, the sprouting of tulips, the joy of life after the groaning of labor, Jesus demonstrated his redemptive love for his creation by entering it, dying for it, and then rising from the ashes with a

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Devotionals

KNOW

glorified body. In him, our best dreams have come true.”³

In your time with God today, we encourage you to listen to this song in full and let the words sink in. To listen on Spotify visit <https://open.spotify.com/track/5iYuppZ8ZRC5phXkWePTwu?si=4412dd85aa8a4395>.

DAY FOUR

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10:12, 14

Have you wondered about Hebrews 12:2, “for the joy that was set before him [Jesus] endured the cross?” As John MacArthur put it: “No one else has been, or could have been, so utterly repulsed at the prospect [of taking upon himself the sins of the whole world].”⁴ So what was He looking forward to? In his book *Gentle and Lowly*, Dane Ortlund says, “it was the joyous anticipation of seeing his people made invincibly clean... when we partake of that atoning work, coming to Christ for forgiveness, communing with him despite our sinfulness, we are laying hold of Christ’s own deepest longing and joy.”⁵ This is the joy that carried him through the suffering and into the seat of authority and intercession at God’s right hand—the seat reserved for the One whose work is done and done well. As Galatians 2:17 makes clear, Jesus is no servant to anyone’s sin.

Do we hold back from Him when we’re sinful, trying to prove we’re sorry by how bad we feel? “When we hold back, lurking in the shadows, fearful and failing, we miss out not only on our own increased comfort but on Christ’s increased comfort. *He lives for this. This is what he loves to do.*”⁶

What if, He doesn’t get frustrated when we show up back at His feet, asking forgiveness for the same thing again? What if we’re denying Him His greatest delight when we DON’T? What if He gets even more pleasure and joy in our ongoing forgiveness and purification than we do? What if, He doesn’t just want things or performance from us, but simply longs for us like He’s missing part of his own body?

Today, in your time with God, we invite you to run to Jesus in glad desperation. Confess everything that’s felt too broken, shameful, or gross to verbalize. He is anxious to celebrate the sufficiency of His finished work—with you!

DAY FIVE

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified

Hebrews 10:14

Today, we invite you to start by spending a few minutes re-reading this week’s passage, Hebrews 10:1-18. This passage is a celebration of the sufficiency of Jesus’ sacrifice—it was enough! The author is so excited about this central, foundational truth, that he explains it over and over again in these verses—delightfully exploring it from every facet, joyful to honor even a few of its complexities and implications. This passage begins and ends with mirroring ideas framing the main point expressed through verse 9: Jesus was the one who finally, fully fulfilled God’s will. The contrasts displayed here are incredible!

In verse 5, we learn that God does not want the Old Testament sacrifices—the shadow; He wanted Jesus’ body—the true form—which He’d created for this role. Verses 2-4 and 10 juxtapose the Law’s sacrifices limited postponement of judgment to Jesus’ final and ultimate removal of it. And in verse 14 we find the purpose of The Law—to remind people of their ongoing sin—in contrast to the achievement of Jesus’ sacrifice: not just the erasure of past sin, but a transfer of His legal status of present and ongoing perfection, and the guarantee of future growth in holiness.

The Law required the work of drawing near and worshipping where Jesus’ sanctification is freely given. The Law was limited in its ability to bring people into the presence of God—the inner part of the Temple where God “dwelt”; the one time per year that one priest ventured inside, he had to go alone. Jesus shredded the Temple veil that blockaded that Holiest place, forging a path for any repentant human straight into God’s presence with Him. Romans 7:8 and 11 tell us that sin took advantage of The Law but verse 13 of today’s

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Devotionals

KNOW

passage tells us that Christ's sacrifice was a trump card, setting into motion the destruction of all enemies. The Law couldn't change hearts, yet Jesus does.

As you read through these truths, which one impacts you the most? Which thrills your soul as you contemplate Christ's sufficiency? In your time with God today, we encourage you to go back through this passage and absorb the descriptions further. How could you verbalize this to someone today?

DAY SIX

"...it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

Hebrews 10:1b-3

Christ's work as a priest was unique. Large teams of Jewish priests were constantly busy, from sunup to sundown, with Old Testament rituals and sacrifices. There was no time to sit. Just during the week of Passover alone, it is estimated that 300,000 lambs could be slaughtered at the Temple, and that was with only one lamb per household! The rest of the year they were killing an animal per person, per sin or per event. Special blood-draining channels had to be built from the Temple to a nearby brook. The priests' work was grimy, redundant, and never-ending. They must have known, better than anyone, the ineffectuality of everything they were scrambling to keep up with.

Even with all the prophets' hints about what He'd be like, Jesus must have blown the minds of a people conditioned for so many centuries to view the priests' job as such. He was the only one, no team of priests. He didn't have to sacrifice for His own sin before venturing into God's presence! He gave His own body instead of using the blood of an animal. He only offered one sacrifice—for EVERYONE—and God judged it sufficient for all. He sat down afterward, that one sacrifice still in motion—does interceding for people even *feel* like work when you're sitting right next to God? It was not what they had in mind.

Do you ever find yourself approaching Jesus like the early Jewish people? It is so easy to come to Him with our preconceptions of who He is—or is supposed to be—that sometimes we can miss who He really is and what He's done for us, and the sufficiency of that work.

In your time with God today, we invite you to use the following song to come to Jesus for who He is. We encourage you to sing to Christ specifically as your priest. Consider the rituals and parameters He's saved you from experiencing. Consider the benefits you experience that many pre-Jesus faithful never imagined in their lifetimes.

Sovereign Grace Music's "O My Soul Arise"

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiHxEuL1dd0>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/5GKOqleewPv9dBYPswfecy>

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

After a long, stressful, and taxing day at work, what do you do to decompress? Do you have any rituals or routines to help you transition from thinking about work to being present at home?

1. Read verse 1. What does the author mean when he says the old covenant was just a shadow of good things to come?
 - a. How would you explain the main differences between the old and new covenants?
2. In verse 3, the author tells us that the sacrificial system of the old covenant was there to serve as a reminder of sin, not bringing forgiveness of sins, why do you think that is?
3. In verse 5-7, the author cites Psalm 40. Read Psalm 40:6-8 and compare it with Hebrews 10:5-7. What are the similarities and what are the differences between the two passages?
4. According to verse 13, Jesus is currently waiting on something, what is it?
 - a. Why is it important for us to remember today that Jesus' saving work is not entirely complete until a future date?
 - b. Within these verses (1-18) the author speaks of Jesus' completed work, His continuous work in sanctifying us, and His work that is yet to come. Have you ever been confused by the different "tenses" of Jesus' work—past, present, future? What are the mistakes we can make if we only focus on one at the expense of the others?

IT IS FINISHED! | HEBREWS 10:1-18

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

5. At one point within this passage, we are told that we have “been made holy” (verse 10), while at another time we “are being made holy” (verse 14). Do these two statements contradict each other? Why or why not?

6. In Verses 16-17, the author quotes Jeremiah 31 when speaking of the new covenant. What is the key foundational difference between the old and new covenant highlighted in these verses? Why is it important for us to understand this?

THE SALVATION OFFERED BY JESUS IS MORE THAN
SUFFICIENT TO SAVE; IT IS ETERNAL IN ITS EFFECT,
AND PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

“Once and for all” is a pretty powerful statement. There’s a level of certainty, security, and comfort found in these words. Very little in our lives can be said to be done “once and for all.” Yet we can rest assured of this: the salvation offered by Jesus is more than sufficient to save; it is eternal in its effect, and perfect in every way. Do you believe this? Do you struggle to believe this? How might your life be transformed if you truly knew that your sins were forgiven once and for all?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 10:1-18 Review

MAIN IDEA

When Jesus said, "It is finished" He meant it.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

I don't enjoy brushing my teeth, but I know I have to do it every single day. I wish there was a toothpaste where I could brush my teeth once and for all and never have to do it again! What is something that you don't like to do, but do it every day? How would you feel if there was a way to never have to do it again?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. He is greater than Abraham, Melchizedek, and Moses.
- Jesus is the better priest that serves with a better covenant and in a better tabernacle (heaven).
- This better covenant is the new covenant that rescues us from sin.
- In the new covenant we get a new heart, a new start, and a new part—all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus!

BIG IDEAS

The law that was given to the Israelites is just a shadow of the real thing – Jesus!

- The sacrifice of animals only covered sin; it did not take away sins. That is why the people needed to do it again and again.

God's plan all along was for us to be rescued from sin through Jesus

- Jesus obeyed God's plan and was born a human.
- Jesus was the final sacrifice.
- The whole Bible points us to God's plan of rescuing us through Jesus.

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. The imperfect sacrifices under the old covenant do not compare.

- Jesus' sacrifice takes away our sin. We can be forgiven and no longer need to make sacrifices for our sins.
- After Jesus ascended to heaven, He sat down next to the Father. The work was finished!

"Not guilty!"

- It's like we are in a court room, standing in front of a judge, who is God. We are guilty of sin. When we believe in Jesus, we are no longer standing in front of God alone. Jesus stands with us. Our sin is put on Jesus and Jesus' righteousness is put on us—meaning we are made right with God through Jesus. Because Jesus took our sin, God declares us not guilty. Our sin is not put on our record. And we can never be held guilty again!

GOING DEEPER

From the very beginning of time, God made a rescue plan for us. Jesus completed that rescue plan by dying for us. However, that does not mean everyone is automatically saved. We must respond. Everyone has a choice to make. Have you decided to trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Read Romans 10:9-10 to learn how you can respond to trusting in Jesus.

SV YOUTH

Week 11 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Read Hebrews 10:1-18. These verses emphasize the completed work of Christ through His perfect sacrifice. The work for our salvation is done! Complete. Because of Christ, we are cleansed and made whole.

a. What lies do we encounter that can cause us to doubt this truth?

b. How can focusing on Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross help encourage us to believe this reality?

2. Verse 14 says, “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified”. These two words *perfected* and *sanctified* carry similar meanings that describe our relationship to God. *Perfected* is shown as a completed action that affects the present reality. This is the same term used of priests in the Old Testament who had finished their purity ritual and were approved to serve God in the tabernacle—see Leviticus 21:10.

In the same way, *sanctified* describes being dedicated or set apart for God. Although verse 14 uses an ongoing form of the word, verse 10 of chapter 10 describes the action as completed, too. This means that because of Christ’s sacrifice, believers are fully approved to enter into God’s presence. Although we know that we still experience sin in this life, nothing changes the fact that we are able to have direct access to God.

a. How can that reality shape how we interact with God?

PERFECTED & SANCTIFIED.

Hebrews 10:19-39

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Week 12

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

INTRODUCTION

A good pastor or spiritual leader will always express care and concern for the wellbeing of their people. Sometimes this care will come across in a word of encouragement or exhortation. Other times it may appear in a word of warning. For the spiritual leader, nothing is more exciting than seeing someone step fully into what God has for them, and nothing can be more heart breaking than watching someone stray. In this section of Hebrews, the author provides all of the above. The writer desires for us to have great confidence in our salvation and ability to connect with God. We are encouraged to use that access to remain faithful, avoid rebellion, and to not take advantage of what great privilege that rests in our possession. While the world around us may guide us towards immediacy and things that are temporal, followers of Jesus will continually look forward to the day of His return, all the while living as if each day may be the last.

MAIN IDEA

In the Christian life, we are to draw near, hold fast, keep near, and press on.

SUNDAY NOTES

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:19-23

Contemplate how God fulfilled prophecy in Isaiah 53:

"It was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt. . . the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. . . He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."

Consider listening to Ross King and Matt Papa's *Every Last Word: Isaiah 53:1-6* to further engage in song.

Praise Jesus for the results of His sacrifice that we see in Romans 5:1-11:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Consider listening to Psallos' *A Sure Hope, Pt. 1* to further engage in song.

WHILE WE WERE
STILL SINNERS, CHRIST
DIED FOR US.

DAY TWO

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:19-23

Remember yesterday's meditation on Jesus' sufficient sacrifice? Grace upon grace, there's more. The cross didn't pull us out of sin just to plunk us into a moral neutrality from which we must forge a nice new track record. In His death, Christ didn't stop at

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Devotionals

KNOW

the point of absorbing all our sin. We see in Zechariah 3:1-4 and Romans 5:19 that He then gifted His own track record to us! This doctrine of imputed righteousness has been nicknamed “The Great Exchange.” Only perfect righteousness meets God the Judge’s standards, and now when He looks at us, He sees image-bearers dressed in the beautiful robes of His Son’s own pristine obedience and goodness.

“Without any merit of my own, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, and as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me.” – Heidelberg Catechism #60 ¹

This kind of confidence ought to carry us into holy places. Christians belong in God’s presence now—so much so, that He’s actually turned us into His holy place, as we see in 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Do we trust that Christ’s sacrifice and imputed righteousness is really all we need? Do we trust that all our needs are met so deeply that we’re forever free from any “need” to manipulate or strategize to make sure certain things work out? Confess any temptations to manipulate, then consciously submit your desires to the God who has proven how much He wants to do for you.

DAY THREE

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

These verses are commands for Christians to be intimately engaged with the rest of God’s people, proactively encouraging them in their faith and provoking them to love. Christian endurance is a group effort. “Neglect” here carries the meaning of desertion during warfare; this is life-and-death work with an unknown deadline!

“Those who neglect assembling together cut themselves off from the very means whereby Christ feeds, assures, and protects his people... Christians should be doing everything within their power to meet together. Not only because they need to be fed by the preaching of God’s Word but also because it is part of the faith to stir up fellow believers to love and good works.” – Al Mohler’s Christ-Centered Exposition: Hebrews ²

Encouraging one another to hold fast to our confession “opposes an unsettled and unstable spirit that distracts us from our duty to God, self, and others.”³ Our Lord has fully equipped us to provide what other believers need.

“A Christian ‘becomes a mighty worker and a wonderful creator, that is, to create out of heaviness joy, out of terror comfort, out of sin righteousness, and out of death life.’ ... We share in God’s ability to turn darkness into light, that is, to bring good out of evil (and so become content). God has given a Christian such power that he can turn hardships into blessings.” – Jeremiah Burroughs, quoting Martin Luther, in The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment ⁴

With the last couple of years in mind, consider your current investment in the

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Devotionals

KNOW

Church: Have you grown weary, disoriented, or lonely? How can you wield that suffering for the good of God's people? Do you believe that even these verses' commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3)? Set one measurable goal for this week: how will you provoke good in one fellow believer?

DAY FOUR

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:26-31

Apostasy is an off-putting word, but its reality is addressed here with warnings too horrific to overlook. Here, it means someone who fully understands the gospel and faithlessly rejects it, as also seen in 1 John 2:19. It's possible that some of us reading this will end up apostate.

Apostates "are bred almost without exception within the church, in the very midst of God's people."⁵ "By which he was sanctified" in verse 29 likely refers to association with God's people, but not salvation. In Jesus' parable of the sower in Matthew 13:20-22, they are people who like the sound of the gospel at first, but don't absorb it to the point where it triumphs over persecution, false teaching, and temptation. It also doesn't triumph over distraction and love of worldly things that lead to neglect of God and his church. Scarily, apostates don't all defect from God's people right away – or ever. Passive rejection isn't differentiated here from active rejection. Some know what they're doing, but others will get the annihilating surprise of Jesus telling them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness" as we see in Matthew 7:23.

Verse 29 shows a compounding disparagement of each Trinity member. "There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" because rejecting the only way means that no way is left. Hebrews' author is warning the readers, "You think the Old Testament's death penalty for idolatry was bad? Now that God's revealed and offered so much more of Himself to you, your accountability has gone way up." The living God is a consuming fire. His judgment is dreadful.

Stop now to pray along with Psalm 139:23-24. Submit yourself to the Lord's ways, plead for your heart to be conformed to His Son's, and welcome His Spirit to work comprehensive repentance in you and the church.

DAY FIVE

For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Hebrews 10:34

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:39

"Plundering" carries the meaning of manipulation, abuse, theft, or outright ruination. Today, consider whether you joyfully accept the plundering of your earthly possessions and rights. What rights, when threatened or removed, hold the power to squelch your joy? How can you wield your confidence in your "better and abiding" possessions against the temptations to militancy or joylessness? How can today's attitude and actions testify to the superiority of your eternal possessions? What can you freely offer up, before it can be taken?

It's been 22 years since John Piper preached his "seashell sermon," but it continues to make a mark on many faithful. Instead of the comfy, enticing question of what's allowable in the Christian life, he honored verse 39 by focusing on how not to waste our lives. His motivation behind preaching the sermon was "so that people would not come to the end of their life and say what that old man did sitting on the front pew in my father's evangelistic crusade after he had pled with him to receive Christ. After putting his face in his hands, the old man said, 'I've wasted it. I've wasted it.'"⁶

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Devotionals

KNOW

In your time with God today, we invite you to watch the full video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfpmbsvu3A&t=11s> and invite God to speak to you through it. What might He be asking you to do? What changes might He be calling you to make in your life today so that when you reach the end, you'll know it wasn't wasted?

DAY SIX

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:32-39

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 1 Peter 4:12

Satan uses persecution to hinder God's people from doing His work. Just as wise athletes train physically before attempting something rigorous, wise believers prepare spiritually for guaranteed persecution, as seen in 2 Timothy 3:12. We must condition our spirits to gladly shoulder this aspect of Jesus' "light" cross without losing stride, like in Matthew 11:30. As Ray Birch discusses in *What the Bible Says About Suffering and Hardship*, it isn't biblical to pray primarily for painless removal of persecution.⁷ Today, allow these verses to embolden you, shape your prayers, and drive how you influence the believers and future believers around you.

We're commanded to rejoice about persecution. In the Wuest translation of the Bible, James 1:2 says, "Consider it a matter for unadulterated joy [without any admixture of sorrow]." Rejoicing is possible because of what comes from it. Trials, the taking away of things we treasure, end up *adding* to us in a way we'd never experience otherwise. James 1:2-4 says, "The testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, *lacking in nothing*."

Persecution gives powerful credibility to our testimony that even in the midst of _____, God was enough for us.

Have no fear... always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." – 1 Peter 3:14-15

The hardest things to lose will be soothed, above and beyond, beginning *in this lifetime* via the Church.

"There is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." – Luke 18:29-30

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

Can you think of a time in your life when you were a part of a larger community that encouraged you to persevere and sustain a hard season in your life?

1. In Hebrews 10:19-22, the author uses imagery of a curtain being opened to give us access to God. What is this imagery intended to lead the reader to think of? (Consider reviewing Hebrews 9:3; Exodus 26, 36; and Matthew 27:51)

2. In verses 22-23 we are encouraged to draw near and hold fast to God. In your own words, what does that mean?

a. What are some of the ways God has instructed us to draw near and hold fast (Hint: consider your spiritual disciplines)?
What are some of the things that prevent us from drawing near to God on a daily basis?

3. Hebrews 10:24-25 are verses many believers are familiar with for the sheer practical instruction it gives on community life for the church. In your own words, what does it mean to stir one another up?

a. How do these verses confront those of us who think we can be a Christian while not in fellowship with the church and other believers?

b. One of the reasons the author gives for this shared experience of community life is due to the fact one day Jesus is coming back. How should the return of Christ affect our daily lives? Our lives and relationship in the church?

HOLD FAST | HEBREWS 10:19-39

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. Verses 26-27 present us with a difficult concept to wrestle with. On one hand throughout the book of Hebrews, we have been told there is forgiveness of sins through Jesus. Now there is no longer a sacrifice of sin, what is the reason given for this?
- a. What is the difference between those "who go on sinning deliberately" and the type of sin struggle many of us still face today?
Hint – What the author of Hebrews is not stating here is that believers will never sin after we become Christians, but talking about an individual who sins by taking a stance against the will and Word of God, essentially someone who is rejecting God.
5. After providing the readers a warning of evidence of someone who may not be walking with God, the author provides a reassurance to those who do have faith. If you have experienced suffering or persecution, it's a good sign of your faith. In verses 32-33, the author invites the believers to reflect upon the struggles they've already endured, why is that helpful?
- a. Why is it dangerous to teach that Christians will always live without suffering as long as they have faith?
- b. The author once again anchors the believers hope and confidence in the return of Jesus in verse 37. How does Jesus' impending return help our confidence in the face of persecution and suffering?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

One key truth that can be taken away from our passage this week is the role and importance of community within our lives. Not merely for the sake of establishing close connections and relationships, but living a life in community provides guardrails for us. When we long to stray, the community is there to keep us close. When we begin to disbelieve, the community is there to remind us of the truth. When we feel weak, the community is there to strengthen us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book *Life Together* says "*The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer*".⁸ Have you experienced this? Have you given yourself to this? Have you committed to belong in community so that you may experience the joys, protection, and strength of belonging? If not, maybe today is the day to make the commitment.

SV KIDS

Hebrews 10:19-39 Review

MAIN IDEA

As followers of Jesus, we are to draw near, hold fast, consider one another, and press on.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

When I was growing up, I was always afraid of the dark. Whenever I got scared, I would always go into my parents' room.

- What are you afraid of?
- Who do you go to when you are afraid?
- What do you think God wants us to do when we are unsure, lonely, or afraid?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. He is greater than Abraham, Melchizedek, Aaron, and Moses.
- Jesus is the better priest that serves with a better (new) covenant and in a better tabernacle (heaven).
- In the new covenant we get a new heart, a new start, and a new part – all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus.
- Jesus was the better and perfect sacrifice. The imperfect sacrifices under the old covenant do not compare.
 - Jesus' sacrifice takes away our sin. We can be forgiven; we no longer need to make sacrifices for our sins.
 - After Jesus ascended to heaven, He sat down next to the Father. The work was finished!

BIG IDEAS

Jesus' death and rising again from the dead took away the old covenant and established the new covenant.

- In the old covenant, the people needed the priest to be their representative.
- The separation between God and man has been bridged through Jesus.
- With the new covenant, with Jesus as our High Priest, we have an open invitation to come into God's presence every moment.

An open invitation

- The Israelites had the high priest who could go past the tabernacle's thick curtain to enter the Holy of Holies once a year. It was there he made a sacrifice on behalf of the people and himself.
- When Jesus died, the curtain tore into two (Mark 15:38). The way was now open for believers to come close to God through Jesus.

Let us draw near, let us hold fast, let us consider one another.

- We can enter God's presence with boldness.
- We can hold on to God's promises—our hope is fixed on Jesus.
 - God has made us a part of His family because of Jesus's sacrifice.
- We are to be faithful to our local church community.
- We are to encourage and build each other up in love and want what is best for each other.

A warning

- We have been warned to not "drift," when we do not put Jesus first and lose sight of what is most important. (See Week 2 – Do not drift!)
- When we drift, we doubt the Word. (See Week 4 – Do not harden your heart!)
- This results in being "dull of hearing." In other words, not listening to what the Bible says and not applying it to our lives. (See Week 6)

SV KIDS

Hebrews 10:19-39 Review Cont.

- All of this leads to deliberate sin. It can be described as an arrogance, or an attitude of repeatedly disobeying the Word of God.
- This is the exact opposite of drawing near, holding fast to hope, and considering one another (verses 19-25).

Press on

- Life is hard. When we live without Jesus, life is even harder.
- Our focus gets turned to selfish things and not on the things that are promised.
- When we face times of struggle, we must approach them with joy and compassion, because our hope is not in the things of this life.
- As God's children, we are not to shrink back in fear of what the world may do or say. Rather, we are called to live by faith in Jesus.

GOING DEEPER

The writer of Hebrews continually reminds us to see our lives through the lens of Jesus as Lord of our lives.

When you think about your life, what are you most concerned about? What has you the most hopeful? How is your life lived out in faith?

SV YOUTH

Week 12 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. As you read Hebrews 10:24-25, ask yourself "Who are people in my church who challenge me to love and follow Jesus?"
2. Read verses 10:26-31.
 - a. How do you feel as you read them?
 - b. What does it say we are doing when we try to use God's grace as a "license to sin?"
 - c. What does that say about our relationship with Jesus?
3. As we feel the weight of verses 26-31, let's not ignore the rest of the chapter. Look at verse 39. How do you think we are supposed to feel as we read this?

Hebrews 11

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Week 13

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 10:19-39

INTRODUCTION

As humans, we are captivated by a good story—even more so when it's a true one. At any given time in the year, at the top of the *New York Times* best-sellers list, there will be an autobiography of an important person telling their story. The Hollywood Box office will be dominated by a biopic documenting someone's triumph over tragedy and how it made them who they are today. These stories can give us a sense of hope, a source of motivation, and an example to follow. We've reached the point in Hebrews that many are familiar with, referred to as the **Hall of Faith**. Within this section, the author walks through example upon example of individuals from the Old Testament who exhibited a life of faith despite the obstacles they faced. By reminding us of these individuals, we are encouraged to hold tightly to Jesus. When we do so, we too will be able to persevere through whatever lies ahead. May this reminder of God's faithfulness encourage us to confidently hold on to God, just like the saints before us.

MAIN IDEA

A life of faith is a life lived by trust in God's promises despite circumstances and trials.

SUNDAY NOTES

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11
Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. Hebrews 11:1-3

When a child asks, "What does that word mean?" we can often find ourselves struggling to form a coherent answer. Even if we use the word all the time—and we understand what it means—we still have a hard time defining or explaining it. The word "faith" can be that way. Faith is a word we hear often, but rarely define. As we enter Hebrews 11, we see the word "faith" used 25 times in just 40 verses! To gain anything from this Scripture, it is vital that we fully understand what we are talking about; we must comprehend what faith is.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." It is confidence in God's faithfulness to His promises. As we see the word "faith" repeated so many times in this chapter, it might be helpful to reflect on another repeated word: promise. Just a few verses before—in Hebrews 10:35-39—we see that there are promises that Christians are still waiting and hoping for. As we look forward to the reward that we are promised, it can be so easy to feel alone in this call to trust God. It may even feel like we are being called to trust blindly in a promise that we may not even see come to fruition. In the face of difficulty, suffering, and persecution, this kind of faith might seem nothing short of foolishness.

Perhaps that is why Hebrews chapter 11 is here. It walks us through the whole story of the Old Testament, showing us how trusting in God's promises empowers faithfulness to Him in hard times. We see story after story of people who trusted in God despite their sufferings—showing us that we are not alone in our struggle to trust God. It also shows us that our faith is not blind but is built on the reality of God's faithfulness to His promises. The people in these stories never got to see these promises fulfilled, yet they remained faithful to God. How much more, then, should we—who have seen God's faithfulness to keep His promises revealed in Jesus—trust in the promises that He has made to us, even in the face of suffering?

TRUSTING IN GOD'S
PROMISES EMPOWERS
FAITHFULNESS TO HIM
IN HARD TIMES.

DAY TWO

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6

One of the beautiful things about the gospel is that God doesn't make us guess what He wants from us. He loves us, talks with us through His Word, and communicates His desires and expectations for our relationship. As we look at Hebrews 11:4-7, the beauty of this reality is brought into full view. The chapter walks us through the story of the Old Testament, beginning with three of the earliest characters in the Bible: Abel, Enoch, and Noah—all of whom pleased God through their faith. Each of these men trusted in God and obeyed Him. According to verse 6, that is exactly what God is looking for from His people. He wants us to trust in who He is and that He will come through on His promises.

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11

Devotionals

KNOW

While most of the chapter is going to encourage us positively towards faith in God, verse 6 has a warning tone—it challenges us and reminds us of what is at stake. God has not hidden His expectations or desires from us. Will we reciprocate by bringing Him an offering of faith? Will we walk with Him in a steadfast relationship? Will we obey His instructions because we trust Him? Or will we try to come to God on our own terms?

Passages like this can make us uncomfortable, but these warnings are gracious gifts from God. God wants us to know what He expects from us and how to relate to Him. He wants us to approach Him in faith. Let's thank the Lord today for the gracious gift of His Word. Let's respond with faith in who He is and that He will keep His promises.

DAY THREE

By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. Hebrews 11:9–10

"If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." Hebrews 11:15–16

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize was a folk song that became an anthem for the civil rights movement. The song looks back at characters from Scripture and—in their endurance through sufferings—people found hope.

*Paul and Silas thought they was lost
Dungeon shook and the chains come off
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on
Freedom's name is mighty sweet
And soon we're gonna meet
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on¹*

The message is clear, Paul's and Silas' sufferings were not the end of the story. The song was sung as an anthem for people to remember that hope is attainable. They would sing this concept over themselves: "If we keep our eyes on the prize, rather than our circumstances, we will find the strength we need to endure our current sufferings." Hebrews 11 is much like that song. It points us to people in the Bible who endured through suffering and offers us hope that we, too, can faithfully endure if we keep our eyes on Jesus.

This idea is particularly highlighted in the example of Abraham. Abraham trusted in God's promise to provide a home for his family. He left his homeland, followed God through the wilderness, and lived in tents his entire life. How does someone stay faithful through all of that? How does someone continue to hope, labor, and toil when it seems like no progress is being made towards the end goal?

The answer we find in verses 15–16 is that he kept his eyes on the prize. He held on. If he had been dwelling on what he gave up, he probably would have abandoned the journey and given it up as a failed experiment. However, his eyes were on the prize, and he had faith that God would fulfill His promises.

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. Hebrews 11:30–31

Years ago, on *Sesame Street*, there was a recurring song called *One of These Things (Is Not Like the Others)*.² As it played, balloons would float across the screen—all of them red, except for one blue one, which stuck out. This imagery might seem silly to us as adults, but the ability to recognize when something has broken the pattern is a skill that we use every day. One important place for us to practice this skill is in our Bible reading.

The story of Jericho is highlighted in verse 30. By faith, God conquered the fortified city for them. This moment—where God was delivering on His promises to Israel—seemed unattainable. This fits the pattern of what we have seen in Hebrews so far. Then, we come to verse 31—this verse sticks out. Here, we see the author of Hebrews highlight Rahab. Rahab, who was not a Hebrew woman at all, but a Canaanite woman from Jericho. One of these things is not like the others. Yet here she is in the Hall of Faith, counted among great biblical figures whose faith was to be admired! The author of Hebrews is challenging our idea of what makes a faithful person. The writer argues Rahab does belong. She is not excluded because of her differences—she is included because of her key similarity: faith. She belongs because she trusted in God to save her and, in doing so, risked everything to remain faithful to Him.

So often, our minds naturally sort people based on our perceptions of them. We internally decide who is “in” or “out”—writing off those who don’t seem to live up to our expectations. While we probably wouldn’t say that outright, we have been raised in a world that values conformity to the norm and casts out those who don’t seem to fit. Today, let’s remember that just as this Gentile named Rahab belonged because of her faith, we too can find belonging in the family of God. By faith, we are just like the others. By faith, we belong.

DAY FIVE

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Hebrews 11:32–38

Tragic stories can be strange. It’s odd that we would be drawn to a story about how someone suffered with no real redemption in the end to make it all worthwhile. Hebrews 11:32–38 takes us on a rollercoaster from the epic highs of legendary feats to depths of tragedy, suffering, and loss. What do we do with these stories? How does a tragedy help us have faith?

As we look at Hebrews 11, one of the big ideas that we are not alone. These men and women who went before us trusted God. Through their faith, God did amazing things and worked miracles. God gave us these examples of people who faithfully trusted Him in the face of intense suffering and persecution. Hebrews 11 shows us that regardless of what kind of story we feel like we are in, we are not alone. Others have gone before us and walked through the entire spectrum of joys and sufferings, giving us examples of faith in God which empower us to remain steadfast.

So, what do we do with tragedies? What do we do with stories of pain where the characters never experience redemption to make the suffering worthwhile? We learn from them. I once heard it said that “All stories are about redemption, even tragedies. In tragedies, redemption is not for the character in the story, but for the reader.” When we see these stories of people who suffered to the death and remained faithful. They did not get to experience the relief of worldly salvation, but by looking at their examples of faith in God’s promises despite their circumstances, we can find comfort and strength to be faithful to God ourselves.

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY SIX

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. Hebrews 11:1–2

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:39–40

An old adage in writing is to, “Tell them what you’re going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them.” That is exactly what we find in Hebrews 11. At the beginning and end, we are told that the stories of the Bible are given to us in order to encourage our faith. This point has been hit hard throughout the whole chapter and here, it is driven home. However, this last verse of chapter 11 stands in contrast to the first verse—and even the rest of the chapter—based on one key difference.

In the last verse, we are again reminded that none of the saints of the Old Testament were able to experience the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus—the Messiah—for which they were waiting. They all died with assurance of things hoped for. They died with conviction of things not seen. We are different. God has given us something better! Jesus has come! Jesus has brought the fulfillment of the promises for which these men and women waited and longed for. Even though they never enjoyed the fruition of this promise while on the earth, we can have hope because we have seen that God has faithfully kept His promises to them through eternity.

As we wait for the fulfillment of God’s promises to us, let’s not lose sight of what we have been given already. We have been given Jesus, our great High Priest who has brought about forgiveness of our sins. We have been given the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our promised inheritance. We have been given the Word of God to give us examples of God’s faithfulness to those who waited on His promises in the past. And we have been given the church, a community in which we can find strength to endure together as we wait on God’s promises in the here and now. Let’s celebrate those things today, thanking and praising God for His good gifts.

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

We see a lot of history covered in this week's passage; do you have an interest in a particular era or historical subject? What about a niche topic you've learned about in your spare time that's unique or unusual? Random fact that never comes up in conversation? This is your moment.

1. Hebrews 11:1-3 provides for us the clearest definition of faith that can be found throughout the entire Bible. How is faith defined? What is the object of faith in this definition?
 - a. What is the difference between having faith in God versus simply hoping that something will happen?
2. Throughout the remainder of Hebrews 11, the author highlights how various individuals in the Old Testament exhibited faith by expressing persistent hope in God's promises. How is it that ancient stories such as these can motivate and encourage us in our faith today?
3. Consider taking time to reflect upon each of the individuals cited in the Hall of Faith. What action did they perform that exhibited their faith? What was the reason they did it (if given)? What were the obstacles they faced? What was the end result? *(Note: Scripture references are there to assist! Not every explanation is given, not every obstacle is explicitly stated, nor is every result given.)*

Person	Action	Reason	Obstacle	Result
Abel (Gen 4)				
Enoch (Gen 5:18-24)				
Noah (Gen 5:29-10:32)				
Abraham (Gen 12-25)				
Sarah (Gen 12-23)				
Isaac (Gen 17-35)				
Jacob (Gen 25-50)				
Joseph (Gen 37-50)				
Moses (Ex 2:10)				
Rahab (Josh 2; 6:17-25)				
Gideon (Jud 6-8)				
Barak (Jud 4-5)				
Samson (Jud 13-16)				
Jephthah (Jud 11-12)				
David (Ruth 4; 1-2 Sam)				
Samuel (1 Sam; 1 Chron 6)				

HALL OF FAITH | HEBREWS 11

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

Is anyone on this list surprising to see included? Is there anyone from the Old Testament that you are surprised didn't make the list?

- a. Each of these individuals were motivated to remain faithful because they were confident in God's faithfulness to His promise. How have you seen God's faithfulness exhibited in your life?

4. Read Hebrews 11:35-38. How do these verses disprove the notion that faith in God always leads to earthly blessings?

- a. What are some of the reasons that God doesn't always deliver those who trust in Him?

5. Go to Hebrews 11:39-40. What does the author say here that should put everything into perspective for us? What was promised to the people that were highlighted in the Hall of Faith? According to verse 40, what is the great reality that they and we wait for?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

As believers, we are encouraged to be inspired by the faithfulness of the saints before us.

However, there are two pitfalls we must be aware of:

1. Downplaying our own faith – We must not slip into the trap of thinking that a life of faithfulness is always going to be extraordinary and must be documented within the Scriptures. We are called to everyday faithfulness. While we read and saturate our lives with Scripture, we can be people who face normal, everyday life and respond with faith no matter what comes. Faith is extraordinary on its own.
2. Not recognizing that these heroes are still flawed – Each individual we explored in the Hall of Faith had the same spiritual need as we do, a perfect and sinless Savior. Learn from their example, be like them in all that was good, but keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

SV KIDS

Hebrews 11 Review

MAIN IDEA

A life of faith means trusting God's promises, even when things get hard.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What do you do when things are hard? Is it easy or hard to have faith that things will work out for good?
What about when big things happen?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Jesus is greater than the prophets, priests, kings, and angels. He is greater than Abraham, Melchizedek, Aaron, and Moses.
- Jesus is the better priest that serves with a better (new) covenant and in a better tabernacle (heaven).
- Jesus was the better and perfect sacrifice. The imperfect sacrifices under the old covenant do not compare.
- Jesus' sacrifice takes away our sin. We can be forgiven; we no longer need to make sacrifices for our sins.
- Jesus' death and rising again from the dead took away the old covenant and established the new covenant.
- In the new covenant we get a new heart, a new start, and a new part – all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus.

As followers of Jesus, we are to draw near, hold fast, consider one another, and press on.

BIG IDEAS

A better way to live.

- Believers are called to life by faith.
- Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is defined as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

The Bible tells us story after story of people who had faith in God and His promise.

- They were obedient to God, even though they never got to see how the story would end.
- They listened and obeyed God, even when things were hard.
- They trusted God, even when they didn't understand how His plan could work.

The Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:4-40)

- The people listed in the Hall of Faith understood that their reward was not here on earth, but that they had a permanent, forever home with God in Heaven.
- Having faith in God's plan often meant that people around them would not understand.
 - Noah built an ark even though it had never rained before.
 - Abraham offered his only son as a sacrifice, knowing that God told him he would be the father of many nations.
 - As an adult, Moses refused to live an easy life though he was taken in as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

When we live by faith, we are able to seek the approval of God alone and not worry about the approval of others.

GOING DEEPER

Pick one of the people the writer of Hebrews lists in the Hall of Faith. Go back and find them in the Old Testament and read their story. What stands out to you? What hard things were going on that required them to have strong faith in God?

Where do I put my faith? When I put my faith in things of this world, I feel_____. When I put my faith in Jesus and His promises, I know_____.

SV YOUTH

Week 13 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. In what ways is trusting Jesus and being faithful to Him hard for you right now?
2. Hebrews 11:11 says that Sarah “considered him faithful who had promised.” How have you seen God show Himself to be faithful, trustworthy, and dependable in your life?
3. Hebrews 11 lists people from the Scripture whose faith should inspire ours.
 - a. Who are people in your church whose stories of faith through trials inspire you to trust Jesus.
 - b. Ask them how God has proven Himself faithful to them in their lives.
 - c. Ask them how their faith is currently being challenged.
4. What is the promise that Hebrews 11 is calling us to faithfully wait for?

HE IS FAITHFUL, TRUSTWORTHY, AND DEPENDABLE.

Hebrews 12:1-17

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

Week 14

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

INTRODUCTION

Living a life with Jesus requires us to go through many things that, if we're being honest, we'd rather skip. Following Jesus means we may be led to do things we never thought possible or places we never imagined we'd go. As Hebrews begins to make its way to a close, the author includes three different images about the experience of living as a Christian: walking a straight path in pursuit of righteousness, running a race that will require endurance, and accepting loving correction from our Heavenly Father when we stray or slow down. All of these provide an honest, fuller picture that tempers our expectations of what it will be like to be a Christian before Jesus returns or calls us home. We may not enjoy life's difficulties, but when we look back, we will likely find that the seasons that kept us up or brought us to tears are often the seasons in which we experience great spiritual growth. We know this to be true anecdotally, but this truth is perfectly modelled in the example of our Savior, Jesus Christ. May we keep that in mind for whatever lies ahead.

MAIN IDEA

Obstacles are a means to develop holiness not to derail your faith.

SUNDAY NOTES

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Imagine you were standing near the starting line of a marathon and observing all the runners lined up preparing to begin. Imagine you saw one runner wearing multiple layers of puffy winter clothing, arms loaded with pots and pans. You'd probably do a double take and wonder why in the world this runner would be carrying such an unnecessarily heavy load that will inevitably drag them down. The writer of Hebrews calls us to lay aside every weight which prevents us from running the race of life well. Sometimes, we may not even realize all the things that are bogging us down. Sometimes, we can be so focused on making it all work that we find ourselves unable to distinguish what our top priorities should be. But we don't have to wonder. The author of Hebrews encourages us: "Look to Jesus!"

Jesus is the measure against which everything else must be weighed. He is our example of living life well. We should not be discouraged that we cannot ascend to the level of perfection with which He lived, but rather recognize that Jesus intimately knows the challenges we face in this life, because He faced them as well. Remembering the endurance with which Jesus faced temptations and opposition can provide us the encouragement we need to continue the race before us.

Spend some time today reflecting on the heart and character of Jesus. What aspect of His character would you like to emulate more fully? Is there anything weighing you down and hindering you from moving forward that you need to lay aside? Ask God to guide you and help you as you draw near to Him today.

CULTIVATE THE
PRACTICE OF MINDFULLY
RECOGNIZING GOD.

DAY TWO

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

When we are in the middle of difficulty, joy can seem unattainable, just out of reach. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to look to Jesus, to his model of endurance, and to His joy. In his book *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*¹, Dane C. Ortlund looks at Hebrews 12:2 and ponders, "What joy? What was waiting for Jesus on the other side of the cross? The joy of seeing his people forgiven."² If we are God's people, what joy do we then have? The joy of being forgiven. This gift can never be taken away. If we are Christ's, we *are* forgiven. No strings attached.

Often it is easier to look at our current circumstances—our worries, deficiencies, hopes, or expectations that have yet to be met. Against the mountain of our

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Devotionals

KNOW

uncertainties, joy can seem to slip right through our fingers. But even here, there can be joy. When we choose to lift our eyes above our circumstances, and focus on Jesus, we gain perspective. We can find ourselves more easily casting off earthly things for heavenly things, aligning our hearts more closely to God's heart. It's not that our earthly circumstances are not real or important to God, but if our hands are full, we have no room to accept the joy He desires and delights to give us. The devil cannot steal our joy from us, since it is ours in Christ, but he can distract us. We may even begin to believe joy is impossible, when in reality, joy is always available to us.

Read Habakkuk 3:17–19. Habakkuk looks out at his city and sees no harvest, no food, no sources or income. Despite the realities of his circumstances, Habakkuk turns to God and rejoices in Him. In your time with God today, write down a list of things you are grateful for—perhaps ways God has provided in your life, or the attributes of His character that are demonstrated through Scripture. Thank God for these things, and rest in the truth that Jesus sits at the right hand of God, listening to your prayers and advocating on your behalf.

DAY THREE

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. Hebrews 12:1-3

Helen Lemmel (1863–1961) was a gifted singer, vocal teacher, and hymn writer. After four years of vocal training in Germany at age 43, she returned to the United States and taught at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. During this time, she developed an affliction which resulted in blindness. Helen's husband, unable to accept the idea of his wife now blind, abandoned her. Over her life, Helen wrote over 500 hymns, but is most well known for her hymn written in 1922, Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus. What a powerful invitation and perspective from someone who did not allow her physical limitation to blind her to the heavenly vision with which we should all look to our Savior.

*O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace²*

Today, look to Jesus. Ask God to grant you vision—to help you see today's circumstances the way that He sees them, in light of the realities of His goodness and sovereignty. Ask Him to help you see yourself the way He sees you, His son or daughter in whom He delights.

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Hebrews 12:4–6

When we read about the concept of discipline, we may initially bristle. Perhaps we had a heavy-handed parent while growing up, or experienced situations where teachers or other figures of authority were quicker to assign disciplinary measures than hear out our side of the story. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that discipline according to God’s design is meant for our good and flourishing. When we experience hardship, instead of viewing it as harsh or superfluous punishment, we ought to see it as an opportunity for refinement. God’s discipline isn’t solely focused on the fact that we messed up and did something wrong again, but desires to draw us towards pursuit of what is better. Consider the following verses:

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

– James 1:2–3

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, – Romans 5:3–4

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray. – Proverbs 10:17

What word do we see repeated in these passages? *Produce*. What does refinement through testing and discipline produce? *Steadfastness, endurance, character, hope*. When we submit to the discipline of the Lord, we continue walking faithfully down the path to life.

Spend time in prayer asking the Lord to help you grow in your understanding of discipline, surrendering to Him your past pain in this area. Consider what He may be asking you to pursue. What may He desire to produce in you in this season? Ask God to reveal His heart to you, that you may grow to desire the same things He does.

DAY FIVE

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. Hebrews 12:7–10

If you were in the grocery store, and witnessed a young child at the end of the aisle screaming loudly and stomping his feet in frustration as tears streamed down his cheeks, would you go over and begin calming him down? Probably not, because he is not your child. The writer of Hebrews emphasizes that we receive discipline from God because we are His children. As a good father who loves us, God desires that those who belong to Him would continue to mature in character and grow into the model of Christ’s likeness. However, just as we would not go discipline a child in the grocery store who is not related to us, the writer of Hebrews argues that if we did not receive discipline from God, it would mean we did not truly belong to Him.

Often it is easy to see that a parent and child are related because they look similar to one another. They may share similar physical features or mannerisms. A young child learns much from their parents through observation and imitation. In the same way, as children of God, we should begin to look more like the image of our Father. In 1 Peter 1:15-16, the Apostle Peter urges his readers, saying “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

Thank God today that you belong to Him, and that His discipline is a sign of His love. What are some of the characteristics of God that you would like to grow in and emulate? Ask God to help you continue to conform more into the likeness of Christ.

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY SIX

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:11-14

In spring, a lush rosebush full of blooming flowers provides both fragrant sweetness and beautiful color. But this pleasant experience requires strenuous and careful labor in the dormant season. A gardener must prune away the excess branches and overgrowth that would prevent the rosebush from flourishing to its full potential. Although a rosebush would survive without yearly attention and upkeep, the plant over time would grow weak and yield smaller blooms. The same is true in our lives. Although seasons of pruning where we experience the Lord's discipline may be uncomfortable or painful in the moment, God knows that it is necessary for us to grow in righteousness. We must trust that the Lord's timing is perfect. From our limited perspective, what may feel like an endless season is God's desire to train us in righteousness and holiness. David reflects in Psalm 30:5,

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

If a gardener wants to train a plant to trellis, or branches to grow in a certain direction, they don't force it down immediately into the place they want, but gently course correct its growth, so that at every stage the plant is strengthened and supported as it is trained to reach the end goal. In the same way, the writer of Hebrews encourages us to stay the course, making straight paths, and surrendering to the Lord's gentle discipline of course correction, as we strive towards the goal of holiness and communion with God.

In your time with the Lord today, spend time reflecting on what areas God may be pruning something away to allow for new growth to emerge. How may the pain or discomfort of this season be inviting you to trust in God's timing more fully? Ask God to support and strengthen you through the process and thank Him that He can be trusted to draw close to you.

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

Endurance is a word that speaks to a person's ability to tolerate a difficult process or situation without giving in, can you think of a time in your life when you have exhibited great endurance?

1. The author of Hebrews equates the Christian life to a race. Do you think this is a fitting analogy? How does that impact the way you view your own relationship with God and spiritual formation?
 - a. In the first Hebrews 12:1-3, the author encourages us to keep three things in mind, what are they?
How do they help us in running the race?.

2. In verses 2-4, we find an encouragement to look at our lives in light of something in particular, what is it? What are some practical steps we can take to look to Jesus every day?
 - a. What was the joy that was set before Jesus? How can that be said considering it had to come through the cross?

 - b. In what ways can this type of sin impact our relationships with others? With God?

3. Turn your attention to verses 5-11. Here, the author turns their attention to discipline. That is not necessarily one of our favorite words, let alone our favorite thing to experience. However, according to these verses, what does the presence of God's discipline in our lives indicate about us?
 - a. According to this passage, what does God's discipline accomplish?

 - b. Based upon verse 5-6, which quotes Proverbs 3:1-12, how should we respond to God's discipline?

 - c. What could possibly be some of the "fruits of righteousness" God might be yielding in your life through discipline?

ENDURANCE TRAINING | HEBREWS 12:1-17

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

4. What is the word picture are we given in verses 12 and 13? What do each of these pictures symbolize for us?
- a. Do you see any connection between the exhortation found in these verses and the one to run the race with endurance from the beginning of the chapter? If so, what?
 - b. Are there any obstacles that are currently on your path that are tripping you up? How can the people around you help in this area?
5. Verse 14 calls for us to do two things specifically, what are they? Why are both so hard to do?
- a. What does it practically look like to pursue peace with everyone?
 - b. What does it practically look like to strive for holiness?
 - c. In verses 15-17, the author roots his argument for these two things in the life of Esau, what are we supposed to learn about temptation and sin in this example? (Hint – Esau acted out of a need for immediate self-gratification)

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

One of the more comforting facts about the passage we studied this week is the fact that it acknowledges the various trials a believer will experience on this earth. Some of it is in form of discipline from a loving Father's hands, some is simply due to the weariness of running the race of this life. Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* says the following:

*We say that there ought to be no sorrow, but there is sorrow, and we have to receive ourselves in its fires. If we try and evade sorrow, refuse to lay our account with it, we are foolish. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts in life; it is no use saying sorrow ought not to be. Sin and sorrow and suffering are, and it is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them.*³

You and I can face the trying situations of our lives in two ways: 1) following the pattern we find in Scripture as people of faith or 2) fighting against or denying this reality. Maybe this is the time to posture ourselves to learn and embrace something from God. Is there a lesson God may be wanting to teach you considering the passage this week?

SV KIDS

Hebrews 11 Review

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Sometimes in life, we have to do hard things. Even if we do not want to. What are three hard things that you would never do again, if you could avoid it? Did anyone in your family list the same three? Is there something that is hard for you but easy for someone else?

MAIN IDEA

Hard things are meant to bring us closer to God, not make us turn away from Him.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Believers are called to life by faith: trust in God's plan, even when things are hard and we may not totally understand.

BIG IDEAS

In this passage, the writer gives us a word picture to help us understand.

- Imagine a track or area for runners. Perhaps it is an arena with spectators seated around. The runners are warming up, preparing for a race. We can be confident that the runners had been training before this race day. There is excitement in the air, and all are anticipating a race that is ran well and a prize at the end.

Training/Stay in the race: endurance

- Being a follower of Jesus is hard. The Jewish believers had grown tired and wanted to give up.
- The writer encouraged them (and us!) to keep going, like runners in a race, with their eyes on the prize.
- Believers stay on the straight path in pursuit of being more like Jesus, knowing that it is a race of endurance set ahead of us.

Look at other runners: the examples

- Look at the Heroes of Faith (Hebrews 11). Were things easy for them? No. Did they continue in faith? Yes!
 - To keep with the word picture—they ran their race and won.
- Look to Jesus. He is the better example. He persevered to the cross.
 - He knew He would be shamed, would suffer, would take on sins that were not His, would shed His blood, and would be separated from His Father (temporarily). But He endured and finished the work His Father gave Him.

Listen to your coach: discipline.

- We need to accept and receive loving corrections from our Heavenly Father when we do stray or slow down.
 - Trials and suffering "exercise" us so that we may grow.
 - It is for our good, so we can grow in holiness.

Finish well: the prize

- We are called to endure, to keep going when things get hard, and to finish well.
- What is the prize?
 - The prize that believers run toward is much more valuable than a medal or a trophy. The prize at the end of a believer's race will be an eternal home with God. It is sharing in Jesus' victory through all eternity and, best of all, enjoying Jesus Himself.

GOING DEEPER

Life will be hard. We need to rely on God for guidance and help, and trust that His plan is what is best for us, even if it feels bad at the time. Think about a difficult situation that you are dealing with right now. What feels hard about it? What does your knowledge of Jesus do to help bring you peace and comfort?

Knowing that God is _____, shows me that I can persevere when _____.

SV YOUTH

Week 14 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Hebrews 12:1 calls us to throw off every weight and sin so that we can run with endurance. What sins, habits, or hang-ups are holding you back from living a life fully committed to Jesus?

2. When we hear "discipline," what comes to mind?
 - a. Does that word have a positive or negative feel to it for us?

 - b. How might it change our attitude if we thought about discipline less as punishment, and more as discipleship?

3. Imagine what it would look like to live marked by peace and holiness this week.
 - a. What would it look like at school?

 - b. What would it look like at home with your family?

LIVE MARKED BY PEACE AND HOLINESS.

Hebrews 12:18-29

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Week 15

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

INTRODUCTION

There are certain environments in our everyday lives that come with reasonable expectations of what might happen. When we go to school, we expect to learn. When we go to the grocery store, there is an expectation that we will leave with food or whatever household items we might need. When we go to the gas station, we expect to leave with enough fuel to take us to the next destination. However, there is one place that we may frequent that can inspire varying expectations as to what might happen, or we might leave with: the church. Whatever objectives we bring with us will impact our experience on a Sunday and in a group setting. Our personal purposes and expectations when we enter this space act as a filter for our affections, feelings, and even our own contributions to the atmosphere. What do you expect when you come to church? The writer of Hebrews brings this to our attention by contrasting two places in which God's presence has been found. When God spoke to His people at Mount Sinai, the people trembled and begged him to be silent. When God speaks to us now, through His Word, we can find grace and long to hear more.

MAIN IDEA

We tremble at the Word of God, not out of fear, but out of reverence.

SUNDAY NOTES

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. Hebrews 12:18-19

Living in the Pacific Northwest, we are spoiled with wonderful landscapes to take in, explore, hike, and enjoy. We love the mountain peaks around us because they remind us of God's power in creation. Standing tall next to a mountain is something none of us can do without realizing the sheer irony of our limited nature. Within a short drive from your house, you can find yourself at the foot of any one of a handful of mountains to climb. In Hebrews 12, we are presented with imagery of two different mountains. Which one do you find yourself visiting most often?

The first mountain referred to in this passage is Mount Sinai, the mountain on which the law was given from God and the Mosaic covenant was formed. At this mountain, as seen in Exodus 19-20 and Deuteronomy 4-5, God showed His people how to live in the world. As you read through Hebrews 12:18-19, the author uses a lot of imagery and visuals to give the general feeling is intimidation which makes the hearers wish to flee. Fire. Darkness. Gloom. Loud trumpet blasts. The people in the Old Testament were overwhelmed and terrified. We would be too!

The second mountain, referenced in verses 22-24, is Mount Zion. In the Old Testament, Mount Zion is the place where God resides, the dwelling place of the living God. This is where we are invited to meet God. This is where we come to experience relationship and community. We find the peace and presence of God.

Which mountain do you find yourself travelling to most often? The mountain marked by doom and fear of what God may do or the mount on which we find the living God calling us into relationship with Him. Which mountain will you visit today?

THE PEACE AND
PRESENCE OF GOD

DAY TWO

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. Psalm 125:1-2

As we've seen, Hebrews 12:22-24 makes a reference to Mount Zion. Mount Zion was the place on earth where God and his people dwelt together. Psalm 125 paints a beautiful picture of what it looks like to dwell within God's presence. Notice the connection from Psalm 125 to what the author of Hebrews would later go onto say about an unshakeable kingdom. Take notice that the Psalm isn't necessarily talking about a specific place or location, but the people of God. *Those who trust in the Lord cannot be moved and will abide forever.* How can we be so sure? Because the Lord surrounds them. Like a large, warm blanket envelops us on a cold winter evening, the Lord is all around his people on every side. He leaves no gaps in His defense of His people that would leave us vulnerable or allow the enemy to sneak in. Ponder this for a second: the Lord is not only present with His people but is all around them as well. Nothing can get to us unless it passes first through Him.

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

Devotionals

KNOW

In 1944, just months before his execution, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the following, which is a meditation based upon this Psalm 125:

*By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
And confidently waiting, come what may,
We know that God is with us night and morning
And never fails to greet us each new day.¹*

These images of Mount Zion are used to instill confidence in God's people. Remaining faithful and loyal to him is worth it. Those who trust in the Lord cannot be moved. Trust in Him today with whatever you are facing, knowing that He is with you and surrounds you.

DAY THREE

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. Hebrews 12:25

Do you hear that? Are you listening? Can you hear His voice? In this verse, we find the final warning in the book of Hebrews. The author is stressing the importance of hearing God's Word and responding to His revelations. This warning isn't isolated to the original recipients of this letter. We are prone to wander and seek out new information. How often do we run to social media, news outlets, or close friends to receive truth and wisdom. But do we turn to God's Word?

Critics today will tell us that the Bible is no longer relevant. We must not believe this lie. The words God speaks to us are words of love. God comes to us in the form of His Word with speech that is dripping in mercy and grace for all who would listen to Him. Are you looking for good news? Listen to God. Are you seeking wisdom? Listen to God. Hear this warning in Hebrews to not refuse His Word. Instead, listen to it and live in light of it. Being a part of God's kingdom motives us to be students of the Word, listening eagerly with obedience and faithfulness.

DAY FOUR

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, Hebrews 12:28

There are two statements within this verse that should make our hearts sing:

1) **We are receiving a kingdom** - What a wonderful gift! This isn't simply an inheritance from a long lost relative, it is a divine gift from above. This kingdom was first inaugurated upon Jesus' first coming, and it will be the only one that remains when He returns. What's remarkable is that the Kingdom of God is here now in a real way too. According to Jesus in Luke 17:21, it's inside of us too. The only appropriate response to such a gift is one of worship and gratitude.

KNOW

2) **The Kingdom is unshakable** - History is filled with stories of kingdoms that have risen and fallen. Even today, though it may look different, we see kingdoms toppled, blown over, and empires taken down. We see the devastating wake of wars, economic problems, natural disasters, all around us. In the midst of this, we can hold on to this truth: the kingdom of Jesus will never end. The laws will never change, nor will His subjects ever perish or fall to ruin. The kingdom of God will always be, and no outside power or calamity can destroy it.

Gratitude can be a difficult thing for us to express. We fall victim to chronic discontentment as we rush through our lives from one thing to the next. Take a minute to slow down and access gratitude within your heart today. Think on these two truths: we are the recipients of God’s kingdom and God’s kingdom will never fall or falter. Set aside time today to worship Him, giving thanks for such a wonderful gift. Express your gratitude to God for what He has done and is going to do in the future.

DAY FIVE

and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,
Hebrews 12:28

What defines authentic worship of God? The author of Hebrews provides some insight for us here. Worshipping God with reverence and awe means we do not flippantly or haphazardly approach Him. We approach God with humility, not arrogance nor carelessness. Reverence means showing a deep respect, while awe is an expression of fear and wonder. For those who are in Christ, this is not a fear of punishment, but wild and humbling appreciation of God’s majesty and holiness. As we see in verse 29, God is a consuming fire, capable of annihilating anything in its path. When we have a firm grasp on this reality, we can offer up pure worship that recognizes God’s holy nature.

Would you describe your weekly approach to God in worship as reverential and awe-filled? While we acknowledge that God is full of grace and mercy, it must never be divorced from the truth that God is holy and that He alone is able to determine worship as acceptable or not.

The last time you attended church, what was your attitude as you entered in? What was on your mind as you were called to worship? What thoughts or feelings did you have as the worship team began to lead you in song? Were you actively aware that you were coming into the presence of a holy God who was worthy of your utmost attention and affection? Were you distracted? How might the exhortation to offer God acceptable worship impact the way you walk into the next church service? Write down a plan as to how you will posture your heart on Sunday morning. Pray that God would remind you of His holiness and reveal His glory to you this week.

REVERENCE & AWE.

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY SIX

for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29

The image of fire at the end of this chapter is often associated with judgement and punishment. Describing God as a consuming fire is fitting because God will never be extinguished and will never be snuffed out. All that comes within His path is consumed. For those in Christ, the fire is a refining and purifying. He uses His holy nature to burn out the unholiness within us and make His people more like Him. For those who don't believe, fire consumes and destroys.

This passage harkens back to Deuteronomy 4:23-24, where Moses writes:

Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

These instructions were given to God's people prior to their entering the promised land. God begins to take his people to task for their willingness to fall into false worship and idolatry. God is committed to His honor and glory; He will not share it with anyone or anything. We know that the Lord is merciful, His name is love, yet we need to recognize that He still is a consuming fire, and sin shall not go unaddressed in his presence.

Is there anything in your life that has slowly edged God off the throne of worship? Is there anything or anyone that you turn to for deliverance instead of God? If so, confess it. God is jealous for your heart, your affections, and your worship. Hebrews 12:29 can bring us comfort by reminding God does not dissociate from us or keep us at arm's length, but He is called "our God." This is the God who has made covenant with us and reconciled us to Himself. We must hold these two truths together, He is "our God" and He is also a "consuming fire". Worship Him as such.

GOD IS JEALOUS FOR YOUR
HEART, YOUR AFFECTIONS,
AND YOUR WORSHIP.

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

When you think about worshipping God, what types of images come to mind?

1. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author juxtaposes the experience the Israelites at Mount Sinai to the new heavenly Jerusalem. In Hebrews 12:18-19, what are the seven ways the author describes the old covenant and how did the people respond to it?
 - a. Reading verses 22-24, what are the seven qualities the author uses to describe the new covenant?
 - b. Why is Sinai no longer the mountain on which we are to define our experience with God?
2. The author of Hebrews was seeking to reawaken some of the believers who had grown apathetic in their faith and worship. How would Hebrews 12:18-29 help awaken some believers?
 - a. According to this passage, what would a healthy fear of God look like?
3. Hebrews 12:25 provides another warning message. It should draw our memory all the way back to Hebrew 1:1-4. How has God spoken? How do we hear God speak today? What are the consequences of rejecting Jesus' word?
4. Hebrews 12:28 tells us that we ought to be grateful because we are a part of an unshakeable kingdom. What benefits does this mean we have?

UNSHAKEABLE | HEBREWS 12:18-29

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

- a. Considering the uncertainty of the last few years, how might life look different if we lived in light of this truth?
-
5. If we are a part of a kingdom, that means we have a King. How does the author of Hebrews describe our King at the end of chapter 12?
 - a. If our God is a consuming fire, how are we not consumed by it?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

As we close, consider the words of Scotty Smith who penned a prayer in response to the unshakable kingdom...

*Dear heavenly Father, there's been a "whole-lotta-shakin'-goin'-on" recently in this ole' world... in my world... How I **praise you** that we don't have to wonder about what's going on... we don't have to gather an executive committee of environmental and financial experts to proffer a few suggestions... we don't have to consult tea leaves, tarot cards or television pundits for insight. This isn't rocket science or some great mystery. You've spoken and you haven't stuttered **in your Word**. Until you send Jesus back to usher in the only **unshakable kingdom**, we should not be surprised at just how "shaky" everything's going to be. The tumbling tower of Babel was the first of many reminders to us that there's **only one** everlasting kingdom and there's only one praiseworthy, trustworthy, service-worthy King. Indeed, I am so very thankful... **thankful**, not fretful or fearful. For we are **already receiving** this unshakable kingdom.*

*Father, when you raised Jesus from the dead, **everything** changed. Your kingdom arrived in a remarkable new way and your kingdom is advancing... in ways we **can observe** and in ways that remain **imperceptible** to the naked eye. Reverence and awe are **easy** to muster for such a God as you... so outrageously **generous** to us in the gospel... so providentially **in control** of every rising and falling of our rivers and financial indicators... so lovingly **engaged** in making all things new through Jesus—your beloved Son and our wonderful, merciful Savior. Keep rescuing us... **rescuing me**... from putting my hope in what is shaky, at best. May the unshakable kingdom be my passion and the incomparable King be my delight. So very amen, I pray, in Jesus' glorious and grace-full name.²*

SV KIDS

Hebrews 12:18-29 Review

MAIN IDEA

We tremble at the Word of God not out of fear, but out of admiration and devotion.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What are some things that you fear, things that you are afraid of? Why do you feel afraid of them? Has fear ever kept you from doing something that you wanted to do? Is fear always a bad thing?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Hard things are meant to bring us closer to God, not make us turn away from Him.
- Believers are to keep going, like runners in a race, with their eyes on the prize (an eternal home with God), even when things are hard and we may not totally understand.

BIG IDEAS

The writer compares Mount Sinai from the Exodus story and Mount Zion (found in Revelation).

- In Exodus 19:10-25, we see that God gave the law to the Moses and the Israelites from Mount Sinai.
 - The mountain was wrapped in smoke and the whole mountain shook. God spoke to Moses in thunder. The people were afraid!
 - Mount Sinai represents the old covenant.
- We are to obey God's Word.
 - We live in a world that is shaking.
 - Mount Zion is located in God's heavenly city. It is an unshakeable kingdom.
 - Mount Zion represents the new covenant. Because of Jesus' blood that was shed, believers are able to enter this heavenly city.

The kingdom of God is not temporary.

- We are heirs to the kingdom that cannot be shaken.
- Because of this, we should offer God our worship, with respect, adoration, and awe.

GOING DEEPER

- Look up Deuteronomy 4:24 and 9:3. What does it tell us about who God is?
- How would you define "consuming fire"? What does it mean to be consumed by something?
- Fire is something that consumes and destroys everything it touches. Look up Exodus 3, what does it specifically say in verse 2 about the burning bush?
- What do you think this means about who God is?

SV YOUTH

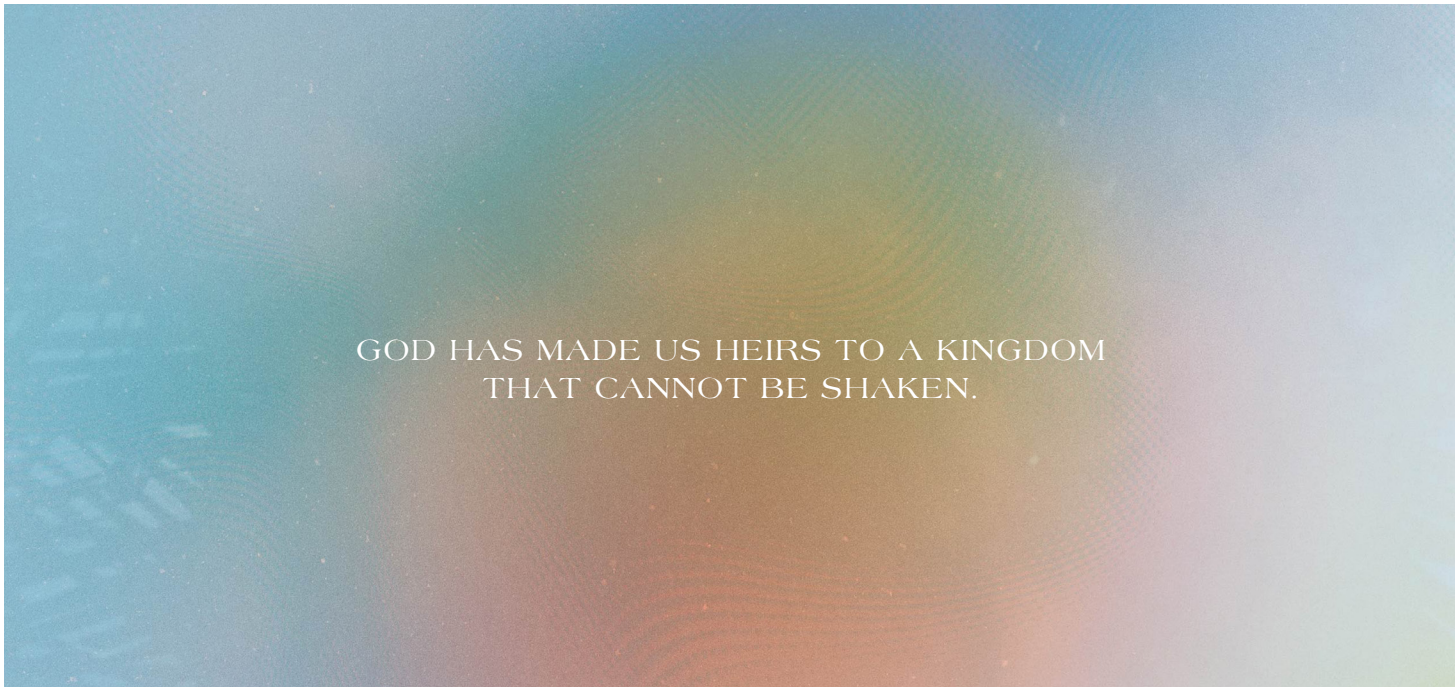
Week 15 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Read 12:18-24.
 - a. What are some of the images that stick out to you?
 - b. What do you feel as you read this?

2. Hebrews 12:25-28 shows us that God has made us heirs to a kingdom that cannot be shaken.
Take a moment to rest in the faithfulness of God.

3. What does it look like to offer acceptable worship to God?
 - a. Look back at Hebrews chapter 11. What did the people bring as an offering to God?
 - b. What would it look like for you to take a step in trusting God more this week?



GOD HAS MADE US HEIRS TO A KINGDOM
THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN.

Hebrews 13:1-6

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Week 16

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to understanding what God wants for our lives, the problem usually isn't that God wasn't clear enough. The problem often lies in our willingness to listen and obey. Thus far in the book of Hebrews, our minds have been stretched to better understand God's will, make more biblical connections, and establish a proper view of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. As the book nears its conclusion, we find that the author lists some extremely practical exhortations for our daily lives and community. The premise is this: if all that has been discussed before is true, it demands certain changes in our lives. The most powerful love we can ever experience is the love of God which is freely given to us by Jesus and has eternal implications. Therefore, this love should impact the way we love those who God has placed around us. The question is, are we functioning as a conduit of His great love, or simply serving ourselves in a closed circuit?

MAIN IDEA

Following Jesus means redirecting our love to His priorities, not ours.

SUNDAY NOTES

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:1-6

The author of Hebrews begins wrapping up his letter with these numerous exhortations. Humanity has proven itself to be forgetful and there will never be a time that we don't need reminders as we follow Christ. How often we forget the promises, warnings, and guidance of God! The author is urging and reminding the reader of vital aspects of the Christian life: to love, to care, and to serve. We are also reminded to pray for, and to remember brothers and sisters in persecution. This passage ends by touching upon the sanctity of marriage, contentment, and the sufficiency of God to meet our needs. These actions embody and reflect God's heart to the people around us. They flow from a deep love, that is only possible because God first loved us.

"All the fruits of the Spirit which we are to lay weight upon as evidential of grace, are summed up in charity, or Christian love; because this is the sum of all grace."
– Jonathan Edwards¹

This Jonathan Edwards quote points out the love that can only be found in us by grace. This love produces in us a desire to act upon these exhortations in charity towards each other.

Take some time to think and pray about these exhortations. What are some examples of what these exhortations look like today, and how can they be practically applied? Finally, consider the essence of each one of the following exhortations:

1. Love for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ
2. Hospitality
3. Compassion and empathy for those in bondage for their faith
4. Fidelity
5. Contentment

How can you apply each of these in your day-to-day life?

TO LOVE, TO CARE,
AND TO SERVE

DAY TWO

Let brotherly love continue. Hebrews 13:1

Love must be a distinguishing marker of being a disciple of Jesus. Consider just a few of the times He speaks to this in His ministry:

Mark 12:30–31 – And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Devotionals

KNOW

John 13:34–35 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Is your life marked by love for others? Are you known for seeking out the wellbeing of others before your own? The hope would be yes. When things get trying and difficult, we are tempted to give up, thus the reason the author of Hebrews includes this in the closing exhortations. Hebrews 13:1 says, "let brotherly love continue". This implies that "brotherly love" already exists within the community, but that there are still things that might put an end to it or threaten its effectiveness. It is up to us in our communities to foster this love with one another and work against those who would see us be divided.

What's the biggest threat to this love? Ourselves. John Calvin reminds us that, "Nothing evaporates more easily than love when everybody looks after himself more than his wife and gives less consideration to others."

Today, find a way to express, show, and share brotherly love to someone. Encourage them in their faith and tend to their wellbeing above your own.

DAY THREE

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2

Building upon what we learned yesterday, we see that love is not expressed merely by our words that we speak, but also by our actions. In Genesis chapters 18 and 19, we are shown stories of when people received angels without even knowing it. Abraham and Lot thought they were extending hospitality to mere mortals and did everything that was expected (provided food, washed their feet), but it turned out they were entertaining angels! These individuals received blessings from God for their hospitality. Even Jesus instructs in Matthew 25:31-40 that when we welcome strangers, we welcome Him as well. Some of us may never entertain angels unaware because we never entertain anybody. This week, consider ways you can seek to show hospitality to people.

Hospitality to others was held in high regard within the ancient world. People could not stay at a hotel or rent an Airbnb the way we can today. Exhibiting hospitality to individuals meant offering your home and resources to give people security, shelter, a place to rest, and have their other physical needs met.

You and I have the same opportunity today, to allow our places of residence to be a place where people can have physical needs met, as well as spiritual ones. Is your house simply a place of refuge for you or is it a place of ministry? Are you intentional to evangelize, teach, and disciple those who enter in? While your neighbor may never want to step foot inside your church, they may feel comfortable entering your home. This gives you an opportunity to live out biblical hospitality, serving both physical and spiritual needs.

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FOUR

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Hebrews 13:3

As Hebrews 13 has instructed us thus far, we are to continue in showing brotherly love and open our doors to visitors, but how do we express and show love to those who can't be with us physically? Hebrews 13:3 helps answer this question. Imprisonment was not unfamiliar to the early church. Christians would often find themselves incarcerated because of their faith. Prison in the ancient world was not like the prison we think of today. It was a place where one was held for a trial or for debts. Often, the person imprisoned would not be able to provide for themselves even the basic necessities of life. They were fully dependent upon those who were on the outside to provide them with clothing, food, and address other needs.

We saw in Hebrews 10:32-34 that some members of the community had already been subjected to imprisonment and social reproach. The author doesn't want us to forget or lose sight of those who are persecuted for their faith. Beyond just remembering them, we are called to go so far as to identify with them as if we are in prison with them. For many of us, this seems extremely out of sight and out of mind. Consider taking time to review some of the stories that are coming out of the persecuted church worldwide:

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/>³

As you conclude your time today with God and His Word, pray this prayer for those around the world who are currently suffering for their faith (from Release International)⁴

*Sovereign God,
we worship You
and we acknowledge that You know all of those
who suffer in Your name.*

*We remember those who are imprisoned for their faith
and ask that they would join with the Apostle Paul
to see that even though they remain captive,
their chains have furthered the gospel,
not frustrated it.*

*May they inspire and embolden their fellow believers
to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.*

*God of all comfort,
for those who are tortured both in body and mind,
give them the grace to endure
and to see their suffering as part of following in Christ's footsteps.*

*Merciful God,
for those asked to pay the ultimate price;
who are martyred because of their love for You,
may they truly know Christ
and the power of His resurrection
and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings,
becoming like Him in His death.*

*Father God,
for those who are widowed and orphaned
may they know the comfort that comes from Your promised
presence even when they walk through the valley.*

*May they be strengthened by Your Spirit,
enabling them to rejoice with the psalmist
as they proclaim that the Lord will not abandon them in death.*

*Heavenly Father,
we ask that You would make us ever mindful of our brothers
and sisters around the world
who need us to stand with them
as they suffer in Your name.*

*Teach us what it means
to overcome by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of our testimony;
we pray that we would not love our lives so much as to shrink
from death.
O Lord, hear our prayer.*

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY FIVE

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
Hebrews 13:4

When you hear the word "honor," what comes to mind? Honoring something means that we treat it with significance and hold it in a special place of high regard. The author of Hebrews is telling us that we should treat marriage and the marriage bed in high regard.

How exactly can we do that? The author gives two insights: 1) Keep ourselves from sexual conduct outside of marriage and 2) remain faithful to your spouse. Often, when people encounter this message in the church, what they hear about sex is to stop, avoid it, and beware. However, we must have a balanced approach and understanding that while Scripture provides warnings and boundaries on sex, it also teaches us that sex within the marriage covenant is something that is good and worthy of celebration. That may be strange to think about, but sexual intimacy between spouses is to be celebrated and honored. God is not surprised when a husband and wife are together, He rejoices in it! We need to do much more than simply pay lip-service to the sanctity of marriage, but truly celebrate it for the gift from God that it is. We give marriage its due respect, we protect it, and give it the focus it deserves.

This command we read today applies to all of us, regardless of our current marital status. We are to avoid anything that defiles the sanctity of marriage and the marriage bed. Today, let us look at our own lives and ask God to remove anything that takes away from the God-given gift that marriage and sexuality is. Take some time considering ways you can pray for the marriages around you. Pray for marriages in the church, including your own marriage (if you are married). Pray that they would become a picture of love, unity and trust that spur others on in faith and helps them understand God's glory.

DAY SIX

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
Hebrews 13:5

When you think about it honestly, are you truly content with where you are in life? One of the most fascinating things about the exhortation we find in verse 5 is that this problem is something that has plagued the human heart for centuries. People have a long history of loving money and possessions too much. Christianity invites us to put our trust in God's providential care, inviting us to step away from the anxiety of trying to collect and acquire more.

John Owen⁵ once said: "covetousness is an inordinate desire to enjoy more money than we have, or than God is pleased to give us." Our passage today implores us to be content with what we have and be free from the love of money. Money in and of itself is not evil, but discontentment with what God has granted us is what begins to twist and distort our hearts.

We can be perfectly content with whatever we have today. Why is that? Because of what we read in verse 5. Our contentment is not rooted in the security and comfort our money or possessions grant us. We can find security and comfort in the fact that we have a Savior who is with us always and forever! He will *never* leave us or forsake us. *Never*. What more could we ask for? What more could we possibly need? In this life, we can lose our wealth. We can lose our prized possessions. Everything can be taken away. Everything except for one thing, our gracious God's commitment to us. As we close out this day, reflect on Psalm 118, in which the author cites this truth: we can take refuge in our Lord.

Psalm 118:6-9

The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

It has been said that we can understand a lot about a person based upon the way they interact with other people. Why do you think that is?

1. Read Hebrews 13:1-6 and notice the list of instructions. What is the first instruction given? Why do you think the list starts with this one?

2. Look at the rest of the instructions given in 13:2-6. Try to explain each of them in your own words.

a. How are the instructions in verses 2-6 impacted by keeping the instruction in verse 1 and using it as motivation?

3. What do you think is the importance of keeping these instructions? For help, look back a few verses to 12:25-29.

4. Read Hebrews 13:2 and compare it to Matthew 25:34-40. After reading this example, why do you think hospitality is so important?

a. How has God shown you hospitality?

b. Who do you need to show hospitality to?

TRANSFORMED PRIORITIES | HEBREWS 13:1-6

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

5. Taking what you learned from Matthew 25:34-40, how are we supposed to love those who are imprisoned and mistreated? Keeping in mind that those who were imprisoned in biblical times depended on others to feed and physically care for them, what categories of people might that apply to in the world today?
6. God cares about what we do with our lives and our bodies in private. What is the significance of verse 4 in a Christian community? What does our sexual ethic say to the world around us?
7. Looking at verses 5-6, what specific instructions are given?
 - a. What allows us to proclaim what verse 6 says? This verse is in reference to Psalm 118:6, but you can also find a hint in Matthew 6:25.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

God cares about how we live our lives and what motivates us. 1 John 4:19 says that we love others because He first loved us. Not only did He love us first, but He loved us at great cost to Himself. It is because God loves us so much, that we can in turn act lovingly and generously toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and those around us who don't know Him yet. When we act out of love towards others, proclaim our trust in our Lord, the one from whom all love flows.

Where in your life do you need to extend brotherly love? Who is God asking you to care for, even if it might cost you time or resources? What about your private life, are you honoring your sexuality and marriage as God intends? Who can you be honest with and accept accountability from in this area? Take some time to reflect on the passage from this week, focusing on the witness of a life that can truly proclaim, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear, what can man do to me?"

SV KIDS

Hebrews 13:1-6 Review

FAMILY DISCUSSION

What would your life look like if you loved everyone the way Jesus loves people?

- Would your life be easier or harder?
- Can you ever love someone exactly like Jesus loves them?

Would life be easier or harder if you loved your family like Jesus loves them?

MAIN IDEA

Following Jesus means doing what He has called us to do with love and putting aside our own wants because in Jesus, we have enough.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- Hard things are meant to bring us closer to God, not make us turn away from Him.
- Believers are instructed to keep going, like runners in a race, with their eyes on the prize (an eternal home with God), even when things are hard and we may not totally understand.
- The kingdom of God is not temporary. We are heirs to the kingdom that cannot be shaken.
- We tremble at the Word of God not out of fear, but out of admiration and devotion.

BIG IDEAS

Living by faith

- There were great examples of faith in Hebrews 11.
- There was encouragement to have faith in Hebrews 12.
- Now, in Hebrews 13, the writer talks about evidences of faith. These are things that show in our lives when we are living by faith.

Evidence of faith: Spiritual fellowship

- The foundation of spiritual fellowship is the new life we have in Jesus.
- The core of spiritual fellowship is love.
 - We love others because God first loved us.
 - When followers of Jesus love one another, there is hospitality and a concern for others. We show love to everyone, even people we do not know or do not like.
 - Loving one another begins in our home, with our family.
 - When we love God and others, we will be content with what we have, knowing that only God can satisfy our heart.

God is always with us!

- He tells us, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
- We can have confidence and live a life without fear because we know that God is in control, and He loves us the most!

GOING DEEPER

Read 1 John 4:19-21.

- Can you love God fully while hating someone else?
- If you have bad feelings toward someone, what should you do?

What does it mean to love like Jesus loves?

- What did Jesus do for us? (Hint: It involved a cross)
- What are you willing to do for Him because of His sacrifice for us?

What is one way you can show love to someone even though they may be hard to love?

SV YOUTH

Week 16 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Hebrews 13:1-2 calls us to suffer alongside one another.
 - a. What are some ways that you and your peers suffer?
 - b. What is one way that you can care for them in the midst of their suffering this week?
2. Hebrews 13:4-6 talks about temptations of sex and money.
 - a. Why do you think we feel tempted towards sexual sin?
 - b. Why do we so often feel discontented with what we have?
 - c. Do we really trust that God's way is able to satisfy us?
3. How can we suffer with and support one another as we endure these temptations with faith?

JESUS' SACRIFICE PROVIDES FORGIVENESS FOR OUR SINS,
AND REMOVES THE WEIGHT OF GUILT AND HESITATION WE
CARRY TOWARD GOD BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.

Hebrews 13:7-25

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with all of you. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with all of you.

Week 17

INTRODUCTION

As we conclude our study in the book of Hebrews, there are two things we hope have been true about our experience. First, that we would understand that the Old Testament is filled with markers pointing us to the salvation that is found in Christ Jesus. That we have learned not to be intimidated by the Old Testament but to see that it offers a richer view of angels, Moses, the temple and tabernacle, the sacrificial system, the Levitical priesthood, and what they are all in service to. Second, that our hope and confidence in our salvation would be strengthened despite the various trials and hardships we may face, just like the original recipients of Hebrews. That we would be a people who persevere, pressing on into holiness, and not being enticed to stray. As we study these last few practical exhortations in how to relate to one another and to leaders in the church, may we receive the prayer the author left with his original recipients: “May the God of peace equip you to do his will.”

MAIN IDEA

We have been equipped with what we need to please God.

SUNDAY NOTES

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Devotionals

KNOW

DAY 1

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7

As the author of Hebrews wraps up the letter, we are given a few more instructions on Christian living that serve as a helpful reminder for us today. Today's verse deals specifically with the leaders of the church and our interaction with them. There are three actions we are called to engage in:

Remember – Those who have faithfully spoken and taught us the Word of God are individuals to be remembered. Whether they are here or gone, the legacy of their faithful proclamation is something to remember. Who in your life can you thank God for who have faithfully taught you the Word of God?

Consider – We can “consider” by investigating and closely examining the lives of those who have taught us the Word of God, all the while paying attention to the fruit they bear. We don't simply offer blind allegiance, but instead, we look at the character and faithfulness of their lives. Within the context of Hebrews, it is possible that this statement was made in reference to martyrdom and to those leaders who had been leading during the time of persecution. We are called to recognize their faithfulness and consider it an encouragement to do likewise.

Imitate – Many of us who live in the Pacific Northwest have a pioneering spirit, seeking to strike out a path for ourselves. Spiritually, we have been called to imitate those who have gone before us. If our leaders are following Jesus, we should be more than happy to follow them. Our leaders are meant to set an example for us in righteousness and godly living. We should be delighted to imitate and follow them as they follow Jesus.

Are you able to remember, consider, and imitate your church leaders? Are they men and women who are worthy of imitation? If so, take time to pray for them now.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE
SAME NOW AS HE WAS IN
THE PAST AND WILL BE IN
THE FUTURE.

DAY TWO

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

In Hebrews chapter 1, we were told about the unchanging nature of Jesus, that He was always the same, here we are reminded of this again. The author bookends his letter to the Hebrews with the truth that Jesus Christ is the same now as He was in the past and will be in the future. He is the same today as He was at the setting of the foundation of the world. He is the same today as He was when He planned your salvation and went to the cross to accomplish it. As Charles Spurgeon eloquently said, “*Whatever was in the heart of Christ before the stars began to shine, that same infinite love is there today. Jesus is the same today as He was when He was here on earth.*”¹

The original audience of this letter needed to hear this as they were wavering in their faith and needed something to cling to. We too need this truth to sink deep into our hearts. While various trials and tribulations tempt us to doubt the character of our Savior, let us remember: if it seems as if things have changed, it was not Jesus who

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Devotionals

KNOW

changed... it was us. While the world around us is constantly transforming, culture is shifting, and our lives are being shaped by our daily experiences, we can rest in this truth: our Savior, Jesus Christ, is not subject to this world and is the rock on which the ocean of time breaks.

Do you believe this to be true? Do you believe that Jesus will remain faithful to His promises? Do you believe that Jesus' love for you has been and always will be? Conclude your time today by praying for God to increase your faith and trust in Jesus' unchanging nature.

DAY THREE

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

While God will always be our ultimate source of support, He has also skillfully designed His church and its leaders to care for us. It can be discouraging to witness the impact of leadership and accountability issues in the church as we hear stories of church leaders falling from grace amid scandal or abuse of position. At times it can feel as if they get off easily and can lead us to ask questions like "Where is the justice?!" Today's passage in Hebrews brings forward a helpful reminder. Those who have been entrusted with the mantle of leadership in the local church will have to give an account for how they have led.

Stepping into church leadership is no small thing. It deals with matters of the soul. Leadership in the local church is unlike leadership in any other place due to the fact that it deals with eternal issues; the weight is simply heavy. As people in the congregation, we can make that load heavier, or lighter.

With that in mind, is your willingness to submit and listen to your leaders increased? Submission doesn't mean we simply give a blank check. It means we follow their lead as they are leading us in the things of God. It is their job to lead us towards Christ, not only in matters of doctrine, but also in life in the church. When we fulfill our end of this partnership by submitting to their leadership, it brings great joy to our leaders and great benefit for us.

Today, consider sending a brief message of encouragement to your leaders. Pray that they will remain faithful to their calling, continue to follow the lead of our Savior, and that they will lead with joy.

DAY FOUR

Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. Hebrews 13:18

Do you ever have a hard time coming up with something to pray for? That can sound like a silly question, but sometimes we find ourselves stuck in a routine of praying for the same things over and over again. There is no doubt that God always honors and

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Devotionals

KNOW

listens to our prayers, no matter the content. After all, He is not after eloquent words or high thoughts from us, but instead simply longs for communion with His children. But when we are feeling stuck, it's helpful to examine what the Scriptures encourage us to pray about.

Within the final verses of Hebrews, the author lays out a personal request for himself. Based on verses 18-19, biblical scholars have proposed that the author of Hebrews is imprisoned while writing this letter. If that is the case, it's remarkable what the author asks for. If we were imprisoned, odds are we'd be asking to bring about deliverance, a key to magically appear, a guard to let us slip out. That's not what we find here. The author requests that the recipients of the letter pray for them to have a clear conscience and the ability to act honorably in all things. Just like the author spent most of the letter encouraging the readers to faithfulness, he is asking the readers to pray that for him too.

Having a clear conscience means honoring the Lord in all that you say and think, which would result in an ability to live out honorably amongst those around us.

Take the remainder of your time today to pray for a clear conscience and the ability to act honorably. Pray those things for your family, your church leaders, the members in your life group. Pray them for yourself.

DAY FIVE

"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20-21

At the end of a church service, it is not uncommon for the pastor, or worship leader, to end with a benediction. Simply put, a benediction is a blessing. The church leaders are blessing the people of God as they leave worship to wherever God is taking them next. Like many of the letters of the New Testament, the author of Hebrews is leaving his audience with a benediction as well.

One of the things the author of Hebrews blesses the readers with is a request that they may be "equipped with everything good to do His will." This request means that you and I would be fully provided for and outfitted to do whatever God brings our way next. Charles Spurgeon notes in his commentary² that the word *equip* in the original Greek was often used to describe a resetting of a bone that had been dislocated or fractured. So, the request could be summarized like this: whatever bones that may be out of joint or still fractured from the fall, would God do a work of resetting within us to enable us to do every good work. Do you believe that God can, is able to, and looking to do this type of work in your life? This passage reminds us that the God of peace can mend what is broken and use it for His Good.

Like Jesus, our aim should be to do whatever God has for us. Our sins have been

NO SIN CAN BE HELD
AGAINST YOU.

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Devotionals

KNOW

forgiven by the blood of Christ, by the God of peace. Let us seek to live a life that is pleasing to His sight. Let us live a life that brings glory to our God.

DAY SIX

"Grace be with all of you. Hebrews 13:25

Well done; you've made it to the end of this study! Before we turn our attention to the final parting words, we want to encourage you to take some time to reflect on some of the things you may have learned and have been encouraged by. Share them with us at info@summitview.net; we would love to hear how this study has blessed you and your faith!

While this closing seems familiar, as it is often found elsewhere in the closing of New Testament letters, let not the familiarity cause us miss something important. Believe it or not, grace is a word and concept that has helped anchor much of the author's letter. Briefly consider:

Hebrew 2:9

– It was the by the grace of God that Jesus took on death for us.

Hebrews 4:16

– We are invited to the throne of grace and receive grace in our times of need.

Hebrews 10:29

– When we consider fleeing from the goodness of God, the Spirit of grace is outraged and grieved.

Hebrews 12:15

– We are encouraged to obtain the grace of God and not fall away from Him.

Hebrews 13:9

– Our hearts are strengthened by grace, not by adherence to the ritual laws.

As we conclude our seventeen-week study, our prayer is much like the prayer we find in this verse. may the grace of God be with *you*. May God's unmerited favor be upon you, may His grace be at work in your life bringing forth holiness. God has made peace with us through the blood of Jesus. We have been saved by grace and we will reach the end by grace.

MAY THE GRACE OF GOD BE WITH YOU.

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

GETTING STARTED

How often do you consider the outcome before you start something new?

1. Read Hebrews 13:7-8. Who are the readers being encouraged to remember and imitate? Why do you think the author encourages them to do this?
 - a. What does he ask them to consider and why is this so important?
 - b. What characteristics do you look for and desire to emulate?
2. Read 13:9-11. What warning is given here? What is the difference between being strengthened by something we do or eat and being strengthened by grace (see Ephesians 2:8-9 for help)? Keeping in mind what you've been learning about Jesus throughout this study, why do you think the author gives them this encouragement now?
3. The word therefore in Hebrews 13:13 tells us we are going to respond based on something we have just learned. Read verses 13-16. What are our instructions here?
 - a. Why do you think these are referred to as sacrifices?
4. In verse 17, the author circles back to another instruction on interacting with leaders. What reason is given here? When the person being led takes this heart posture, what difference does it make for the leader? What about for the person being led?

WORDS TO LIVE BY | HEBREWS 13:7-25

Group Questions

BE KNOWN

- a. What is your heart posture toward the leaders God has entrusted you to?

- 5. Why do you think, after everything written in this letter, the author closes with an exhortation to obey leadership?
 - a. What are the biblical qualifications for a leader (for help, see 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9)?

 - b. How should these qualifications help us joyfully submit to our leaders?

- 6. Looking at verses 18-19, we see that the author is earnestly asking for something. What is it? Do you pray for your leaders, or do you tend to look at them as already being “spiritually put-together?”
 - a. How does this passage encourage you?

 - b. Who do you need to pray for?

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Read Hebrews 13:20-21 aloud. God gives us peace with Him through Christ, the better sacrifice, initiating the better covenant. Through Him, we are given all we need – He gives us the better gift, His Spirit, so we can be made pleasing in His sight. Christ is the “something better” we’ve all been looking and longing for. In Him, we can proclaim, “He is enough!” Take time to reflect on the better things Christ is and give thanks to God!

SV KIDS

Hebrews 13:7-25 Review

MAIN IDEA

We have been equipped with what we need to please God.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

We have reached the end of Hebrews! What has been your favorite thing you have learned about Jesus?

BACKGROUND REVIEW

- There are things that show in our lives when we are living by faith. When we enjoy spiritual fellowship, it is evidence that we are living by faith.
- The foundation of spiritual fellowship is the new life we have in Jesus. The core of it is love.
- Following Jesus means doing what He has called us to do with love and putting aside our own wants. We can do this because we know that in Jesus, we have enough.

BIG IDEAS

Evidence of Faith: Spiritual Leadership

- Our spiritual leaders are those in our local church: elders, pastors, and teachers.
- We are supposed to:
 - Remember them and follow their example of pointing to Jesus.
 - Obey them and their teaching on the Word of God.
 - Support them and pray for them.

Evidence of Faith: Spiritual Worship

- We no longer need blood sacrifices. The kinds of sacrifices God wants are:
 - Praises to God.
 - Doing good and sharing with others.
 - Prayers.

Evidence of Faith: Spiritual Lordship

- The book of Hebrews helps believers:
 - Know how to stand firm in a shaky world.
 - Receive forgiveness through the better sacrifice of Jesus' blood.
 - Know the better person and priest: Jesus.
 - Live by the better principle of faith.

GOING DEEPER

- Ephesians 5:10 says, "...try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord." Look at Hebrews 13:15-21 for help discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.
- Consider making a daily personal prayer based on Hebrews 13:21: "Lord, equip me with everything good that I may do Your will, working in me that which is pleasing in Your sight, through Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

SV YOUTH

Week 17 Small Group Questions

REVIEW

1. Hebrews 13:7 and 13:17 call us to remember our leaders.
 - a. Who are the leaders in your life that care for your spiritual health?
 - b. What does it look like to submit to their leadership?
2. According to verses 15 and 16, what are the sacrifices that God desires from us?
3. How does Jesus' resurrection relate to the repeated call for us to be faithful to God in the midst of suffering?



BE FAITHFUL TO GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.

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SOMETHING BETTER

*This guide has been specifically and prayerfully created with you in mind.
It is designed to complement your personal daily devotion, Sunday service
engagement, and Life Group participation.*

As human beings, we all suffer from ASBS, the Always Something Better Syndrome. Deep down we sense there is more to this life and find ourselves constantly searching for something better.

We are frustrated by how far behind we feel in our careers; not where we thought we'd be financially by now, and a voice inside whispers "look for something better."

Discontent or discouraged with your living situation and the current housing market? Look for something better.

Date night didn't meet your expectations (or didn't happen at all)? Look for something better.

Still tired and rundown after finally taking that vacation? Look for something better.

We spend our lives searching for the next thing that might leave us satisfied and fulfilled. Yet the moment we find it within our grasp, we are once again left longing for something better. Every generation looks to the past and the future, certain that anything but what is in the present must be better; yet we find that the longing for something better has always plagued us.

Thankfully, the Bible offers another way; something better that meets our every need and satisfies the longings of our souls.

This is the thread woven throughout the book of Hebrews. At a surface level Hebrews can be confusing and a little unclear in its practical application. Yet the resounding message throughout its thirteen chapters is that Jesus is the something better our hearts long for. Hebrews makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is superior to all we might long for, hope for, and seek out for the fulfillment of our souls—superior to everything else. Whatever we might pursue to satisfy our minds and hearts, Jesus is better.

How can we be so sure? Journey with us for the next seventeen weeks and discover for yourself an anthology of God's faithfulness and the pitfalls that come with seeking our hope in other places. There may not be a more fitting book for Christians today. Don't consider yourself a Christian? This book is for you too!

The book of Hebrews offers us a rich history and understanding of how God has worked throughout the ages to demonstrate one simple truth: that He knows the deepest longings of our hearts and invites us to look up from all the world has to offer to pursue something better, the only One able to truly satisfy—Jesus.



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