



HEBREWS



Introduction

We are thankful for the talented team of writers and editors who have put this study together. While it was designed with small group use in mind, it can easily be used for personal study.

Park has a great vision – **to be a Biblical community where the Gospel of Jesus Christ transforms lives, renews the city, and impacts the world.** If you hang around Park, you know that we talk about that. A lot. It's our vision. **Yet**, somehow we lose focus, or transformation doesn't take priority in our individual pursuits or in our small group Biblical communities.

Bottom line, it is our prayer that as you intentionally engage with God's word through this study, it will be a vehicle for great transformation – first in your life, then in your small group. As we lead lives that reflect Christ and are transformed by the gospel, we impact our communities, our city and the world!

Hebrews is a book that is challenging, convicting, encouraging, and perplexing at times. But the message is powerful. Christ is greater! He is greater than angels, priests, the old ways, you name it. He is greater!

It is our prayer that individually and in our small groups we follow the charge in Hebrews 12 to “lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us!”

Let's run the race with endurance and confidence!

Kevin Howells
Lisa Bishop
Park Community Church Small Groups

Hebrews | Lesson 1

Introduction to Hebrews Study

Author, Audience, and Title

The author of Hebrews neither names himself nor clearly designates his audience. The traditional title “to the Hebrews” reflects the ancient assumption that the original recipients were Jewish Christians. The author’s identity has been a matter of significant conjecture throughout church history. In antiquity, authorship was attributed to figures such as Barnabus or especially Paul, but some of the most astute church fathers recognized considerable differences in style and method of argument between this book and Paul’s named writings. Although scholars have suggested other possible authors, such as Clement, Luke, or Apollos, most today concede that this author remains anonymous. It seems that the judgment expressed by Origen (d.c. A.D. 254) remains correct: “Who actually wrote the epistle, only God knows” (cited in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6.25.14).

The author clearly knew his recipients and longed to be reunited with them (Heb. 13:19). They had a mutual friend in Timothy (13:23), probably the same Timothy who ministered alongside Paul. The author was presumably male since he refers to himself using a masculine participle (see 11:32: “would fail me to tell”). And because “us” included the author in 2:3 (the salvation “attested to us by those who heard”; also 2:1), it appears that he was not an eyewitness of Jesus.

The author passed on the greetings of those “from Italy” (13:24). Scholars debate whether he was in Italy writing to the church elsewhere or was outside Italy (though accompanied by Italians) and writing back to an audience in Italy (possibly at Rome).

The audience’s social situation can be inferred from commands to “remember those who are in prison” and who are “mistreated” (13:3). Timothy himself had just been set free (13:23). Indeed, the author of Hebrews commended his audience for their former endurance of persecution, for their compassion on those in prison, and for having “joyfully accepted the plundering of your property” (10:32-34).

The author warned against “strange teachings” in the church (13:9). These teachings may have been related to the use of ritual foods (13:9-10). Moreover, he repeatedly called his audience to persevere in the faith and cautioned them about the danger of leaving the Christian communion, as he sought to show the

superiority of Christ to Mosaic sacrifices and rituals (chs. 3-10). Hence the early church was likely correct to assert that Jewish Christians (as well as Gentiles who had previously been drawn to the Jewish religion) were the intended audience for this book (see “our fathers,” 1:1). Furthermore, such an audience would have well understood the book’s many citations and allusions to the OT (and would have shared in the writer’s frequent use of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT).

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The genre of Hebrews is unusual. The book is without an introduction or other early indications that it is a letter, yet the final verses do pass on greetings and blessings (13:23-25) and the author speaks of having “written to you” (13:22). However, the author also identifies his work as a “word of exhortation” (13:22). The careful rhetorical progression of the book, along with its frequent practical exhortations, has led many to consider it a single sermon. So perhaps Hebrews is best understood as a sermonic letter.

Hebrews frequently encourages the audience to endure and warns against leaving Christ (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:1-29). These warning passages are interspersed throughout the book and have noticeable structural similarities (esp. in terms of exhortations and threatened consequence). Around these passages the argument of the book progresses carefully. Moreover, these exhortations flow out of the surrounding material. Thus the book is unified in both structure and intent.

The warning passages exhort church participants to remain faithful. The more expository sections of the epistle show the superiority of Christ and his new covenant work to angels, Moses, the tabernacle priesthood, and the sacrificial system. The implication is that these are so inferior to Christ that it is futile to return to them (or to go anywhere else). Thus the book encourages the church to hold fast to its faith, because that faith is grounded in the most superior revelation.

The background of such exhortations must have been the audience’s need to continue enduring through persecution and trials of life (e.g. ch. 12). They appear to have grown less attentive to Christian instruction (5:11-14), and some apparently had ceased regular attendance at their meetings (10:25); nonetheless, the author reminds them of their past faithfulness and communal love in the midst of persecution (10:32-34). He encourages their faithfulness by careful exposition of the OT in light of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

The soteriology (salvation teaching) of Hebrews is rooted in its Christology—the Son of God became the heavenly high priest, who offered himself as a sacrifice

once for all. Christ obtained salvation for all who approach in faith (6:1; 11:6; cf. 4:2), and such faith perseveres until it reaches the promised eternal reward (6:12; 10:22, 38-39).

1. Read the book of Hebrews in one setting.
2. What are repeated words or themes throughout this book?
3. Scholars are unsure of the authorship of Hebrews. Does the mystery about the author raise any questions for you?
4. What are some of the characteristics of the Hebrews this letter is written to? How are their struggles similar to ones facing Christians today?
5. What was the author's main purpose in this letter?
6. The book of Hebrews has an overwhelming emphasis on the person of Christ. Write down some verses and phrases that emphasize the person of Christ. In what ways would such an emphasis serve to reassure the Hebrew believers?
7. Hebrews outlines Christ's superiority over the angels, the Mosaic Law, and the priesthood. What are things today that compete with the superiority of Christ, even among believers?
8. Hebrews has been described as a commentary on the Old Testament. What is the purpose of the author referring frequently to the Old Testament?

9. The audience in this letter was battling intense discouragement and was therefore susceptible to being led astray by faulty theology. It was easy in the midst of discouragement to lose sight of the foundation of their faith. In response, the author emphasizes:

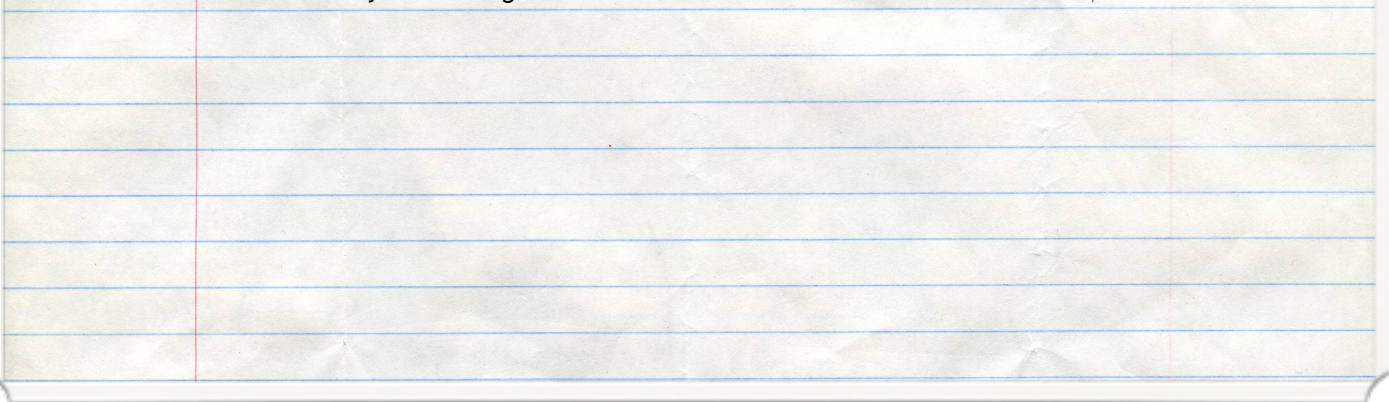
- a. The basic truths of Christianity
- b. The importance of community
- c. The future hope that awaits believers

What are specific ways you can apply these truths to be encouraged and encourage others in difficult times?

10. The Hebrews were placing a heavy emphasis on the law and their Jewish background, perhaps more than their newfound faith in Christ. In what ways do we wrongly honor religion above our relationship with Christ Himself? How can we seek to combat this tendency?

11. After reading and reflecting on the book, what are you looking forward to learning and applying throughout this study of Hebrews?

12. Write a brief prayer asking God to increase your knowledge of Him through this study and to teach and transform you through His word:



GREATHER

Hebrews 1:1-14 :: Jesus is Greater than the Angels

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 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. 3 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, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? 6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” 7 Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” 8 But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

10 And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” 13 And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?



Getting Started.

In prayer, ask God to teach you as you read and seek to understand these passages.

1. Describe a time where you waited for something, and as a result of waiting, what you received was better than what was initially offered. How did you know something better could be available? How long did you have to wait?



Read it. Hebrews 1:1-14

2. Many themes in the book of Hebrews are outlined in the first chapter. Write down the verse and the theme the author introduces.

3. In the first two verses, how does the author contrast God's medium of revelation in the past to the revelation He has used "in these last days"? Why is this important?

4. Verses 2-4 make some striking assertions about the personhood of Jesus Christ. Take a moment and read Colossians 1:15-20. What are some similar qualities of deity expressed in these two passages?

5. Scripture emphasizes the attributes of Christ numerous times. What attributes of Christ are mentioned in this first chapter?

6. Why was it important for the original audience to understand that Christ is fully God? Why is it important that we believe the same truth?

7. How is Jesus listed as better than angels in verses 8-12? 8. Verse 13 gives one final piece of evidence about Christ's superiority over the angels. Why is the location of where Jesus is seated important?



Apply it.

9. From verse 4, Jesus inherits the name “son”. Why is this important to us today?

10. Understanding who Jesus is and how he is to be exalted is important. How does Hebrews 1 impact your worship of Jesus?

11. When referring to the angels, verse 14 says, “ Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” What qualities of the angels should be reflected in our lives?

12. What is the hope given to believers in verse 14? What are some practical ways we can live and function in light of this current and future hope?



Live it.

13. Re-read Hebrews 1. Write down how Jesus is greater. What is one way you will actively pursue making Jesus greater in your life this week? Spend time this week in prayer acknowledging the greatness of Jesus.

SALVATION

Hebrews | Lesson 3

Hebrews 2:1-4 :: Not Neglecting a Great Salvation

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 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, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.



Getting Started.

1. What was the best thing that happened to you this week? Did you take time to reflect on how Jesus is greater than this? How did that affect your worship of Him?

2. Did you or someone close to you ever go through a period of drifting in the faith? What were some of the reasons for the drifting? How did God draw you/them back to himself?



Read it. Read Hebrews 2:1-4

3. In the first verse, what does "therefore" refer to?

4. What is the warning given to Hebrews? Why does the author give such a grave warning to the audience?

5. What does the image of drifting away from the faith imply? Is this a permanent or a temporary drifting? What verse in this passage speaks to this?

6. What does this passage say is the safeguard against drifting away? How might an awareness of the past make the audience more grateful for what they had received?

7. How would you summarize the argument made in verses 2-3?

8. What evidence is given for the truth of salvation? How do you see all persons of the Trinity at work in this evidence?



9. What are cultural cues that show that the world has “drifted away?”

10. In what ways have those who are in Christ Jesus drifted today?

11. In what ways have you drifted/are you drifting?

12. What action will you take to honor God and restore your relationship with Him through obedience?

13. Write/say a prayer confessing and asking God to bring you back into the fullness of relationship with Him:

14. The passage encourages the readers to remember what they have heard regarding salvation. What are some practical ways we can keep the Gospel at the forefront of our minds?

15. As a small group, how have we been doing at keeping the Gospel the focus of our time together?

16. In verse 3, the word "neglect" means to ignore. The audience had become apathetic about the grand reality of their salvation. In what ways have we become callous/apathetic towards our salvation? What kind of danger lies ahead if we continue down this road?

17. Read Luke 12:47-48. How can we be good stewards of the knowledge we have received regarding salvation?



Live it.

18. Who are you intentionally praying for and seeking opportunities to share the message of a great salvation with?

Hebrews 2:5-18 :: Jesus is our great salvation

5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? 7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, 8 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. 9 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. 10 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. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." 14 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, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 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. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Getting Started.

1. What challenged you from the teaching or last week's study on drifting? Did you notice some drifting in your own life and begin to make adjustments?

2. Who do you admire that has overcome challenges in life and then gone on to help others facing challenges? What qualities about them do you admire?



Read it. Read Hebrews 2:5-18

3. What does this passage say about angels, God, and man?

4. Read Psalm 8. What descriptive words does David use to describe the Lord?

5. What parallels can you see between man and Jesus in the Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 texts?

6. According to the text, what did man fear? Whom did Jesus defeat in order to vanquish that fear?



CONSIDER THIS

Christ strips the devil of his power in death by making propitiation for our sins. How does this work? That big word "propitiation" simply means Christ takes away God's anger at us for our sins. When Christ dies, he is perfectly innocent (Hebrews 4:15). His death is to bear the guilt and punishment of our sins, not his own. And when our punishment falls on him, it is taken away from us. That's what propitiation means. God's justice is satisfied. He loved us enough to put his own Son forward to absorb the punishment we deserved so that he could demonstrate that he is just and faithful in dealing with sin and merciful in dealing with sinners. This is the great gospel. This is our great salvation. Christ dying in our place, and propitiating God—removing his righteous anger from us. So in him there is now no condemnation.

By John Piper. ©2013 Desiring God Foundation.

Website: desiringGod.org



7. Verse 11 refers to "those who are sanctified". What does it mean to be sanctified? What's His role? What's our role in that process?

8. What is one area where God has been sanctifying you in recent weeks or months?

9. A priest is a "middle-man" between a person and God. Jesus is both man and God. How does this affect the way you approach Him?

10. Verse 17 states, "...to make propitiation for the sins of the people"?

a. What is a Bible dictionary definition of propitiation? (Use www.Biblegateway.com for online Bible dictionaries)

b. How would you explain propitiation to a friend who is not a follower of Christ?



Apply It.

11. Is it a simple truth or a complex truth? Jesus came as a man and he can understand anything we bring Him. He was tempted and is able to help those who are being tempted (verse 18). How is Jesus able to help you in your temptations? Is there an area of suffering in your life that you would like to entrust to your high priest?

12. In light of this passage, how should you respond to a follower of Christ battling a sin pattern, who often states, "You don't know how hard it is to be in this battle! You don't know how hard I've tried to defeat it!"

Hebrews 3:1-19 :: Jesus is greater than Moses

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 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. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 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. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ 11 As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” 12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 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. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” 16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Think about it...can a follower of Christ “lose” their salvation?

That is, it teaches that if you have truly become a partaker of Christ, you will always be one. He will work in you to preserve your faith and hope. Another way to say it is that if you are a child of God, you cannot cease to be a child of God. But we all know that there are many people who make a start in the Christian life and then fall away and forsake the Lord. That kind of person is very much on this writer's mind. He knows that happens and he deals with it in this text and how to keep it from happening. But when it happens, his explanation is not that the person really was a partaker of Christ, but that he never had become a true partaker of Christ. If we hold fast to our assurance, we have become a partaker of Christ; if we do not, then we have not become a partaker of Christ.

In other words persevering in faith and hope, holding fast to your confidence in God, is not a way to keep from losing your standing in Christ; it is a way of showing that you have a standing in Christ. That standing can never be lost, because you have it by the free grace of God, and because Christ has promised with a covenant and an oath ([Hebrews 6:17-19](#)) to keep those who are his ([Hebrews 13:5; 20-21](#)). In other words, my security and assurance is not a decision or a prayer that I remember doing in the past; my security and assurance is the faithfulness and power of God to keep me hoping in him in the future. My security is that “he who began a good work in me will complete it to the day of Christ” ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

How Can You "Fall Away from God" if You Never Were a Believer?

Now this raises several questions. One is: Well, if our failure to hold fast our hope and confidence means we never were really partakers of Christ, what are we falling away from in verse 12?

Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away [or turning away] from the living God.

In what sense can there be a falling away or a turning away from God if we never truly belonged to God?

One simple answer is that there can be real and painful falling away from a fiancée that is not a falling away from a wife. I think the way the writer wants us to think about this is given in the example of the people of Israel in verses 7-11 (see also Psalm 95 v. 7-11)). In Hebrews 3 verse 9 the writer points out that the people “saw my works for forty years” and still they hardened their hearts against God (v. 8) and went astray in their hearts (v. 10). In other words they had seen God divide the Red Sea and show them great mercy to save them from Egypt. They had seen him give water from a rock, manna from the sky, guidance with pillars of cloud and fire, deliverance from enemies, good laws to live by, and leniency for their rebelliousness. But in spite of all this they became hard in heart and stopped hoping in God. They wanted to go back to Egypt; they made idols and they murmured. This is what the writer means by “falling away from the living God.”

They had been swept up into the mighty workings of God. They had tasted his power and benefited from his Spirit and goodness. They had been enlightened with God's revelation way beyond any people on the earth. And they had fallen away. So it was with some of the people in New Testament times. And so it is today. These people had been swept up in the signs and wonders mentioned in [Hebrews 2:4](#). They had tasted the power of the age to come. They had been folded into a loving people and experienced measures of the Spirit's work in their midst and in their lives. They had glimpsed the light of the gospel. They had been baptized and eaten communion and listened to preaching and probably had done some remarkable works themselves.

But, as with Israel, their hearts became hard, and an evil heart of unbelief got the upper hand, and they began to put their hope in other things rather than Christ, and over time they fell away from all the goodness that they had been surrounded with. And Hebrews says that the explanation of this is that they “had not become a partaker of Christ.” They had partaken of certain measures of enlightenment and power and joy; but (to use the words of Jesus) there was no root to the plant and it withered, while others were choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life ([Luke 8:13-14](#)).

In other words, you can fall away from God to the degree that you have come close to the work of God—the love of his people, the light of his Word, the privilege of prayer, the moral force of his example, the gifts and miracles of his Spirit, the blessings of his providence and the daily revelation of sun and rain. It is possible to taste of these things, be deeply affected by them, and to be lost in unbelief, because Jesus Christ himself is not your heart's delight and hope and confidence and reward.

Jesus taught these things over and over to warn against false assurance. For example, he said in [Matthew 7:21-23](#), Not every one who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.”

Prophesying, casting out demons, and doing mighty works in the name of Jesus do not prove that Jesus has “known” us, or that we are partakers of Christ. It is possible to do those things with a hard, unchanged heart. The evidence of “being known” by Jesus is that Jesus is our hope, our confidence, our treasure, our reward ([Hebrews 10:24; 11:25-26](#)). That is the inner reality that transforms our lives.

That's one question: How can you fall away from or turn away from God, if you never were a partaker of Christ? And the answer is: there are many ways to partake of the nearness of God without trusting him and hoping in him and loving him. And so there are many ways to turn from Christ without having ever been a partaker of Christ himself.

By John Piper. ©2013 Desiring God Foundation. Website: desiringGod.org



Getting Started.

1. How does a person with a hardened heart typically act toward God? How do they act toward others?

2. What are ways the “deceitfulness of sin” is prevalent in our society? In our churches? In our own lives? In our small group?



Read it. Read Hebrews 3

3. This chapter begins with the word, “therefore,” and as the saying goes, “stop and see what it is there for.” What thoughts is the author connecting?

4. Take a closer look at the house mentioned in verses 2-6. How would you explain that passage to a friend reading it for the first time?

5. This passage clearly states Moses and Jesus were faithful to God.

a. How did Moses demonstrate faithfulness in Exodus 3?

b. How did Jesus demonstrate faithfulness in Luke 5:31-32, 1 Timothy 1:15, Colossians 1:13-14, and Romans 6:22?

c. How is the work of Jesus greater than the work of Moses? Why did the author of Hebrews emphasize this for the original audience?

6. What is the significance of the “if” clause in verse 6? How does John’s teaching in John 10:27-29 impact the understanding of Hebrews 3:6?

7. Verse 7 also begins with, “therefore.” This time, the author is connecting us back to Jesus’ superiority over three people or groups. What are they (list the verses that support your answer)?

8. Hebrews 3:7-11 refers us back to people in Moses day, quoting from Psalm 95:7-11. List the warnings from the Holy Spirit in this passage.

9. How do you apply verse 13 to those in your community? What responsibility does a small group have to exhort one another to avoid hardening by the deceitfulness of sin? What are practical examples of conversations that should occur within a small group community? What conversations should your small group have with each other that you are avoiding?

10. According to verse 14, what is the evidence of our belief?

11. Break down the cause and effect in verses 18 and 19. Put them in your own words.



Apply It.

12. What “areas of wilderness” are you currently experiencing? How are you responding? How can you honor and obey God in this time?

13. What did you learn from the failure of the Israelites to continue believing God?

14. We have learned that there are serious consequences of disobedience. What are ways you can “exhort one another every day” as stated in Hebrews 3:13 this week?

Hebrews 4:1-11 :: Rest

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. 2 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. 3 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. 4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” 5 And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” 6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 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.” 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.



Getting Started

1. What additional thoughts or questions from last week’s study came up for you regarding “hardened hearts”?
2. In our study today we see many references to rest. What does real and total rest mean to you? What does it look like?
3. Looking back on last week, how would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is high) at achieving rest? Why?



Read it. Read Hebrews 4:1-11

4. Like chapter 3, chapter 4 begins with “therefore.” What is the “therefore” there for? What is the author connecting?

5. What is the author’s goal in this passage?

6. Verse 2 tells us that good news, the gospel, came to the Israelite's in the Old Testament as well as to followers of Christ in the New Testament. What is the Good News given in these verses?

Exodus 19:3-6

2 Kings 7

Psalms 62:1-2

Matthew 24:14

Romans 1:16

7. How does Hebrews 4 verse 6 restate truths from verses 4 and 5 and what new truths are introduced?

8. This passage uses the word “today” (verse 7) and the phrase “rested from his works” (verse 10). Does this mean that the passage is referring to both a present earthly rest and a future eternal one? What do the following passages teach you?

Matthew 11:28-30

Romans 5:1-2

Revelation 14:13

Revelation 21:1-4

9. How could Hebrews 4:7 be written to Park today? To your small group?



Apply It

10. Only those who have heard and believed the good news can enter God's rest, and you are charged with bringing that good news to the nations. Park's vision is "to be a Biblical community that transforms lives, renews the city, and impacts the world." How can you be more involved to impact the world? (contact Park's Global Team for more information or next steps. tcork@parkcommunitychurch.org)

11. Read Psalm 62:1-2 and write down what this Psalm says about God's character. How can you put these verses into practice in a current trial or challenge you are facing?

Hebrews | Lesson 7

Hebrews 4:11-13

DO NOT
grow
WEARY

11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. 12 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. 13 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.



Getting Started.

1. How did praying Psalm 62 and focusing on the attributes of God affect you this past week?
2. As a child or an adult, can you think of a time you thought you could get away with doing something wrong since no one knew about it?
3. What are typical characteristics or actions of a public official who has been caught in some sort of scandal or breach of public trust?



Read it. Hebrews 4:11-13. What does the “therefore” in verse 11 connect?

4. Why is the author concerned that the Hebrew people not repeat the same disobedience of the past?

5. What did God promise the people of Abraham in Psalm 105:7-11?

6. What was the consequence of the people of Israel's disobedience in Joshua 5:6?

7. What is the "same sort of disobedience" the author is referring to in verse 4:11?

8. How do we define "rest" in our daily lives? How does this definition compare to God's Word of "rest"?

9. Are you actively striving for God's rest (v11)? How are you doing this?

10. Do you recognize when you become disobedient to God's Word? How do you respond?

11. Read verse 12 and circle every adjective. Write a synonym and antonym for each:
Synonym _____ Antonym: _____

12. Read Timothy 3:16-17 out loud. What does it mean for the Word of God to be "living" and "active"?

13. How does God's Word "discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart"?

14. Do you think there is ever a case when a heart cannot be changed? Why or why not?

15. Read John 9:39 and then verse 13 out loud. God can see our every intention, and what is inside our hearts—

d. Do we ever act like our heart intentions (for good or bad) are not seen by God? Give an example for each of the following:

- At Work

- At Home

- In a Relationship

e. How does that make us feel?

f. How do you think that makes God feel?

g. Can we reconcile this? How?



Apply it.

16. Read Psalm 119:1-16.

a. What does this Psalm teach you about the character of God?

b. What does this Psalm teach you about yourself?

c. How are we called to respond?

17. Form prayer groups of 2-3 people in your small group. Pray the truths of this Psalm for one another. Take turns praying one truth for the person on your right,. Fill in the blank with the name of that person.

Psalm 119:1-16

First person:

Blessed are _____ (list all 3-4 names) whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the Lord!

2 Blessed is/ _____ who keep(s) his/her testimonies,
who seek(s) him with their whole heart,

3 who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways!

Second Person:

4 You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.

5 Oh that _____ ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!

6 Then _____ shall not be put to shame,
having _____ eyes fixed on all your commandments.

7 _____ will praise you with an upright heart,
when _____ learn(s) your righteous rules.

8 _____ will keep your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me/him/her!

Third Person

9 How can _____ keep his/her way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.

10 With my/his/her whole heart _____ seek(s) you;
let _____ not wander from your commandments!

11 _____ has/have stored up your word in my/his/her heart,
that _____ might not sin against you.

12 Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach _____ your statutes!



DIGGINGDEEPER

What is a soul? What is a spirit?

What do you think the division of soul and spirit means?

The Soul is manifested in man and will continue on after our death, for good or bad. The Spirit is given to us by Jesus' sacrifice. A man "of the spirit" is one who has received the gift by believing in Yeshua (Jesus), the messiah, son of God as our salvation. Our souls meshing with the Holy Spirit promise us eternity in God's rest.



All (praying aloud in unison)

13 With my lips I declare

all the rules of your mouth.

14 In the way of your testimonies I delight

as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate on your precepts

and fix my eyes on your ways.

16 I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

Hebrews 4:14-5:10 :: Jesus the Great High Priest

14 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. 15 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. 16 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.

5 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. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 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”;

6 as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus[j] 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.

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

More on Melchizedek!

In Chapter seven's lesson we will learn more about Melchizedek



Getting Started.

1. Reviewing the past weeks' Hebrew studies, what have you learned and applied in your life? What has surprised you? What questions do you have?

2. How did last week's study and application of Hebrews 4:12 impact your week? "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."- If you were not conscious of the impact last week, how will you intentionally "live into" this truth this week?

3. Who and or what do you seek out in times of stress or trouble? Why?



Read it. Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

4. Read Lev 4:1-3, Lev 4:13-17 and Lev 4:22-24. The High Priests of the Old Testament were the only ones allowed to make an offering for others' sins. First they must make an offering for their own sins and the second animal was for the "peoples'" or "families'" sins. Jesus was the spotless lamb for all of mankind's sins.

When you read Hebrews 4:15 "...we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" what does truth does the author want us to "get" from that passage? Why is it important?

5. Why was it important that God sent his son to us in the form of a man?

6. How was Jesus able to sympathize with the Hebrews? How is He able to sympathize with you?

7. The author reminds the audience if they draw near to the throne of grace they will receive mercy and grace in time of need. Does that give you confidence to approach God or does it create fear? Describe how this practically impacts you?

8. Provide a dictionary definition for the words below:

Sympathize (verse 15):

Mercy (verse 16):

Grace (verse 16):

9. Read Exodus 28:1. Aaron, Moses' brother, was anointed by God as the first High Priest representing the Israelites. Read Psalm 2:7. What is the importance of being anointed to a position versus claiming or exalting oneself?

10. Read Genesis 14:17-24. What is God saying Jesus now represents? Will there ever be a need for another savior? Is it even possible? Why?

11. What does the writer mean by "in the days of his flesh"? What "priestly" activities did Jesus do while on earth?

12. Based on Jesus' example, what can you learn through suffering?

13. Was Jesus tempted by the same temptations we as humans are? How did Jesus respond to temptation? Be specific and use scripture to support your answer.



Apply it.

14. Jesus is the source of eternal salvation to all that obey him (verse 9).

- a. What excuses prevent you from obeying Him?

- b. Where are you struggling to obey Him? How can the truth of this passage speak to your challenge?

15. Paraphrase the following verse as a prayer to God as your High Priest who is able to sympathize, provide confidence, grace, and mercy. 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.

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:12 :: Warning Against Apostasy

11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 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, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

6 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, 2 and of instruction about washings the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 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, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 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. 7 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. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. 10 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. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.



Getting Started.

1. When you receive a gift with “some assembly required” do you read and follow instructions or just dive in to figure out how to use it?

2. How has your understanding of the doctrine of eternal security grown or been challenged throughout the Hebrews study?

3. How does your mood affect how attentively you listen and apply a message?



Read it. Read Hebrews 5:11-6:12

4. How would you summarize what Hebrews 5:11-14 meant to the original audience? How would you summarize it for someone reading it today?

5. Hebrews Chapter 6 lists a series of wakeup calls. Write down the warnings listed in this section. Which apply to you at this time?

6. Hebrews 6:4-6 has often confused and confounded those who are studying it. How would you explain this verse to a person who thinks a close brother or sister has “fallen away” from their salvation?

4 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, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 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.

7. What are examples of “willful negligence” in our culture?

8. How do you “crucify once again the Son of God”?

9. Are you one to quickly repent of sins revealed to you or does it take several reminders? Why? Describe a recent example.

10. Re-read Hebrews 4:15-16. How do the instructions for obtaining mercy and grace compare to the verses above?

11. What is the responsibility of every follower of Christ? How can you play an active and intentional role in your small group to better live that out?

12. In these verses the author brings back hope and salvation. Why did the author spell out a severe warning in verses 4-6, yet show confidence in verses 9-11 that his warning will not ultimately apply to his audience?

13. Laziness is a theme in Hebrews 6. The author sends a clear wake-up call to those who say they are believers; believers once dynamic in faith but now dull. There is shock value to be

found in this passage. It appears the author expects the reader to react with a “measure of fear” by “pressing forward and not giving up.”

What specific challenges do you find in verses 1-8?

What specific encouragement do you receive in verses 9-12?

How can you apply this passage in the upcoming week?



Personal Reflection & Application

(for personal reflection – you may share only if you choose)

1. Be honest. When reflecting on your recent pursuit of Jesus, are you drinking milk or eating solid food? What is the consequence (favorable or unfavorable)?

2. What can you do this week, to pursue solid food and bear fruit that lasts [John 15]?

3. Note: In next week’s lesson we will study the same scripture, diving into additional key emphasis of the text.

Hebrews 5:11-6:12 :: What is Discipleship?

11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 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, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

6 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, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 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, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 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. 7 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. 8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. 10 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. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.



Getting Started.

1. Describe a time where you demonstrated a lack of maturity.

2. How do you deal with immature people around you – at work, at school, or in your neighborhood?

3. Who has been influential in your spiritual growth? Have you had the opportunity to walk aside other followers of Christ as they grow in their maturity?



Read it. Read Hebrews 5:11-6:12.

This is the same passage you studied last week. This week, discipleship is our intentional focus.

4. Read through the passage. Write down the marks of an immature and mature follower of Christ.

Immature:

Mature:

dis-ci-ple

(written in a “dictionary” kind of way) A disciple loves and follows Jesus and invests in others to do the same. We previously studied this passage regarding the warning against apostasy. Reexamine Hebrews 6:4-7 under the context of the call to maturity. What does the passage suggest about this process of spiritual enlightenment?

5. What are marks and fruit of spiritual maturity? Use scripture to support your answers.



Apply It.

6. Park's three values are:

Pursue – pursue your relationship with Jesus

Connect – connect in biblical community

Invest – invest holistically – your time, talent, and treasure in the kingdom.

Take a moment to evaluate where you currently are. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being high, how would you evaluate yourself?



Pursue – daily pursuing my relationship with Jesus

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (high)

My next step:



Connect – consistently connecting in biblical community, living out the “one another” passages in scripture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (high)

My next step:



Invest – investing my time, talent and treasure in the work of the kingdom

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (high)

My next step:

dis-ci-ple

noun \di-'sī-pəl\

Definition: A disciple loves and follows Jesus and invests in others to do the same.

6. What attributes should mark a disciple as defined above?

7. Every follower of Christ is called to be a disciple (follower) and disciple (invest in) others. Who are you investing in as a disciple?



ac·count·abil·i·ty

noun \ə-,kau n-tə-'bi-lə-tē\

Definition of ACCOUNTABILITY: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to [account](#) for one's actions

8. Every follower of Christ is responsible to have accountability in their life. Park has developed 10 great questions to use when meeting one-on-one or in groups of three.

Take time to divide into groups of two or three of the same gender and begin asking a few of the questions below. Develop regular accountability relationships that meet at least two times per month.

Identify one area in your life where you would like accountability in the next week. Share that with your accountability partners.

1. Daily Pursuit. Have you had daily time reading the Bible? Has this time been meaningful? How is God speaking to you through his Word?
2. Prayer Pursuit. Have you been spending time in prayer? Are you listening to God's promptings?
3. Personal Pursuit. Have your interactions with members of the opposite sex been above reproach?
4. Have you exposed yourself to any explicit materials?
5. Circle of 3 Pursuit. How are you engaging and praying for your circle of three (three people you are intentionally engaging with and sharing the Gospel message)? What is the next step you can take to cultivate those relationships?
6. Discipline Pursuit. What are your personal and spiritual discipline goals? Are you fulfilling goals of exercise, healthy eating, sufficient sleep, Bible study, prayer, scripture memory, etc.?
7. Relationship Pursuit. How have you invested in significant relationships this past week? How are you growing deeper in your relationships with others?
8. Tongue Pursuit. Have you criticized, judged, or gossiped about others this week?
9. Stewardship Pursuit. What can you do to better steward your time, talent, and treasure?
10. Honest Pursuit. Have you been honest in all your answers?

Hebrews 6:13-20

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. 17 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, 18 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. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

More on Melchizedek: In next week's study we'll look into more history on mysterious Melchizedek.



Getting Started.

1. From last week's study, how did you take the next step in the area of Pursue, Connect, Invest? How will you be intentional this week in one or more of those areas?

Diving into this week's study, a note on Oaths:

"Oaths given and received in human courts have two characteristics. (1) They require an appeal to one higher in status than the oath-giver. This action lends the witness a credibility grounded in the worth or integrity of another. (2) Witnesses swear an oath given in court to bring about a "confirmation" or to provide a legal guarantee of a testimony's truthfulness, thus strengthening the case being presented."

The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews, George H. Guthrie

2. How do you respond when someone breaks a promise they made to you? How does that affect your trust in others?

3. Have you ever broken a promise you made? What were the circumstances? How did the other person respond?



Read it. Read Hebrews 6:13-20.

4. Reflect on the story of Abraham (verses 13-15). What can we learn from Abraham's example about having hope in God's promises? What would this have meant to the original Hebrew audience?

5. What can we understand about God's character when He issues a promise?

6. How does understanding God's promises change our understanding of Christ's ministry?

7. The first section of Hebrews 6 can cause some to believe we can lose our salvation. What words or phrases from Hebrews 6:13-20 state that God is not capable of changing his mind when it comes to salvation?

8. How would you explain verse 18, “it is impossible for God to lie” to a friend who is not discerning when they hear false teachers?



Apply It.

9. Review the first six chapters of Hebrews. Write down truths and attributes about the character of Jesus that is taught in these chapters.

10. What are some of the challenges we face in trusting God’s promise to hold onto the “steadfast anchor of the soul?”

11. For the upcoming week, what is one truth or attribute about Jesus that you will commit to intentionally focus on and pursue a deeper understanding of? Include a scripture reference.

12. How will that truth impact your week at home, at work, at school, in your neighborhood or other spheres of influence?

Study Writers: Drew Bogan, Courtney Mellinger, Mike Parrilla, & Scott Roth
Copy Editors: Natalie Wanders and Kurt Weissgerber
General Editors: Kevin Howells & Lisa Bishop
Design: Josh Burns



PARK

COMMUNITY CHURCH

1001 N Crosby St, Chicago, IL 60610

parkcommunitychurch.org

© 2013 Park Community Church. All rights reserved

Download more small group studies online at parkcommunitychurch.org/smallgroupstudies