

INTRODUCTION

STUDY WITH US

Welcome to Study with Us - Part 3 of 3. This booklet contains information and questions to help you study the book of Hebrews in depth. These questions are the same ones we ask in Gospel Community. If you're in a Gospel Community, please study these questions before your meeting. If you're not in one yet, why not join today and study with us in community?

HEBREWS

"Hebrews is one of the most beautifully written, powerfully argued, and theologically profound writings in the New Testament" - Timothy Johnson

The book of Hebrews is for followers of Jesus who have been worn down by the world and need to be reminded of the greatness and glory of Jesus. This epistle is a masterpiece of theology, imagery, and pastoral wisdom, intentionally woven to teach us about the redemption we have in Christ. This letter is written with both encouragement and warnings so that followers of Jesus would 'not grow weary or fainthearted,' but rather be courageous disciples known for their endurance.

ENDURANCE

"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised". - Hebrews 10:36

Hebrews was penned for weary urban Christians. The letter was written to encourage Jewish Christians (hence the title Hebrews) enduring a time of trial. Believers who were navigating pluralistic societies similar to our own. Christians who lived in cities where Jesus and Christianity were not respected or understood. The author wrote to persecuted Christians who felt discouraged and isolated, Jewish Christians who were tempted to either drift away towards worldliness or fall back towards Judaism. In response to opposition and persecution, the author of Hebrews encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus and the unshakeable kingdom he's ushering in. The author doesn't end this book by giving us a cosy blanket to wrap ourselves up in and hide from the world. No, it ends with a challenge to have faith that endures, to have a faith like the heroes of the faith.

BIBLE READING & CHALLENGES

To help you study and apply the book of Hebrews follow the reading plan below and complete the weekly challenges.

| WEEK | PASSAGE | THEME | CHALLENGE |
|------|--|---------|--|
| 11 | Hebrews 10:19-39 Psalm 95 Habakkuk 2:3-4 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" 10:22 | Stir Up | Call someone who you're inspired by and encourage them. Be specific in your encouragement, read out Hebrews 10:19-25 and pray for them. |
| 12 | Hebrews 11 Psalm 78 Genesis 15:1-6 "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice" Hebrews 11:4 | Faith | Read Hebrews 11 and then write out your own by faith paragraph based on your life. By faith [name] And then write down a by faith paragraph that you'd like to see. |

| 13 | Hebrews 12:1-17 Psalm 94 Proverbs 3:11-12 "but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness." Hebrews 12:10 | Discipline | Journal difficult seasons in your life, where God works through disappointment, disobedience of suffering to form you. |
|----|---|------------|---|
| 14 | Hebrews 12:18-29 Psalm 145 Haggai 2:6-7 "let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe" Hebrews 12:28 | Worship | Find the City on a Hill Hebrews Worship Playlist and spend time alone listening, singing and training your body and soul to worship. |
| 15 | Hebrews 13 Psalm 46 Isaiah 65:17-1 "Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality" Hebrews 13:1-2 | Love | Invite a neighbour, acquaintance or stranger to Christmas service or your house for dinner or a Christmas party. |

LET US...

SERMON

- 1. What were you encouraged or challenged by in the sermon?
- 2. What questions do you still have about this text?

READ HEBREWS 10:19-39

- 3. Focusing on vv19-25:
 - a. List all instructions (or exhortations) the author gives.
 - b. Can you explain each one in your own words?
 - c. What do you think this looks like practically, today? You might like to choose one instruction reflect on it more deeply.

4. This passage begins with a 'therefore'. It summarises the reasons the author has already given for us to live this way. List all the reasons he mentions in vv19-25 about why we should live this way.

5. **Reread Hebrews 10:26-31.** What do you think it means for someone to 'go on deliberately sinning after receiving knowledge of the truth'?

- a. Does that mean Christians never sin?
- b. Consider the following passages: Romans 7:21-25; 1 John 1:8-10; (Luke 17:3-4; John 18:15-27, 21:15-19). How do these passages relate to one another and to our current passage?

- 6. What do you learn about God from this passage?
 - a. Two qualities of God include his holiness and his justice. We don't often emphasise these qualities. How are you going at worshipping God for his holiness? And for his justice?
 - b. How might these characteristics of God have helped the readers to continue persevering in faith?

7. Reread vv32-39.

- a. What stands out to you about the readers' early experience as Christians?
- b. How might that have helped them continue in faith?

8. To sum up the author's argument, go back to your previous list about the reasons they have to live out their faith. Add as many other reasons as you can from the rest of the passage.

9. Which area of trust and obedience do you find most challenging to apply? (from the list in vv19-25)

10. Which reason do you find most motivating to persevere in faith? Why? How might it help you obey in the particular area you find difficult?

PRAY

THE HALL OF FAITH

SERMON

1. What were you encouraged or challenged by in the sermon?

2. What questions do you still have about this text?

READ HEBREWS 11-12:3

3. How does the Pastor describe faith (especially in 11:1-3)?

4. Look at these Old Testament characters. What did they do? Why did the pastor include them in? Feel free to read or skim the OT references (Spend 15 mins in this activity- it could easily take all day/night). If you've got time you could draw the characters on a piece of paper.

Enoch (Gen 5:21-24) Abraham (Gen 12:1-4, 15:1-6, 22:1-19), Sarah (Gen 18:11-5, 21:1-7) Jacob (Gen 49:1-27) Rahab (Joshua 2:1-24, 6:17-25) Barak (Judges 4:1-16) Samson (Judges 13-16 esp 16:26-30) David (I Samuel 17, 2 Samuel 7:1-17, most of the Psalms eg 18, 23, 51)

Were all of these "heroes" really that heroic? What does that tell us about faith?

5. Did all of the promises they see? Will we see all of God's promises fulfilled in our lifetime?

6. Where can it be hard to see the bigger picture of God's plans? What might be the weights and sin that entangles us (12:1) Or has there been a time where you previously struggled with seeing the bigger picture?

7. Read Hebrews 12:1-2. How is Jesus a better example of faith?

8. How is Jesus both the founder and perfecter of our faith?

9. What could it look like practically for us to keep running the race of endurance with faith?

PRAY

Reflect on what has encouraged you in your faith and/or where you are struggling. But don't stay there, spend time giving thanks to men and women of faith that have gone before us and praise Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith!

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

SERMON

1. What were you encouraged or challenged by in the sermon?

2. What questions do you still have about this text?

READ HEBREWS 12:4-17

3. What is the context of the struggle? How is Jesus' struggle different and similar to our struggle?

4. What does it mean that they haven't resisted to the point of shedding blood?

5. What does discipline mean in this passage? What is the purpose of it?

6. Who do you know that is disciplined in their faith? How has God used that discipline to know Jesus and make him known?

7. Can you think of a time when something painful or hard in your life eventually led to spiritual growth or maturity? How did God work through that situation?

8. Read again v12-17. What is the warning for Christians here?

9. Verse 15 talks about the root of bitterness. How might bitterness be destructive to Christian community?

10. Positively, what should Christian community look like in light of Hebrews 12?

PRAY

Pray for your Gospel Community and church community. Pray for each other and the hardships they are enduring, that we may fix our eyes on Jesus together.

THE UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM

SERMON

- 1. What were you encouraged or challenged by in the sermon?
- 2. What questions do you still have about this text?

READ HEBREWS 12:18-29

3. What strikes you most about this chapter?

4. On a sheet of paper draw two mountains. Name the first mountain "Mount Sinai" and the second mountain "Mount Zion". For each mountain, add:

- What do we know about this mountain? (Look through the Bible for other references if you have time).
- b. Why is this mountain significant? Why has the author chosen to compare these two mountains?
- c. What are the key differences between these two mountains?
- 5. Read Matthew 5:17. How does this verse link to Hebrews 12?

6. There is a lot of descriptive/vivid language used in this passage. **Reread Hebrews 12:18-29** and write these words down. What is the author trying to convey through this style of language?

- 7. In verse 25, the author warns readers not to refuse God's voice.
 - a. What does hearing God's voice look like to you? Do you find it easy, or difficult?
 - b. How can we ensure we are listening?

8. The world around us often feels unstable. What does this passage tell us about how to navigate our challenges?

- 9. What does it mean to "let us offer to God acceptable worship"?
 - a. Why do you think the writer chose the word "acceptable"?
 - b. What does this look like for you each day/week?

10. Read Revelation 21:1-4.

- a. What does this passage tell us about the "New Jerusalem"?
- b. How is this passage relevant in relation to Hebrews 12?
- c. What are you looking forward to about the new heaven/earth?

PRAY

THE CITY TO COME

SERMON

- 1. What were you encouraged or challenged by in the sermon?
- 2. What questions do you still have about this text?

READ HEBREWS 13:1-25

3. What are your initial impressions of this chapter?

As the author wraps up his message, he leaves his listeners with some final instructions on how to live in light of Jesus' sacrifice. This isn't new teaching, but reminders of what the community should already know, so he doesn't spend long on each topic.

4. Reread Hebrews 13:1-6.

- a. How do each of these instructions relate to continuing in 'brotherly love'?
- b. How do these instructions relate to worshipping God? (See Heb. 12:28).
- c. What are the key differences between these two mountains?

5. Look again at vv7-9 and v17. Why do you think they are called to 'remember', 'imitate' and 'obey' their leaders? What does this have to do with following Jesus?

6. How do vv10-16 help us continue in love and worship, even when it's hard?

7. Look back over the instructions given in this chapter. Choose one that stands out to you. How can you grow in obedience in this area?

8. Spend 4-5 minutes by yourself looking back through the book of Hebrews. How has this 'word of exhortation' shaped your understanding of Jesus?

9. How has it changed the way you worship God?

PRAY

Look at the author's prayer/blessing in vv 20-21. How can this shape our prayers for others?

