

BETTER

HEBREWS



TRINITY
CHURCH

Better: Hebrews

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Study 1: God Has Spoken

Hebrews 1:1-4

Launch:

- Have you ever heard someone say, “I would be prepared to believe in God if he would just show himself to me”? How does such a person usually want God to show himself?
- In what ways do you see people in the surrounding culture trying to experience spiritual things?

Read Hebrews 1:1-4

1. According to Hebrews 1:1-4, how and to whom did God reveal himself:

a. ‘in the past’?

b. ‘in these last days’?

2. It would be easy to overlook the incredible statement at the centre of this passage: God speaks! List some of the most momentous occasions God spoke in the Old Testament. Given the magnitude of those occasions, what is the implication for the significance of the claim that God has now spoken to us in his Son?

3. Verse 4 concludes that the Son is superior to angels, which were the previous messengers of God. Complete the table below to unpack the various characteristics of the Son that show why the Son is better:

Description	What does this tell us about...
'the heir of all things'	the Son's ability to inform us about how the world works?
'through whom he made all things'	
'the radiance of God's glory'	the Son's ability to inform us about God?
'the exact representation of [God's] being'	
'sustaining all things by his powerful word'	the power of what the Son says?
'provided purification for sins'	the Son's role in mediating between God and humanity?
'sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven'	

Application:

4. What does this passage affirm about the Old Testament? What is your practical attitude towards the relevance of the OT? How does this passage confirm or confront that?
5. How do you think your view of Jesus compares with that of the writer to the Hebrews? What do you find encouraging or challenging in this description of who Jesus is?
6. How would you answer a friend who says “If only God would come and show himself to me, then I would believe in him”?
7. What is one implication for the coming week if you want to know God in the midst of your everyday life?

Study 2: Listen To Jesus

Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Launch

- What do you think are the most common things that cause people to drift away from Jesus?
- Why do you think it is important for Christians to read the Old Testament as well as the New?
- What are some of the difficulties you have in reading the Old Testament and what are some tips you've found helpful for getting more out of it?

Read Hebrews 1:1-14

1. Divide the following sections up among the group as you briefly review the Old Testament quotations. Consider the questions with them, and report back:
 - a. Hebrews 1:5
 - i. Skim read Psalm 2. Who was the Psalm about in its Old Testament context? How does Hebrews 1:5 apply it?
 - ii. Skim read 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 12-16. This is God's promise to King David that one of his descendants will have an everlasting kingdom. How does Hebrews 1:5 apply this?
 - iii. What do these two passages teach us about Jesus?

b. Hebrews 1:8-9

- i. Skim read Psalm 45:1-9. This was originally a wedding song to be used at the king's wedding, recognising that Israel's king served as God's representative. How is the king described?

- ii. How does Hebrews 1 apply it?

- iii. What does this teach us about Jesus?

c. Hebrews 1:10-12:

- i. Skim read Psalm 102:1-5, 18-28. Who is the psalmist talking about in verse 25-27? What is the point he is making?

- ii. How does Hebrews 1 apply this?

- iii. What does this teach us about Jesus?

2. It might seem odd that the writer to the Hebrews should spend so much time arguing that Jesus is better than angels – until you realise the significance of angels in the bigger picture of God’s dealings with humanity:

a. What was the ‘message spoken by angels’? (Acts 7:37-38, 53; Galatians 3:19)

b. So why is it so important that the Son is greater than angels?

Read Hebrews 2:1-4

3. The implication of Jesus being greater than the angels is pretty simple: if it was important to listen to what God said through the angels, then how much more so to listen to what God says through Jesus!

- How might we, as 21st century Christians, be tempted to ‘drift away’ from Jesus?
- Do you feel like Hebrews 1:1-2:4 is more of a positive encouragement to stay close to Jesus or a negative warning not to drift away from him? Why?
- How might you help a friend who is drifting away from their faith in Jesus?
- Remembering that the writer seems keen to address the pressures for these early Christians to go back to the ‘popular’ and ‘familiar’ ways of life, how does this section spur you on to stand firm in Jesus?

Study 3: Jesus Is The Ultimate Human

Hebrews 2:5-18

Launch

- What are the most amazing human achievements you can think of? On the other hand, what are the lowest points to which you think humanity has sunk?

Our passage from Hebrews is basically a short sermon on Psalm 8, so let's read the psalm before we turn to Hebrews, with just one question to help set the scene for our study in Hebrews.

Read Psalm 8

1. How would you sum up the question of verse 4 in your own words?

There is obviously a lot more that we could learn from Psalm 8, but let's see how the writer of Hebrews refers to it.

Read Hebrews 2:5-9

2. In verse 8, the writer to the Hebrews points out something we can all see: Psalm 8 doesn't seem to reflect reality! We don't see everything subject to humanity. Can you think of examples of this problem in real life?
3. Take the time to read verse 9 closely:
 - a. In what way was Jesus made 'a little lower than the angels?'
 - b. What did he do to be 'crowned with glory and honour?'
 - c. Why did he do it?
 - d. So how does this address the problem identified in Psalm 8?

Read Hebrews 2:10-18

Verse 9 helps us see that Jesus is the ultimate human, fulfilling Psalm 8 in the way that none of us can. But that does little to help the rest of us if that is all that happens.

4. What is the big issue for humanity identified in verses 14-15? Where do you see evidence of this in the world?

5. [Extension question for those that want it: In what way was the Son of God 'made perfect' through suffering? To consider it another way, how did his suffering as a human make it possible for the Son to achieve his goal?]

6. So, according to verses 10-18, why did the Son of God become human?

7. This is pretty heavy theology! But it has massive practical implications for us:
 - a. How has Jesus freed us from the fear of death? Try to identify three different ways that might impact your life.

 - b. How does the truth of verse 11 and verse 18 help us in our struggles in the here and now?

 - c. How does the knowledge that Jesus reigns over all creation give you courage in the face of the messiness of life?

Study 4: Going Home To God

Hebrews 3:1-4:13

Launch

- Are you a sprinter or a plodder? What helps you keep your spirits up and your mind focussed when you're working on a long-term project?

We're tackling a big chunk in this study so we can see how it fits together. Most groups will not have time to read it in full, but it will be worth it if you can, or read the passage in the week prior to meeting. This passage ties together because it is one long engagement with some really significant biblical theology that goes right back to the Exodus from Egypt, through life in the promised land, looking forward to our hope of heaven. There are a few points where you can exit to application – right after the first few questions if you like, or after doing some Biblical theology.

Start with the context in Hebrews:

Read Hebrews 3:1-14

1. How does the writer address his audience in verse 1 and verse 6? Does he seem to assume they are Christians or not?
2. What is the warning he gives them in verses 12-13?
3. Looking at verse 1 and 14, what is the 'end' that the writer has in view?

At one level, we could jump from here to application (so if you're short on time, feel free to do so), but that would miss all the wonderful riches of this passage as all this is put in context of God's big picture. In fact, it is like a picture within a picture within a picture, as the writer to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 95, which itself refers back to episodes in Exodus and Numbers, which is put in the context of Genesis and all of that looks forward to our eternal home!! Really, they're all pictures of going home, so lets look at them together...

Hebrews 3:7-11 is a quotation from Psalm 95, but let's go further back to the story Psalm 95 refers to. It's all about the experience of Israel after God rescued them from Egypt where they had been slaves serving Pharaoh rather than free to serve God. God had demonstrated his amazing power in overcoming the oppressive rule of Pharaoh and promised that he was taking them to his land to enjoy life under his loving rule. The journey was going to be challenging – it would take a number of months through a difficult desert environment, but they had just seen God's great power and compassion, so what could possibly go wrong?

Read Exodus 17:1-7

We know from Exodus 16:1 and 19:1 that this episode occurs less than 3 months after Israel has left Egypt, during which time God has already miraculously provided for them. Before we are too hard on God's people, let's acknowledge the anxiety we'd all feel at the prospect of being stuck in the desert with 1 million other people and no water.

- a. How does Exodus 17:2-3 and 17:7 sum up the core issue?

- b. How does Hebrews 3:8-9 describe the issue?

- c. What does all this tell us about the Exodus generation's take on God's promise that he was taking them home to be with him?

Returning to Hebrews 3, in verses 10-11 the writer continues quoting Psalm 95 to describe another significant episode in the journey from Egypt to Canaan. This time Psalm 95:10-11 is referring to an episode from Numbers 13 and 14. The context is that God had led Israel right to the border of the promised land and then instructed them to send a scouting party to investigate the land (Numbers 13:1-2). They returned and gave mixed reports: the land looks great, but the locals are too powerful for us (Numbers 13:26-33). And that's where we pick the story up:

Read Numbers 14:1-35 (or perhaps just 14:1-10, 19-23 if you are short on time)

- a. What does verses 1-4 tell us about the people's trust in God?

- b. How does this stand in contrast to the summary of God's promise and God's power in verses 19-23?

The writer to the Hebrews now leads us through some wonderful Biblical theology as he shows how the lessons of the Exodus generation were applied to those who eventually lived in the promised land. This has implications for how we think about our own final home. It's worth reading all of 3:15-4:13 to see the flow of thought, or you can pick it up with a shorter reading:

Read Hebrews 4:6-13

4. To make sure everyone is on the same page, who is the Joshua mentioned in verse 8, and why is it significant that King David wrote psalm 95 long after Joshua's time?

5. What do verses 9-11 mean? How does this relate to the initial instruction of 3:1?

6. How do verses 12-13 stand as a powerful warning at the end of this section on persevering to the end?

Application:

- In what way were the Exodus generation an example of what not to be? How might we be tempted to fall into the same kind of sin?

- How does the Exodus generation illustrate 'sin's deceitfulness'? (verse 13) Can you think of examples of how sin deceives us with respect to God's promises and power? How does the encouragement of 3:1, to 'fix your thoughts on Jesus,' protect against this?

- How does this lesson from Israel's history help us heed the call to 'hold our original conviction to the very end' (3:14) as 'holy brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling' (3:1)?

- What does it mean to encourage each other 'as long as it is called 'today''? How could you apply this as a small group?

Study 5: Confidence In God's presence

Hebrews 4:14-6:20

Launch:

- Last week's study described heaven using the metaphor of the promised land with this life like the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. With this image in mind, what could prevent someone from making it to the promised land of heaven?

This study works from 2 bookends that surround a serious warning. Let's start with the bookends:

Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and 6:17-20

1. What does this tell us about where Jesus is?
2. How is Jesus described in relation to humanity?
3. How is Jesus described in relation to God?
4. What confidence does the writer say this gives us?

If your group is short on time, you could jump to application from here, but if you have the time there are some very important lessons for us in between these bookends...

With the end of chapter 4 introducing the idea that Jesus is our 'Great High Priest', the writer now expands on this to show how Jesus is unlike any other priestly mediator between us and God.

Read Hebrews 5:1-5

5. In verses 1-4 the writer sets out a few things about priests from the Old Testament that would have been 'common knowledge' to his original readers. How does this passage describe Jesus as similar to those priests and how he is different?

Read Hebrews 5:6-11

Here we read about a strange new character: Melchizedek. We'll look into him more in the next study, but for now it is sufficient to say that he was a priest who was of a different order from the regular Old Testament priests. That is to say, Melchizedek wasn't an ordinary priest, and Jesus isn't either.

6. What is the massive claim of verse 9 that set Jesus apart from all other priests in human history?

7. If verse 9 is true of Jesus, then what would be the consequences of turning away from him? Or, to put this in the context of the original readers of Hebrews, if verse 9 is true of Jesus and a recent convert from Judaism decided to cut themselves off from Jesus and return to the old priesthood, what would they be cutting themselves off from?

For groups running short on time, this is another point where you could turn to application, but for those with the time, lets dig into chapter 6 together. It's not easy, but it's worth it!

In Hebrews 6:1-2 the writer sets out some doctrinal matters that at first glance might seem quite advanced to us, but to a first-century Jew or someone who is familiar with that background, they are all very familiar Old Testament concepts. They are the basic principles that God made known in the Old Testament to set a foundation for the coming of Jesus: repentance from sin, faith in God, ceremonies to teach about holiness, laying on hands to designate God's leaders as priests and kings, the anticipation of resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment – they're all found in the Old Testament and they all point towards Jesus.

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:12, with the original readers of Hebrews in mind – readers who were feeling pressure to step away from Jesus and return to Old Testament thinking.

8. How would 6:1-2 have encouraged the original readers to pay attention to the Old Testament? How does it help us see the importance of the Old Testament?

9. How would 6:4-8 have warned the original readers who were considering cutting themselves off from Jesus? How does it warn us if we have the same thoughts?

10. How do verses 11-12 pick up on themes we've already seen in Hebrews so far, as a great encouragement to persevere in faith?

In all this, the writer to the Hebrews is a pastor who loves the people he is writing to and longs for them to trust in the promises of God that find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His point is simple: If we have Jesus then we have absolute confidence. If we do not have Jesus then we have no assurance.

Let's wrap up by seeing how sure these promises are, picking up at verse 12 again to see the link:

Read Hebrews 6:12-20

11. From verses 12-15, what is the example of Abraham? What was he promised and how did he receive it?

12. Verse 17 tells us that God is unchanging so we can rely on everything he says, but he wants to make sure we know how trustworthy his promises are, so 'he confirmed it with an oath'. According to verse 18, why did God do this?

13. On what basis can we be confident of inheriting the promise of heaven?

14. How do these final verses of Chapter 6 promote our trust in God?

Application:

The bookends of this passage provide two very powerful images to reflect on: From 4:14-16, the throne room of God that we can walk into with confidence and bring our requests to God. From 6:19-20, an anchor passing from our soul into the inner sanctuary of the presence of God.

Consider any of these questions to discuss and pray in light of:

- How do these two images encourage you in your standing before God?
- How do these two images encourage you to hold on to Jesus?
- In light of this passage and these images, how could you encourage a friend who is wondering about walking away from Jesus?
- What might it look like for you to approach the throne of grace with confidence this week?
- What warning have you had from this passage?
- What are you thankful for from this passage?

Study 6: A Better Priesthood

Hebrews 7:1-28

We might come to Hebrews 7 with all this talk about Melchizedek and wonder why we're looking at something so obscure. But if the writer to the Hebrews has mentioned him twice already (5:6, 6:20) and now devotes a chapter to him, we can be confident that he'll help us see something pretty special about Jesus.

Launch:

The microwave oven was invented in 1945, when a Raytheon engineer named Percy Spencer was fiddling with energy sources for radar equipment. Then, he realised that the chocolate bar in his pocket was melting.

In 1947 a Bedouin shepherd looking for a stray sheep wandered into a cave in the Judean Desert and stumbled upon a collection of ancient scrolls tucked away in clay jars. We don't know if he found his sheep, but we do know he made one of the greatest archeological discoveries of the 20th Century: The Dead Sea Scrolls.

- Have you had an experience where something unexpected or obscure turned out to be much more significant than you first thought?

Before we unpack what Hebrews says about Melchizedek it is helpful to understand some of the writer's 'assumed prior knowledge'. Fortunately, we don't have to read much of the Old Testament to get everything there is on Melchizedek because he's only mentioned very briefly in two spots. So let's meet Mel.

Read Genesis 14:17-20.

The context of this episode is that on the strength of the promise that God had given to Abraham (known as Abram at that point), Abraham has travelled from his homeland to Canaan where he settled in relative peace. However his nephew Lot got caught up in a regional conflict and was taken hostage by a coalition of armies led by the regional warlord King Kedorlaomer. So Abraham mounted a rescue mission and defeated the coalition. On his way home he bumped into Melchizedek... And what you've just read in Genesis 14 is all we know of Melchizedek!

A few things to briefly note:

1. What job title(s) does Melchizedek have?
2. What does Melchizedek give Abram?
3. What does Abram give Melchizedek?

Melchizedek is only mentioned once more in the Bible, in Psalm 110.

Read Psalm 110:1-7

A couple of questions to help us see the point that Hebrews will go on to make:

4. Who is this psalm about?

5. How would you describe his job title(s)?

6. What relation does he have to the Levitical priesthood? How is he a 'step-up' from the Levitical priesthood?

Turning to Hebrews, Jesus was first described as a priest right back in Hebrews 2:17-18. But for those who have grown up with the Jewish law, there is a massive problem with this: Jesus wasn't born in the right family line. He was in the tribe of Judah, a descendent of King David, not the tribe of Levi and descendent of Aaron like all other priests. The writer to the Hebrews now turns to this obscure character Melchizedek to make sense of it all...

Read Hebrews 7:1-28

In verses 1-2 the writer gives us a Hebrew lesson to show that Melchizedek was both priest and king:

'melchi' = king

'zedek' = righteousness

'Salem' = peace

7. What difference does it make that Jesus is king as well as priest? How does the imagery of Psalm 110 help us understand this?

8. From verses 4-28, what was the problem with the old priestly system? In each instance, how does Jesus supersede it?

9. Running through this section are a few mentions of the permanent nature of Jesus' priestly role. What evidence is given that this is based on his resurrection from the dead?

Application:

- Jesus didn't come as a social worker, a doctor, an engineer or a philosopher. He came as a priest-king. What does this say about the real need for humanity?
- For the original readers of Hebrews how would this picture of Jesus as mighty King and great High Priest have encouraged them in the face of social and family pressures to walk away from Jesus? What impact does it have on you today?
- Picture your week ahead at work, or home, or school. What difference does it make to you that Jesus lives forever as your priest and king?

Study 7: A Better Covenant

Hebrews 8:1-13

- The personal computer made typewriters obsolete. What are some other examples of inventions that were once useful that became obsolete? (And do you still own any of them?!)

Read Hebrews 8:1-13

Verses 1-5 introduce ideas that will be explored in the following two chapters, but verse 6 is the key point of chapter 8. The writer now has the longest Old Testament quote in a book that has lots of Old Testament quotes, so let's turn our attention to that.

1. How does verse 9 summarise the main problem with the old covenant?
2. How is the new covenant shown to be better in verses 10-12?
3. Verse 6 said that the new covenant was established on better promises. How would you sum up the 'better promises' as described in the quote from Jeremiah?

It's easy for us to miss the significance of all this. The writer to the Hebrews is pointing out that, after thousands of years of the old covenant waiting for God to bring ultimate change, God has finally done it in Jesus! The new covenant has come! This wasn't something that Hebrews was announcing for the first time (it was what Jesus was all about. See, for example, Matthew 5-7 or Matthew 26:28), but it was vital that people appreciated just how much Jesus changed things.

4. What do you think it means for God to write his law 'on our hearts'? How could you tell apart a member of the old covenant and a member of the new covenant by the way they treated God's commands?

5. Why might we be tempted to return to 'old covenant' way of thinking with rules and regulations? What does the gospel of Jesus call us to do instead of just obeying rules?

6. What do you think it means that God no longer 'remembers' our sin? How does this help us when we feel regret?

7. The point of chapter 8 is not just to highlight how good the new covenant is, but to keep showing us how good Jesus is. How does this chapter grow you in thankfulness for Jesus?

Study 8: A Better Temple

Hebrews 9:1-28

In April 2019 Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was almost destroyed by fire. There were scenes of national grief as Parisians came to grips with the loss of such an iconic structure. It had come to represent so much more than just another church. As French president Emmanuel Macron summed up, the building “is our history, it is our literature... the epicentre of our lives”. Buildings can certainly represent more than the bricks and mortar they are made of.

If Jesus was a new kind of priest, mediating a new covenant, there would be questions about the whole religious system that the old priests mediated under the old covenant. And that would have implications for the temple in Jerusalem – which could well have been described as the symbol of Israel’s history and literature, the epicentre of their national life and identity. Imagine the pressure on new Christians whose teaching about Jesus undermined such significant cultural values.

Read Hebrews 9:1-28

Try drawing a picture or even making a model of the tabernacle based on verses 1-7. Resources can be found at <https://visualunit.me/tag/tabernacle/>

1. After giving a brief description of the tabernacle in verses 1-7, how do verses 8-10 sum up the purpose of the tabernacle?

2. What impression do the design and function of the tabernacle give regarding our access to God’s presence?

3. What is ‘the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands’ (verse 11)? (see 4:14-16, 6:19-20, 9:24)

At first glance, verses 16-17 can seem confusing and we might find ourselves wondering how the example of a will relates to the need for sacrifice for a covenant. To understand this we need to appreciate that the pattern of sacrifice in the Old Testament. Entering into covenant with God required that the people acknowledge the consequence of their non-compliance with the covenant - their death - through the offering of a sacrificial substitute. (See Leviticus 16 for the clearest example of this).

4. With this logic in mind, according to verses 14-15 and verses 23-26 how does Jesus' death achieve something that no animal sacrifice could ever achieve?
5. How do verses 27-28 portray the universal significance of Jesus' death for all people?

Application:

Hebrews 9 continues the pattern of showing how much better Jesus is than the old system for relating to God. But there is something reassuringly tangible about a physical temple and regular sacrifices and a visible priestly system.

6. For those who didn't see Jesus die on the cross - like the original readers of Hebrews and like us today - what might be appealing about a system of physical rituals to try and access God?
7. We're unlikely to return to the sacrificial system of the Jerusalem temple, but can you think of ways we might be tempted to return to other physical practices to secure our relationship with God?
8. How does the universal significance of Jesus' death for all people spur us on in evangelism? How does verse 28 give further urgency to this?
9. How might you respond in prayers of confession and thanksgiving in light of this study?

Study 9: A Better Heart

Hebrews 10:1-25

- What has stood out to you from our study of Hebrews so far?
- What questions has it raised that remain unanswered?

Read Hebrews 10:1-18

1. This section draws together the previous comments about the Old Testament priesthood, sacrifices and covenant. How would you sum up the core issue with the old covenant that is outlined here?
2. How is Jesus' sacrifice of himself different from the sacrifice of animals?
3. What does it mean to have been "sanctified" or "perfected" through the sacrifice of Jesus' body (verse 10, 14)?
4. Verses 12-13 looks beyond Jesus' death on the cross to include his resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand, using phrases from Psalm 110. How does this reality of his resurrection and exaltation increase our confidence in Jesus' death on our behalf? (You may recall that Psalm 110 was previously quoted in Hebrews 1:13 and alluded to through Hebrews 5-7.)

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

This passage is a wonderful summary of so much that has come before, with three key exhortations for how we should respond. Take the time to consider the structure of this section and complete the following outline. Try to put each of the phrases in your own words to sum up what each means:

Since (verses 19-20)

And since (verse 21)

Let us (verse 22)

Having (verse 22b)

Let us (verse 23)

For (verse 23b)

Let us (verses 24-25)

5. What connections can you see among the three exhortations and what Christ has already done for us in the past, once for all?

6. How does each of these exhortations relate to the future?

7. How do these exhortations apply to us individually?

8. How do they apply to us as a church?

9. Are there any changes you need to make in your life as a result?

Study 10: Faith-Filled Perseverance

Hebrews 10:26-12:3

- What's your favourite event at the Olympics? (If you have no interest in the Olympics that's ok, just imagine you do and consider whether you'd prefer to watch the sprints or endurance events)

Read Hebrews 10:26-11:2

1. What do you think it means to 'deliberately keep on sinning' (v26) or 'shrink back' (verses 38-39)?
2. From this passage, what are the consequences of such behaviour?
3. How is it contrasted to living by faith?

The writer now spends Chapter 11 unpacking a series of examples of faith. You might like to read them all, or you could split it into sections to consider them in smaller groups.

Read Hebrews 11:1-16 (or just verses 13-15)

Read Hebrews 11:17-31 (or just verses 24-26)

Read Hebrews 11:32-40 (or just verses 39-40)

4. While many of these characters can be considered 'heroes of the faith' the Old Testament accounts of many of them record terrible occasions of sin. But what is the quality that the writer to the Hebrews highlights in all of them?
5. How do these examples challenge our perspective on suffering of various kinds?
6. How does this contribute to our understanding of what it means to live by faith?

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

7. In what sense do the people of chapter 11 'witness' or 'testify to' the faithfulness of God and his promises? How does this serve as an encouragement for us to 'run the race with perseverance (verse 1)?

8. How does verse 2 describe Jesus as the ultimate hero of faith?

9. How is Jesus more than just an example of faith, such that if we consider him the writer can assure us that 'you will not grow weary and lose heart'?

Application:

10. What things that are not necessarily sinful in themselves might threaten to distract you from the race marked out before you?

11. What sin threatens to entangle you and hold you back?

12. This section carries the implication that if we run the race before us with eyes fixed on Jesus we might 'miss out' on things the world offers or says we should hold dear. What might you 'miss out' on, and how can we encourage each other that it is worth the cost?

13. How does this section of Hebrews give us resources to respond in faith in the face of suffering?

Study 11 – A Life Of Worship

Hebrews 12:4-13:25

- What words and activities come to mind when someone mentions 'worship'?

Read Hebrews 12:18-13:25

With particular attention to Hebrews 12:18-29

1. What is the contrast being made here between the Old Testament people of God and those who have faith in Jesus? (See Exodus for background if you need.)

2. List any themes from Hebrews 1-11 that you can see in this passage. Note those that are already a present reality for us, and those that are still to come.

3. How are verses 28-29 both a wonderful encouragement and a stern warning?

Worshipping God 'acceptably with reverence and awe' is something that affects every aspect of life. It is certainly a lot more than just religious rituals!! Consider the following sections and how they highlight particular aspects of a life of worship. In each instance consider what might need to change in our lives as we consider how we worship God with all of life.

Read Hebrews 12:4-17

How does submission to God's discipline express our reverence of him?

Read Hebrews 12:13-19

What is the lesson drawn from Esau missing out on his inheritance, and how does it relate to our devotion to and worship of God?

Read Hebrews 13:1-4

How is this different from what our pagan society thinks of as 'love' and how does it flow out of worship of God?

Read Hebrews 13:5-6

How does this frame our thinking about money in light of our faith in God?

Read Hebrews 13:7-9 and 17-19

What is the role and importance of leadership? How does this relate to our church's shared submission to God's word and will?

Read Hebrews 13:15-6 and 18-21

How are praise and works of service both expressions of our worship?

Read Hebrews 13:20-21.

How is this linked to a life of worship?

How does it capture some of the big themes of the letter as a whole?

Finally, on the back page of this booklet, rewrite this prayer as a prayer for yourself, for your small group and for our church in light of our time together in Hebrews.

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21

For me:

For our small group:

For our church: