

A Study in Hebrews

Study Eight

Hebrews 10:24-11:10

Day One

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,

27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

v. 24 – We are in this walk together. I am only partially successful if I maintain my walk with the Lord, but do maintain it with those around me. Notice here that love and good deeds are linked together. We can only prove our love as we engage in good deeds. And stimulating others to good deeds must be strategic—I must give some thought as to how to do that.

v. 25 – I am always a bit amused by people who walk with the Lord, but don't go to church anywhere. They tell me, "I can worship the Lord just fine at home on Sunday with my family." That may be true, but that is not the standard that God has called us to. Jesus gave His life for the Church; can we do any less?

I will admit that it is often easier to maintain our love for the Lord without the interference of imperfect, often inconsiderate people. But Jesus called us to walk out our obedience to Him in the context of a church body, as difficult as that may be. John wrote:

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:19-21).

My love for God and walk with God will never be all that it can be unless I am learning how to express the love of God to other people, especially believers. If you are not in a church at the present time, I suggest you find one and join it, whether it meets all your standards or not. If your needs aren't met there, then make it your aim to meet the needs of others and trust God for your own until a better option comes along.

vs. 26&27 – I can't help but think that this reference is once again to those who would know Christ and then willingly walk away from Him in search of a better system or "deal" in serving God. There is no sacrifice for any sin at this time except for Jesus. Those who reject Him have no hope of a relationship with the Father. Rejecting Christ

would make the one rejecting an enemy of God. I don't think this verse pertains to a believer who willingly sins. A case in point would be Peter, who willingly denied Jesus, but found forgiveness and grace from Jesus. There are some who would disagree and you may be one of them. You would say that anyone in Christ could not *willingly* sin if they were rightly related to God. But I think of what Paul wrote:

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit (Romans 7:21-8:4).

There is grace for the sinner who turns to Christ; there is none available for those who refuse Him.

Day Two

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."

31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

vs. 28&29 – What strong language! “Trampled the Son of God,” “Insulted the Spirit of grace?” It is possible to think that because God is invisible He cannot be insulted or grieved. But God is a being and can be angered, offended or insulted. It is important that we not interpret this according to our sinful, human tendencies. If God is angered or offended, it is not because He has any inherent weakness or insecurity. Remember that Hebrews was written to those who were considering departing from the faith and returning to Judaism. To have done so would have insulted God. I do not want to ever insult God, do you? Then make Jesus the focal point of your life and walk with God.

vs. 30&31 – The writer quoted Deuteronomy 32:35-36 here. God will judge His people to preserve them from their and His enemies, and anyone who walked with Jesus and

then would turn back will be judged as an enemy. I don't want to ever meet God as my enemy. That would indeed be dreadful. The writer has turned from forceful pleading and biblical arguments to strong language to keep those considering returning to Judaism from doing so.

Day Three

32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.

34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

v. 32 – The readers of this letter had obviously paid a price for their faith at one point. They were subjected to suffering and intense pressure. Yet they obviously stood their ground. Any time you take a stand for Jesus, you will face opposition, sometimes of the most severe kind. Peter and John also wrote about this particular truth. Perhaps you need to remind yourself of this today:

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good (1 Peter 4:12-19).

Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death (1 John 3:13-15).

v. 33 – Sometimes the suffering is a result of a direct attack, and other times it is identifying with others who are under attack. To stand with someone else means that you have a close enough relationship to know them and what they are going through. That requires you to not only be in a church but to be in fellowship and relationship with those who are there with you. Do you have these kind of relationships with other believers? What can you do to develop them?

v. 34 – My “stuff” often has more of a hold on me than I would like to admit. I remember in 1995 when my computer and briefcase were stolen in a foreign country. I felt so violated and at such a loss. Then I remembered the great missionary to China, Hudson Taylor. I remembered reading how he had entrusted all his possessions to someone who was supposed to take them by boat to his next destination. He never saw his possessions again. I remember thinking after my own loss, “If Hudson Taylor could endure the loss of all to take the gospel to China, then I can endure this loss for the sake of my work in Christ!”

One sign that your “stuff” has a hold on you is whether you can give it away. I had a favorite shirt and I took it to Cuba when I ministered there. All of us left all our clothes there to help the saints, but I struggled leaving that favorite shirt. I felt I had to leave it, for a simple piece of blue cloth had a hold on me. I could not let that happen. Do any pieces of metal, cloth or plastic have a hold on you? If so, what are willing to do to break their hold?

Day Four

35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

37 For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.

38 But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."

39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

v. 35 – Confidence is something that is under our control. If the writer cautioned us not to throw it away, then that means we can throw it away. But our confidence in what? Our confidence in God’s word. Confidence that Jesus is the only answer to man’s addiction to sin. Confidence that what God said He would do in Christ He will do. How is your confidence level today? Have you maintained your confidence or have you allowed it to be eroded? Make a decision to get it back!

v. 36 – This verse presents an interesting progression. I want to receive God’s promises and **then** I feel like I can persevere. But God wants me to persevere in doing His will and then I will receive His promise. The problem is “then.” I don’t know how long the “then” will be. But after 30 years of walking with Jesus, I have learned that the “then” is almost always longer than I thought or wanted it to be! Are you in a “then” period? Are you waiting to receive God’s promise, doing His will faithfully in the meantime? If so, then be of good cheer! You are doing what’s called “waiting on the Lord!

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse (Psalm 25:3).

Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary (Isaiah 40:31 NASU).

“Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed.” (Isaiah 49:23).

If you are waiting on the Lord, you may be in a hard place, but you are also in a good place.

vs. 37&38 – It appears that the writer paraphrased Habakkuk 2:2-4 in these verses:

“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. ‘See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous will live by his faith’”

God’s promises always linger to teach to trust in Him and not the circumstances around us. They linger to teach us trust and faith. In this context, the opposite of faith is being “puffed up” or proud. There was a lyric to a song I heard that made so much sense. It went, “There’s only one thing worse than waiting on God and that’s wishing that you did.” Amen!

v. 39 – The word “shrink back” is where we get the English word “apostate.” This refers to someone who abandons the faith after having walked in it. So the writer here wasn’t talking about faith for finance or ministry (although you can apply the principle of faith to those issues), but rather about faith for salvation. And obviously there were some who were considering being apostate and it was to those that he addressed this letter.

Day Five

11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

v. 1 – We now begin one of the great chapters in the Bible (yes, I know—they’re all great; but some are greater!). Faith is being sure of what we hope for. Keep in mind that the context of the letter is faith in Christ. We can be sure of our salvation. I never give any thought as to whether or not I am saved. I know I am, even though I am saved by faith.

Is it possible to have than kind of certainty in other areas of life and our walk with God. I think so. God can so clearly show us something in faith that we can base our whole life on the certainty of that which He has showed us. I knew for 16 years that I would preach

although I had no opportunities. But I was so certain in faith that I prepared and visualized based not on the lack of ministry opportunities I had, but rather on the promise that God gave me. Today I preach all over the world because I had confidence and certainty of what God had spoken to me. I was sure of what I could not see.

v. 2 – God commended men and women of old for their faith and He still commends people of faith today. The rest of this chapter contains some of those commendations. I want God to commend me for my faith. I have said recently that I would rather die in faith than live in presumption or “un-faith.” How about you? What are you trusting God for that only He can do? What are you believing the Lord for that unless He comes through, you will look foolish?

v. 3 – Every theory of how the world began is just that: theory. Evolutionists talk with such certainty, but they weren’t there when the world began. So they have a theory although they talk like they know. I have faith and I believe that what I see came from what I cannot see—it came from God’s command. This is very important because God can still provide for you and me today through His spoken command, creating something out of nothing. He can create a job position for you where there wasn’t a job previously. He can provide for you through someone who has never been used by God. God speaks and the world “listens” and responds.

We are connected to all the resources in the universe through Christ. Our source is not the visible, but the invisible word of God. I put my faith in His ability today. How about you?

Day Six

4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

v. 4 – Is it interesting to you that Adam and Eve are not mentioned in the following faith accounts? They did nothing of faith that pleased God and are passed over in the faith commendations.

Cain brought an offering from the ground, which God had cursed. Abel brought an offering from the flock, which spoke of the shedding of blood and the forgiveness of sin. I don’t think Cain brought a few tomatoes and cucumbers. I think he brought a magnificent offering of the produce of the soil. That is why he was so angry when God rejected his offering. Cain brought something to God on his own terms and was rejected. Abel had faith and his offering was received. In fact, the faith in which he brought this

offering is still speaking to us today. Many want to leave their children a legacy. The greatest legacy to leave your children is a legacy of faith and trusting God.

v. 5 – Enoch’s story is found in one verse, Genesis 5:22; but what a story it was. Enoch was one who pleased God and we know from this current chapter that faith had to be his chief means of pleasing his Creator. So completely did Enoch walk in faith that he did not see death.

Now I’m not sure what all that means and what Enoch did exactly. But I know that Enoch had a lot less than you and I have. But he walked in what he had so completely and perfectly that he was a total pleasure to God his Maker. If Enoch can please God as such, what should you and I be able to do?

Oh Lord, forgive me for how short I come in fulfilling your expectations. I walk in so little faith, yet that is the very means by which I can bring pleasure to your heart. I choose to be obedient to you and ask that receive my faith vows as a pleasing sacrifice to you. Amen.

v. 6 – It is impossible to please God. There is nothing we have that He needs; nothing I can say that will impress Him; nothing I can build that will move Him. There is only one thing that can please God and that is when you and I put our hands in His and say, “I trust you.” Do that today.

The word anyone means just that: anyone. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. The word “diligently” speaks once again to the need to persevere and endure in seeking, to prove that your faith is real. God hides Himself at times not to punish us but to teach us to trust Him, to have faith in Him. When you continue your pursuit of God in the midst of difficulties, you please Him. What’s more, ultimately He will reward you. Press on, dear friend, and keep your trust in God. Don’t be deterred and you will be rewarded.

Faith is the currency with which we make transactions with God. Spend it wisely!

Day Seven

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.

10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

v. 7 – I always wonder what Mrs. Noah thought when Mr. Noah took over the front yard to build an ark—and it took him 100 years to finish! Remember that Noah had never seen rain so he had to walk in total faith and obedience to what he thought God was saying to him. Can you imagine the ridicule he encountered from those around him, perhaps even from his family, as he proceeded to build according to God’s plans and instructions? You may want to review his story as found in Genesis 6-9.

vs. 8-10 – God doesn’t owe us a full explanation of what’s ahead or where we are going when He commands us to do something. I have always said that if He did owe us that, He would have to apologize to Abraham, whom He ordered to leave his family and set out on a journey to an unknown place. If you had a full explanation you wouldn’t need faith and without faith, it is impossible to please God. So God only gives as much information as you need today and expects you to trust Him for tomorrow’s information.

Faith makes for an amazing study. That is why I wrote what I call The Faith Files, which studies every verse in the New Testament that has anything to say about faith, belief, unbelief and trust. You may access those studies at http://www.purposequest.com/bible_studies.htm. Think of Abraham’s faith. He had to leave the land that God gave him by faith on two occasions due to drought. He had to purchase a piece of “his land” in order to bury his wife. Any time he was discouraged, God would have him look at the stars and promise that his descendants would be more numerous than those very stars and all this while he was old and childless. Yes, faith is a fascinating study, but it must be more than a study. Faith is not a study or an event—it is a way of life! It never takes any less faith to progress in God—it always requires more.

As for verse 10, let’s look at what Adam Clarke had to say in his commentary:

[For he looked for a city which hath foundations] He knew that earth could afford no permanent residence for an immortal mind, and he looked for that heavenly building of which God is the architect and owner; in a word, he lost sight of earth, that he might keep heaven in view. And all who are partakers of his faith possess the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

[Whose builder and maker is God.] The word **technitees (NT:5079)** signifies an architect, one who plans, calculates, and constructs a building. The word **deemiourgos (NT:1217)** signifies the governor of a people; one who forms them by institutions and laws; the framer of a political constitution. God is here represented the Maker or Father of all the heavenly inhabitants, and the planner of their citizenship in that heavenly country. (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Biblesoft)

Have you lost sight of earth because heaven’s light is so bright? Are you a pilgrim, aware that you are looking for another city beyond the one in which you now reside? May the faith of Abraham reside in your heart and may you act in obedience according to that faith. Amen.