

LIFE Bible Study: Hebrews 10:19-39

For Discussion: What are the difficulties associated with long-distance relationships? How do you guard such a relationship and build it through the distance?

Read Hebrews 10:19-39

For review: In Hebrews 10:1-18, the author highlighted the importance of Christ's ministry, specifically the value and efficacy of His sacrifice. The animal sacrifices of the old covenant were not God's greatest desire from His people. They were a provision necessitated by the people's inability to keep the covenant's commands and conditions. Rather, God's desire is for His people to do His will. This was accomplished by Christ, who perfectly obeyed God and became the one offering that was able to take away sin and do away with the old sacrifices that were consigned to endless repetition. Having amply provided the reasons for confidence in their faith (i.e., Christ's superior priesthood, character, covenant, ministry, and sacrifice), the author gives a concluding exhortation for his readers to endure in that faith, along with a solemn warning to not turn away from the truths that had been given.

In light of their acceptance before God because of the ministry of Christ, the great priest, and the merit of His blood, the author exhorts his readers to respond rightly to their relationship with God that they now have through Him. What does the author invite his readers to join him in doing?¹ How can we follow the author's lead in each of these areas?²

¹The author makes three "let us" statements in verses 22-24 (ESV) that are directed at all believers, including himself.

¹In the charge to his readers to hold on to their confession and to help one another live their faith there is an implicit recognition of a vulnerability and need for each other to succeed (v.36). There was also an actual problem being addressed (v.25).

¹ Response	² Application
1. <u>Draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith</u> (Heb. 4:16) – We have better access to God and greater freedom to approach Him than the old high priests.	-Be bold in going to God with a true (i.e., sincere & loyal) heart because of the assurance that comes through Christ. -Value prayer & meditating on Him and take every available opportunity to do so.
2. <u>Hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering</u> (Heb. 4:14) – Hope is forward-looking and takes our eyes off this world, both the good and the bad, and puts them on what God will do. God's faithfulness is the basis for this confidence in His promises (v.23, Heb. 6:17-18).	-The prospect of inheriting the better and more abiding possession is something that can help us to endure (v.34). -Remind ourselves of these things and live in light of the sureness of their fulfillment.
3. <u>Consider how to stir up one another to love and good works</u> (Heb. 3:12-13) – Stirring up (agitating) is what one does to something that has become settled or inactive.	-We have a responsibility to one another in the body of Christ, the focus is not on ourselves but on others. -Have concern for the spiritual state of others and give our consideration/heart, efforts, and whatever else to spur them on.
3a) <u>Not neglecting to meet together</u> – We cannot most effectively live out and grow in our faith in isolation. Not to shame absences or encourage legalistic attendance-taking, it is about the attitude/desire of the heart (i.e., valuing the community of believers).	-Perseverance is to be pursued as a community, our gathering protects our faith. -Fight against the formation of a bad habit (a pattern built through repetition) before it becomes defining. Dismissing the gathering of believers had become a way of life for some.
3b) <u>Encourage one another</u> – With an eye toward the approaching Day. This includes both pointing others to what they should be doing and affirming them for what they should keep doing.	-We ought to ensure our meetings are marked by spiritual edification, not just gathering for the sake of social activities. -Be open with each other so it can be known where we need to be reproved and where we need to be encouraged.

²Faith focuses on God, hope focuses on God's promises, love focuses on others: Know God => Trust Him (i.e., believe His promises) => Let go of this world/life (i.e., value things rightly) => Be outwardly focused and sacrificial in loving others.

What is the Day that is drawing near and why is it important that we live in light of its approach (Heb. 9:27-28; 10:30, 35-36, 39)?¹ How does the author describe the fate of those who claim to have faith but live a life marked by deliberate ongoing sin?² Why is their punishment so severe?³

¹The Day is the day of Christ's return (Heb. 9:28).

¹When Jesus returns, He will bring deliverance and reward, but He will also bring judgment (Heb. 2:1-4, 6:4-8, 10:26-31, 39).

-Only those who persevere to the end will receive the promised reward and preserve their souls (v.35-36, 39).

-God is faithful to punish as much as He is faithful to bless (v.30), we can have confidence in this based on His character.

²The author issues here the most severe of his warnings, using strong language to describe the punishment that is coming.

-Transgressing the law of Moses resulted in a death sentence (Lev. 24:13-16, Deut. 17:2-7), but to fall into the hands of the living God is much worse (v.29-31, Luke 12:4-5).

²Those who go on sinning deliberately in the face of knowing the gospel truths are exposed as adversaries of God (v.27). **Many of our sins are committed in full knowledge that they are sinful, how is this different (v.26)?**

-They have not only renounced identification with other believers (v.25) but have refused Christ and His work. “Shrinking back” (v.38-39) is not being timid in the faith, it is apostasy – a total abandoning of God.

²Those who reject Jesus have no recourse for dealing with their sins (Heb. 6:4-8). There is no other sacrifice or place to turn to receive forgiveness. Unlike those who have Christ, God remembers their sins and acts against them (Heb. 10:17).

-These stand to face God’s just wrath (v.26-31, 39, Heb. 6:8), a fate that is called fearful (v.27, 31), a consuming fury of fire (v.27), and destruction (v.39).

³Jesus and His message are far greater than Moses and his message – Proportional punishment for offenses (Heb. 12:25).

³ Offended Party	Nature of Offense
Law of Moses (v.28)	Set aside (Rejected, NIV84) – The law’s validity and authority are denied.
1. Son of God (v.29) 2. Blood of the covenant (Jesus’ blood) 3. Spirit of grace	1. <u>Trampled underfoot</u> (Trampled under foot, NIV84) – Jesus is history’s victor and deserves to have everything under His feet (Heb. 1:13, 2:7-8, 10:13). Trampling means to regard something as worthless (Matt. 5:13 & Luke 14:34) => Contempt for the deity of the Son. 2. <u>Profaned</u> (Treated as an unholy thing, NIV84) – The nature of the One who bled that blood is holy, holy, holy (Isa. 6:1-3). Those who had once proclaimed Jesus’ death though partaking in communion now reject His work. 3. <u>Outraged</u> (Insulted, NIV84) – In forsaking the faith, the person and work of the Holy Spirit are rejected as well (Heb. 6:4-6, 9:13-14). The grace that God ministers through the Holy Spirit is attributed to evil.

³The sin against the law of Moses is described briefly and in terms that are less severe and less personal (i.e., rejecting an object not a person). The number of descriptions and terms used to describe the sin against God convey a much broader, more severe, and more personal offense.

-The regard for and treatment of the offended parties are completely opposite to what is right and proper. There is a devaluing of all of them with the offender sitting in the place of judgment.

Even as the recipients of the author’s letter faced difficult circumstances in their present and immediate future, he directs them to look to the past. What does he instruct them to recall?¹ How would this be helpful to them in the present?² What has God done in the early days of your faith that can be an encouragement to you now?³

¹The author reminds his readers of their past trials and how their response to them was demonstrative of the faith, hope, and love that he is now commending to them.

-Their endurance was on account of God. They were being encouraged to remember how God had been active in their lives. He had even enabled them to experience those struggles with joy (v.34) – Their eyes were on the right prize.

²Similar to elsewhere in his letter (Heb. 6:9-12), after issuing his warning, the author gave his readers a word of personal affirmation and confidence that the faith of those who had visibly transformed lives was genuine.

²The God who was previously at work in them is the same God who is with them now => He is able to strengthen them again.

³God was active in your life at the start of your faith – Recall the former days when faith was fresh and enthusiasm was high.

The author closes this section with a quote from Habakkuk 2:3-4 that sums up one of his main takeaways, “the righteous shall live by his faith.” Where do matters of faith intersect with the concerns of your daily life (1 Cor. 10:31)?¹ What does it look like to live by faith in these areas (2 Cor. 5:6-10)?²

¹View all of life as worship and choices as led by movement either towards God’s kingdom or to another one.

²Ask God to enable you to see beyond the veil of the world that is in front of you to the greater spiritual reality around you and to live in accordance with it => Valuing and hoping in what is momentarily unseen (2 Cor. 5:7).

²There is a constant return to God and a full dependence on Him to calibrate our focus to what has genuine lasting worth.

Reflection and application

Our relationship with God is now marked by confidence because the way to Him has been opened by Jesus, our great priest. In the author’s exhortations, he encourages us to exercise our faith in God and make it sure, going boldly to Him and holding firmly to the object of our hope, so that we can then take part in strengthening the faith of others with a recognition of the coming Day of the Lord. On that day there will be assurance on both sides, salvation and blessing for those who are Christ’s and just vengeance for those who have rejected Him.

In light of this, we would do well to carefully consider and prayerfully ask God to show us the state of our hearts before Him. It can be easy to be outwardly involved but not have true faith, to come before God but be captivated by worldly things and the concerns of this life, and to be in the midst of God’s people but be disengaged from the community and entirely self-focused. Be challenged by the author’s warning if your life lacks the fruit of true faith (Heb. 6:7-8). We are each to answer the call to perseverance, obedience, and the pursuit of a faith that is bold, a hope that is steadfast, and a love that is selfless.