



BE  
GOD'S

*Family*

**VOLUME 4**  
**READINGS, DEVOTIONS, POEMS**

*Fishers United Methodist Church*



# Introduction

Over the previous three years, we have taken a sweeping overview of the entire Bible with studies on the four Gospels (“Be with Jesus”), the rest of the New Testament (“Be on Mission”), and the Old Testament (“Be God’s Light”).

Now we slow down and go deeper. Our focus in 2025 will be on the New Testament books that focus on Jewish people who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Throughout the Bible, the Hebrew people are considered children of God, that is, His family. Through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, believers in Him are grafted in. Hence, this year’s study: “Be God’s Family.”

First, we look at the Gospel of Matthew, written for a Jewish audience who had become Christian. It draws on many Old Testament and Jewish traditions, texts, concepts, customs, and more. Matthew clearly points to Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah for the Jews and the entire world.

Second, we will spend several weeks exploring the book of Hebrews, which by its title alone is very Hebrew. This New Testament book examines the person and work of Jesus through the lens of numerous Old Testament people, practices, sacrifices, holy days, and more.

Finally, we will close out the ten-month study by examining two shorter New Testament books: Galatians and James. In Galatians, Paul addresses whether Jewish circumcision and the law of Moses are prerequisites to faith in Jesus Christ. In James, the brother of Jesus discusses whether works or faith are most essential to Christian living.

One of the great bonuses this year is that a number of people from our church are joining me in writing the devotionals for this study. They will bring fresh insights and perspectives to our devotion time. Each of them is engaged in training by me, a small cohort with one another, and personal prayer as they produce what you will read and reflect on. Make sure to thank them throughout the year as you are impacted by their words.

## There are several components to this year-long exploration:

1. **Daily Scripture Readings** – Actually, they are five days a week. Consider reading each weekday to anchor your day in Scripture.
2. **Daily Devotions** – These are written by others and me, and correlate with the daily Scripture to help you think more deeply about what you are reading.
3. **Daily Poems** – These are written by my sister-in-law, Rev. Dr. Martha FrizLanger. They will help you imagine the Scripture through poetry. This year, the poems will be based on a portion of a Psalm or other literature from the Old Testament that connects with the theme of that day’s New Testament reading.
4. **Weekly Studies** – These studies, written by my colleague Rev. Dr. Ben Greenbaum, are great tools for small groups and classes.
5. **Weekly Sermons** – If you cannot attend worship with us in person, you can always watch them online, visit [fishersumc.org/begodsfamily](https://fishersumc.org/begodsfamily) for easy access, or view them in the Fishers UMC app.
6. **Weekly Podcasts** – Ben and I and some special guests will spend some time each week dialoguing about that week’s readings, visit [fishersumc.org/begodsfamily](https://fishersumc.org/begodsfamily) for easy access or your favorite podcast platform.

The hope is that we are all drawn to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this study as One who is Holy, yet approachable through His kindness and salvation. All Scripture references are NIV unless otherwise noted.

It is my prayer that you will be motivated to embrace the fact that you are a child of God, called by Him to “Be God’s Family” in the world.

Enjoy the journey!

Rev. Mark A. Ellcessor

*Senior Pastor, Fishers United Methodist Church*



**6/16/2025 - WEEK 25 DAY 1**

## The Limitation of the Law

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:1-4**

### Devotional By: Dan Henke

How many times can you be baptized? I don't know if there is a prescribed number in the Bible; most of us find one is sufficient. However, I do have a friend who said he'd been baptized three times! My irreverent response was "What, the first two didn't take?"

The writer of Hebrews addressed the issue of sacrifices for sin under the Mosaic Law and had a similar observation. Those sacrifices were only temporary, if they were effective at all. They certainly were not a permanent solution to the question of sin. In Leviticus 4, Moses provided complex and detailed instructions to the people of Israel on the making of a sin offering of bulls, goats and lambs. Leviticus 16:34 states, "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites." The passage in Hebrews laments that year after year, the same practices were endlessly repeated. And yet mankind remained dead to sin, because the blood of animals cannot take away sins. Those sacrifices didn't take.

Jesus broke this endless cycle of empty sacrifice on the cross. It was apparent to John the Baptist; when meeting Jesus he exclaimed: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). This was in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12 "For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

We don't have to make ritual sacrifices devoid of meaning. Jesus' one incredible and amazing sacrifice was enough, once and for all. We only need to acknowledge, accept and repent.

Have you accepted the sacrifice Jesus' made for you?

### Poem

**I Fear Not The Arrows**  
Hebrews 10:1-4, Psalm 11

For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Psalm 11: 2-3

*I fear not the arrows  
Sure pointed at me  
For my God is my shield, He  
My portion will be  
For when arrows are set  
Held fast to the bow  
When enemies' tighten  
Their strings full stretched so  
Before their releasing  
Before they can fly  
My God has already  
Filled fully the sky  
With fire from the Spirit  
His defense for me  
Defending my weak soul  
And setting me free  
From all who'd accuse me  
From Law's punishment  
All covered by Christ's blood  
Sin's abolishment*





6/17/2025 - WEEK 25 DAY 2

# Christ's Sacrifice Made Us Holy

## SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:5-10

### Devotional By: Judith Gibson

"Be **holy** because I, the Lord your God, am **holy**" (Lev. 19:2). Such words can seem overwhelming to us who claim Jesus as our Savior. One writer defines being "holy" as someone or something who is "set apart for the use intended by its designer.... In the Biblical realm, things are sanctified or **holy** when they are used for the purpose God intends" (*Bible Study.com*). A person is holy, therefore, when he or she lives according to God's design and purpose.

However, the fact is that we are all sinners. Despite our best intentions, we are all going to sin and do things that we wish we had not done. In the old ceremonial law of Moses, the Jews had to offer yearly sacrifices to cleanse their sins. But when Jesus died on the cross for you and me, His blood was the perfect atonement required to cleanse us from our sins. The Jewish sin offerings were just a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice. "Then said He, 'I come ...to do thy will, O God.' He taketh away the first that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

Through His blood sacrifice, "ye are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (v. 10). Only one sacrifice was required. Jesus Christ brought His sacrifice once. He put away our sins once. And now those of us who believed in Him have all the benefits of His perfect work. We are to be holy people (C.H. Spurgeon from *Expositions on his Sermons*). God reminds us, "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6).

Living a holy life means being shaped by God's character. It looks like the life that Jesus lived. Jesus said that anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father (John 14:9), and we can know what God is like when we look to Jesus. It may seem overwhelming, but God has given us Jesus as the perfect example of how to live a holy life. We just need to yield completely to Him.

English hymnwriter Frances Havergal penned these words about living a holy life:

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my heart; it is Thine own...  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee....

How can we consecrate our lives to Christ every day? Are we able to show God's holiness through our daily actions and words?

### Poem

#### I'm Here - To Do Your Will Hebrews 10:5-10, Psalm 40

Then I said, "Here I am, I have come— it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart."  
Psalm 40:7-8

*The posture of a Glor'ous King full seated on the throne  
Is one of strength and power; authority His crown  
A scepter stretched to welcome allows the lowest in  
A fierce command, a ruling, make mighty shrink within  
A good King's hands bring blessing, abundance in the land  
An angry King, a cursing, great violence to expand  
The servants' postures, ready, to bid to King's wills voice  
The servants, empty of all pow'r, yield to the King's plans  
choice  
To do a menial task of care or summon to great conflict  
To sacrifice their own life's blood, or in long patience sit  
Despite the summons—small or great—the Servant must  
fulfill  
For love of King, a bowed reply, "I'm here—to do Your will."*

*And so, the Prince of Glory, great, for love of King and  
Father  
Submits to Great King's plan of course, "Redeem sisters,  
brothers!"  
He bows, assenting to the plan, and stripping off His glory  
Takes on the flesh clothes of the weak, to save salvation's  
story  
At every turn He harkens to the voice of Father's Spirit  
Each word and action, solely lived, His people to inherit  
He walks the path of righteousness straight, though the  
road be crooked  
He heals the sick, dines amid sin and challenges the wicked  
Each step He takes true to the plan of His Almighty Love  
While living 'midst the anguished cries, His ear to God  
above  
Until the crux, the suffering, harsh, brutal, faithful still  
"O, King, O, Father, O, My Love, I'm here—to do Your will."*

*The posture of the risen Prince, now seated on the throne  
Is one of honor, glory, pow'r, and wisdom fully known  
Because He sits at God's right hand to judge all who've  
shared life  
He knows each hair, each thought, each deed; He knows  
each hidden strife  
His scepter stretches 'cross the world; to offer life  
abundant  
It is His choice—tasks great or small—to usher in  
triumphant  
Not only Kingdom's greatest goals, but each soul which He  
saved—  
This is His great inheritance through conqu'ring death and  
grave  
So we, now baptized in His death, rise up, a mighty throng  
The servants of this blessed Prince, in battles to stand  
strong  
With law written upon our hearts, we echo Great Love 'til  
We lay our crowns down at His feet—"I'm here—to do Your  
will!"*



**6/18/2025 - WEEK 25 DAY 3**

# Christ's Sacrifice Made Us Perfect

## **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:11-18**

### Devotional By: Dave Rizk

My son, Joshua (a high school freshman), avoided me around the semester's end. When I asked him about his grade in Math (his favorite subject), he replied, "You do not want to know." I sensed the shame in his voice because he thought I would be disappointed by his grade.

At first, I warned him that school would continuously get harder and that he would need to grow. But I also reassured him that I would always be there with him, supporting and encouraging him as he continued to grow.

We will never be perfect, yet, as Jesus' followers, we are being made holy. Through His death and resurrection, Christ, once and for all, made us His new creation, whom God sees as holy. At the same time, He progressively cleans and sets us apart for His special use in our daily pilgrimage here. We should not be surprised, ashamed, or shocked that we still have room to grow.

God is not finished with us. We can encourage this growth process by deliberately applying scripture to all areas of our lives, accepting Christ's discipline and guidance, and giving Him control of our desires and goals.

**A Call to action:** Can you think of how to continue to grow and apply the scripture to all areas of your life?

### Poem

**How Good To Know**  
Hebrews 10:11-18, Psalm 9

*I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all  
my heart; I will tell of all your  
wonderful deeds. I will be glad and  
rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of  
your name, O Most High.  
Psalm 9:1-2*

*How good to know the LORD saved me!  
How good to know the LORD's grace!  
How good to know He willed to lay  
down His life  
"Once for all" saving our race!*

*How good to know all of God's precepts!  
How good to know life-giving law!  
How good to know, pondering fully,  
The ways in our lives which are flawed!*

*How good to know God's full  
forgiveness!  
How good to pass this to our friends!  
How good to know, even to enemies  
A grace that extends, never ends!*

*How good to know comfort in suff'ring!  
How good to know the Spirit's voice!  
How good to know whate'er may  
happen  
In everything—always rejoice!*





**6/19/2025 - WEEK 25 DAY 4**

**Draw Near to God in Faith, Hope and Love**

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:19-31**

## Devotional By: Kim Arnott

I was deeply drawn to verses 22-24 of today's passage. And I was reminded of the familiar words of 1 Corinthians 13 - "The Love Chapter" - when Paul says, *"And now these three remain: **faith, hope and love**. But the greatest of these **is love**."* (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Verse 22 calls us to draw near to God in **faith** having been baptized and cleansed. Faith is the *"assurance of what we hope for and the conviction of what we don't see"* (Hebrews 11:1). And our faith and confidence in the grace of God is where our salvation lies. *"You are saved by grace through faith, not by your own doing"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). And we are free to enter God's presence because of Jesus and His sacrifice. So, draw near to God with faith, confidence and an obedient heart.

Verse 23 challenges us to hold on to **hope** for our God is a faithful God. Life can wear on us with burdens and worries but the prophet Isaiah uplifts us with these words - *"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint"* (Isaiah 40:31). We have hope in the one who will never fail us. The one who will lift us high above the storm.

And finally, verse 24 pushes us to encourage others to **love** and do good. Paul tells us love is the greatest of the three virtues. The love referred to here is *agape* - that selfless, unconditional, universal love intended for each person, no matter who they are, where they come from, or even how they live. But this challenge goes even farther. We are told to encourage others to love as well. And the only way for this to happen is to be in fellowship and communion with other believers. We cannot do what we are called to do in this verse if we live in isolation. We need the love, support and encouragement of our church family to get through life's trials. Being in communion with other believers provides for mutual care, sharing of our faith stories and strengthening us as we daily live out our faith in Christ.

*"Two are better than one.....If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.....A cord of three strands is not quickly broken".* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Are there areas in your life where you need to be more diligent in faithfulness, hopefulness or love?

What do you gain from being in community with other believers? Or what is lost if we fail to surround ourselves with other believers?

## Poem

**O King, I Stand Before You**  
Hebrews 10:19-31, Psalm 17

*Hear me, Lord, my plea is just;  
listen to my cry. Hear my prayer—  
it does not rise from deceitful lips.  
Psalm 17:1*

*O King, I stand before You—  
I have nothing to offer You  
No gift in hand  
No honor  
No merit  
Save the precious blood  
And righteousness  
Of Your only Son  
My Savior and Lord*

*O King, I am bold with my request—  
It is small and insignificant  
When compared to Your glory  
When compared to Your creation  
When compared to others' suffering  
For why should You attend to  
My little sparrow life  
Yet because I come at Your Son's per-  
mission  
I stand boldly before You*

*O King, I know Your authority—  
You but say the word  
And all is put right  
And darkness is conquered  
And Your servant shall be healed  
I bring two, perhaps three  
Who with Your Will agree  
In the name of Jesus Christ  
Your beloved Son*

*O King, I trust Your goodness—  
You stand and fight for me  
Against all enemies  
Against all that would come for me  
Against all the storms of my mind  
'Show me the wonders of Your great  
love'  
'Keep me as the apple of Your eye'  
Confident to enter Your holiness  
O King, I stand before You!*



**6/20/2025 - WEEK 25 DAY 5**

## Confidence to Persevere No Matter What

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 10:32-39**

### Devotional By: Wilbur Sutton

When I read Hebrews 10:32-39 I remembered the choices the disciples made when they followed Jesus. I sometimes have felt that I didn't deserve the love and sacrifice Jesus made for me. I thought about times when I should have witnessed for Jesus Christ and did not do so. Maybe I thought it would take too long. Maybe I thought I might embarrass either myself or the person I would be witnessing to. Whatever the reason, I later decided that I made a mistake by not taking advantage of the opportunity to share. Now, I call those missed opportunities "practice" and I have decided that the next time I won't keep silent.

I think we have chances to share our stories with others and, in taking that opportunity, I might have to leave myself vulnerable. My story might be the reason another person might choose to listen to the Word. That might give them the incentive to give Christianity a chance (or another chance). They may have been turned off in the past. They may have rejected even listening to a sermon or a story. My being vulnerable might just be the opening Christ needs to reach that person.

I guess I may not have to risk my life to witness but I may have to let myself become uncomfortable sometime.

Dear Lord Jesus, give me the strength to not shy away from opportunities that you put in front of me to share my story and help others to see and hear about your love. Amen.

### Poem

#### I Am Confident!

Hebrews 10:32-39, Psalm 23

*Because the LORD is my Good Shepherd  
I am confident that He will supply my every  
need...*

*Psalm 23:1*

*On Spring days  
When winds blow  
When tornadoes threaten  
When dead branches are shaken and fall  
When rains flood  
I am confident in hearing my Good Shepherd's voice  
which can calm the storms  
I am confident, hidden in the depths of my Savior's heart  
I am confident new life is just waiting to become green  
pastures  
I am confident my Shepherd has set the boundaries and  
has me safe in His fold*

*On Summer days  
When sun beats down by day  
When plaguing pests swarm  
When heart's soil cracks from drought  
When the weedy cares of life threaten fruitfulness  
I am confident neither sun nor moon shall smite me  
I am confident oil will anoint my head  
I am confident I will be led to living water  
I am confident my Shepherd will release my horns from  
the brambles*

*On Autumn days  
When the harvest is white  
When the storerooms are bulging  
When the grapes and olives yield their juice  
When the days grow shorter  
I am confident there will be laborers to join me in the  
field  
I am confident a great banquet will be set before me  
I am confident I will see and taste the goodness of God  
I am confident my Good Shepherd will call me to Sab-  
bath rest*

*On Winter days  
When vines dry and shrivel  
When temperate friends become cold  
When warmth is scarce  
When hoary frost threatens life  
I am confident in the Vine in whom I abide  
I am confident I will never be forsaken  
I am confident the Spirit's Pillar of Fire will guide me  
through cold nights  
I am confident I will dwell safely in my Good Shepherd's  
fold forever*





6/23/2025 - WEEK 26 DAY 1

## Being Certain of the Invisible

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:1-2

## Devotional

By: Peggy Cooke

Hebrews 11 has become one of the most known and loved chapters on faith. It has earned the nickname the “faith chapter”. Hebrews 11:1 doesn’t just describe faith but challenges us to live it out. It is a foundation for understanding what it looks like to live with hope and trust God, even when life feels uncertain.

SO, FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR. What is the substance? Jesus! It is the work he has done for us. That is the firm foundation for us to build our faith on. There are valid reasons to place our trust in God. God is trustworthy and what he says he will do, he will do. The proof is in the Bible.

THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN. We have evidence of the things we hope for, but we have not yet seen these things. We might not be able to fully see, fully understand everything, but we can still be confident in our faith. We should live confidently in what Jesus has done for us. Faith is living confidently, trusting God’s promises will come true. It is trusting that things in the future and the things unseen will happen as God has revealed they will.

To trust God means that we listen to him even when it might not make sense. It means we follow what he says is best rather than listen to the voices round us and trust things will be made right for those who place their trust in him.

We are often tempted to live by what we see in front of us. When life isn’t going our way, it is easy to assume that God is not in control. We as Christians need to focus not so much as to what is happening around us but to look to what we cannot see. We need to look past our struggles and toward God and place our hope in him. As Christians we should cling to the promises that God has made. Rather than looking at what we can see, we should look to what God has done and what he has promised.

The reality is we all go through dark seasons. We will all face struggles, suffering, grief, and loss. And it’s in these times that we ought to cling to the hope we have in God. Jesus promised that he would be with us, that one day things will be made right, and that we will spend eternity with him. We have incredible hope in him. What are you clinging to?

## Poem

Assurance And Conviction  
[ὑπόστασις and ἔλεγχος]  
Hebrews 11:1-2, Psalm 26

*I have trusted in the Lord and have not  
faltered. Test me, Lord, and try  
me, examine my heart and my mind; for I  
have always been mindful of your  
unfailing love and have lived in reliance  
on your faithfulness. Psalm 26:1b-3*

*I stand under [ὑπόστασις]*

*The mighty protection  
The sacred room  
The love banner  
The blood painted doorposts  
Of my Father  
Fully assured  
Whatever comes my way  
I will be mindful—*

*Despite  
Tests  
Trials  
Temptations  
Or the snarling roars of my Enemy*

*Of my Father’s unfailing love  
Which was, is and ever will be  
My Assurance*

*I have the proven truth [ἔλεγχος]*

*The everlasting promises  
The eternal presence  
The firm foundation  
The Chief Cornerstone  
Of my Father  
Firmly believing  
No matter how long the wait  
I will live in reliance—*

*Despite  
Lies of the deceitful  
Assemblies of evildoers and hypocrites  
Dirty hands of the bloodthirsty  
Or Forty-on-forty*

*Upon my Father’s eternal faithfulness  
Which was, is and ever will be  
My Conviction*





**6/24/2025 - WEEK 26 DAY 2**

## God Created Everything from Nothing

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:3**

### Devotional By: Lynette Hart

This verse takes us back to the beginning. The very beginning. The very first verse in the Bible.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Genesis starts strong. There was nothing and God created everything. The heavens and the earth. The universe. In addition, everything in the universe. That is pretty big.

My husband loves space and astronomy. We have been to many planetariums throughout the Midwest. I have looked in many giant telescopes. I have watched many planetarium shows. I have looked at his telescope many times. I have absolutely no idea what I am looking at. I have no idea what they are talking about. I absolutely cannot comprehend the magnitude that they are talking about. These stars and galaxies are trillions and zillions of light years away. There are trillions and zillions of stars in the universe.

God created all of it. We are just one very little speck in this enormous universe. The Heavens and the Earth. Our faith tells us that God created it all.

I grew up in a suburb of Chicago. I'm pretty sure that growing up I never looked up at the stars in the sky. When Charlie and I moved to our current house, it was a little ways away from any neighborhoods. I was always amazed in wonder when I looked up and could see the stars. So many stars. It's easy to be overwhelmed and hard to understand where we fit in this giant universe.

But one thing that Hebrews 11:3 reminds of is that God created it all. God has the power. People have the faith that God created it all by His command. He didn't build something, but He created something and everything from nothing. More importantly is that God created each one of us. We do fit into this giant Heavens and Earth.

### Poem

**Everything From Nothing**  
Hebrews 11:3, Psalm 29

*Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.*  
*Psalm 29:1-2*

*From void to teeming  
From chaos to order  
From unseen to visible  
From invisible to revealed  
From sin to forgiveness  
From unbelief to faith  
From doubt to assurance  
From dead to resurrected*

*The voice of the LORD  
The command from His lips  
The Word being said  
Brings forth  
Everything from nothing*

*Abundance  
Creation  
Glory  
Strength  
Splendor  
Holiness  
Courage  
Life*





**6/25/2025 - WEEK 26 DAY 3**

## Abel – Our Ancestor is Faith

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:4**

### Devotional By: Kim Arnott

One of my hobbies is genealogy – tracing family history. This hobby combines a few of my favorite things – history, puzzles and storytelling. One lesson I've learned as I dig through family history and putting those puzzle pieces together is that every individual has a story to tell. No matter how seemingly insignificant. And through these stories, our ancestors leave a legacy for the generations that come after. Hebrews Chapter 11 is sometimes called the "Faith Chapter" as it highlights those from the past who are remembered because of the way their faith was reflected in their life and how they put this faith into action. These individuals have a story to tell and have left a legacy for us. They are our "ancestors in faith".

Abel is the first individual mentioned in this list of faithful ancestors. He is held up because the gift he offered to God was superior to his brother Cain's. Abel's gift was given with faith, a sincere heart and in devotion to God. And he gave from the "fat portions" – the best he had. This contrasted with his brother, Cain, whose offering displeased God. We're not told exactly why his was displeasing, but we can assume it was because he gave out of obligation and duty, without the same faithful and sincere spirit as his brother Abel. And it was not given out of the best of Cain's possessions. Was Abel's offering necessarily better than Cain's? No, but it was more valuable because of the spirit in which it was given.

But as the saying goes, "no good deed goes unpunished". Cain was so angry at the rejection of his gift that he took it out on his brother. He lured Abel out into the field and killed him – the first recorded murder in the Bible. Abel could be considered the Bible's first martyr. His goodness, faithfulness and unselfishness cost him his life. But we're told in Genesis 4:10 that "(Abel's) blood cried out from the ground". Abel was not forgotten – his story of righteousness and faith continues to speak to us through the generations.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., victims of the Holocaust, William Tyndale – these are just a few of the more recent names that remind us of those who lost their lives for a cause. Those who left a legacy of righteousness and faith.

What is your legacy? What will you leave behind for your children, your grandchildren and the generations that follow? May we live our lives in such a way as to leave a legacy for others. To live a life that might point others to Jesus.

### Poem

**Into Your Hands, Lord**  
Hebrews 11:4, Psalm 31

*Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.  
Psalm 31:5*

*Into Your hands, LORD  
My spirit I lay  
Into Your grasp, LORD  
Can none take away  
Upon Your altar  
I lay down my best  
Upon Your promise--  
Provision and rest  
Taking my cross, LORD  
Enduring all strife  
Taking Your sacrifice  
I gain new life  
Here let me offer  
My offering of praise  
Here, my best sacrifice  
To You I raise*





**6/26/2025 - WEEK 26 DAY 4**

## Enoch Pleased God

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:5-6**

### Devotional By: Bill Ringenberg

Two years ago, when my wife, Becky, was dying of Alzheimer's Disease, I asked her how she would like it if God would offer to come down in a chariot and take us both directly to heaven. We both (in our 80's and having lived full lives) agreed that we would readily accept such an offer. Enoch (Hebrews 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) are the only two people recorded in the Bible as having bypassed death in this manner. Although many other Biblical characters joined Enoch in this classic Hebrews 11 "Hall of Fame" faith passage, he was the only one of that illustrious group to be so honored. The text only reports that he "pleased God." We wish we knew more details about the nature of his faith.

Verse six of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews reports that God wants us to "diligently seek Him." Other Biblical passages reinforce this central idea. For example, Jeremiah 29:13 states, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." In other words, one is to want God more than anything else. The good news is that if you really want Him, you have Him.

The faith of chapter eleven is not an abstract, academic belief, rather, it is a commitment to obey. Note for example, Hebrews 11:8 states, "by faith Abraham obeyed." Also, in James 3:26, we see the emphasis on obedience as "faith without works is dead."

Enoch is noteworthy for more than his references in Hebrews 11.

Details of Enoch's fatherhood, age, faith and death are mentioned in Genesis 5:21-24. *When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*

He is also referenced in Jude verses 14-15 with a prophecy. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about evil doers: *"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

What do you see as the most important elements in "walking with God" both for Enoch in his time and for you today?

Faith is a very important but somewhat general concept. What specific elements characterize the modern faithful Christian?

### Poem

May I  
Hebrews 11:5-6, Psalm 39

*I said, "I will watch my ways and  
keep my tongue from sin; I will put a  
muzzle on my mouth while in the  
presence of the wicked."  
Psalm 39:1*

*May I please You, O LORD, as I reign  
in my tongue  
May I seek You quite early while I am  
still young  
May I keep my eyes set upon Your  
narrow path  
May I drown out all thoughts which  
be pondering wrath  
May I tune both my ears to Your  
wavelengths of love  
May I set guards against all that's not  
from above  
May I resolve 'fore battle to yield to  
Your will  
May I long meditate on Your Word  
and be still  
May I live open handed—receive and  
let go  
May I speak only truth in love, mercy  
to show  
May I run to the shelter of Your  
hov'ring wings  
May I ever and always to You only  
cling*





**6/27/2025 - WEEK 26 DAY 5**

## Noah Became an Heir of Righteousness

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:7**

### Devotional By: Nancy Foust

50 years—that is a very long time to build anything. It took Noah that long to build his ark to get ready for the floods that God warned him about. Think about that in biblical days: having a plan, getting supplies and finding people to help. All the while, many did not believe why Noah was so determined to build this ark. He believed in God's word. Many did not believe in God's word, coupled with the fact that they had never seen rain, (as stated in Genesis 2:5-6) making it very difficult for the general population to even understand such a phenomena – a flood lasting 40 days. Their lack of faith made it very hard to acquire any of his needs to create his safe place for the upcoming flood. Noah, being the righteous person he was, ultimately forgave all the disbelievers and endured until completion. I feel like that is some really strong faith!

How many times in your life have you had to accept people's negative opinion of something you are trying to accomplish? Having the confidence to endure until you succeed, passing many hurdles of friends, family and others, repeatedly saying, "Are You Crazy"? Most likely, you weren't thinking that this was part of God's plan for your life. Standing up for what you feel is right is what He wants to see you do. Also, to understand how to forgive those that are constantly negatively influencing your choices.

Noah became an heir of righteousness by believing in his faith and forgiving those who tried to stand in his way of creating his Ark. Believe it or not, you can also be an heir of righteousness when you are determined to succeed at a project many feel you cannot. In the end, believe in your faith, listen to God, and enjoy your success.

### Poem

#### Faithful Life

Hebrews 11:7, Psalm 35

*My tongue will proclaim your  
righteousness, your praises all day long.  
Psalm 35:28*

*With dream in my mind  
With God's plan in my heart  
With saw and with hammer  
While I'm set apart  
I'll build in the Kingdom  
Put brawn to the test  
Though mockers against me  
At Satan's behest  
Hurl insults and mockery  
My faith deride,  
I'll steadily work on  
The plan You decide  
As clouds threaten o'er me  
As thunder does roll  
I'll hunker down safely  
In my heart Your scroll  
I'll watch as the door of  
Your safe fold You close  
Throughout heavy flooding  
Your anchor, my hope  
Through forty and forty  
And sleepless night's prayer  
I'll naught let the tossing  
O'er shadow Your care  
I'll wait 'til I rest upon  
Great mountain's height  
And watch for the dawning  
Beyond peril's night  
Your promise stretched o'er me  
Your covenant true  
My life be Your altar  
With offerings to You*





**6/30/2025 - WEEK 27 DAY 1**

## Going Without Knowing **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:8-10**

### Devotional By: Elyce Meador

Faith- exactly what is faith? Websters Dictionary says it is "belief and trust in and loyalty to God" and "firm belief in something for which there is no proof". In the church, we use a combination of these definitions when we speak of faith. It is both a belief in God and a belief in something for which there is no proof. Abraham is a good example of faith and Hebrews reminds the reader of this. God called Abraham in Genesis 12:1 "Go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you." And Abraham followed. He was patient, able to look beyond his current circumstances, and had faith that God would keep his word.

How hard is being patient? How often do we wish that, like Abraham, God spoke directly to us? And yet he does - in 66 books he speaks to us. He tells us of his continued love for us. He tells us how he follows us wherever we may go. He tells us of the sacrifice He was willing to make for us.

Faith - the belief in something for which there is no proof. And yet is that true? Can you look at your life and say there is no proof? Can you read the Bible and say there is no proof?

Faith- belief and trust in God. They say seeing is believing, but faith asks us to believe without seeing. I look at my life in retrospect and I see God's hand all over it, but in those moments, both good and bad, I had to believe He was working. I had to trust that I was on the right path following Him. Faith.

Would I follow if God called me to leave my country, my people, and my family? It's a big question. Abraham followed and it took him to many places. He trusted that God would lead him ultimately to the promise God had made. Do you trust that God will keep his promises to you? Do you understand exactly what that promise is? Go back and read the four gospels (Matthew , Mark, Luke & John), and see that Jesus is the promise of God's love, and all we have to do is believe. Do you?

### Poem

**With You, I Go In Grace**  
Hebrews 11:8-10, Psalm 49

*Why should I fear when evil days  
come?  
Psalm 49:5a*

*You call me, LORD; I listen  
Though I not know the place  
Where You and I are traveling to  
With You, I go in grace*

*With You, my great provider  
Why should I fear the days  
Which might present some great  
unknown;  
With You, I go in grace*

*Around the corner lurking  
Great enemies seek prey  
Though they may plot against me  
With You, I go in grace*

*Perhaps a great adventure  
A blessing, promised place  
It does not matter future's fate  
With You, I go in grace*

*So, only with my sandals  
Eyes set, horizon's gain  
With staff to tread Your chosen Way  
With You, I go in grace*



7/1/2025 - WEEK 27 DAY 2

Never Too Old

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:11-12**

## Devotional By: Charlie Hart

Today's scripture reminds us that God kept His covenant with Abraham when Sarah gave birth to Isaac at the age of ninety. When Abraham learned that Sarah would conceive in Genesis 17, he responded by laughing. His immediate reaction makes sense in normal human terms as one hundred-year-old men and ninety-year-old women do not normally start families. Human terms, however, do not apply when God is involved. The writer was reminding the Hebrews that, through God, all things are possible.

As I initially started researching items for this devotional, I was drawn to the idea of mentioning notable accomplishments made by people in the eighth, ninth, and tenth decades of life. Peter Mark Roget published his Roget's Thesaurus at the age of 73 and continued to assist with later editions until he was into his 90s. Doris Haddock, affectionately referred to as Granny D, walked over 3,200 miles from Los Angeles to Washington, DC, between the ages of 88 and 90 to raise awareness for campaign finance reform. Warren Buffet, at the age of 94, continues to be the very active, hands-on CEO of the fifth largest American-based company. Anna Mary Robertson Moses, better known as Grandma Moses, began painting in her 70s and completed over 1,000 highly-regarded works by the time of her death at the age of 101.

All of these accomplishments are impressive and would be regardless of the age of the person completing it. God, no doubt, had a hand in all of these successes. These achievements should serve as motivators to those concerned that age could prevent one from trying something, but I sometimes look at it slightly differently. While the story of Abraham and Sarah can be seen through the prism of encouraging people of advanced age to attempt the impossible with the knowledge that God is always present, I think it also implores us not to wait to attempt something. Whether we are 10 or 100, we do not know when our last day will come. When embarking on a journey at any age, asking God for His presence makes the unlikely possible. God's plan for you is great, and there is no better day to work into it than today as He says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11).

Have you ever found your age to a limiting factor in achieving God's plan for your life? What factors are truly holding you back? Have you asked for God's assistance and guidance?

## Poem

### Promise

Hebrews 11:11-12, Psalm 48

*For this God is our God for ever  
and ever; he will be our guide even  
to the end.*

*Psalm 48:15*

*It matters less the promise  
But more the one who made the vow  
For words are thrown around these  
days  
Their follow through in doubt  
To make a vow is easy  
To keep one, very hard  
Security's reputation made  
By what's actually procured  
So, when you hear a promise  
Walk 'round its giver's base  
How steady is this speaker?  
How firm its history's face?  
How faithful is its past record?  
How true its full intention?  
How often must reminders come?  
How often must one mention  
Reminding of the promise?  
A Promise Keeper sure  
Is only God, eternally  
Our guidance to ensure*





**7/2/2025 - WEEK 27 DAY 3**

## A Better Country

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:13-16**

### Devotional By: Dan Henke

On March 26, 1979, I was with my college friends watching Larry Bird's Indiana State Sycamores face Magic Johnson's Michigan State Spartans in the NCAA Championship game. All of us watching the game were Hoosiers, not just by attending IU but by birth in our native state. All of us were rooting for Indiana State and Larry Bird as fellow Hoosiers. Except for that one guy, who was rooting for the Spartans. His loyalty was more to the Big 10 than to the state where he lived. After arguing with him, in exasperation I asked, "Do you live in the Big 10?"

Everyone seeks a place to call "home," as this passage states, "a country of their own."

The book of Hebrews is a case study in how God's New Covenant, secured by the blood of Jesus, is better than the old covenant. In Hebrews 4, we are told Jesus is the great High Priest, better than the priests of Mosaic Law. In Hebrews 8, we are told that our earthly attempts are poor imitations of Jesus' ministry. In Hebrews 10, Jesus's sacrifice is superior to the Mosaic sacrifices.

Another aspect of the New Covenant involves the "Promised Land." No less than 19 times in the Old Testament, the people of Israel were promised a land "flowing with milk and honey." But that land was a mere shadow of the Kingdom of Heaven promised in the New Covenant. The ancient Hebrews had to fight endless wars to gain, keep, and ultimately lose their Promised Land. We don't have to fight for the promise of a better country. It is given to us by Jesus' sacrifice and gained by our faith in Him and acceptance of his sovereignty.

Our citizenship in this "better country" is already assured. In John 18:36, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." In Philippians 3:20-21, Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

We don't have to live in the Big 10. We do still live on this earth for now. But Jesus cautioned us that our time here on earth is not where we should seek a sense of "home." "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...[b]ut store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...." (Matthew 6:19-20)

Where are you storing your treasures?

### Poem

**The Forward Journey**  
Hebrews 11:13-16, Psalm 125

*Those who trust in the Lord are like  
Mount Zion, which cannot be  
shaken but endures forever.  
Psalm 125:1*

*I will trust in God, my LORD  
His promises secure  
I'll not be shaken from this faith  
E'en foreign lands appear  
And as I journey as God leads  
Held faithful through the years  
I'll not look back on comfort's days  
With salty longing tears  
But with my eyes focused ahead  
Toward Zion I will go  
Trusting my Guide, His faithfulness  
Is all that I must know*



**7/3/2025 - WEEK 27 DAY 4**

## Abraham and Isaac

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:17-19**

### Devotional By: Elyce Meador

We continue to work through this word "faith." Abraham, called to sacrifice his son, had faith that God had only the best in mind for him. I don't know about you but I'm not sure I could have had the faith of Abraham. I look at my children and cannot imagine life without them. Could I sacrifice one of them if God asked? That is faith. Note that God did not, in the end, ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. God was looking for the willingness to follow. He looks for our being willing to accept the things we cannot understand and continue to have faith in his goodness.

Over 20 years ago our daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. It rocked my world. She was just 11 years old, and I was responsible for managing her illness. Now I don't think of myself as a detail person and I have never liked needles. I don't thrive on charts. Luckily I do like schedules. I remember standing in that hospital hallway sure that I was going to take my daughter home and end up hurting or possibly killing her. I didn't know how I was going to do this, but I knew I needed to. I sent a lot of prayers to God and then I just had to trust that He had given us the tools to manage all of this.

Faith – belief in what you cannot see. In the end, we managed, but more than that I came to see that God had given my daughter all the things she needed to live with this illness. It didn't matter that I didn't have them. My job was to believe in her and show her what God had given her. I would never want to choose which one of my children had a life-altering illness, luckily, I didn't have to. God, however, knew which one and he gave her everything she needed.

Belief in the things we cannot see. Faith. Abraham had faith, faith that God had his back, and that God kept his promises. Do you have this kind of faith? I know that I am a work in progress. When I find myself doubting, struggling, or just unsure – I try to stop and remember that God keeps his promises. He doesn't promise a long life, He doesn't promise riches, He doesn't promise health. He promises peace, love, assurance and to let us join him for eternity. I'll take that promise. You?

### Poem

**A Hymn Of Faith**  
Hebrews 11:17-19, Psalm 111

*[The LORD] has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate. He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.*  
*Psalm 111:4, 5, 10*

*In midst of trials and testing  
Cause memory to soar  
The promises You gave me  
Provision from Your store  
Your grace and Your compassion  
Your covenant so true  
May I face life's afflictions  
With wisdom-fear from You  
For You give understanding  
E'en when all seems as loss  
No matter height of mountain  
No matter wooden cross  
May I in full assurance  
Lay down what's loved by me  
And then await provision  
From Your own constancy*





**7/4/2025 - WEEK 27 DAY 5**

## The Power of Blessing

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:20**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

There is nothing like good old sibling rivalry. I grew up the third of four brothers. Tim is the one in line above me, six years older. When we played basketball, he would block all my shots. When he got his driver's license, I was stuck at home playing with Hot Wheels. When he graduated from high school, I was navigating my way through middle school. Whatever he had, I always wanted.

In the book of Genesis, Isaac had two sons who put sibling rivalry on steroids. Jacob, the younger, cajoled, deceived and manipulated his way to the top position. Their father Isaac blessed Jacob with words normally reserved for the oldest son. You can't blame dear old dad, as his eyesight was gone, and his judgment was fading.

Once Esau found out, he was incensed. The twirp had stolen his blessing. Isaac then gave a blessing to his oldest saying, "You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck" (Genesis 27:40).

I can just imagine my dad saying to Tim, "You will give your driver's license and car to Mark, and you will go to seventh grade for him."

Still, the writer of Hebrews looks at these blessings Isaac gave to his sons as steps of faith. Indeed, Jacob would be renamed Israel, and the entire nation came from his family line. Esau was angry enough to kill his little bro, but eventually reconciled with him, though his descendants the Edomites continually battled with the Israelites.

Let's consider the power of blessing. The words we speak over others can have power in their lives. When Lisa and I were raising our four daughters, I spoke these words into their lives as often as I could:

"I love you"  
"You are pretty"  
"You are smart"  
"You have God's favor"

Later I did similar things with our nephew Abraham when we were raising him. Now I am doing so with my grandchildren.

Be a blessing to those around you, and while you are at it, speak a blessing to them as well.

### Poem

#### The Lord Does As He Please Hebrews 11:20, Psalm 135

*Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good;  
sing praise to his name, for that is  
pleasant. For the Lord has chosen  
Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his  
treasured possession. I know that  
the Lord is great, that our Lord is  
greater than all gods. The Lord does  
whatever pleases him, in the heavens  
and on the earth, in the seas and all  
their depths.  
Psalm 135:3-6*

*Despite lies and deception  
Despite vain trickery  
God's will cannot be shaken  
His plan will come to be  
In faith, we sing God's praises  
By faith, we rise to bless  
In faith, we ask forgiveness  
By faith, we find deep rest  
For truly it is written  
God works all things for good  
This truth is held in myst'ry  
And oft misunderstood  
But for the true believer  
An anchor's hope this be  
To trust always, "the LORD is great!"  
The LORD does as He please*



**7/7/2025 - WEEK 28 DAY 1**

## Jacob and His Sons

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:21**

### Devotional By: Lynette Hart

When I began reading into this verse, I went back to Genesis 48 and the blessing of each of Joseph's sons. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons and declared them his own. He further blessed Ephraim with his right hand above Manasseh with his left, even though Ephraim was the younger of the two. This reminded me of Jacob stealing the birthright blessing from Isaac away from his twin Esau who was born first. Jacob declared that the younger shall have greater number of descendants than the older.

Jacob also declared the boys as his own. The tribe of Joseph was essentially split into two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. In later parts of the Old Testament, the tribes include the Tribe of Ephraim and Tribe of Manasseh, but there isn't a Tribe of Joseph. There is no logical reasoning to what Jacob did as it was all done by Jacob's faith.

In the second half of the verse, Jacob "worshiped as he leaned on top of his staff." His staff was very important to him. After Jacob wrestled with God at Peniel, he limped. This limp may have continued on the rest of his life. With a limp, his staff would have been vital to walk and live. But that staff would have been a reminder of that night when he wrestled with God and gained that limp. He would have had to learn to lean on this staff to walk, live, etc. Just as he had to lean on the staff, he learned to lean on God. He worshipped God as a broken man. Others saw this daily reminder of his weakness and his strength that he received from God. He did not and physically could not walk alone.

In some versions of this verse, the word "bed" is used instead of "staff". This is the end of Jacob's life and a time to rest and worship.

Much of Hebrews 11 ties back into Genesis and the beginning. I have learned that much of the New Testament can be tied to the beginning as this is what they knew in Jesus's time and that is what was used to teach new Christians. "By faith" is how so much of what they did in the Old Testament and what Jesus is calling for us to do today.

### Poem

#### **A Lifetime Of Prayer** Hebrews 11:21, Psalm 134

*Praise the Lord, all you servants of  
the Lord who minister by night in the  
house of the Lord. Lift up your  
hands in the sanctuary and praise  
the Lord. May the Lord bless you from  
Zion, he who is the Maker of  
heaven and earth.  
Psalm 134:1-3*

*As infant may I babble  
As infant may I raise  
My gurgling "Alleluia!"  
A joyful song of praise*

*In youth may I extol You  
Your precepts memorize  
Great hymns of faith be learning  
Obedience, my prize*

*As faith inside me deepens  
As Holy Spirit speaks  
May joy be my anointing  
May truth roots sink in deep*

*And when Your voice is silent  
May I keep love aflame  
Despite the darkness of a night  
May watchful I remain*

*Then as my eyesight darkens  
And on a cane I rest  
May I be still found praising  
And constant may I bless*

*And when You close my eyelids  
In sleep, full rest, repose  
Arouse, Your trumpet, my alarm  
Your glory, full disclose*





**7/8/2025 - WEEK 28 DAY 2**

## Joseph and His Bones

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:22**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

Hope for a better future is a powerful thing. It is a weapon against doubt. It is a tool amid turmoil. It is a vision for a better tomorrow.

At the end of the book of Genesis, the Israelites had moved to Egypt because of famine back at home. Their brother Joseph had welcomed them, providing security and food. But this would not always be so. A future Pharaoh would enslave the Israelites, and they would remain in bondage for four hundred years. To put that into perspective, four hundred years ago the Mayflower was arriving from England with a boatload of Pilgrims.

While Joseph could not have known all that would transpire in the coming four centuries, he spoke this God-inspired vision for the future: "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place" (Genesis 50:25). Four hundred years later "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19). And forty years after that "Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem" (Joshua 24:32).

Carrying and burying the bones of Joseph in the Promised Land represented the fulfillment of the prophetic vision that "God will surely come to your aid." God did. God always will.

Look at these prophetic promises from Scripture. They are filled with hope. Latch onto one and explore what it means for your future.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Jesus said, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

God said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

### Poem

#### Bones

Hebrews 11:22, Psalm 34

*The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.*

*Psalm 34:19-20*

*These bones  
Old bones  
Bones which have sustained  
Structure  
Posture  
Semblance to my frame*

*When bones  
Crumble  
Hold me to Your breast  
Carry  
Bury  
These bones home to rest*

*'Neath the  
Oak tree  
There may I be lyin'  
Safely  
Resting  
Buried, home in Zion*



**7/9/2025 - WEEK 28 DAY 3**

## The Baby on the Bus

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:23

### Devotional By: Mark Ellcessor

Newborn babies are the most helpless creatures on earth. Baby fish can swim right away. Baby horses can walk within minutes of birth. Most baby birds leave the nest only a few weeks after hatching. But baby humans take about a year before they can even take their first steps, and even then they cannot fend for themselves.

Think about the kids' songs. "Baby Shark" and "Baby Beluga" are action-packed. But what does the "The baby on the bus" do? Nothing but "Wah, wah, wah."

Moses was born into a hostile world. The Egyptian Pharaoh was so convinced his Israelite slaves might revolt and flee, that he commanded the midwives to kill every Hebrew baby boy that was delivered. This order of infanticide could not be defended by the helpless infant. All Moses could say was, "Wah, wah, wah." So, the mother of Moses took some action-packed steps of faith for her newborn son. It's all in Exodus 2:1-10.

First, she hid him for three months.

Next, she put him in a basket down by the river where Pharaoh's daughter bathed.

Third she sent Miriam, the older sister of Moses, to work out a deal with the princess for the baby's own mother to nurse him.

Finally, when baby Moses was weaned, she took her Hebrew son to the princess to be raised in the royal palace.

What faith! What Moses could not do for himself, his mother did for him.

We can relate. Matthew 9:36 demonstrates the heart of Jesus for people: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

And Romans 5:6 says, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

That's us. We are helpless. We are powerless. We are little babies whose only contribution to our own salvation is, "Wah, wah, wah."

Trust the Lord to deliver you! He is faithful to do it!

### Poem

**Cry!**

Hebrews 11:23, Psalm 28

*To you, Lord, I call; you are my  
Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me.  
For if you remain silent, I will be  
like those who go down to the pit.  
Hear my cry for mercy as I call to  
you for help, as I lift up my hands  
toward your Most Holy Place.  
The Lord is the strength of his  
people, a fortress of salvation for  
his anointed one. Save your  
people and bless your inheritance;  
be their shepherd and carry  
them forever.*

*Psalm 28:1, 2, 8, 9*

*Sweat  
Blood  
Sorrow  
Slave*

*Listen!  
Heed!  
Hasten!  
Save!*

*Danger!  
Death!  
Drowning!  
Cries!*

*Basket  
Pitch  
Prayer  
Sighs*

*Watch  
Wait  
Reeds  
Nile*

*Ark  
Drift  
Chosen  
Child*





**7/10/2025 - WEEK 28 DAY 4**

## Moses, the Prince of Egypt

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:24-27**

### Devotional By: Dan Henke

You can't say Moses led a boring, ordinary life. It was remarkable even from birth through his young adulthood. The son of a Hebrew woman, condemned to death by Pharaoh, hidden in a basket in the river, found by Pharaoh's daughter, and adopted into the royal family. Moses went from nothing to being the cousin of the ruler of the ancient world's superpower. But Moses never forgot that he was one of the people chosen by the one true God.

To honor God's sovereignty over his life, Moses gave up all the power, prestige and comfort that went with being a royal Egyptian. He lived in the wilderness as a shepherd. When the time came, God called Moses to be the shepherd of His people to lead them from slavery. God called Moses to challenge the most powerful man in the world. That sounds a little risky, doesn't it? And not without justification Moses balked at the offer. But Moses placed his faith in God's promise. God chose the right person for the job; Pharaoh did not arrest Moses or punish him. In addition to a sense of awe at the displayed power of God, Pharaoh just couldn't bring himself to harm the relative brought into the family. Pharaoh even granted allowance for Moses to speak.

Moses' relinquishment of power, prestige and comfort was not unlike Jesus, as described in Philippians 2:6-7

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

This passage is a high honor indeed for Moses. Hebrews does not denigrate the Mosaic Law and God's previous covenants; the Mosaic Law was not wrong or bad, it's that God has provided something better. This is consistent with Jesus' own statement in Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Faith is as much a part of the Old Testament as it is with the New.

Moses was not Christ. No human has ever come close and cannot because Christ's nature is Divine and perfect. But Moses could, and did, give up much to follow the path of the prophets that Christ came to fulfill. So can we.

What are you willing to set aside for the sake of Christ?

### Poem

#### Invisible

Hebrews 11: 24-27, Psalm 105

*Give us aid against the enemy, for  
human help is worthless. With God  
we will gain the victory, and he will  
trample down our enemies.  
Psalm 105:11-12*

*Invisible God,  
Make me invisible  
That I might hide  
In enemy camp  
For human help  
Is worthless*

*'Tis only You  
Can set a plan  
A steadfast heart  
Built in the sand  
Of fire-burning  
Desert*

*Bring victory!  
Your people cry—  
A Savior to deliver—  
Invisible, He dwells  
Invisible  
God*



7/11/2025 - WEEK 28 DAY 5

## Moses, the Deliverer of Israel

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:28-29

## Devotional

By: Susan Pressler

The book of Hebrews Chapter 11 contains meaningful information about living a life of faith. Today's scripture, verses 28-29, have only two sentences with a total of 49 words. These 49 words provide two key stories about the strong faith of Moses and the Israelites that is written in the Old Testament. As you reflect on these stories, think about the obedience and trust that was required by Moses and the Israelites to believe and to follow God's commands.

In Hebrews 11:28, Moses' strong faith in God was evident when he told the Israelites to put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts to save their firstborn sons in Egypt. Moses had trusted God that the Passover would happen. The Israelites had faith in Moses' and in God's words. They saved the lives of their firstborn sons by putting the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. This verse is a metaphor about trusting in the blood of the Passover Lamb; Jesus was the ultimate Passover Lamb for all of us.

In Hebrews 11:29, Moses' strong faith in God was evident when he listened to God's command and led the Israelites out of Egypt. The beautiful story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea to leave Egypt as commanded by Moses is told in Exodus 14:21-31. God commanded Moses to stretch "out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left" (Exodus 14:21-22). At the end of the night, "the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion" (Exodus 14:24). When the Egyptians tried to cross the Red Sea, the water flowed back into the sea and they drowned.

Faith is the focus of some of our beloved hymns, including "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."

"My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!  
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,  
O let me from this day be wholly thine!"

(Words by Ray Palmer, 1875; Music by Lowell Mason, 1831)

Take a few moments to pray for continued strengthening of your faith in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

## Poem

### Trusting God's View Hebrews 11:28-29, Psalm 105

*The Lord made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made the land dark—for had they not rebelled against his words? He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die. Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. He turned their rain into hail, with lightning throughout their land; he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country. He spoke, and the locusts came, grasshoppers without number: they ate up every green thing in their land, ate up the produce of their soil. Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their manhood. He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered. Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them.*

*Psalm 105:24-38*

*God sits above earth's timeline  
Each moment in His view  
The past is like the present  
The future His purview  
A century—A moment  
A twinkling of an eye  
A thousand ages in His sight  
Is like a breath, a sigh  
No matter when we plod along  
This earth we call our home  
It is "Today," it is "I AM"  
All is before God shown  
And so, dear gentle pilgrim  
Fret not, only obey  
For God is working all for good  
E'en when all seems delayed  
In faith, we like our forebear's  
Must wait upon our God  
Full trusting in His mighty works  
Creating all for good*





**7/14/2025 - WEEK 29 DAY 1**

# Joshua and the Walls of Jericho

## **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:30**

### Devotional By: Wilbur Sutton

When I read Hebrews 11:30 and Joshua 6:15-21, I understand the Hebrews trusted God to provide the city of Jericho to them. They marched around the city seven times for seven days. The Lord promised them the city after these marches. After marching, after sounding the trumpets and after shouting, the walls of the city fell and they conquered the city.

I don't have a city to conquer, but I do know the Lord has plans for me, and for you. We are put on this earth for a purpose. The challenge for me, when I understand a reason God put me here, is do I pray about it and do I really trust God to provide a solution?

I am an advocate for homelessness and for housing for all families. I am an advocate for both the intellectually and developmentally disabled. When I go to the legislature to advocate for the laws to change to support those needs am I truly trusting in God to provide the solution? When I share solutions or ideas for solutions with others, am I trusting God to make it happen? Do I trust God to provide what he's promised when he charged me with these tasks?

Dear Father in Heaven, I don't have any city walls to tear down, but I do have prejudice, unfairness, inequality and hate to overcome. Please guide those of us that you have chosen to trust in your power to conquer these issues. Guide us and give us your discernment to listen to the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to speak through each of us. Amen.

### Poem

**Some And Yet**  
Hebrews 11:30, Psalm 52

*Why do you boast of evil, you  
mighty hero? Why do you boast all  
day long, you who are a disgrace in  
the eyes of God?  
Psalm 52:1*

*Some look into the mirror,  
delighting in their frame  
Some point to their diplomas,  
position's right to claim  
Some boast in their great prowess,  
competing in life's game  
Some brag in their acquaintances,  
a chance to drop a name  
Some glory in their riches,  
a-counting all their stacks  
Some build great walls around  
themselves, sure none will e'er attack  
Some pour themselves in sporting,  
to gain their ribboned plaques  
Some spend their lives a-sculpting  
their physique to make impact*

*Yet let me be a little one,  
a tree within a grove  
Yet let me be a wanderer,  
a-walking toward my home  
Yet let me be a trusting one,  
a marcher 'round fierce walls  
Yet let me be a child of God,  
responding to God's call  
Yet let me be a boasting one,  
who's bragging is in God  
Yet let me be obedient,  
who knows the Shepherd's rod  
Yet let me be a hoping one,  
not seeking fortune, fame  
Yet let me be a waiting one,  
my confidence, God's name*



**7/15/2025 - WEEK 29 DAY 2**

# Rahab and the Spies from Israel

## **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:31**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

Everybody has some thorny, knotty branches on the old family tree. Matthew 1:5 says that one of the ancestors of Jesus was a woman named Rahab. A little research shows that she was a pagan prostitute who lived in the Canaanite city of Jericho. When Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, Rahab welcomed, housed, and aided the people of God as they were preparing to claim the territory.

Rahab was the last person you would have expected to be a reliable resource for the ancient Israelites and a forebear of the future Messiah. A woman – strike one. A Canaanite – strike two. A harlot – you’re out. Take your seat on the bench. Named “Rahab” – you’re thrown out of the game. Hit the showers.

The word “Rahab” was a mythical sea monster, used to reference the pride and arrogance of Egypt in the books of Psalms, Job, and Isaiah (think how we refer to people or things as a beast, monster, or other animals). Jericho was conquered by “Joshua,” the Hebrew name that is the same as the Aramaic name “Jesus.” Joshua’s relied-upon person on the inside? “Rahab,” basically the Loch Ness Monster.

Today’s verse says Rahab acted by faith. James 2:25 says, “was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?” Rahab acted by faith. She was considered righteous. It turns out that thorny, knotty branch on the Messianic tree produced some beautiful fruit.

Romans 3:22 tells us the righteousness of God “is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.” Your life is not the sum-total of your family heritage. Your legacy is not bequeathing of your accumulated successes. Rather your life and legacy are rooted in your faith in Jesus, producing righteousness on even the unlikeliest of branches.

### Poem

**Do You Know What It’s Like?**  
Hebrews 11:31, Psalm 54

*Surely God is my help; the Lord is  
the one who sustains me.  
Psalm 54:4*

*Do you know what it’s like?  
Discarded by life  
Ravaged by men  
Abused in shame  
Housed in contempt  
Awaking to another hopeless day*

*Do you know what it’s like?  
To receive tales of foreboding  
To hear of enemy’s strength  
To smell the fear sweat of your  
abuser  
To imagine a rescue  
To hope in another way*

*Do you know what it’s like?  
To risk safety for another  
To bargain for your loved ones  
To trust in a God you do not know  
To pray for the first time  
To think the cycle will end*

*Do you know what it’s like?  
To hear the battle cry at your  
doorpost  
To welcome the spy  
To gather your family  
To throw out a signal  
To faith beyond faith*

*Do you know what it’s like?  
To open your window  
To let in fresh newness  
To leap from your bed  
To see a new dawning  
To walk into promise*

*Do you know what it’s like?*





**7/16/2025 - WEEK 29 DAY 3**

## Old Testament Heroes of the Faith

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:32-34**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

In the first thirty-one verses of Hebrews 11, the writer covered in some detail acts of faith by some of the people in the first six books of the Bible. Then in these three short verses the writer summarizes the entire rest of the Old Testament. Just the mention of their names and actions would have captured the minds of the readers and listeners.

They were judges, kings and prophets. They failed in the flesh but flourished in the faith. They trusted God when there was nowhere else to turn. They were examples of the opening verse of this chapter: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Take a moment and think about the highs and lows of the six people mentioned by name in these verses. What do you learn from their lives?

Gideon (Judges 6-8)

Barak (Judges 4-5)

Samson (Judges 13-16)

Jephthah (Judges 10-12)

David (1 & 2 Samuel)

Samuel (1 & 2 Samuel)

### Poem

**In Your Right Hand**  
[Sung to the tune: St. Columbia]  
Hebrew 11:32-34, Psalm 63

*On my bed I remember you; I think of  
you through the watches of the night.  
Because you are my help, I sing in the  
shadow of your wings. I cling to you;  
your right hand upholds me.  
Psalm 63:6-8*

*Chorus:  
In Your right hand, my name inscribed  
My destiny secure  
For none can snatch me from Your  
grip  
My future You've procured*

*Though battle fierce, though justice  
scorned  
Though lions round me stalk  
Your promises allow me strength  
Confronted, I'll ne'er balk*

*Chorus*

*Though giants taunt and beat their  
 chests  
Though rulers, kingdoms rage  
'Tis in Your name I stand erect  
And hold ground unafraid*

*Chorus*

*And when I lay me down to rest  
'Tis of You I will ponder  
Remembering my place of peace  
Each vic'try, ever fonder*

*Chorus*



**7/17/2025 - WEEK 29 DAY 4**

## Other Heroes of the Faith

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:35-38**

### Devotional By: Elyce Meador

This is a challenging piece of scripture, mostly because we are not Jewish and do not know Jewish history well. In the Bible Study Series by William Barclay, he says that this scripture references the time between the Old and New Testaments, called the Maccabean period. During this time frame, a king came to power by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. This King hated the Jews and their laws. It appears his one goal was to rid the world of the Jewish faith and in his desire to do so, he killed and maimed many Jewish people when they refused to break their laws. The stories are gruesome but I would encourage you to read some about his atrocities. These were people of great faith, willing to give up their lives to save their faith. Because of people like these, the Jewish faith continued and Jesus was able to come for all of us.

Do you know of someone like this: Someone willing to give up their life so that belief in God would not vanish? If you are like me and have only lived in this country, probably not. Maybe you have heard of those in other countries who have struggled and sacrificed to share the faith. I admire these people.

When I read the history of this nation and slavery, I admire the slaves. A group of people who were mistreated, maligned, and tortured and yet had faith. You read of their faith and wonder if you would have been up to it. That is what the Hebrews did when they read this passage. They remembered all those who came before them and allowed them to practice their faith. It is what we should do. We should remember all those who came before us. I am a very lucky person and come from a family with a long history of faithfulness. There are no stories of punishment or torture in my family history. Yet, each one before me in my family continued the faith, shared the faith, and delivered it to me. What a blessing!

Who is responsible for your faith? Who led you to God? If they are still here, thank them. If they have passed, thank God for the gift they gave you. You will never know what sacrifices they may have made to give you the opportunity to believe.

### Poem

**I'm Not Worthy**  
Hebrews 11:35-38, Psalm 55

*Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. Psalm 55:1-3*

*Are you able, dear brother, to bear suff'ring's pain?  
Are you able, dear sister, Your name be defamed?  
No, LORD, for in You alone can I bear such great shame  
I'm not worthy to share in Your suffering*

*Are you able, dear mother, to stand 'neath a cross?  
Are you able, dear father, your loved child be lost?  
No, LORD, for in You only can I bear this great cost  
I'm not worthy to share in Your suffering*

*Are you able, my dear one, pursued and arrested?  
Are you able, disciple, your faith be full tested?  
No, LORD, for Your grace is all that can but sustain me  
I'm not worthy to share in Your suffering*





**7/18/2025 - WEEK 29 DAY 5**

## Something Better

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 11:39-40**

### Devotional By: Lisa Ellcessor

In kindergarten, my report card used grading symbols of E=Excellent, S=Satisfactory and U=Unsatisfactory. Sometimes I would get an "E" and life looked promising. When I received an "S," this was NOT the best news! Looking at my report card, I received "Excellent" on "I think for myself and solve my own problems" and "I respect others." But I received Satisfactory on "I work without disturbing others" and "I rest quietly." My kindergarten report showed positive areas and recommended areas needing improvement. The evaluation was promising, but there was something better ahead.

Chapter 11 of Hebrews is like reading a report card that grades the faith of the Old Testament Biblical heroes. Hebrews 11:2 states how God's people earned an "E" in faith! As we read the "It was by faith..." statements, we are encouraged. What could be better than historical faithful people and nations witnessing God's power, wisdom and miraculous deeds? Everyone listed gets an "Excellent" but then we come to the last two verses of Hebrews 11.

*"They were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."*

In other words, God wasn't done in the Old Testament. Faith existed, but God planned something better.

- What's better than the spoken word of God creating the visible and invisible universe shouting magnificence to Him?
- What is more excellent than a righteous young man giving a historical offering to God?
- What could be better than an old barren woman and her husband birthing descendants as numerous as the grains of sand?
- What report card wouldn't give an "E" to a rehomed baby boy unafraid to man up and forego Egypt's treasures for God's upcoming rewards?
- What's better than a nation walking by faith or an army marching in circles to win a battle?

The something better is Jesus Christ.

- Jesus Incarnate: God choosing to embody human flesh so we have insight into true love.
- Jesus Impeccant: Virtuous, sinless life filled with teaching, power and truth.
- Jesus Crucified: Punishment for our sin by dying on the cross while He prayed for us.
- Jesus Resurrected: Not even death could hold Him or us from eternal life.
- Jesus Benevolent: Generous promises of hope, love, peace and undeserved grace.

How do you grade your "faith report card" concerning God's promise through Jesus Christ? Is it Excellent, Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory? The something better IS our Savior Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

### Poem

**Something Better**  
Hebrews 11:39-40, Psalm 53

*Oh, that salvation for Israel would  
come out of Zion! When God  
restores his people, let Jacob rejoice  
and Israel be glad!  
Psalm 53:6*

*Something better, yet unseen  
Not within our lifetime  
When, O when, LORD  
Shall the new day  
Break upon earth's scene?*

*For Your time alone, we wait  
Longing for fulfillment  
When, O when, LORD  
Shall we know the  
Fullness, promise weight?*



7/21/2025 - WEEK 30 DAY 1

## Running the Race of Faith

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-3

## Devotional By: Kim Arnott

One of my daughters is a marathoner and running coach. My other two children run as well. Not sure where they got this – certainly not from me! I have learned from them there are certain qualities one must have to be a successful runner. And our scripture today compares our life in Christ to running a race.

First, one must establish a goal. It could be to run a marathon, or it could simply be to run just one block. But setting one's eyes on a goal is crucial to reaching the finish line. As Christians, we should always fix our eye on our prize. In all we do, it is important to constantly focus on Jesus.

Runners must train to achieve their objective. One must be disciplined to train properly and ready oneself for the competition. Our Christian life also requires training. By being in the Word regularly, having a robust prayer life, finding places to serve, attending worship regularly, and being in communion with other believers. We must be ready.

The support of others is critical. People cheering runners on, urging them to keep going and not give up. Encouragement and cheers from the sidelines as one approaches the finish line is crucial. In our faith, we are supported and encouraged by that "great cloud of witnesses" – those brothers and sisters in Christ who came before us, as well as those in community with us today. They set the example for us to follow. Our race is run together, in community, not alone.

Runners must have nothing to slow or weigh them down. They wear light-weight clothing and shed anything that might restrict movement. Even their bodies are lean and fit. As we run our race of faith, we also need to shed what gets in the way of our relationship with God. Throw off anything that distracts us like material possessions, toxic relationships, unproductive activities, fear, doubt, etc.

Finally, one must run with endurance and perseverance. Runners train very hard to build up their endurance. They push through obstacles and, sometimes, pain to finish strong. Our journey of faith is not a sprint but a marathon. And we have a great example to follow. Jesus has already run the race for us. He has won the prize, and his endurance should show us the way to stay the course and win the ultimate reward.

*"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me."* (Acts 20:24)

What is the goal of your life in Christ? How do you prepare for this life? Who do you surround yourself with? What do you need to throw off? How do you endure hardships?

## Poem

Running  
Hebrews 12:1-3, Psalm 56

*I am under vows to you, my God;  
I will present my thank offerings to  
you. For you have delivered me  
from death and my feet from  
stumbling, that I may walk before  
God in the light of life.  
Psalm 56:12-13*

*in, out—huffing, puffing  
deep panting, can't catch breath  
I'm running from my enemies  
pursuing me in death  
they taunt me as I'm running  
they are not far behind  
Lord, save me, I'm exhausted  
another hill to climb*

*in, out—huffing, puffing  
panting, take another breath  
what's that distant sound I hear?  
Love's witnesses in depth!  
cheering—hallelujah!  
I've almost reached my goal  
Lord, give me strength for one last lap  
Your second breath enroll*

*in, out—huffing, puffing  
I've made it past the line!  
though I'm collapsed, full on my knees  
Your victory now mine  
I join the other runners  
who've finished now the race  
we pop the cork—fruit from the vine  
and drink in saving grace*





**7/22/2025 - WEEK 30 DAY 2**

## Discipline of God's Love and Wisdom

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:4-13**

### Devotional By: Carlye Frye

I'm sure all of us, at some point, have faced a hardship, a correction, or some obstacle in our lives where things were just downright tough. Within the book of Hebrews, we are painted a very powerful picture of the discipline of the Lord. As children of the Lord, God's discipline shows us that it is not to intentionally hurt us, cause us pain, or break us, but more to transform us. In Isaiah 64:8, it says we, the children of the Lord are the clay, and God is our potter. We are all the work of his hand, molding us to be more Christ like as we continue through our faith journey.

When we think about some of our own personal hardships or obstacles, how many of us have had the mindset of, "I'm a failure" or "I can't do anything right"? God tells us that we can trust in him, his process, and that the struggles we are currently facing or have faced, are producing something greater, a harvest of righteousness and peace (Hebrews 12:11). God is working in us, in the moment, in the struggle. As we are enduring that hardship, that is God saying, "Trust Me" and have the Discipline.

As we go through hardships and obstacles, and as corrections come our way, let us be reminded by God's discipline, not as something negative, but as his love, care and wisdom of what is to come. Let us trust that he is our potter, and we are his clay, he is continually molding us so that our faith and character can continually be refined. As obstacles, hardships, and corrections come in your way, let it be an opportunity to foster peace with God, yourself, and others. May we seek God's wisdom to guide us in our response to difficult situations with a gentle heart, rather than anger, frustration, and hurt.

### Poem

#### Ready?

Hebrews 12:4-13, Psalm 66

*Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. Psalm 66:8-10*

*O Daughter, have you studied?  
You ready for the test?  
Did you just cram or deeply learn  
My precepts to digest?  
Are you prepared, great testing?  
Perhaps, oral exam?  
A written essay? Physical?  
Your faithfulness expand?  
Is your mind sword-like sharpened?  
Your weak knees wrapped in grace?  
Is your tongue used to bridle?  
Your path leveled for race?  
O Daughter, are you ready  
To face My loving test?  
Great discipline I'm sending—  
Refinement, this—your best*



**7/23/2025 - WEEK 30 DAY 3**

## Living a Godly Life

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:14-17**

### Devotional By: Nancy Foust

We are taught all our Christian life to live in peace and strive for holiness. These are not optional, but essential for experiencing God's presence and blessing in our lives. Many difficult life experiences get in our way and we must find a way through them. Prayer becomes a very important part of my life when I am feeling conflicted. Often it takes many prayers and lots of time listening for God to tell me what direction I need to head. Usually, I feel very comforted by His words. But when I think it is the wrong answer, I do my best to remember I have been taught to live in peace—so I must do as He is telling me.

Hebrews 12:15 states "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." All too often unresolved conflict and resentment can have a detrimental impact on us as individuals and our communities. Again, when conflict enters my life, I pray for His guidance to find a comfortable solution.

A few years ago, a new person entered our family as a step-parent. They had a very strong personality and wanted to alter the family dynamic we all had known for years. It was a "bitter root" to swallow. We all had to learn to accept the way it was going to be as it was driving a huge wedge throughout the family. Some accepted the situation as it was, others did not, creating a very divided family. Looking back on those times, if someone had suggested that we all pray together and ask for God's guidance, I think it might have ended up better.

If you want to live a Godly life as it should be, don't let those conflicts get in the way. Pray about them and listen for God's answer to resolve the conflicts, hopefully.

### Poem

**Righteous Examen**  
Hebrews 12:14-17, Psalm 58

*"Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth."  
Psalm 58:11*

*Dear Lord, as I review my day  
Please join my will with Yours  
Before I close my eyes tonight  
Did peace reign all my hours?  
Is there a grudge I'm holding?  
A bitterness, a root?  
Did I cause one to stumble  
In my own will's pursuit?  
Were all my thoughts pure, holy  
Or did I roll in dirt?  
Was I content to eat the pods  
Of pig sties here on earth?  
Dear Lord, sort out my wrongings  
Forgive me, make me clean!  
So I may rest in righteousness  
Your holiness, my dream*





**7/24/2025 - WEEK 30 DAY 4**

## The Mountain of Moses

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:18-21

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

It had been only ninety days since the Israelites left slavery in Egypt, escaped through the parted Red Sea, and embarked on a life of freedom. God told them, “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6). Everybody said they would do everything the Lord commanded. So, Moses went to the mountain in Sinai to find out what that was.

But only Moses could go. The Lord said, “Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘Be careful that you do not approach the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death’” (Exodus 19:12). The whole thing was encompassed by thunder, lightning, thick clouds, smoke, and earth tremors.

This was the Mountain of Moses.  
This was the Mountain of Fear.  
This was Mount Sinai.

Moses ascended the mountain of God to receive the Ten Commandments.

The people stayed in the valley breaking every one of them.

The writer of the book of Hebrews told the followers of Jesus they had not come to Mount Sinai. Faith in Christ is not about fear. Jesus is greater than Moses. The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

We are recipients of that which is better. Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). He also promised, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

We no longer must live at the foot of the Mountain of Fear. Jesus has provided something better!

### Poem

**Who Can Stand?**  
Hebrews 12:18-21, Psalm 76

*You are radiant with light, more majestic  
than mountains rich with game. It is you  
alone who are to be feared. Who can  
stand before you when you are angry? From  
heaven you pronounced judgment, and the  
land feared and was quiet— when you, God,  
rose up to judge, to save all the  
afflicted of the land. Surely your wrath  
against mankind brings you praise, and the  
survivors of your wrath are restrained.  
Psalm 76: 4, 7-10*

*They trembled with fear  
At the foot of the hill  
Upon which the LORD did  
Descend  
God gave forth the law  
And a covenant true  
Who can stand before such glory?*

*They trembled with fear  
As they sat on the mount  
Upon which the Lord did  
Reside  
Christ gave for the sermon  
And kingdom principles  
Who can stand before such glory?*

*They trembled with fear  
At the top of the mount  
Upon which the Lord did  
Transfigure  
God spoke from the cloud  
This my Son—listen to Him  
Who can stand such glory?*

*They trembled with fear  
At the foot of the hill  
Upon which the Lord did  
Die  
God tore down the veil  
And offered new life  
Who can stand such glory?*

*They trembled with fear  
At the crest of the mount  
Upon which the Lord did  
Ascend  
Christ gave a commission  
And a promise of presence  
Who can stand before such glory?*



**7/25/2025 - WEEK 30 DAY 5**

## The Mountain of Jesus

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:22-24**

### Devotional By: Mark Ellcessor

Yesterday we saw how Moses led the Israelites to Mount Sinai, filled with warnings and fear. Here we see how Jesus gave us Mount Zion, filled with promise and joy. Hallelujah!

The Mountain of Jesus is not one of trying desperately to legalistically keep every commandment flawlessly. That is what Moses brought down from Mount Sinai, instilling fear and trembling into the people. Rather, Jesus took us to Mount Zion, where He shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. The former is based on fear. That latter is grounded in faith.

When I was young, I was afraid to do anything wrong. First, I was afraid of my dad's cowboy belt. I can remember the sound of it being yanked through the loops of his jeans: "thwup, thwup, thwup, thwup, thwup." I don't really remember every being swatted with it. Just the audio-visual effects were enough to scare me straight.

But mainly, I didn't want to disappoint my parents. I knew they loved me. I knew they wanted the best for me. I knew they were in charge of me. I bore their name. I was their son. I represented them at home, at school, at practice, at church, when I was alone, with my brother, or with my friends.

Too often we look at God as a cosmic killjoy with an oversized cowboy belt, just ready to give us the what-for. Rather, we come to the city of the living God, to angels in joyful assembly, to the church of God in heaven and on earth, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant by His blood!

You can keep the Mountain of Fear.

I'll ascend the Mountain of Joy!

### Poem

#### Judgment

Hebrews 12:22-24, Psalm 75

*You say, "I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge with equity. When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm. It is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another. Psalm 75: 2-3, 7*

*J—Justice*

*U—Ultimate*

*D—Decision*

*G—God's*

*M—Meted upon*

*E—Everyone*

*N—Necessary*

*T—Thousands upon thousands*





**7/28/2025 - WEEK 31 DAY 1**

## **An Unshakable Kingdom**

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:25-28**

### **Devotional** By: Peggy Cooke

Have you ever felt the ground shake beneath your feet? I have and it was scary! I remember several years back we were out visiting our son and family in San Deigo. I was standing in the doorway of their kitchen and family room. Planes were constantly flying over the military housing where they lived. There were times when we felt a little rattle from the jets, but this was no rattle. As I was standing there the floor started shaking, pictures were starting to slant, and I gave our son a serious look. He proceeded to tell me that it was just a little earthquake and that it happens from time to time. Such a feeling of being out of control came over me. It was one of the most bizarre things I had ever witnessed.

Our scripture today tells of a time of judgement when God will shake the heavens and the earth. All our earthly treasures and our temporary man-made things will all fall. Everything will be falling apart according to God's schedule. The only thing that will be left is God's eternal kingdom. This is his pledge to us: the blessing of an unshakable kingdom. Jesus and his kingdom are the only thing that cannot be shaken.

So how do we receive such an awesome blessing? If you are in Christ, we are asked to serve with gratitude, reverence, and awe. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Live every moment for Christ because we will receive the eternal kingdom. This kingdom will encompass every righteous person that has been granted repentance, those that have been chosen in Christ, those that have been adopted into his family by sovereign grace, those that have been justified, sanctified and given new life.

Faith in Jesus is part of the unshakable kingdom. Fix not only your eyes but your heart, mind, and your everything on God. The nature and character of God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Will you be ready to receive your unshakable blessing?

### **Poem**

#### **Listen Up!**

Hebrews 12:25-28, Psalm 94

*Pay attention, you dull ones among the crowds! You fools! Will you ever become wise? The one who formed the ear can hear, can he not? The one who made the eyes can see, can he not? The one who disciplines nations can rebuke them, can he not? The one who teaches mankind can discern, can he not?*

*The Lord knows the thoughts of human beings—that they are futile. When I say that my foot is shaking, your gracious love, Lord, will sustain me.*

*Psalm 94: 8-11, 18*

*Listen up! While you still have  
Ground upon which to  
Stand*

*Shaken up! While you still delay  
Ground upon which God  
Created*

*Pay attention! While you still have  
Favor in the eyes of your  
Creator*

*Can He not! While you still trust  
Be gracious and sustain  
You*



7/29/2025 - WEEK 31 DAY 2

Love One Another

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:1-3

## Devotional By: Kim Arnott

How many of you went to church camp? One of my most vivid memories is sitting around the campfire and singing camp songs. Here are some lyrics to one of my favorites:

*We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.....  
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored.....*

*We will work with each other, we will work side by side.....  
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.....*

*And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
They'll know we are Christians by our love*

This passage from Hebrews is all about love! The love spoken about here is *philadelphia* (no not the city!). It's the love of our brothers and sisters and how we should care for each other. We are to love our fellow man but especially care for the meek, the helpless and those suffering from injustice – the “least of these.” Hebrews gives three examples of how we are to offer this love.

We are first to show ***hospitality***. Hospitality was valued in ancient times as travelers from here and there relied on the kindness of strangers. For us, caring for strangers includes opening not just our homes but our hearts and minds to the needs of others and making them feel welcome and loved. “*Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*” (Romans 12:13)

We are to ***remember those in prison***. Incarcerated individuals deserve to be treated humanely. And people can be imprisoned by so many circumstances, not just behind bars. One can be trapped in difficult relationships. One can be held captive by their aging and failing body. Addictions can feel like a prison. We are to remember these circumstances as if we were suffering with them. As if we were caring for Jesus. “*I was in prison, and you came to visit me.*” (Matthew 25:36)

We are to ***remember those who are mistreated***. Caring for and showing love to those being oppressed, neglected, abused or victimized is our charge as Christians. This includes people being mistreated over their race, religion, gender, nationality, or life choices. Christian voices are needed regarding justice and mercy – we cannot be silent. “*Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.*” (Psalm 82:3)

I read this statement recently – “*It shouldn't have to happen to you for it to matter.*” Our hearts should always be open to the plight of others. Empathy.... Compassion.... Love. That's what it means to truly live out the Gospel message. How are you showing hospitality, remembering those held captive, and supporting those mistreated? Do they know you are a Christian by your love?

## Poem

If You Truly Love  
Hebrews 13:1-3, Psalm 97

*Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.  
Psalm 97: 10-12*

*If you truly love God  
And you boast in His love  
You will truly love each, one another  
You will hate what is evil  
And cling to the good  
And extend grace to sister and brother*

*If you truly love others  
And you do good to them  
You will act as a child of the Father  
You will know righteous light  
And your heart be upright  
And God's grace through you shines even farther*





**7/30/2025 - WEEK 31 DAY 3**

## Keeping Pure and Content

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:4-6**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

I first became a pastor when I was twenty-four, just three weeks shy of my twenty-fifth birthday. I had a Master's degree in theology and a Kindergarten's worth of experience in life.

Though I was wet behind the ears, people came to me for advice simply because I was a minister. Throughout my twenties I counseled people through broken marriages, crushing affairs, busted families, mismanaged finances, and indebtedness up to their eyeballs. Out of desperation I purchased and read about ten books on Christian marriage, sexuality, and family, and another dozen on Christian finances, investments, and debt.

I don't know if I ever gave people advice that helped. But I did resolve to live a different kind of life than what was walking into my pastor's office.

It's helpful to remember that the book of Hebrews was written to Christians. Even the first generation of believers had to be reminded that their view of sexuality and money should be derived from God, not the world.

Think of it like a huge umbrella that we carry around all the time. One option is to move about under an umbrella labeled "Cultural Worldview." Under that our ethics and values are formed. Our secular lifestyles follow. The world approves.

The other option is to live day-to-day under an umbrella labeled "Christian Worldview." There we form Biblical ethics and values, and pursue a God-honoring, Jesus-centered, and Spirit-filled lifestyle. It demands sexual purity and financial contentment. The world laughs.

I often wonder what happened to those people who came to me thirty-five to forty years ago. Did they reorient their lives until they discarded the old umbrella and opened the better "Christian Worldview" one? Or did they continue to lug around the "Cultural Worldview" umbrella, to their own demise?

By the way, the "Christian Worldview" umbrella is 24/7, not just for Sunday mornings. And there's a 100% chance of rain.

### Poem

#### In You

Hebrews 13:4-6, Psalm 81

*But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.*

*Psalm 81:16*

*In You my satisfaction lies  
In You I am content  
In You all hopes will come to pass  
In You all angst relent*

*O keep me pure from evil ways  
O keep me in Your grace  
O keep me focused on Your path  
O keep me from disgrace*

*My praise to You be on my lips  
My praise begin each morn  
My praise for all your bounty borne  
My praise to You in song*



**7/31/2025 - WEEK 31 DAY 4**

## Remember Your Leaders

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:7-10**

### Devotional By: Doug Bromm

*"Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."*

Do you ever look back on your life and think about the things that occupied so much of your time and energy back then but mean nearly nothing to you now? Do you have any regrets about things you wish you'd done more of back then, but it is too late now?

Today's passage challenges us to look at the people who were Godly influences in our lives and "consider the outcome of their way of life." When I do that, a long list of names comes to mind. My list starts with my parents of course, Sunday School teachers like Mrs. Dwelle, and the pastor of my confirmation and high school years Stu Stephens. Thankfully, my parents are still with us, but I picture the broad smiles of Mrs. Dwelle and Pastor Stu as they met Jesus and He told them about the impact they probably never realized they had on a group of snot-nosed kids like us.

I know you are reading this devotional at the end of July, but I am writing this just days after Linda Williams' passing. I can just hear her hitting the high notes in the heavenly choir as she finds out just how many people came to Him after being served in the Pantry. They thought it was the worst experience of their lives when they had to come to the pantry for help after a job loss or unexpected bills arrived. They came in for food and they left with the Bread of Life.

Today's passage challenges us to "imitate their faith" of our spiritual heroes. Measuring up to them seems like quite a tall order. But the Bible does not ask us to "just do it," it tells us to start by imitating them.

The challenge of our verse is to invest our lives in others today in a way that will be worthy of imitation by those who come after us.

### Poem

Hegemosin ἡγεμόσιν  
Hebrews 13:7-10, Psalm 73

*You guide me with your counsel, and  
afterward you will take me into glory.  
Psalm 73:24*

*Let us now pray for leaders who do  
wisely point to You  
Who give encouragement and truth  
Full grounded in Your word  
O give them great discernment as they  
lead Your people daily  
As they intercede, administer  
And speak with Spirit's sword  
Remind me, Lord, to lift them up, to hold  
their arms in battle  
For I not know the weight they bear  
Nor wounds they have incurred*





**8/1/2025 - WEEK 31 DAY 5**

## An Insider to the Outsiders

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:11-14**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

Almost everybody has experienced being an outsider at some point in life. You moved into a new neighborhood. You started attending a new school. You took a different job. You relocated to a new city. You walked into a new church. Every one of those is filled with insiders who say, “We’re a welcoming neighborhood, a fun school, a collegial workplace, an attractive city, a friendly church.” True. Except to the outsiders.

Today’s passage tells us to go outside the camp, outside our comfort zone, away from our safety net, beyond our inner circle. Why? Because that’s where Jesus went in life and in death. Jesus went to the least, that last, and the lost. Jesus went to women alone at a well, isolated by their life choices, and abandoned by society. Jesus went to men who were alienated by their job choices, forgotten by their families, and detached because of their diseases. And Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem for our sins.

There, among the outsiders, is where we will see the kingdom of God. We’ll find faith on the fringes. We’ll discover wealth among the poor. We’ll experience the city of God outside the city of man.

Take a piece of paper and draw a small circle in the middle with the word “ME” inside it. Then draw several more concentric circles, each larger than the last. Label each one, with those closest to the center being those closest to you. Family. Friends. Church. Draw more circles. Neighbors. Classmates. Coworkers. Draw some more circles. Acquaintances. Waitresses. Strangers. Draw a few more.

How will you label those outside the last circle? What would Jesus do? What would Jesus have you do?

### Poem

**There Are No Words**  
Hebrews 13:11-14, Psalm 68

*There are no words to speak of God  
Who’s power’s beyond all knowing  
Who’s genius we cannot afford  
Who’s grace to us all showing*

*There are no words to speak God’s force  
Who fights and shields me always  
Who all provides, who all creates  
Who breathes new life displaying*

*There are no word to speak God’s love  
Who not only created  
But sacrificed Himself for me  
And in me lives, inhabits*

*There are no words—for when we speak  
Our words are small and limit  
The majesty, humility  
The breadth, the width, the summit*

*And yet, my God calls forth my words  
To offer praise and blessing  
Which shatters mountains, heals the  
earth  
His love by me expressing*



**8/4/2025 - WEEK 32 DAY 1**

## Continual Praise

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:15-16**

### Devotional By: Judith Gibson

As a quick summation of the book of Hebrews, one pastor gives an overview of what we have learned in Hebrews: God is “better than Angels (Ch. 1), Moses (Ch. 3), and Aaron (Ch. 4-7); His covenant is better (Ch. 8); His sacrifice is better (Ch. 9); and His temple is better (Ch. 10). We have also been encouraged to worship Christ for His person and work as the Heir, Creator, Sustainer, Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the climax of God’s revelation (Heb 1:1-3)” (D. Hentschel).

In today’s passage, the writer of Hebrews encourages Christians to do good and share with others while offering their sacrifice of praise to God. As we end our study of Hebrews, we may still find ourselves asking, “What can we do for God?” The answer: Christians should always be doing good. As God is ever doing good, so we can never say we have done all we ought to do and will do no more. “To do good and to communicate, that is, to communicate of your substance, and of your charitable help, forget not” (C.H. Spurgeon). Hebrews 13:16 says: “And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.”

How can we help others? We can help by our service, money, comfort, and instruction. We are “to do good to others to those who need them, and to do this at some sacrifice to ourselves, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased” (Spurgeon). At our church, we have many opportunities to serve each other: teaching a Sunday school class, singing in the choir, helping in the Food Pantry, and so many other needy areas. Which have you chosen to serve and praise God?

God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer certainly deserves our continual praise. C.S. Lewis writes in his *Reflections on the Psalms*: “Isn’t it amazing to realize His [God’s] lovingkindness towards us, as in commanding us to give Him praise, He is offering us the supreme joy and fullness of life. It makes you want to shout out loud and share the goodness of God with others.” In Psalm 150:6, we are admonished, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Let’s sing and shout to the Lord these words by Fanny Crosby as we serve Him:

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

How are you expressing your love for God by helping and serving others today?

### Poem

**Praise God!**  
Hebrews 13:15-16, Psalm 77

*I will remember the deeds of the Lord;  
yes, I will remember your miracles of  
long ago. I will consider all your works  
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”  
Your ways, God, are holy. What god is  
as great as our God?  
Psalm 77:11-13*

*What is the greatest “thank you?”  
What encompassing response?  
What opens floodgates, healing?  
What every ill denounce?  
What sends forth heaven’s legions?  
What guards my soul always?  
What speaks when words do dwindle?  
What song can I e’er raise?*

*Praise God!  
Praise God!  
Praise God!*





8/5/2025 - WEEK 32 DAY 2

## Submitting to Authority

### SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:17A

## Devotional By: Doug Bromm

Wow, did we just get a doozy of a verse today? "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority." Really God, have you met my congressperson?

We just read the easiest translation of this verse too. The King James says, "obey those who rule over you, and be submissive." Oh boy, does that grate on our American ears! "Obey" and "submit" have become dirty words in our culture.

If those are tough words for us to hear today, imagine Paul's audience thinking about their Imperial Roman leaders when he wrote, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted." (Romans 13:1-2)

After years of listening to people on both sides say, "not my president," maybe we have hit on something after all. God's word says it IS NOT your president. Neither is it your congressman, your mayor, your judge, nor your police officer. They are His and He put them right where they are! They might be in that position for an ultimate good we cannot see. They could be there as a judgement on our actions like the Assyrian and Babylonian kings were. God's reason for establishing them might not even be about you. Regardless, HE put them where they are. And if we are to respect HIM, we must respect THEM.

If you cannot respect the person holding the office, you should respect the office itself. Or, as Paul put it in Romans 13:7, "Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor."

In this day and age of social media, it seems like the only voices that get magnified are the ones assuming the worst in the motives of their opponents.

I think every Christian reading this devotional would like to think we give the benefit of the doubt to people and generally try to assume the best in other's actions. Why is it we have such a hard time extending the same grace to our leaders?

Let's commit today to honor our leaders so we can properly honor our greater leader, God.

## Poem

### I Hope Someone Is Praying (A Pastor's Plea)

Hebrews 13:17a, Psalm 70

*But as for me, I am poor and needy;  
come quickly to me, O God.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
Lord, do not delay.  
Psalm 70:5*

*I hope someone is praying  
Someone upon their knees  
Ready for Sunday worship  
Lord, praying now for me  
As I will stand before them  
Delivering Your word  
That what I speak does come from You  
That Spirit's voice be heard  
I hope someone is praying  
As I sit by the sick  
As I lift up the dying  
As consciences I prick  
Administering business  
Or battling evil's war  
I hope someone is praying  
And holding up my arms*

*I hope someone is praying  
When I grow weary, tired  
When times I want to quit my call  
When by the load I'm tried  
Or even when I'm blessing  
And joy fills every hour  
I hope someone is praying  
All asking for Your power*

*I hope someone is praying  
Lord, as I pray to Thee  
I know You are at God's right hand  
For me You intercede  
Remind me when I'm tired  
Or feel like I'm alone  
There is no great truth on earth  
That by You I am known*



**8/6/2025 - WEEK 32 DAY 3**

## Praying for One Another

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:18-19**

### Devotional By: Wilbur Sutton

When I read Hebrews 13:18-19 and James 5:13-15 they talk about praying for one another (intercessory prayer). It immediately brought to my mind "The Come to Me Food Pantry." I am an advocate there, and one open spot on the form that people fill out is "Prayer Requests." Many people leave that part blank. Recently, I started asking if they had any prayer requests. I usually get a "no" or a "I pray every day." I'll answer "Then God is Good. We can praise him." Sometimes they then express a prayer need and we pray over it. I am surprised at how serious some people's troubles are, but they don't ask for prayer. You and I know that God can make a difference in their lives.

I think a lot of us think of prayer as asking God for help for our needs, or our family's needs and we don't think of simply praising God for daily blessings or asking God to help others. Intercessory prayer is not a common style of prayer. I need to get better at it.

When we know of a soul that is obviously not a follower of Christ, do we ever start praying for them to find Jesus? Do we ask for that blessing daily? We can't always be the person that causes them to come to Christ, but God can cause that hunger in them to get to know Him. We just need to be persistent in our prayers for them.

As a side note: We are putting together a PIT Crew (Pastor's Intercessory Prayer Team) to pray for our pastors every day. I can't imagine how God will respond to our prayers when ten people are praying for them every day for a month all year long. I do look forward to hearing the stories. The office can put you in touch with us if you want to join us.

Dear Loving God, guide us in our prayer life. Teach us to talk with you daily. Help us to remember to pray for other people when you place them in our minds. We love you, Lord, and we know you love us. Help us to pour out your love to others. Amen.

### Poem

#### Prayer Life

Hebrews 13:17b-19, Psalm 88

*May my prayer come before you; turn  
your ear to my cry.  
Psalm 88:2*

*Forgive me, Lord, for selfish prayers  
Which only my good seek  
O, bring to mind the suffering  
The weary ones, the weak*

*Forgive me, Lord, for shallow prayers  
Which only scratch the surface  
Which tumble thoughtless from my  
tongue  
By rote or idle practice*

*Forgive me, Lord, for seldom prayers  
The last thing on my list  
Which oft forgotten, oft ignored  
Crowded out by daily tasks*

*Instead, O Lord, build within me  
A temple house of prayer  
That, I, in constant fellowship  
May with you burdens share*

*Instead, O Lord, may praise flow forth  
An ever-growing stream  
A constant, life filled dialogue  
With true love as its theme*





**8/7/2025 - WEEK 32 DAY 4**

## How to Write Encouraging Prayers

### **SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:20-21**

### Devotional By: Lisa Ellcessor

Have you struggled with how to write words of encouragement? Do you blubber in your prayer life? Do you need a reminder of why you are living? I have a little technique to share when you are at loss for words of encouragement. It's found when you open the Bible and read the beginning or end of the various letters written in the New Testament. This style of learning helps you rewrite scripture in your own words. Today's scripture concludes with a benediction of encouragement. Below are samples written from today's verse to stimulate your creativity. Start by looking for key words or phrases that pop out. I used three themes that caught my attention.

#### **Peace**

God of peace, this I know: You work inside my very being at all times and at every moment. Even when I am afraid or lonely, Jesus, You are like a great Shepherd caring for me. You have proven You would leave 99 others to search and save me. When the clouds of life overcome me, I am equipped with everything I need to carry out Your work. You died and rose eternally for me. I will continue even in my storm of agitation to give You glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### **Blood Promise of Hope**

God of the Eternal Covenant, I have never known such love. You never break Your promise even when I fail miserably. The blood circulating in my body is life. I commit right now to You, even when I am ready to give up. I will keep my promise. Help me use every breath of oxygen that renews every cell in my body to scream life! I won't quit even though I feel discouraged. This I know: Jesus's death and resurrection makes things new and infuses in me the ability to not give up. I covenant to carry out Your will and give You glory forever. Amen

#### **Ready to Serve**

Lord, I want to please You because You deserve all the glory and honor in heaven and on earth. Hallelujah! I am ready and willing to praise You! I'm reminded of Your peace and promises in the NT book of Hebrews. What would I do without your eternal covenant and shepherd like encouragement? Keep equipping me to do Your good deeds. There are so many people in my life that need Your hope and I am pleased to serve as Your hands and feet. Please guide me.

Now it's your turn to write an encouragement. Try using Philippians 1:3-6. Have fun and share it with me.

### Poem

#### **Let Us**

Hebrews 13:20-21, Psalm 98

*Let us sing!  
Let us bless!  
Let us serve equipped!  
Let us ever rest!  
Let us know the LORD!  
Let us share His grace!  
Let us live in light  
'Til we be face to face!*



**8/8/2025 - WEEK 32 DAY 5**

## Future Hopes and Warm Greetings

**SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 13:22-25**

### Devotional By: Mark Elcessor

With these words the author of the book of Hebrews concludes this writing that reads like a sermon. The people are encouraged to do several things we might find helpful.

“Bear with my word of exhortation.” It’s one thing to hear a sermon, to read some Scripture, or to listen to what another believer has to say. It’s another thing to apply it to your life. James 1:22 states, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” My definition of a disciples is someone who knows, loves and obeys Jesus. What does it mean to you when this thirteen chapter book ends by saying, “Bear with my word of exhortation”?

“Greet all your leaders and all the Lord’s people.” The Christian faith was not meant to be lived alone. While I love the fact that our devotionals, podcasts and sermons are available online, I also lament it. We were meant to do faith together. Earlier in this study we read, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:24-25). Our “witness” demands “with-ness.”

“Grace be with you all.” We live in the grace of God, poured out through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The grace of Christ is the air we breathe. Acts 17:28 reminds us “For in him we live and move and have our being.”

For the past fifteen weeks we have been exploring the book of Hebrews. What stands out to you from this journey of faith? How do you see Jesus more clearly? In what ways is the Lord calling you to live differently?

Say a prayer to God, declaring your discoveries and commitments. Amen!

### Poem

#### Blessing

Hebrews 13:22-25, Psalm 96

*May you always know grace  
May you always have peace  
May you dwell in God's temple  
May your love never cease  
May your life be e'er fruitful  
May you know great increase  
May your children know Jesus  
May you serve great and least  
May you know God's abundance  
'Til together we feast*









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