

*Bible Study and Quizzing for Youth*

# Discovering HEBREWS 1 & 2 PETER

By Jim Wilcox



# Discovering

HEBREWS  
1&2 PETER



# DISCOVERING HEBREWS AND 1 & 2 PETER

BIBLE STUDY AND QUIZZING FOR YOUTH

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# USER'S GUIDE

## FOR DISCOVERING HEBREWS AND 1 & 2 PETER

**DISCOVERING HEBREWS AND 1 AND 2 PETER** is best used in a “Discovery Group” setting. A Discovery Group is a group of youth committed to growing in God’s Word, meeting regularly for a set period of time to study and share. The use of Discovery Groups is described in more detail in the next section of this guide. It also serves as a great group study workbook for youth involved in Bible quizzing.

Here are some guidelines to help facilitate your use of Discovering Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter:

- This study is divided into 13 Study sessions, and then the Bible quizzing. Each Group Study lesson is written to take approximately 45-60 minutes. This Bible study is meant to be only a part of a total session that includes you and your youth sharing insights from your personal study plus events and activities of the week and ending with prayer. A meeting of an hour to an hour and a half will provide adequate time for these components.
- Each Group Study session covers a specific section of Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter and also identifies a key verse for you and your participants to memorize.
- This leader’s guide gives you a complete session plan for the entire Bible study portion of your weekly meeting. Each session contains the following elements designed to assist you in your preparation and presentation.

**TEACHING AIMS** and **PERSPECTIVE**--these will help you gain an understanding of the “main points” of the lesson.

**BIBLE BACKGROUND**--this extensive section will provide you with additional information that will broaden your understanding of the passage being discussed.

- The actual group study time is designed to take place through the structure of the session activities. After you’ve prepared yourself through studying the Purpose, Perspective, and Bible Background, read through the session activities to develop an understanding of what to expect from the coming group study time. Make sure you understand exactly what is intended to happen through each activity; remember, also, that these activities are here to assist you. Feel free to adjust them as necessary to fit your group environment, resources, and/or time frame.
- Regarding the group activities, you will find specific instructions that actually say, “Say, ...” or are printed in bold italics. This does not mean that you must quote this information word for word to your students. We’ve included this material only as a guide for you regarding what we recommend to be communicated to your group.
- Each session provides you with four activities; each one intended to bring your students

into an encounter with the Scripture through a certain perspective. These activities are: Engage the Word, Explore the Word, Apply the Word, and LIVE THE WORD. The session activities are intended to give you strong teaching options without neglecting your own creativity. Adapt and tailor the sessions to meet the individual needs and personalities of your group.

- Occasionally, you will find sections entitled “Terms/People to Know.” These brief sections will give word definitions, explanations about terms or people, etc. that will help your class members better understand the passage being studied.
- Students are encouraged to keep personal notebooks as they read and study during the next several weeks. During the group sessions, they will often be asked to reflect in writing. Encouraging each youth to have a “notebook-type” journal will keep you from having to provide blank notepaper each time.

The first place to start on your journey through Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter is with the Word itself. Read through Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter entirely before you begin your Bible studies. Then look through this leader’s guide and acquaint yourself with the contents.

## **GUIDE TO DISCOVERY GROUPS**

An effective small-group Bible study ministry for youth in the local church begins with Discovery Groups. Discovery Groups are important in: communicating acceptance, teaching by example, building personal relationships, modeling discipleship in a real-life setting.

There are many ways to start a Discovery Group in your church. The best way is to invite all of

your youth to be involved. Use posters and promotional announcements beginning three or four weeks in advance to spread the word about the group. Personally contact those persons whom you feel would especially benefit from the study. Also, make personal contact with those whom you think will be involved in quizzing in the coming year, encouraging them to be involved in the group.

There are at least two ways to form a Discovery Group. One is to hand-pick those already strongly committed to becoming all God wants them to be. These hand-picked, highly motivated youth will usually respond more eagerly to discipling than others would. This approach to discipling is called for when a major purpose of the discipling is training for leadership, as in Jesus’ training of the Twelve.

At the same time, every Christian needs to be discipled. Every Christian needs to belong to a warm, accepting fellowship that calls out the best in him. In the loving fellowship, the half-hearted disciple can begin to catch a vision of his potential; he can taste the excitement of growth.

In many churches, all the youth will fit into a single small group. If you need more than one group, provide different groups for those with different levels of commitment. You may want to hand-pick a group for in-depth discipling, then provide other groups for those not yet ready for the intense commitment expected of the first group. Rather than dividing the youth arbitrarily, you may want to set specific conditions for membership in the more in-depth group. These conditions might include disciplines of attendance, spiritual journaling, Bible study, accountability, and so on.

Any Discovery Group member must have some level of commitment. An obvious minimum



commitment is to attend the group regularly. To build mutual trust in the group, members have to get to know each other. If one group member drops in only occasionally, he will be a relative stranger to the rest of the group, at least at the level of sharing expected in the Discovery Group. The presence of a relative stranger will immediately reduce the trust level in the group, limiting the openness of sharing. Of course, some absences are inevitable. The needed commitment here is for each group member to make group attendance a very high priority so that attendance is regular. A discussion of the priority of group attendance can be helpful in the early weeks of the group.

What's the best time for a Discovery Group? Again, it depends upon your goals and the personality of your group.

How long should we continue the Discovery Group? As long as the youth involved can stay committed. There have been groups who continued year round. Once they finished the 13-week study, they worked chapter-by-chapter on other Bible books or started on a new workbook. It is generally best to run the group for 13 weeks. After the study has finished, there may be other youth who want to be a part of the Discovery Group who did not sign up before. If so, arrange for a leader for them. Some of the youth in the original group may want to continue, while others focus more on other activities. If you cannot continue to serve as leader, be sure another adult leader is there to carry on.

How do I facilitate the Discovery Group Bible study? To facilitate means to "make easy." A small-group facilitator, then, is a person who makes it easy for the group to relate. He or she keeps the group moving, nudges it back on track when it starts to stray, encourages participation.

The leader's role is to help group members discover for themselves what the scripture means, how they can apply it to their lives, and then encourage them to follow through with obedience. The group leader's role is not to be a resident authority who tells group members what the scripture means and how they are to apply it to their lives. He must resist the temptation to lecture.

The Discovery Group leader is not authoritarian but an authority. This authority, though, is a spiritual authority, flowing out of an authentic life. Youth follow this leader, not because they are forced to, but because of the kind of person the leader is.

This book has been created with the prayer that the Word of God will find a place in the heart and mind of you and your students so that you will all be equipped to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ in the midst of the contemporary pagan culture you face each day.

# YOUR ADOPTION

## PAPERS HAVE ARRIVED

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 1- 4:13

**KEY VERSE:** “For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your father’? Or again, ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son’?” (Hebrews 1:5).

### **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. Discover the proper relationship between God, angels, Jesus Christ, and human beings.
2. Know that despite the pressures and fears they face every day, God, through His Son, Jesus Christ, understands and cares.
3. Strengthen their faith in their Heavenly Father and His Church people.

### **PERSPECTIVE:**

We all have our weak points that cause us to trip and stumble just about every day. For some it’s temptation; for some it’s rebellion; for others it’s complacency. For the Early Church, it was fear: fear of hostility, fear of alienation, fear of being wrong.

Youth today can identify with all of that—in their schools, in their homes, perhaps even in their churches. And they’re searching for ways both to understand and to cope with those anxieties. What if I’m wrong? What makes the

church think it’s right? Why do wrong things feel so good? Why don’t I fit in at school if I fit in at church, and why don’t I fit in at church if I fit in at school? And what about my par-ents?

This lesson will outline the hierarchy of relationships from God to today’s teen-agers. It will help them to identify their own haunting questions and begin to build a foundation that will sustain them through their doubts.

### **BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

This Bible Background, and the ones that follow, will cover the entire Study Scripture—although only a portion of that scripture is actually used in the Discov-ery Group session. This is done so that the leader understands the context surrounding the passages and is prepared to help their students.

It would be wise at the beginning of the study of Hebrews to explain some of the unique characteristics of the book. Although it is called in many versions of the New Testament “The Letter to the Hebrews,” it is more homiletical than it is episto-lary; that is, it is more accurately labeled a sermon than a letter. It lacks most charac-teristics associated with a letter (no salutation, no opening greeting, and as impor-tantly, no signa-ture), but it does contain the outline of an emo-tional exhortation and argument.

It was, until the Reformation of the 17th century, believed to have been born from the pen of Paul, but has since been attributed to either Barnabas or Apollos, both colleagues and followers of the apostle Paul. Both Barnabas and Apollos share the characteristics attributed to the author of the book, in that both were intellectual Hebrew Christians well versed in the Old Testament. Barnabas was a Jew of the priestly tribe of Levi (Acts 4:36) who became a close friend of Paul after Paul's conversion. The church at Antioch commissioned Barnabas and Paul as evangelists, and they went together on the first missionary journey (13:1-4). Apollos, as well, was a noted orator. Born in Alexandria, he is described by Luke in Acts 18 (v. 24) as "a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures."

Because it is not a letter, some problems of interpretation or hurdles to understanding may exist. First, who was the specific audience targeted by the writer? Critics today believe that they were Jewish Christians who lived in the Lycus Valley, where Colosse was located. The book shares several characteristics with Paul's letter to the Colossians, though in style and tone contrasts significantly with Paul and the writers of other New Testament letters. For instance, both Hebrews and Colossians discuss outsiders' criticism of food, regulations of the body, cultic activities, and angels, among many topics. It would, therefore, stand to reason that the audience of Hebrews also shared many of the problems faced by the church at Colosse. T. W. Manson concluded that Hebrews is "the Epistle of Apollos to the churches of the Lycus Valley."

A second concern, then, is that the Book of Hebrews is one side of a communication, like listening to only one speaker in a telephone conversation. Without the typical salutation in which a letter writer might address the spe-

cific problems in question, Hebrews starts with a rather abrupt exhortation: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe." Not the smoothest of introductions. Had the writer just received a letter from one of his friends or a relative perhaps, describing a crisis in the church? Did a messenger burst into his tent with an emotional plea to "come quick," whereupon he sat down with pen in hand and dashed off this remarkable speech? And what was this crisis, this pressure, being faced by the intended audience?

William Lane, in his book *Hebrews: A Call to Commitment*, suggests that the church who received this sermon was afraid of hostilities it might face in light of its newfound Christianity. Alienated from the Jewish community in which they had been raised and trained, aware of the persecutions taking place in Rome following the great fire of A.D. 64, they were huddled in their "home missions," afraid that the God of the Old Testament revealed to them in the person of Jesus of Nazareth had abandoned them at the moment of their greatest need. Remember that this was a time when being religiously different was punishable by imprisonment or even death. It can be most closely compared in recent historical perspective to the Nazi annihilation of Jews in Europe. Just as it was lethal in the 1930s and 1940s to admit you were a Jew, you lived in the shadow of the executioner in the first century if you were a Christian.

The first four verses are the writer's assurances that God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, has spoken His final word through His Son, Jesus. Though in the past God used other messengers and means to communicate to His

people, He has now sent the ultimate Messenger to deliver the ultimate message. The next 10 verses (5-14) indicate the spiritual proof that Jesus is superior to the angels who were never called sons of God. No, it was the angels themselves who were the first to recognize the deity of the Christ child of Bethlehem and to fall down and worship Him.

This Son of God, Jesus, is made like His brothers, according to chapter 2, verses 5-18. It is imperative that the student understand this connection, for it lies at the very base of the new covenant. God revealed himself through Jesus, yet Jesus shared our humanity, making us His brothers and sisters, which is how He refers to us in verse 12, a quote from Psalm 22:22. And if we do indeed suffer persecution in this life, it is only because God himself, in His Son, Jesus, also suffered persecution in this life on earth only to conquer death and live eternally in God's

Rest (Hebrews 4:1) and was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (v. 15).

Most of this introduction to Hebrews seems to be based on a premise that the readers were tempted to believe that the kingdom of God that was to come would be governed by angels. In Judeo tradition, it was angels who had delivered the law at Mount Sinai, God's greatest revelation, so angels were particularly sacred to the Jew. The Dead Sea Scrolls support this lofty position given to angels by naming an archangel, Michael, as the supreme ruler in the new kingdom.

Others believe the author is simply trying to dissuade his readers from returning to Judaism in their fear of retributions. He is persuading them to understand and then believe that Jesus is above the angels, above Moses, above all priests, and is their sole Advocate.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **EXPLORE THE WORD**

#### **All in the Family**

Before beginning this activity, you might pray with your students, encouraging them in this upcoming Bible study.

In the column of "Ideals," allow students to put whatever they want to at first, but after a few minutes of writing down initial ideas, explain to them that the ideals are not necessarily only those things that would make their own lives easier and more hassle-free; rather, the ideals enable the family as a unit to function better and more smoothly. Family is cooperation, not slave labor.

A family is made up of all kinds of people, playing all kinds of roles and doing all kinds of jobs. Make a chart, and list the people in your family, and if you live with an extended family either in the same house or nearby, you may want to list them, too. Be sure to include yourself. What are their "Job Descriptions" as you see them? What would be the "Ideal Job Description" for each person?

NAME

JOB DESCRIPTION

IDEAL JOB DESCRIPTION

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## ENGAGE THE WORD

### 1. WELCOME TO HEBREWS

*How many times have you gone to the mailbox or your e-mail inbox and discovered a letter to “Occupant” or “Current Resident” “hey you”? Really personal, huh? You can hardly wait to get it inside the house, open it, and find out what it says and who wrote it. Right? Wrong!*

*The letter to the Hebrews must seem like that to many readers, for it is often overlooked in preaching, devotional writing, and scripture study. William Lane even calls it “A Sermon in Search of a Setting”. But that should not be, and this series of lessons will show you how important this book is to the young Christian who is struggling with the confusing messages of today’s world.*

*The New Testament is full of letters, most of which are written like personal letters today (especially letters from parents to their children, full of wise advice): Salutation, Opening Remarks, A Little News, A Lot of Insights, and Closure. After the Gospels and Acts, you will find 13 letters from Paul, then the letter to the Hebrews, followed by six letters from various writers including Peter, John, and Jude. Oddly, however, Hebrews is unique.*

*For instance, nobody is certain who wrote it. At first, scholars attributed it to Paul . . . all the way into the 1600s, in fact. But during that time,*

*called the Reformation, people who would know because they studied the Bible all of their lives discovered that not much of the letter resembled the other 13 letters Paul wrote. Sure, it was similar in content and overall philosophy, but not in style and tone.*

*First, it is more accurately described as a sermon rather than a letter. Instead of a greeting at the beginning, we have an invocation, a description of God who re-vealed himself in history and who is speaking to us now. The writer himself calls the message an exhortation (13:18-25) rather than a letter.*

*Second, the writer never identifies himself, as Paul did in the letters he wrote. All the author tells us is that he is a man, and even that takes a true scholar to discover: he uses masculine verb forms of the Greek language.*

*Third, the writer had never had any personal contact with Jesus, either during His earthly ministry before His crucifixion or in revelation after His resurrection, as Paul had had on the Road to Damascus. The author claims in verse three of chapter two that salvation “was first announced by the Lord [and] was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”*

*So whose signature is missing from this letter? Some suggest Barnabas, a close colleague and friend to Paul, who was both an authority in the*

early church and a Greek intellectual who was an expert in the Old Testament, two characteristics obviously possessed by the writer. Others claim the writer is Apollos, who was also a Jewish Christian intellectual and renowned speaker. Luke calls him “a learned man with a thorough knowledge of scriptures” (Acts 18:24). He, too, was a co-worker with Paul in the Corinthian church’s beginnings.

We know more about the recipients of the letter than we do the sender: Jewish converts being tempted to renounce their Christianity and return to their Judaism. The writer, then, is arguing that Jesus was no mere angel, no high priest appointed only by the Church. No. Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the only Son of a compassionate and merciful God.

Before we start looking into this letter of encouragement chapter by chapter, let’s try to get an overall impression of what it says to us. It’s important that you should use a translation and version of the New Testament that you can read easily. Look at the page headings and section headings. If time permits, read the entire book as a class.

Once your class has looked at all 13 chapters, ask your group members to finish in their own words the following statements:

- If Hebrews were made into a movie, it would be called . . .
- A word or phrase that seems to occur over and over again is . . .
- As I read, I couldn’t help but wonder . . .
- Two or three things I’d like to learn are . . .

## 2. EARTH ANGELS (1:1–2:4)

Let’s look at this first section of Hebrews together and discover some of the foundations for the writ-

er’s argument.

Have someone read Hebrews 1:1–2:4 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

- If you were sitting across from the writer right now, what would you ask him?
- What is the writer’s tone? Understanding? Anxious? Authoritative? Where do you see that most evident?
- What new insight did you pull from this section?

We all remember the neighborhood argument: “My dad’s bigger than your dad!” Some brave ones even screamed, “Oh yea, well my dad can beat up your dad!!!” On a much higher plane, some of that attitude was creeping up in the neighborhoods of the Hebrews, because as they met in each other’s homes (this is before they built Christian churches), they sensed hostility from the families and friends who still worshipped in the synagogue and held onto the liturgies of Judaism.

- In your imagination, picture the people who were listening/reading this sermon. How would you describe them?
- What is your concept of angels?
- What is the relationship of angels to God? To the Son of God?
- What does it mean to be a son or a daughter?
- How would 2:1-4 sound if you wrote those verses?

## 3. MISERY LOVES COMPANY (ESPECIALLY GOD’S) (2:5–3:6)

Have someone read Hebrews 2:5 – 3:6 aloud

while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

*Most of us have been awakened in the pitch-dark of night by a noise. Frighten-ing, isn't it? Some of us have lain awake all night, worrying over some relationship or job troubles. Usually, we are comforted by prayer. But what if our fear was that God had abandoned us? Or that there was no God at all?*

- *Have you ever been rejected by a friend? Describe your feelings, first about the situation, then about your friend.*
- *The writer reminds the Hebrews that they are made "in the image of God." He shows how God's Son is our "brother." What are some of those shared characteristics found in these verses?*
- *Recall a time when someone came to you for comfort and reassurance. What were the circumstances? What did he/she ask you? What did you say and do?*
- *Now turn that around: think of a situation when you felt alone, afraid, alienated. You were so vulnerable and defenseless, it hurt. What steps did you take to climb out of that hole? What worked? What didn't?*

#### 4. REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE (3:7--4:13)

*One of the "rites of passage" for a youth into adulthood seems to be rebellion. Some skip a class or two at school; some stay out beyond curfew; some run away from home. This passage encourages us to avoid "hardening our hearts as we did during the rebellion," but rather to enter God's sanctuary of rest.*

Have someone read Hebrews 3:7—4:13 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, then answer these questions.

- *The writer quotes Psalms (95:7-11) to warn the reader not to repeat history. What is the Psalmist warning against? How does that warning apply today?*
- *The writer says, "the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith." How does the message combine with faith?*
- *What are some ways you have seen people "walk the talk"?*
- *In verses 12 and 13 of chapter 4, the writer describes the Word of God. What are some of the descriptive phrases? How do they fit the Word of God?*

#### **APPLY THE WORD**

All youth rebel in some fashion. It's part of breaking the tie with parents in order to forge ahead into a family of their own. It's painful sometimes and can become entirely unhealthy if it gets out of hand, but it is normal.

This activity asks students to consider Susan's rebellion from the teachings of her parents and her church. Why is she tempted to follow Billy instead of Sam?

You might have three students "act it out."

*Susan is very close to leaving the youth group at her church. Her best friend, Sam, goes over to her house one night to talk to her and as he nears her house he sees Susan sitting on her front steps with the same guy she's been hanging around at school. Sam knows who Billy is but not too much beyond that.*

Susan: Well, hello, Sam. What are you doing tonight?

Sam: Hi, Susie. Hi--it's Billy, isn't it?

Billy: Yeah.

Susan: We were talking about the party over at Millie's next weekend. It ought to be incredible. You know Millie --loud music, lots of alcohol, and her parents are out of town the whole weekend.

Sam: You're going?

Susan: Well, I guess. There's nothing else to do around this dead town, is there? Aren't you planning on going? What else you got to do, Sammy Boy?

Billy: It'll rock the place.

Sam: I never thought about it, I guess. Not my kind of gig, really. There's that thing at Pastor Greg's house that night after the "Jesus Freaks" concert, so I thought about going to that. Who else is going to Millie's?

Susan: I don't know. Jack, Marcie, Deedee, L. C., Andy. Probably. I don't know. Besides, with me there, you'll want to go, won't you?

Billy: Exactly.

Sam: I don't know, Susie. I'll have to think about it.

ASK:

- *What is making Susan think the way she is thinking?*
- *She has not usually gone to things like Millie's party (her parents have raised her in the church), but for the past several weeks, she's been acting strangely. What would you do if*

*you were Sam?*

- *What is it that causes youth to rebel?*
- *What are some ways people you know are rebelling?*
- *How are Susan's rebellion and other youths' rebellion like the rebellion referred to in 3:7-11.*
- *What does Hebrews tell us about rebellion against God?*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### *When I Have Fears*

*A British poet by the name of John Keats wrote a short poem in the early 19th century about his greatest fears, entitled, "When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be."*

- *What are some of your biggest fears?*
- *How do you deal with them?*
- *How might those around you help you to cope better with these fears?*
- *What have you seen from our study today that can help you when you face fears?*
- *In the last section, we looked at "God's rest." What does it mean to enter "God's rest"?*

*Why don't we pause together right now and enter that rest? Let's shut out all the chores and assignments we have for a few minutes and focus on the face of Christ as He sits with us and the hands of Christ as He extends them to us. Lay your heaviest burden, fear, hurt at His feet for a few minutes. Rest.*

End the class with prayer.





# TRUST ME

ON THIS

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 4:14 -7:28

KEY VERSE: “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised” (Hebrews 6:12).

## TEACHING AIMS:

To help the learners:

1. Begin to look for and eventually become spiritual mentors themselves.
2. Learn to trust in God and His people, including teachers, parents, and pastors, when making big and tough decisions.
3. Comprehend the importance of integrity earned by keeping your promises.

## BIBLE BACKGROUND:

(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):

Reduced to its least common denominator, life is merely a series of decisions. Should I go to university? What should I major in? Where should I apply for a job? Where do I want to live? What will I believe in and what will I cast aside as rubbish?

For many youth, these decisions might seem far

off. They are often more concerned with the more mundane and everyday: What should I wear today? Should I ask Alicia to the party? Do I have time to go to church tonight? But there are also the fears that experimentation with various influences and temptations might alter the rest of their lives. Drugs and alcohol. Promiscuity. Rebellion. Scholarship. Athletics. The list must seem endless when you're 13, 16, or 18.

Each decision we make carries with it consequences and responsibilities, and no matter what those might be, we can never go back and remake the decision. We simply live with it, which can be especially difficult if we believe we have made the wrong or foolish decision. That's probably why most of the world procrastinates, putting off major choices until the last minute.

Such is the premise to this passage of Scripture. In the preceding passage, Hebrews 3:7—4:13, the writer reminds the reader of Israel's experience in history, tracing its rebellion and its redemption. In essence, he tells us that there are such things as life-or-death decisions. It's not just melodramatic to think in these terms.

This section of study continues to reinforce Christ's humanity as being the bridge to God. The writer of the sermon to these Jewish Christians is encouraging them to assume their role in the ministry of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. Jesus' worship of His Father in heaven enables their worship, and His sacrificial suffering in

this life provides the means by which they may offer their sacrifices to God.

It was important for the writer to remind his readers that the liturgies of Judeo worship—the tradition they had forsaken in order to follow the new covenant—were mirrored in the life of the Christ, its High Priest. This Messiah was history in-carnate, doctrinal belief come to life, God revealed to humanity. This man, Jesus, fulfilled prophecy and promise.

It was equally important for the Hebrews to recall the failure of their Jewish ancestors to obey the voice of God, instead listening to the warnings of the ten spies they had sent into the promised land of Canaan. “Do we listen to the voice of God or to the voices of men who have actually been there?” It was this same question that the new church of Hebrew Christians was facing. Decisions, decisions, decisions!

The author begins a fairly in-depth discussion in 4:14 on the merits and superiority of Christ’s priestly position. Referring to Leviticus 16:15 and 17, when Aaron the high priest passed out of sight into the holy place, the writer tells how Jesus, too, ascended from the presence of His disciples into the holy of holies, having done what He set out to do: reconcile man to God. And he ends that verse with a fairly emotional appeal: “Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess,” echoing earlier admonitions in 2:1; 3:6; and 3:14.

The setting for this book may seem far away from the 21st-century to our youth, with little or no application for the here and now. However, when we look at modern religious cults, ecological plunder of the planet, political irresponsibility, rapid technological change, and the sheer difficulty of life, we see the value of having a spiritual anchor—a solid rock. The Hebrews

may have been facing different anxieties than we are today, but they were every bit as serious. It is up to you as the leader to make the connections between the decisions facing the Hebrews and the decisions facing your youth.

Verses 4-6 of chapter 6 have caused Bible scholars, theologians, laymen, and new Christians much concern, for they seem to imply that when one loses his faith (“backslides”), there is no way for reconciliation. “It is impossible,” begins the writer, “for those who have once been enlightened . . . if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.” That seems pretty cut and dried. According to the NIV Study Bible—New International Version footnote on this section, “The most common interpretations are (a) that it refers to Christians who actually lose their salvation; (b) [that] it is a hypothetical argument to warn immature Hebrew Christians that they must progress to maturity or else experience divine discipline or judgment; (c) [that] it refers to professing Christians whose apostasy (abandonment of belief) proves their faith was not genuine.” According to Dr. Roger Hahn, professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary, the message here might make more sense and be more accurate if one would translate the conjunction in verse 6 “while” instead of “since” (RSV), so that it reads: “For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened . . . if they then commit apostasy, [while] they crucify the Son of God on their own account” (RSV). In other words, it is impossible for a person to be reclaimed while yet denouncing his or her faith. Hahn, like most, then believes that if the person ceases the denunciation and makes sincere confession of sins, seeks forgiveness, and restitutes wrongs, he or she can be re-claimed to the Kingdom.

The last part of chapter 6, from verse 13, explains the certainty of God’s promise to Abraham, which He made with an oath to himself. Scholars suggest that God used the oath to emphasize its permanence, its inevitability. Normally, an oath (swearing by some deity) is reserved for humans in their lowly spiritual state, for a person’s word is not always trustworthy. When God swore an oath to fulfill His promise—which is in itself absolutely trustworthy because of the nature of God, He was further substantiating it in human terms, thereby making it doubly dependable.

The “two unchangeable things” mentioned in verse 18 (which students are asked to ascertain) are God’s promise to reward Abraham’s faith, which in itself is absolutely trustworthy, and God’s oath, confirming that promise.

The writer uses two metaphors at the end of chapter 6 to illustrate our hope in God’s promise: an anchor and an inner sanctuary behind the curtain. The anchor of a ship holds it firm when winds, storms, currents, and waves try to capsize it. It provides footing and mooring when the surrounding sea is in utter upheaval. The ship’s anchor goes down to the ocean bottom. The inner sanctuary behind the curtain, on the other hand, goes up into the sanctuary of God’s heaven where the individual can be secured to God himself.

The character of Melchizedek, discussed greatly in chapter 7, introduces from Genesis the plan God instituted for reconciliation. From as early as Genesis 14, King Melchizedek draws many comparisons to the coming Messiah. Nowhere is Melchizedek’s lineage or genealogy given, and the writer of Hebrews uses this to portray him as a forerunner of Christ. His priesthood forecasts Jesus’ priesthood. He was both priest (groom of

the Church) and king (sovereign ruler of a kingdom), just as Christ was both priest and king.

When studying verses 19-22, note that the old covenant, the Law, was only preparatory for the new covenant, a “better hope,” assuring the Christian of complete redemption and invitation into the presence of the Almighty.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *THE ROAD TAKEN*

*The entire poem by Frost goes like this:  
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

(“The Road Not Taken” [1916])

Most students will suggest that Frost is applauding Americans’ sense of individualism. Being different while still fitting in is every youth’s goal.

This activity lends itself well into a discussion of what goes into our decision making. You might

read 1 Corinthians 8–11 to understand the process Paul suggested in making ethical decisions. The activity also opens up a discussion of God’s will.

### *The Road Taken*

American poet Robert Frost wrote a poem that has been quoted as often, perhaps, as any poem ever written (especially around school graduation time). “The Road Not Taken” speaks of decisions made in our lives that dictate, in many ways, the paths our lives will follow.

Consider the following settings and what big decisions have to be made in those places. Write down some of those choices, options, decisions, dilemmas in the form of questions, then share them with the group. Which decisions have you had to make?

**SCHOOL** (Example: What university do I want to attend?)

**HOME** (Example: Where do I want to live when I leave home?)

**CHURCH** (Example: Do I want to teach a Sunday School class or sing in the choir or be on the youth council?)

**WORKPLACE** (Example: Should I look for a new job or stay where I am?)

**RELATIONSHIPS** (Example: Am I too young to consider marriage?)

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

In these next chapters of Hebrews, the author supports his introductory claims with comparisons and contrasts of Christ, who is God’s High Priest and only Son, to Melchizedek, who is

God’s priest and king of Salem. He reminds the readers that life’s decisions come at forks in the road, and we must trust both God and ourselves to make the right decision, to take the right road.

*If there is time, have class members take turns in reading the whole study passage for the day, Hebrews 4:14 – 7:28, aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.*

- Why do you think the author wrote these things to the Hebrews?
- Besides the key verse, which passage stands out to you? Why?
- The passage speaks a great deal about promises. What is a promise? What does it mean to make a promise?

### **2. WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?** (4:14–5:10)

*It’s important to remember that the Hebrews were doubting God’s concern for them. They were also wondering about the Lordship of Jesus, the Christ. In these verses the writer validates the priesthood of Jesus and the promise of God. After reading this passage, answer the following questions as a class.*

*Have someone read Hebrews 4:14–5:10 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.*

- What characteristics enable Jesus to understand the questions of the Hebrews (vv. 14, 15)?
- What are the two specific qualifications of the high priest (vv. 5:2 and 4)?
- In that day, the high-priestly office was in the hands of the family that had bought control of it. According to verses 4 and 5 of chapter 5, Christ was appointed by God. How had God

“bought control of it”?

- Verses 5:8-10 indicate that Jesus was made perfect through obedience and suffering. Can you think of instances of Christ’s suffering, temptations, and obedience that are mentioned in scripture?

### 3. FOOD FOR THOUGHT (5:11–6:12)

*This passage may seem more condescending than conciliatory at first reading. It begins with a metaphor about the gospel being like food (vv. 5:11-14), and ends with another parable about the Christian walk being like thirsty land (vv. 6:7-8). Read the final paragraph (vv. 6:9-12) carefully, then answer the following questions as a class.*

Have someone read Hebrews 5:11--6:12 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

- The Apostle Paul also referred to food when describing the early church (see 1 Cor. 3:2). Peter did the same thing in his first letter, verse 2:2. Why is this metaphor appropriate? How do you think the Hebrews might have responded? How would you have reacted?
- There are six fundamental doctrines mentioned in the first two verses of chapter six. What are they? What is a definition for each of them?
- One of the most difficult passages in the entire New Testament is in 6:4-6. Let’s read it aloud again carefully and slowly. What is the writer warning the Hebrews about?

### 4. HE GAVE HIS WORD (6:13–20)

*Here we hear the author speaking of the oaths*

*and promises and vows God made to the Hebrews through Abraham and his descendants. History supports the trustworthiness of God’s promises to humanity.*

Have someone read Hebrews 6:13-20 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. Ask:

- It would be good for us to read again about the reference to Abraham in Genesis 22. Pay particular attention to verses 16-18. What did God promise Abraham? Why did He make that promise?
- Now read from Jesus’ Sermon On the Mount, Matthew 5:33-38, about swearing oaths. How do you reconcile this to what we’ve just read in Hebrews 6 and Genesis 22?
- Verse 6:18 refers to “two unchangeable things.” What are they?
- The passage ends with two symbols of Christian certainty. Write each one down and explain in a sentence how each illustrates the writer’s point.

### 5. WHO IN THE WORLD IS MELCHIZEDEK? (7)

*We have seen his name prior to this, but this is the chapter where we learn who he is and why his name keeps cropping up in this sermon. First we have a little biography, then a brief testimonial, then the writer compares him to Jesus, God’s High Priest. After reading this chapter, consider the following questions as a group.*

- If you were introducing Melchizedek to speak at your youth group’s End of the Year Banquet, what three things would you say about him?
- Everyone needs a history lesson once in awhile--in order not to repeat its follies. The

writer of Hebrews uses Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:4 as his lesson here. Why does this lesson seem appropriate?

- Chapter 7, verse 4 begins, “Just think how great he was . . .” How great was he? And after reading verses 4-10, list what made Melchizedek so great?
- In many ways, Melchizedek was like Jesus—and Jesus was like him. List as many similarities as you can as you read in chapter 7.
- Now read the last two verses of the chapter. How are Jesus and Melchizedek different?

## APPLY THE WORD

### TRUST AND OBEY

This activity defines the essence of civilization—the trust we have with each other that rules will be kept and laws will be obeyed. It is, after all, the backbone of our society. Students should be able to define the rules by which they live and why they choose to obey or disobey them. Find that fine line between civil disobedience and criminal activity. A good discussion about house rules, church standards, city ordinances, etc., should ensue. Don’t be surprised if the discussion evolves into one on values. You might encourage your group to discern the values that derive out of each of the rules/laws that they mention.

### *Trust and Obey*

*“Children, obey your parents” is how many interpret the Fifth Commandment . . . especially parents. The commandment actually reads “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”*

*The writer of Hebrews links obedience to listening*

*and listening to learning. So we grow up obeying rules, regulations, laws, and leaders.*

### ASK:

- What are five laws that you obey? (Why do you obey them?)
- What are five laws that you think are unfair or unenforceable?
- What are five rules in your house? After each, place a number between 1 and 10 (10 means “Hallelujah for this rule”; 1 means “This rule stinks”; and 2-9 are anywhere in between).
- Which of the above rules will carry into your home when you make the rules?

## LIVE THE WORD

### WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

This true scenario should hit home with teenagers who struggle with what it means to be like Christ. Remind them that the very word “Christian” means “Christlike.”

### *What Would Jesus Do?*

*They were walking through the parking lot together for the last time. For almost three months Ralph and Tim had worked side by side on the day crew at a local lumberyard, but the summer was drawing to a close and Tim would soon be leaving to attend one of the Nazarene colleges, so today was his last day on the job.*

*He was tall and lanky, loved to laugh and play basketball, which many of his teammates did simultaneously when they saw him come out of the locker room in his uniform. Tim stood over six feet four inches but weighed a pitiful 140 pounds. Unfortunately, the 2” x 12” x 16”s that Tim was forced to carry were both wider and weighed more than Tim, himself. Or at least it seemed so to Tim.*

*Ralph, on the other hand, was short and muscular. Though he didn't know it, his buddy Tim would have loved to have had Ralph's shoulder span and bicep development. Ironically, Ralph wanted to be six inches taller than he was. (Isn't that always the way it is?)*

*As they neared their cars, their pace slowed and their voices began to waver under the strain of what they knew would be the last time they ever saw each other. Ralph was what Tim's church might have called "a worldly character," who listened to distinctively unchristian rock and roll, drank, and generally fooled around too much. He had been introduced to a better life through a Christian counselor years before, but had abandoned the search due to the hypocrisy he had seen in some of the churches. But Tim was different and Ralph knew it.*

*With a quick shake of hands and tears in his eyes, Ralph looked up at Tim and said something to Tim that to this day Tim has never forgotten: "You're the first person I've ever met who showed me what Jesus was like."*

ASK:

- *What do you suppose Tim had done to earn such a compliment?*
- *What is it that makes a Christian "like Christ"?*

It might be of interest to the students to know what had really happened in this story. Tim spent time outside the lumberyard with Ralph—even in Ralph's home. Tim was not scared, not jumpy, not reluctant, but rather eager to see Ralph's house and how he lived. Tim also had Ralph over for a dinner party, introducing him to his other friends, playing basketball with him afterward. And each day, they goofed around on

the job, worked hard, ate together, joked, and laughed. Never once did Tim condemn Ralph; in fact, they rarely talked about the gospel very deeply at all. Tim mostly answered Ralph's questions and became his friend.

*More is done for the kingdom of God by regular people befriending the unsaved than all the "church evangelism" the world has ever known. After all, when you ask someone if he or she would like to become a Christian, that is not the question they hear. What is heard is, "Would you like to be like me?"*

Close with prayer

# 3 MERCY

MERCY ME!

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 8:1-13

**KEY VERSE:** “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12, RSV).

## **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. Grasp what it means to receive God’s mercy and then show that same mercy to others.
2. Experience the liberation of forgiving those who have wronged them.
3. Become a group that can distinguish the differences between American justice and Christian mercy.

## **PERSPECTIVE:**

It is easy in the world today to see all the wrong, all the violence, all the corruption, all the sin, and to throw up our hands and exclaim, “Nuke ‘Em All.” There’s almost too much evil in the world to comprehend, much less to cope with. It seems that every newscast, every newsmagazine, every front page carries story after story of people doing wrong to people.

It is doubly hard to deal with it when it hits home, when someone we know and love becomes the victim of society’s abuses and human depravity.

Is it wrong to feel vengeful when someone has assaulted our body, our home, our family, our integrity? Are lawsuits and counter-lawsuits vengeful or protective? Are there some individuals whom even God himself, even the merciful God of the new covenant, would find it difficult to forgive? And to forget?

These are some questions that have been haunting Christians for centuries and certainly have bothered or will bother your youth. In this passage, the writer not only teaches us the new heart of God but further establishes Jesus as the solitary agent of God’s mercy.

## **BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

Nowhere outside the actual words of Christ in the Gospels is the Good News more profound and comforting than in the echo of the prophet Jeremiah, found in chapter 8 of Hebrews. It is the second phase of God’s redemptive plan, the new contract He has drawn between himself and His greatest creation. For the balance of this sermon to the new Christians of the Lycus Valley, beginning here in chapter 8, the writer links the familiar station of the Levitical priest and his duties to the uniquely lofty status and activities of the Christian Church’s High Priest, Jesus. Its



apologetical tone continues to remind the reader of the urgency felt by the writer as he both defends and expands the Sonship of Christ to the frightened men and women of Jewish roots.

The writer begins with what by now must seem almost an unnecessary redundancy to the casual reader: “We do have such a high priest . . .” (Hebrews 8:1). This is the 10th reference to this point in Hebrews to Jesus, the Christ, as the High Priest, but not until this chapter does the reader begin to learn of the extraordinary benefit of our Lord’s Sonship and Priesthood. This new Priest has overcome life’s bitterest enemy, death, and not only rose after three days back to an earthly life, but furthermore has ascended directly into heaven and is today seated at God’s right hand. The writer’s reference to “the Majesty in heaven” would have been a familiar one to Jews, who used that phrase to describe God in their own liturgies. This verse also reflects verses 2 and 3 in the opening chapter of the book, in which the writer demonstrates the superiority of this High Priest in no fewer than seven ways: (1) first-born heir of God’s kingdom; (2) Creator of all things (see Colossians 1:16 and John 1:3); (3) the radiance of God’s glory (see 2 Corinthians 4:6); (4) the perfect image of God (He is God); (5) creation’s glue, holding it all together; (6) the ransom of man; (7) the Agent and Finisher of redemption, now seated with God, working with God.

The second verse of the chapter contrasts the tabernacle of man with the “true tabernacle” of God. The writer is referring to the tabernacle built by Moses as per the exact instructions of God delivered at Mount Sinai. Though planned by God, the fact that it was built by man made it inevitably imperfect and temporary. It is in Leviticus 16:13-15 and 34 that we might get a better picture of this temple. The sanctuary

built by God in heaven replicates the innermost sanctuary of Moses’ tabernacle, a sanctuary Jews called the “most holy place.” The high priest was allowed annual entrance but only while carrying the sacrificial blood of atonement inside as a ritual offering. The writer notes that the “true sanctuary” is inhabited eternally by our great High Priest who is our Intercessor.

It is interesting to study the gifts and offerings mentioned in verse 3. A study of the opening two chapters of Leviticus might help your students to imagine what these were, since most modern youth give only coins or paper currency issued by the government. A burnt offering was given twice a day, once early in the morning and once in the evening, and this was doubled on the Sabbath. Special feast days brought more extra offerings for Israel. These offerings had to be male animals, normally a sheep or goat, because male animals were generally more valuable. Wealthy Jews brought bulls as their offering, while the impoverished were allowed to sacrifice male birds, usually doves and pigeons. No marks or blemishes were to be found on the animals, and the individual was to lay his hand on the head of the animal to demonstrate a link, a symbolic relationship between the person and the offering. It was at this point that the animal was accepted for offering and became a symbol of atonement for the individual. The blood was sprinkled on the sides of the altar, then the entire body of the animal was burned so that no one could claim that the giver reserved any portion for himself. (The officiating priest, however, often kept the hide of a sacrificial bull for himself.) The Hebrew name for “burnt offering” meant “going up.”

The claim in Hebrews 8:4 that Christ, “if he were on earth, would not be a priest” simply refers to His lineage. Being born in the house of Judah

precluded His priestly potential.

The crux of the chapter, perhaps the entire book, maybe even all of Scripture, is found in verses 8-12. It is a direct quote from God's promise delivered through the prophet Jeremiah some seven centuries before: "I'm starting over. The old covenant didn't work well—the Israelites refused to obey and I got angry at them. This time, I'm coming down there myself to establish open communication. You can talk to Me, and I will talk to you. You'll recognize Me by the nail-prints on My hands and feet. I will forgive and forget your past and from now on My heart is merciful" (author's paraphrase). Try to imagine the God of history using everyday language like that to talk to you. It's absolutely extraordinary. The advantages of the new covenant over the Mosaic covenant, according to the writer, are that the Law will now become ethical principle, God will be intimate with His people, ignorance of God's character is gone, and forgiveness will be forever.

It is crucial to discuss with your youth the writer's claims that the old covenant has been rendered obsolete. This is not to imply that the Law of Moses is dismissed as irrelevant. Nor is it to suggest that the Old Testament is not equally "the Word of God." It simply indicates, according to William Lane in his book *Hebrews: A Call to Commitment*, "that the old covenant was imperfect and provisional. The old covenant was defective; it developed faults on the human side. . . ."

Students should be made aware that instead of ignoring the Old Testament Law, they should rejoice that God's plan of salvation has such historical preparation. God was intending, from the Fall, to get us back; in fact, that became His singular mission.

## SESSION ACTIVITIES

### ENGAGE THE WORD

#### LORD, HAVE MERCY

Probably the most difficult concept of the gospel for youth to understand is mercy. They see so little of it in society, and they may even see too little of it in their own lives, at home, at school, at church. It's not uncommon for many of them to see vengeance, retribution, and punishment as normal Christian behavior. That's why so many return to the altar time and time again to seek forgiveness for the same sin.

Christ's death enabled forgiveness and His resurrection mediated it. We are, in essence, crucifying Him anew every time we fail to accept His complete absolution of our sin.

This activity puts today's headlines and stories in the perspective of Hebrews 8. While deciding which of the eight criminals should receive mercy, the students are also deciding which crimes may be beyond God's mercy, which is, as we know, im-possible. A discussion of the issue of justice will be important for them to understand God's merciful heart.

#### *Lord, Have Mercy*

*The room is dark and dank, strewn with trash, laced with cobwebs, and full of dirty, rotten scoundrels. It is the holding cell of society's worst humans, the scum of the earth, the bottom of the barrel (you get the point). These are real people with real families and real pasts.*

*Fortunately for you, you're not one of them. As a matter of fact, you've been put in charge of their fates. Yes, you are the judge who will decide which ones are sentenced to prison or death and which ones will be set free. Today your choice seems relatively simple: you may set one person free. Which*

one will receive your court's mercy?

- Jeffrey is a 28-year-old serial killer who not only enticed young boys into his apartment for sexual gratification, but then murdered and mutilated them, occasional cannibalizing them. His sentence is death by lethal injection.
- Doctor K is a medical physician who sees himself as a mercy-killer. He helps anyone who asks--and has enough money for inevitable legal fees--to commit suicide with a simple injection. His sentence is life in prison.
- General X took over a small country on a faraway continent a few months ago and since then has ordered the systematic massacre of thousands of citizens opposed to his regime. His sentence is death by firing squad.
- Sergeant Y, who serves General X in the military of that country, has personally shot 2,000 citizens. His sentence is death by firing squad.
- Mark is a practicing homosexual who is also the leading activist in youth(?) country's capital for gay rights. His sentence is one year and a \$5,000 fine for unlawful assembly and inciting a riot in which 13 were injured and 42 were arrested.
- Luther is a man in his 20's who one night in an argument shot another man. It just so happens they were both driving at the time and the victim's car plowed into a third vehicle, killing the driver instantly. The shooting victim survived. Luther has been sentenced to life in prison.
- John is a "Right to Life" activist who planted a bomb that destroyed an abortion clinic in his neighborhood. He had no idea that the custodian of the clinic would be inside the night the bomb went off. He has been found guilty of

second degree murder and is sentenced to life in prison.

- Malcolm is a televangelist who claims to be the Son of God. He uses this "significant relationship to the Almighty" to cheat hundreds of thousands of dollars from his loyal following. He has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for fraud.

1. Which person will you choose to have mercy upon and set free? Why?

## EXPLORE THE WORD

### 1. OVERVIEW

If there is time, have class members take turns in reading the whole study passage for the day, Hebrews 8, aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

*Just like a see-saw has a fulcrum, like scales have a pivot, this chapter is the turning point of the book to the Hebrews. As a matter of fact, our Key Verse, along-side John 3:16, may indeed describe the very turning point of human history. Its confession, after all, transformed the first 39 books of the Bible into the Old Testament, setting forth the theme of the New Testament--The New Covenant God made between himself and humanity:*

***The heart of the Lord is mercy. MERCY!***

Have your class read the KEY VERSE several times (Hebrews 8:12), commit it to memory, then answer the following:

- How do you define "mercy"?
- What do you think has been the single turning point of your life?
- What question creeps into your mind as you read these verses?

## 2. SIT DOWN (8:1-2)

Having established the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, the writer now begins to describe His role in the lives of the Hebrew church. Remember that during this time, there were only two places of worship: the synagogue if you were a Jew, and other Christians' homes if you followed Jesus. These verses describe Christ's position in the new tabernacle.

Have someone read Hebrews 8:1-2 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. Then discuss:

- *Jesus, the High Priest of the New Covenant, "sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven." What does that position mean in Scripture? (See Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:34; 7:55; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20.)*
- *God is referred to as "the Majesty in heaven." What does "majesty" mean to you?*
- *Two familiar terms are given as names of the church building: "sanctuary" and "tabernacle." Look each up in your dictionary and write down their definitions.*
- *We often sing in our churches "We Are Standing on Holy Ground." How is your church "Holy Ground"?*
- *This tabernacle in Hebrews 8:2 is "set up by the Lord, not by man." Aren't all tabernacles (i.e., "churches") set up by God? Can you describe the difference?*

## 3. MAKING A SACRIFICE (8:3-6)

*Having established the priesthood of Jesus in the first chapters of the book and the position of that priest in heaven in the first two verses of this chapter, the writer now begins to describe the ministry of the High Priest in these four verses.*

Have someone read Hebrews 8:3-6 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, then discuss:

- *From your recollection of other studies, what are some of the "gifts and sacrifices" mentioned in verse three? After listing them, look up Leviticus 1:2 and 2:1. Were you close?*
- *If Jesus were on earth, the writer claims, He would not be a priest. Why not?*
- *God warned Moses to build the tabernacle according to a single blueprint, a single pattern. Only one way allowed! Compare this to John 14:6, when Jesus states that He is the only access to God's throne. What conclusions can you come to?*
- *We've been studying a lot in this book about the idea of promises. Here again we see the writer mentioning God's promises at the end of verse six. What are those promises? How are they "better"?*

## 4. THE RECLAMATION PROJECT BEGINS (8:7-10)

Have someone read Hebrews 8:7-10 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

*What an intriguing passage this is. It seems that God is admitting He made a mistake--or at least changed His mind. "If there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another." Could the Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe, have decided things weren't going too well and said, "Hey, let's start over"?*

This quote is from the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34). Let's read it in that context before we answer talk about it.

- *According to these verses, what was "wrong" with the first covenant?*

- How is this new covenant, the basis for and essence of the New Testament, different from the first one?

- In verse 10, God says, “I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.” What laws is He talking about? Why is “writing” the law “on their hearts” such a significant statement?

- This whole passage is listing the ways by which this new covenant is superior to the old one. With that in mind, what do you think verse 11 means? Who is the “they” in “because they will all know me”? How will they know Him?

## 5. FORGIVE AND FORGET (8:11-13)

Have someone read Hebrews 8:11-13 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

*Because of our frailty and finiteness, human beings are completely incapable of grasping the truth of these verses. It is difficult to forgive each other, but if by God’s grace that does occur, it seems like it is nearly impossible to forget a wrong done against us. What these verses teach us is that forgiveness--by definition--is forgetting the*

### **APPLY THE WORD**

#### **MERCY OR JUSTICE?**

This activity is somewhat similar to the preceding exercise, but this one focuses more on the everyday commissions and omissions of misbehavior. It will help students see that mercy is truly “not getting what is deserved.”

#### *Mercy or Justice?*

*In the following situations, decide which is better, mercy or justice. If you decided to be merciful, what was your reason? What do you hope will happen? If you chose justice, tell the group why. What would be a just consequence? These are based on the assumption the person was caught.*

*transgression, the evil, the “wickedness.”*

*God, however, is thankfully not human. When He forgives, He forgets. His “Sea of Forgetfulness” (Micah 7:19) is much larger than Satan’s “Lake of Fire” (Revelation 20:14).*

- To what “wickedness” is God, through his prophet Jeremiah, referring to in verse 12?

- There are “Four For’s” to God’s mercy: forgiving, forgetting, forbearing, and forever. The first two are perhaps clear to you. How do the second two fit into His mercy?

- Mercy is “not getting what we deserve.” Grace is “getting what we cannot earn.” Justice is “getting what we deserve.” How do the person of Jesus and His Heavenly Father reflect each of these?

- Verse 13 may seem, at first reading, to negate or at least supersede the relevance or necessity of the Old Testament (the first covenant). How do you interpret this verse? How might the New Testament supersede the Old Testament?

*Jesus took the place of Barabbas, a convicted murderer. Instead of calling the angels to rescue Him, Jesus allowed His persecutors to become His exe-*

	MERCY	JUSTICE	REASON
Cheating on a school test			
Disobeying your parent's instructions			
Lying to a friend			
Eating a supermarket fruit before paying for it			
Running cable TV off your neighbor's line (with his permission)			
Driving 65 mph in a 55 mph zone			
Throwing your hamburger wrapper outside your car			
Putting down two hours of piano practice time when you did only one			
Taking \$5.00 from your dad's wallet			
Copying your friend's math homework			
Writing down an extra three hours on your time sheet at work			
Saying a four-letter curse word at the dinner table			
Finding and then keeping someone's wallet full of cash, with plenty of adequate ID in it			

*ctioners so that a sinner could have more time to repent. Do you think Christ's decision might have been different had Barabbas killed His mother, Mary? How many of us would be able to stand in the place of one who has wronged us and take upon ourselves his or her guilt so that he or she might be saved? What widow would be electrocuted in place of her husband's murderer in order to show God's mercy to the lost?*

*A tough question for us all.*

*The preceding activity was built on the premise that these people were caught in the act. Much of how we behave is based on the assumption that if we are not caught doing something wrong, it's OK.*

*What are some other things we tend to do quite easily and without a second thought if we think we can get by with them?*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

This activity will prepare the group to see that God's contract seeks a contract from them in return. It's not "stuff" He's looking for; it's "selves" He desires. Look for "behaviors," "commitments," and "morals."

#### *Last Will and Testament*

*God gave us two covenants, didn't He? His first (the Old Testament) and His last (the New Testament). First in small groups, or as individuals, then as a whole group together, draw up your side of the contract with God. Include what your promises to Him are.*

- *What are His promises to you in return?*

Close in prayer.

# 4

## GOD'S

### RANSOM NOTE

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 9:1-10:18

**KEY VERSE:** “Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant” (Hebrews 9:15).

#### **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. Acknowledge that their own piety might make them more judge-like than Jesus-like.
2. To comprehend the true nature of sacrificial giving.
3. Understand the difference between legalism and sanctification.

#### **PERSPECTIVE**

This passage of Scripture may seem far removed from the ways we live today, but underneath the words lies a truth that is both universal and timeless. In Christ, we have been liberated from a life lived and bound by the law into a life that loves one another as Christ loved us.

In reflecting on Jewish tradition in worship, the writer to the Hebrews becomes almost disappearing and condescending when pointing out that worship through the eternal sacrifice of the

new high priest is ultimately superior to the old ways and the old beliefs. Christ's ministry to us is in His death and resurrection, providing a direct path, a direct line of communication to God the Father, himself. To say it would have “awakened the Hebrews” is grossly understated, for it rocked the very fiber of their religious culture. It virtually negated thousands of years of tradition and custom.

This lesson will help your youth see that worship is more than liturgy and that Christianity is more than behavior modification. It is values clarification on the highest level. The lesson asks them to decide whether they will live focused on looking at people's outside actions or on measuring their own hearts and motives.

#### **BIBLE BACKGROUND**

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

Talk about your wake-up call. Chapters 9 and 10 must have seemed like a “slap in the face” to the old ways so important in Hebrew tradition. The writer concentrates his purpose toward demonstrating the striking differences between worship under the old covenant and the provisions made with the new covenant through the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Understand that in Judeo tradition, particularly



with those Hebrews in the Ly-cus Valley, there was almost an obsession with the forces of the universe, so when the writer contrasts the new covenant to the “regulations for worship and . . . an earthly [or cosmic] sanctuary,” characteristic of Levitical worship, he is writing in rather negative tones. Although he is shallow in his descriptions of the tabernacle and its features, built under the instruction and supervision of Moses, this passage might seem a bit bogged down with unimportant detail to the 21st-century reader, particularly the younger reader.

The layout of the tabernacle may be the most interesting and accessible aspect of this introduction. Your students are even asked to draw their bird’s-eye version of it with the holy place and the holy of holies, etc.

The new religious observances taught by Moses in the desert centered on rituals connected with the tabernacle, and amplified Israel’s sense of separateness, pu-ri-ty, and oneness under the Lordship of Yahweh.

A few desert shrines have been found in Sinai, notably at Serabit el-Khadem and at Timnah in the Negev, and show marked Egyptian influence. Specific cultural antecedents to portable shrines carried on poles and covered with thin sheets of gold can be found in ancient Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom (2800-2250 B.C.), but were especially prominent in the 18th and 19th dynasties (1570-1180). The best examples come from the fabulous tomb of Tutankhamun (ca. 1350). Comparisons of construction details in the text of Exodus 25—40 with the frames, shrines, poles, sheathing, draped fabric covers, gilt rosettes, and winged protective figures from the shrine of Tutankhamun are instructive. The period, the Late Bronze Age, is equivalent in all dating systems to the era of Moses and the exo-

du-s (Hugh Clay-combe, drawings in the NIV Study Bible [1981], 124 and 126).

The symbolism of God’s redemptive covenant was preserved in the tabernacle, making each element an object lesson for the worshiper. The Levitical priests, in-cluding some with Egyptian names and perhaps Egyptian training, gave meticulous attention to facts about the shrine. Reconstruction of the furnishings is possible be-cause of extremely detailed descriptions and precise measurements recorded in Ex-odus 25—40.

## ARK OF THE COVENANT

The ark of the testimony compares with the roughly contemporary shrine and funerary furniture of King Tutankhamun (ca. 1350 B.C.), which along with the Nim-rud and Samaria ivories from a later period, have been used to guide the graphic interpretation of the text. Both sources show the conventional way of depicting ex-treme reverence, with facing winged guardians shielding a sacred place.

## LAMPSTAND

The traditional form of the lampstand is not proven archaeologically until much later.

## TABLE

The table holding the bread of the Presence was made of wood covered with thin sheets of gold. All of the objects were portable and were fitted with rings and carrying poles, practices typical of Egyptian ritual processions as early as the Old Kingdom.

## INCENSE ALTAR, BRONZE ALTAR

The altar of burnt offering was made of wood overlaid with bronze. The size, five cubits square and three cubits high, matches altars found at

Arad and Beer-sheba from the period of the monarchy.

After these physical descriptions are set forth, the writer initiates further discussion on the temporary nature of the cultic worship, pointing out the annual necessity for atonement ritual, known as the Day of Atonement (the 10th day of the seventh month). It was a busy day for the high priest, who began his day by taking off his daily clothes, cleansing himself in the outer courtyard before entering the holy place to put on the special garments. His first sacrifice was a bull, a sin offering at the altar of burnt offering for the transgressions of all his fellow priests. (There were five types of offerings: burnt, sin, guilt, peace, and cereal.) He then took some of the bull's blood into the most holy place, sprinkled it on the front cover of the ark while incense smoke hid the ark from full view.

After these rituals had been completed, he went outside again and cast lots over two goats, one to be sacrificed. The other was called the "scape-goat." The blood of the sacrificed goat was then spread on the atonement cover of the ark as an offering for the sins of the people. Then the priest went back out to the holy place where he spread together the blood of the goat and bull. In a symbolic gesture of transference of Israel's sin, he laid his hands on the spared goat and set it free to the desert. When all of this had been accomplished, the high priest once again stripped, cleansed himself, and put his regular clothes back on. But before he called it a day, he had to sacrifice two rams, one for himself and one for the people.

This was all familiar to the readers of Hebrews who had yearly celebrated this ritual as an appeasement to their minds and an atonement for their sins. But then came Jesus, the Son of

God, the High Priest of the new covenant. He made all of that unnecessary, for His shed blood as the Lamb of God was for eternity. No more was there limited access to the holy of holies, for "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The redemptive blood of Jesus was for each individual on earth, and no offering, no animal sacrifice could separate man from the love of God. "Christ is the mediator"—not bulls, goats, sheep, doves or pigeons—"of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).

William Lane refers to 9:16-22 as "a long parenthesis" that "responds to the question, 'Why was it necessary for Christ to die?' in terms of covenantal practice" (Hebrews: A Call to Commitment, 120). This High Priest didn't use animals. No, He sacrificed himself, making the offering once and for all. Good Friday was a one-time, all-time sacrifice, and Resurrection Sunday was a one-time, all-time victory and reconciliation.

The first 18 verses of chapter 10 are the author's final exposition of Christ as High Priest, who requires simple obedience for approaching the throne of God. Jesus, who obeyed His Heavenly Father in both life and death (and life again), is our example to approaching God in complete submission of will.

These 18 verses are brilliantly persuasive in the classical terms of oratory. They begin by pointing out the incompleteness of the Law and its necessary repetitive rituals of atoning sacrifices (in the first four verses). These are answered directly in verses 15-18 with the completeness of Christ's sacrifice. Intervening this point-counterpoint is another point: the superiority of Christ's priesthood. He did the will of God and thereby overwhelmed the need for repeated

sacrifice (vv. 5-10), and His position at the right hand of the throne of God overcomes the need for Levitical priests (vv. 11-14).

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### **Church Board Meeting**

The lesson plays right into the primary desire of every youth: PUT ME IN CHARGE AND WATCH ME GO. Here we have set up the idea of a church board meeting with an agenda that will include discussion of church rules, rituals, and regulations. For many young people, the church's main purpose is to tell us what we can't do. "It's all a bunch of 'thou shalt nots!'"

Discussion will lead into the important distinctions between rules for rules' sake, and rules that transform us from the world's molds and expectations. It might be productive to elect a pastor, a secretary to keep the minutes, a president of the church board, etc. Let them do as much of the leadership as they can. When it starts to stray or bog down, intervene and redirect.

#### *Church Board Meeting*

*Memo to: All Church Board Members*

*From: The Senior Pastor and his staff*

*Regarding: Changing and/or omitting rules of the church*

*Agenda: Prayer*

*Old business*

*Motion to accept the minutes*

*New business*

*It has become apparent to some in the congregation and some members on the board that some of the practices and rules of the church may be obsolete and unnecessary. Such as those dealing with:*

- *Drinking of alcohol*
- *Social Dancing*
- *Pierced ears (on young men)*
- *Stewardship*
- *Baptismal services*
- *Wednesday night services*
- *Appropriate attire for worship*
- *Social activism*

*We need to discuss these items and decide if their merits outweigh their drawbacks. Should we change our stance, and if so, how?*

*Adjournment*

*Please don't miss this important meeting. Wednesday at 8:00.*

*• If your youth group were the board, what would the discussion sound like?*

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*In our modern society, it seems that a person's worth and value are judged solely on his or her last performance. Athletes aren't paid for the games they won when they were in university. Coaches aren't retained based on career wins. Employees aren't given bonuses for last decade's dividends. Our culture rewards those who did excellent work this morning. Our motto seems to be, "So, what have you done for me lately?" We see it in the workplace. We hear it in the schools. We*

*feel it in the homes. We even taste it in the church.*

*That doesn't say much for our attention spans, does it? In our go fast instant lifestyle, we don't have time to contemplate our history full of rich tradition and customs. No, no, no--we have people to see, places to go, things to do. Who's got time to think anymore?*

*The writer to the Hebrews begins this section of his sermon with a reminder of the rich traditions in Jewish worship, particularly with regard to the tabernacle and its architecture. As he continues, he demonstrates that Jesus honored those traditional values by personifying them in the image of God. As you read through these verses, note how he seems to be writing directly to us today. Prophetic, isn't it?*

If there is time, have class members take turns in reading the whole study passage for the day, Hebrews 9:1—10:18, aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

- Which verse seems most prophetic for your situation today?
- What would you consider to be the most troublesome verse(s) of this passage?
- What are reactions/feelings you have to this passage of Hebrews?
- If you were to transcribe this section into a hymn to be sung, what would be the title?

## 2. THE BLUEPRINT (9:1-10)

*Before you read this description of the "old" tabernacle, it might help to re-read verse 8:13 right above it. The writer is establishing the proper authority and position of Jesus, the Christ, within the framework of Jewish tradition and law so that they will see the High Priesthood of Jesus as a con-*

*tinuation of God's covenant, established now in mercy. In order to do that, he must first lay out the blueprint of the more familiar tabernacle.*

Have someone read Hebrews 9:1-10 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer these questions as a class.

- Do your best to "translate" the words of the writer into a drawing. Do a bird's eye re-creation of the Jewish tabernacle so you might visualize its unique design.
- If you'll look in Exodus 25:31-40, you'll see a detailed description of the lampstand and its lamps. Why do you suppose God was so specific with His instructions and design?
- What three items were inside the ark (verse 4)? What is the significance of each?
- In verses 9:6-10, the writer establishes the differences between "the way it was" and "the way it is." What is the primary difference?

## 3. WHAT HE'S DONE FOR US LATELY (9:11-15)

*These next verses are the first part of another argument set forth by the writer to support his main point. They are a list of achievements of the Son of God that establish His High Priesthood. It's almost as if we have here a "resume" of Jesus' ministry.*

Have someone read Hebrews 9:11-15 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer these items as a class.

Complete the following statements:

"He entered \_\_\_\_\_"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(v. 12).

“He obtained \_\_\_\_\_”  
\_\_\_\_\_”  
(v. 12).

“He has decisively cleansed \_\_\_\_\_”  
\_\_\_\_\_”  
(vv. 13-14).

“Therefore, He is \_\_\_\_\_”  
\_\_\_\_\_”  
(v. 15).

• What’s the primary difference between the “blood of bulls and goats” and the “blood of Christ”?

• Verses 13 and 14 imply a metaphor that makes a distinction between the Law of the Old Testament (Covenant) and the Love (or Law) of the New Testament (Covenant). What is that metaphor?

• What does it mean to be “a mediator”? What is Christ mediating? How is He mediating?

#### 4. WHERE THERE’S A WILL (9:16-28)

While the first part of the current argument establishes Christ’s credentials, this second part of the argument describes His motives. The temptation while reading this passage is to say to yourself, “Haven’t I heard all of this someplace else before?” Therefore, we’ll read it aloud and listen to its tone and its content. The writer is quite emotional and wants his readers to respond.

Have someone read Hebrews (9:16-28) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After you have finished reading it, answer the following:

• Shakespeare was one of the first playwrights to use a “dramatic aside”—a comment made by a character to the audience without the other

character’s knowledge. Verses 16-22 almost resembles one of these dramatic asides—a parenthetical comment. Their theme is the sacrificial blood. What do they say about it?

• Without this sacrificial blood, what is impossible?

• Most statements of logic in argument are “If . . . then . . .” statements. In looking at verses 16-22 as the “If-Clause,” what is the “Then-Clause” that follows?

• Verse 26 alludes to “the end of the ages.” What “ages” is he referring to? What “age” is now beginning?

#### 5. YOUR PIETY IS SHOWING (10:1-18)

Because the Old Covenant based on the law concentrated itself on outward appearances and external behaviors, people watched each other even more closely than we tend to do now. That’s what happens with laws, you know. They remain on the outside and don’t engrain themselves on the inside. And people get so judgmental and “holier than thou”.

So when a society or group of people lives by a set of laws instead of morals and ethics, it becomes quite clear, almost immediately, which ones are obedient and submissive to the law and which ones aren’t. Those who aren’t get punished; those who are get pious.

Have someone read Hebrews 10:1-18 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer these questions as a class.

• What is one rule (of the Church, or your town/city, or your school) that tends to bring out the worst piety in people? Can you think of

any others?

• *The quotation from Psalm 40:6-8, cited here in verses 5-7, refers to four of the five types of offerings mentioned in Leviticus 1--6. Turn in your Old Testament to Leviticus and, looking at the page headings or the section headings, what are the five types of offerings mentioned?*

• *The writer claims God was “not pleased” with the legal offerings of the Levitical church (v. 6). Why not?*

• *Jesus was not like His predecessors in the priesthood. How?*

## **APPLY THE WORD**

### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Prejudice is alive and well in our world today, and we don't have to leave our own churches and homes to find that out. You might introduce this activity with a story from your life when you either prejudged someone wrongly (and the price you had to pay for doing so) or you were the victim of someone's prejudice (and what it cost you).

This activity should get your group thinking about how superficial many of us are when we judge the value or worth of someone, how we judge individuals based on outward appearance or behaviors, how we are terribly unchristlike in our love . . . and lack of it . . . for our fellow human beings.

### **First Impressions**

*One of the easiest things for us to do is to stereotype people based on our first impressions. After each of these brief descriptions of people--some individuals, some groups--share your first impressions of them.*

• Two well-dressed, neatly-groomed men in their early 20s are shopping together in the mall. Later you see them laughing quietly at a fancy, candlelit restaurant.

• Sherry brings a friend to your weekly social. She's cute, modestly dressed, shy . . . and pregnant.

• A carload of minority teens you've never seen before is on your street. In a couple of minutes, a Mercedes pulls up and the drivers talk quietly.

• Some people are proposing the construction of an abortion clinic across the street from your church.

• A visitor leaves your Sunday morning worship service to smoke a cigarette.

• While visiting a prominent church member's home, you see a beer in her refrigerator.

• Your new youth pastor (a man) has a ponytail.

• Your next door neighbor is diagnosed with AIDS.

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### **GIVING IT UP**

When we think of offerings in our society, we think of those coins and bills that we hurriedly take out of our pockets on Sunday “because we can afford it.” That little bit of cash in the offering plate rarely causes our lives much disruption or sacrifice.

This activity asks students to look beyond the wallet and to see giving to God as a sacrifice that could and should cost them something. It doesn't have to be limited to money. It could be

the offering of time, talent, property.

Be prepared to get the discussion going with some examples you have thought of, seen, or done.

### *Giving It Up*

*It seems quite obvious by now, after reading the first 10 chapters of Hebrews, that the early church gave a lot of offerings and made a lot of sacrifices in their worship of the Almighty God. They gave animals (their form of “currency”) and offered them up in all sorts of ways for all sorts of reasons.*

*If, indeed, an offering is to be sacrificial, list the ways some of the following offerings might truly fit that definition.*

### **“CURRENCY”**

### **HOW CAN IT BE MADE TRULY SACRIFICIAL?**

MONEY

TALENT

TIME

PROPERTY  
(CAR, CLOTHES, ETC.)

As we have seen, giving to God as a sacrifice should cost us something. It doesn't have to be limited to money. It can be the offering of time, talent, property. Let's look for ways that we can make real sacrifices for Jesus.

End with prayer.

# 5 YOU MUST

## HAVE FAITH

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 10:19-11:40

**KEY VERSE:** “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

### **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. Realize that faith is built in history, both personal and of humanity.
2. Believe that God can be trusted to help them cope and overcome the trails they face every day.
3. Feel a sense of confidence that the God they serve is trustworthy and faithful.

### **PERSPECTIVE:**

Sociologists aren't certain when it began to unravel, exactly, but somewhere in the past 30 or 35 years, people have started to mistrust government, institutions, even each other. Some blame the assassination of presidents. Some point to wars. Still others blame government or business corruption.

Perhaps it's not one event that has eroded society's foundations of trust. Maybe it's drugs. Or violence. Or poverty. But it is quite obvious that the skepticism of an-other era has dissolved into a chronic cynicism, bordering on phobia. Everything has become a conspiracy.

In this regard, are we any different from the Hebrew Christians of the first century? Aren't we all running toward home, tails tucked between our legs, looking for that last bit of security to latch onto?

This lesson helps us see that the God of today is the same God of A.D. 64 and the same God of 700 B.C. He's been here since before the beginning, a concept probably more abstract than of the eternity that lies ahead, so He knows what He's doing—particularly when we have no idea what we're doing. That makes Him uniquely trustworthy.

### **BIBLE BACKGROUND**

*(Provided to help you, the leader, prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion):*

Is it any surprise that the writer begins this passage with some concluding re-marks that include the word “confidence”? It is at the very heart of his argument that he has been attempting to establish since verse 1 of chapter 1—“Hey, God is faithful. And merciful. And gracious. He said Christ is the One. Christ said He is the One. Let's put that fact behind us and underneath us and all around us and start trusting Him. If we can hold on to the confidence He has earned by taking our sin upon His own cross as a final and complete and eternal sacrifice, then nothing that can and will happen to us is of any lasting consequence.”



The first of five exhortations, “Let us draw near to God” (10:22), is built on four preset conditions. First, we must have “a sincere heart.” The original Greek brings forth a great definition of the word “sincere.” In biblical times, fraudulent and greedy merchants selling honey often “padded” the earthen jar with wax, so it appeared that you were getting a lot more honey for your money than you were. Literally, then, “sincere” means “without wax.” In other words, sincere means honest and just and equitable. That is the heart we must carry into the holy of holies to commune with God. Second, we must have “full assurance of faith.” This, as we will learn in the next chapter, has multiple biblical precedents, but none seems more striking than the calling of the Twelve disciples. In Matthew 4:18-20 we read: “As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’ At once [instantly, without hesitation, in utter faith] they left their nets and followed him.” They did not question. They did not call a committee meeting or a board meeting. Their obedience was immediate and complete. Third, we must have “our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience.” Unlike the world’s view of Christianity and churchmanship, following Christ is not limiting and confining. Just the opposite—it is liberation and pardon. Christ’s once-and-for-all sacrifice at Calvary liberates us from all guilt and shame. And finally, we must have our “bodies washed with pure water.” This does not necessarily refer to the rite of baptism, though that is certainly not excluded. What the writer is alluding to is an inner cleansing symbolized by the washing of the priests under the old covenant.

What we have here in verses 19-25 is the practical application of the preceding nine chapters and 18 verses. It is a pastor’s call to action. Christ has transformed worship from a set of regulated rituals to a lifestyle accessible to all. Our worship now is fellowship with one another. According to William Lane, “Christian worship is expected from the new people of God because God has restored them to a relationship characterized by peace through Christ, the perfect sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews: A Call to Commitment, 139).

This is not to say, of course, that one cannot worship God alone on a hillside, high atop a mountain, floating along a river, praying at bedside. However, the ratification of Christ’s sacrifice, a peace offering, takes place only in relation to the fellowship of peace. One can certainly be at peace with oneself, and that is well and good. But God wants us to be at peace with each other, and that comes only through fellowship. Hence the writer’s warning in verse 25 that the Hebrew church should not abandon meeting together “as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day [of the Lord’s return] approaching.”

The next verses (26-31) are yet another warning from the writer to his people not to give in to the pressures of apostasy but to worship the one true God through His one true Son. These verses in tone and thrust repeat 6:4-8, explaining the dangers of turning from Jesus’ sacrifice and the new covenant. Can you hear his plea, his emotion? Those people who deny this new covenant not only deny themselves of its benefits but also assure themselves of its judgment and God’s wrath. What has driven the community to desertion (v. 25)? Fear probably. Disappointment certainly. Persecution undoubtedly. When the going gets rough, only the determined remain. All others get washed aside like small pieces of

driftwood. It is no wonder, then, that the writer concludes this chapter by reminding the church of its past, when it first “received the light, when [it] stood [its] ground in a great contest in the face of suffering” (v. 32). The choice is simple yet profound, and it is found in verse 39: “shrink back and [be] destroyed” or “believe and [be] saved.”

The future is the great unknown, the ultimate mystery. Seers and prophets have for centuries been revered for their ability, both alleged and demonstrated, to look down the road and see what’s coming. It is the future that brings about fear and worry and sinful behavior. But the past—now that’s something you can count on. You can document the past. You can read about it and remember it, and sometimes you can even repeat it. That’s why Hebrews 11, “The Great Faith Chapter,” is here. It is an annotated biography of the heroes of faith. Christian faith. It is the writer’s Hall of Faith, and it’s here to reassure those who face the bleakest and blackest of futures.

There is purpose in the inclusion of each hero that is as rich and detailed as the Old Testament itself. Therefore, it would be good for you to study these characters of Christendom in greater detail than is afforded here. In capsule form, however, here is a brief rationale for each:

- ABEL: His offering to God was offered by faith; Cain’s was not and was, therefore, rejected by God.
- ENOCH: The fact that he pleased God is proof of his faith in God.
- NOAH: He built a sea vessel in a landlocked country because God had told him to—and he suffered ridicule and persecution because of it.

- ABRAHAM: His sacrifice of a long-awaited son, Isaac, was honored by God and Isaac was spared. This foreshadowed God’s own sacrificial Lamb, Jesus.

- ISAAC: This product of Abraham’s faith produced a faith of its own in his sons.

- JACOB: His blessing on each of the sons of Joseph assured an unbroken line of faith.

- JOSEPH: He foresaw the exodus of the Israelites out of bondage.

- MOSES: He led the chosen people of God out of Egyptian slavery.

- JOSHUA: His army of faithful trumpets overtook a city.

- RAHAB: She became a living testimony of God’s limitless grace and infinite reach.

- THE OTHERS: “Conquered kingdoms, administered justice, gained what was promised; . . . shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, . . . escaped the edge of the sword; . . . became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. . . . received back their dead, . . . were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. . . . faced jeers and flogging, . . . were chained and put in prison. . . . stoned; . . . sawed in two; . . . put to death by the sword. . . . destitute, persecuted and mistreated” (vv. 33-37).

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *Want Ads*

Today’s newspapers seem to be full of want ads. Some are for employment, used cars or furniture, garage sales, and more. Those ought to be

very familiar to your group. You might want to bring a page or two from several newspapers to show them what they look like.

This activity will force them to consider the heroes of faith in concise fashion. What characteristics are important for a man or woman of faith to possess? What is God looking for when He says, “I want you”?

### **Want Ads**

*Your city newspaper has a great rate for want ads: 30 cents a line or a nickel per word. God has given you three bucks (it was a low tithe month) to write an ad for Him. He needs a great person of faith to help build His kingdom in your city. What characteristics might He be looking for?*

Discuss as a group when everyone is finished. Then later after class, either individually or in small groups, you might want to collect the want ads, put them in uniform design, and publish them for the group next time you meet.

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*They call 1 Corinthians 13 “The Great Love Chapter.” They call John 14 “The Great Hope Chapter.” As you read Hebrews 11, you will understand completely why it is often referred to as “The Great Faith Chapter” or “The Hall of Faith.” In its verses is a list of God’s promises fulfilled, each attached to a name (just so it’s easier for us to remember each miracle, I think), from the creation of the universe (verse 3) to Rahab, the prostitute (verse 31), to the unsung martyrs of the early Christian church.*

*The writer to the Hebrews has spent most of 10 chapters defending the rightful place of Jesus within the context of the New Covenant and now*

*launches forth in His genealogy of faithfulness in order to encourage these new Christians who are desperately struggling “to hold on” against great odds, both from within and with-out.*

After reading Hebrews 10:19--11:40, respond to the following items as a class.

- *Before we jump into a more careful study of this passage, what is your definition of “faith”?*
- *Which name in chapter 11 stands out, either from this reading or what you’ve read and studied in the past? What is it about that person that seems to stick with you?*
- *If you could talk to any of the men or women mentioned here, what would you ask him/her?*

### **2. HOLD ON! (10:19-39)**

*You’ve heard the phrase a thousand times, perhaps, but here it is again anyway: “Whenever you see the word, ‘therefore,’ you must stop and ask, ‘what is it there for?’” This word stands at the beginning of this passage as a beacon, shining forward to the exhortations that follow. Up to this point, the writer has been an apologist of the Gospel, defending its truth and its trustworthiness. Now he urges his readers to hold onto it and never waver from it.*

*As we read these lines, try to imagine yourself huddled in the corners of your home in the center of the village, afraid to go out and just as afraid to stay put. Nowhere in the world in which you have lived all of your life do you feel safe from harm. Listen to the impact these words must have had on their readers, then address the questions that follow.*

Have someone read Hebrews (10:19-39) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

There are five exhortations in the first seven verses of this passage. They all begin with “let us . . .” What are they? Put them in your own words.

- These exhortations are prefaced by two conditions established in The New Covenant. They begin with “since . . .” What are those two conditions?
- Why is the writer so concerned that the new Hebrew Christians keep on meeting together?
- Verses 26-31 are a rather stern warning, aren't they? What is the writer warning them about?
- It is interesting to note that in verse 32, the writer refers to the first time the new Christians “received the light.” How did they behave that time?

### 3. THE HALL OF FAITH (1 1:1-7)

Faith and trust are twins, Siamese twins. Without one, the other one dies instantly. They are the basis of all law, all contracts, all relationships. They are at the very foundation of hope, love, and joy. Without trust and faith, the world would be destroyed by its own chaos.

These verses begin a historical recitation of the great miracles of faith, found in the annals of Scripture and other historical documents and data. Read them with a sense of awe and wonder.

Have someone read Hebrews (11:1-7) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class.

- What are some things you have faith in every day (such as: “The sun will come up in the morning”; “My mom will love me today,” etc.)?
- You've already been asked to define “faith”; how

does one earn someone's trust or faith?

- According to these seven verses, what have we learned “by faith”?
- Some have suggested that Noah is “the second Adam.” How might that label fit?

### 4. CHILDREN OF FAITH NEED A FATHER (1 1:8-28)

Abraham has been referred by Paul as the “father of all who believe” (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:7, 9, 29). It would seem a fitting title, given his demonstration of such in Genesis 12. He receives by far the most discussion of all those listed in the Hall of Faith.

Following the description of Abraham's faith is an uninterrupted line of faith-fulness through Moses (verses 23-28).

Have someone read Hebrews (11:8-28) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

- Read the 12th chapter of Genesis to remind yourself of some of the details, then in your own words, describe what happened.
- If you were a father or mother, could you have shown that level of faith? How?--or why not?
- How does Abraham's faith with Isaac foreshadow or parallel God's faith with Jesus?
- Why would the story of Moses be so important to the Hebrews? What effect might reading it have had on them?

### 5. YOU NEED MORE? (1 1:29-40)

The story continues from Moses leading the Israelites out of the hands of bondage across the Red Sea to the heroes of faith who did not experience immediate victory but persevered for the blessing

of God that was to come.

Have someone read Hebrews (11:29-40) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After finishing up this great “Chapter of Faith”, answer the following as a class.

- *Rahab seems like an odd person to include here, given her former way of life, not to mention that she is the only women mentioned by name. Her story is told in Joshua 2. Why does she belong here?*
- *A summary of miracles is in the paragraph beginning with verse 32 and ending with verse 38. What are three or four that stand out to you?*
- *Verse 39 is a rather curious verse, but if you study it, it begins to make sense. It might help to consider “what had been promised.” What do you think had been promised? Why did they not receive it? Reading verse 40 might help you answer that.*
- *How has this passage boosted your faith? What have you learned?*

## **APPLY THE WORD**

### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

This would be fun to act out. You might have four people from your local congregation (pastor, layman, board member, choir member, whoever) volunteer to do a little preliminary research (or you could do it for them) on one of these four characters. Encourage them to dress and speak the part. Moses, for instance, stuttered or lisped or had some speech impediment. Rahab was probably somewhat coarse. This is not intended to disparage a particular handicap or lifestyle, but it is enjoyable to bring a little life to a group.

This activity gets the students into the characters as real people living real lives in real times. It transforms them from black letters on white pages into heroes and heroines of faith.

### **Press Conference**

*One of the great gatherings of history is happening at your church this weekend as four of the forefathers of faith will appear to hold a press conference. NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, and the Associated Press are sending correspondents, but the four biblical figures have insisted that your Bible Study group also be allowed to attend.*

*Those who will answer questions are Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Rahab. You must submit your questions to the press agent of these people before the conference begins, however, so be prepared to do so.*

*You may not get to ask each of your questions, but you ought to write down two or three questions for each of the individuals.*

### **Hall of Faith Nomination**

Everybody is looking for a role model or a mentor. These are the people after whom we shape our decisions and lifestyles. They are usually a parent or a close relative, but often in spiritual matters, we look at people in our churches for guidance.

This activity asks students to look around them and see the heroes and heroines of faith that live next door and sit on the pew down front. These don't have to be headline grabbers and Nobel Peace Prize winners. These are everyday people living out extraordinary trust in the Almighty.

Have them make a brief list of names first, then perhaps brainstorm a few characteristics that fit the criteria. Then they can write their speech.

It would be both fun and beneficial to have each of the speeches delivered from a podium on a platform. Maybe a vote could be taken. (It's fairly important that you don't have a lot of repetition—the same person being nominated five times—if you do this orally.)

### *Hall of Faith Nominations*

*The Great Hall of Faith is taking one new inductee this year from your community or church. This person will have demonstrated tremendous trust in the power of God to do what He has promised. The wonderful thing is--YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT THE NOMINATION.*

*I want you to write your nomination speech for this person of faith. Consider what it takes to enter the Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11): perseverance, unwavering commitment, humble consideration of others, suffering. Make the judges cheer with enthusiasm.*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### "LET US" MEANS YOU

What kind of practical applications can your students come up with that reflect the admonitions of the writer of Hebrews?

This activity once again pulls the truth from the printed page and engrains it onto their hearts. Your students will supply each other with all kinds of great ideas that focus on encouragement, benevolence, compassion, and fellowship. And they'll do it so easily, they won't even sweat.

After a list is compiled from the group (you may use transparencies and an overhead projector or a flip chart or even a plain old chalkboard), and if you still have time, why not try some drama and role-playing. Set up some hypothetical scenes in which there is someone in need and

someone to supply that need. You might use your city newspaper for some ideas.

### *"Let Us" Means You*

*The writer spends seven verses calling his readers to action. The exciting thing is that you, too, have become one of his readers. Therefore, taking the five admonitions from Hebrews 10:19-25 that begin with "Let us," offer one or two (or more) ways you might demonstrate those exhortations this week.*

*"Let us draw near to God"--*

*"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope"--*

*"Let us consider how we may spur one another"--*

*"Let us not give up meeting together"--*

*"Let us encourage one another"--*

Have class members share their ideas, discuss as a group, and then close with prayer.

# 6 THE OLYMPICS

## OF CHRISTIANITY

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 12:1-29

**KEY VERSE:** “. . . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

### **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. See how the change of heart must manifest itself in a change of behavior.
2. Understand that God’s discipline is part of His blessing.
3. Realize that the race set out before us is a long-distance run, not a 50-yard dash.

### **PERSPECTIVE:**

One of the gifts mature Christians have is the ability to see life through a telescope instead of a microscope. New Christians and immature individuals tend to examine every little action, every possible motive, worry about every small detail, and analyze every single event in life until the zest and joy of living each day becomes drudgery and misery.

There is great wisdom—not to mention comfort and serenity—in looking at the journey, at the big picture. This ability transforms every defeat into a lesson. It turns the bitterness of each

failure into sweet flavoring for each success. It offers a perspective that enables us to walk through our valleys with peace and goodwill . . . and not to gloat when we have reached the mountaintop.

This lesson is the concluding challenge of the argument set forth in the Book of Hebrews. The challenge is to cast off the old (both the old “man” or his carnal nature, and the old covenant or the life under the Law), and to set course with the new love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. The writer’s challenge “to keep our eyes on Jesus as we persevere and run” is as appropriate to your youth today as it was to the original Hebrews of the Lycus Valley.

### **BIBLE BACKGROUND**

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

The writer has just concluded an emotional listing of those saints of faith who persevered and a glory once only dreamed of but now made possible by the shed blood and resurrection of Jesus. These, then, are the “great cloud of witnesses” who watch from the amphitheater stands as the Olympics of living in Christ begin. They are not merely spectators who have wandered by the arena with little else to do; they are examples who have paved the way, leveled the path for us

to follow. The Greek word that is here translated “witnesses” is the same word used for “martyr.” “Martyr” is not limited to that person who has sacrificed himself or herself for an idea or belief, but also signifies one who is testifying to that idea or belief. So these witnesses, these martyrs, are testifying to the faithfulness of God and to their own power of faith in Him.

The concept of running a race was not foreign or alien to the Hebrews of that generation. It was an enjoyable pastime of that day, and also one of the main modes of transportation. It appears in many places in the New Testament, particularly in the writings of Paul, which may have led many early scholars to believe Paul wrote this sermon to the Hebrews. We read, for instance, in Philippians 3:13, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” And in 1 Corinthians 9:24, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?” And in Galatians 2:2, “I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.” And finally in 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” The truth of the Hebrews passage is that, despite what some Hebrew Christians might be doing, that is, dropping out of the race because of momentary affliction and persecution, those who will “win the prize” are those who endure and persevere. It’s a long race (into eternity) and not one that is won in a day.

The exhortation to fix “our eyes on Jesus” is an old concept that enables the farmer to plow a straight line. In order to plow perfectly straight lines, it is necessary to pick out a focal point

at the end of the line, to keep your eye on that point as plow. If you break that concentration and begin to watch your feet or look down, you will end with a crooked line instead of a straight line. Runners, as well, know that the old saying is true: the closest distance between two points is a straight line.

The “author and perfecter of our faith” is also a reference to a race, in that the author conceives and commences a work and the perfecter completes the work (like a writer and an editor). In other words, Jesus is both the starting block and the finish line of the race. He has come full circle, a perfect circle, and therefore plots for us the same perfect circle of completion. He has already run this race and overcome its adversity, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God. If we can indeed keep our eyes on Him, we will never tire nor become discouraged because we see Him through our telescopes instead of seeing persecution and trial through our microscopes.

The next section, which deals with the discipline of the Lord, may be both the most difficult and the most accessible passage in this chapter for your youth, for none of us likes to think of a punishing Heavenly Father. But the fact of the matter is that all children are disciplined (“punished”) in order to become disciplined Kingdom builders. Perhaps a study of the word “discipline” in a good dictionary will help you understand that it means a lot more than a spanking or being grounded for two weeks. It is teaching values and ethics and morals and behaviors that make for a brighter future and not simply a bleak moment. It is God’s discipline that is our spiritual “Birth Certificate.” Without it we are spiritual orphans. His discipline enables us to achieve holiness (v. 10) and righteousness and peace (v. 11). Therefore, rather than reason for depression and sad-



ness, His discipline is cause for rejoicing (“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” [James 1:2-4]).

It is in verse 13 that the writer begins a five verse exposition on the practical application of such sonship. First, we are to “make level paths for [our] feet; so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.” This is a call to order, really, that our conduct will be conducive for training and developing the spiritual and moral aspects of others and not a stumbling block. Walk the talk. People learn more about you by watching you than by listening to you.

Second, “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy” (v. 14). It is easier to pray for those who befriend you, Jesus said in His great sermon, than it is to pray for those who betray you. To live in peace is not to live with those of like mind; rather, it is to live with those who call you enemy. In that way, you will win them. Be the first to say you’re sorry. Be the first to ask for forgiveness. Be humble with all men. Be meek and inherit the earth.

Third, “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (v. 15). That is, never allow unbelief to fester and grow in your midst, for it will destroy those around you. Do not deny the grace (getting what you cannot earn) of God, nor deprive those around you from seeing it in action. The “bitter root” can refer to any sin of unhealthy relationship, be it pride, envy, hostility, hatred, or jealousy.

Fourth, “See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau” (v. 16), who learned more

about regret than he did about repentance. These verses (16 and 17) lend themselves to volumes of discussion about the sin of sexual promiscuity, the definition of immorality, and the contrast between regret and repentance. Esau was rejected because his only sorrow was for that earthly thing he lost, not the salvation he might have gained. Genesis 27:41 contains this misguided lament. The “blessing” he lost symbolized to the writer to the Hebrews the blessing of the first-born, for his readers were considering sacrificing their faith (blessing) in order to escape the moment of persecution they were facing. The writer is telling them, “NO, that will be only temporary relief and will deprive you of an eternal blessing—your PRIZE.”

The passage ends with a contrast between Moses on Mount Sinai, its visible mountain, the tangible laws, its frightening warnings, with the experience to be found on Mount Zion, used here figuratively to represent heaven. With the final two verses of the chapter, the writer ends his words of warning: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken [as was the kingdom established on Mount Sinai], let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire’” (vv. 28-29). This latter label can be traced to Exodus 24:17, as that writer states that “To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.”

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *How to Be a Parent*

Every kid who has ever suffered the wrath and blessing of a mom or a dad will be able to handle this activity. If they’ve said it once, they’ve probably said it a thousand times, “When I have a

family, I'm never going to . . .”

After they think about it for a while, however, they will begin to think of many things they appreciate about the way they were raised: going to church, having a stable homelife, learning how to cook, or fix a car or mow a lawn or hold down a job, etc.

You could divide your group into two smaller groups in one of several ways in order to discuss these items: “Moms” and “Dads”; “Spoilers” and “Deprivers”; “Grandparents” and “Parents”; “Rich” and “Poor”; or many others. That might re-lieve many from being “too revealing” about their own homes. Adopting a mask or persona can be quite liberating.

### *How To Be A Parent*

*It's not easy being a parent--you might think it will be, but just wait. Most youth have said at least once in their lives, “When I'm a parent, I'm never going to do this,” or “I'm always going to do that.” Admit it--you've said it.*

*As you think about the way you're being raised, make a list of the things you'll “keep” when you become a mom or a dad (the things you appreciate your parents doing) and the things you'll “toss” when that time comes (the things you wish your parents had never done).*

### *Keepers*

## *Tossers*

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*Welcome to the Millennial Olympiad. The 12th chapter of Hebrews has nearly everything you see in the Summer Olympics: throwing, running, enduring, strength-ening, growing weary, sitting down, and focusing on the prize. It's even got crowds and crowds of people and angels who are watching, as well as the Supreme Spon-sor. It's a chapter of action, of discipline, and of warning.*

*Before we begin looking at this exciting chapter in detail, it would be wise for us to read through it for its overall idea. Don't worry about understanding every word--just keep moving through it.*

Have one or more class members read Hebrews 12:1-29 aloud as the rest of the class follows along in their bibles, and then discuss the following questions as a class:

- *What's the primary challenge of the writer in these verses?*
- *What element of this passage is the most exciting to you?*
- *Which idea is a little confusing and you'll need some guidance in understanding it?*
- *How is being a Christian like being an athlete?*

## 2. THE FLAME IS LIT (12:1-3)

*Everybody anxiously awaits the arrival of the Olympic torch and the lighting of the Olympic flame. It's the oldest and richest of the Olympic traditions, and in our day and age, it is broadcast to millions of people around the world.*

*Well, these opening verses of chapter 12 indicate that the Open Ceremonies have already taken place and it's time for the competition to get started. So why don't we?*

Have someone read Hebrews (12:1-3) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After reading these three verses, have your class answer the following questions:

- *What are the commands we have just read. You should find at least four, maybe more.*
- *Why is it important for us to "fix our eyes on Jesus"? What happens if we don't?*
- *Who is the "great cloud of witnesses"? Why are they a "cloud"?*
- *Is the Christian life a long-distance race or a sprint? What makes you say that?*

## 3. WHO LIKES DISCIPLINE? (12:4-13)

*Nobody likes to be corrected, but ironically, we all respect those who do it. It's part of maturation and understanding. Children who are not disciplined now grow up to be lonely, spoiled individuals who don't know how to get along with others. On the other hand, those who have been disciplined by their parents, coaches, teachers, and employers learn what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior and that makes them productive and highly regarded adults.*

*Because we are legitimate children of God, we must understand His occasional hand of disci-*

*pline. It is not merely to punish us for doing bad things; indeed, it is an indication of our unique relationship to Him. Think of it this way--nothing worth having or achieving comes easily. You didn't go out to store one day and buy that trophy sitting on your mantle. No, you earned it with hours and hours of hard work. Your teachers didn't give you that A in class. You earned it with hours of study and work. That's the way of "righteousness and peace" (v. 11).*

Have someone read Hebrews (12:4-13) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After reading these verses, answer these questions as a class.

- *What's the hardest you've ever worked for anything? Why did you put up with all the sacrifices it cost?*
- *What's the difference between "receiving" and "earning"?*
- *The writer tells us in verses 2 and 3 that Christ endured the cross and sinful opposition, then in verse 7 he tells us to endure hardship as discipline. What does he mean?*
- *The writer says that the primary difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy as children of God is discipline. Do you agree? Why or why not?*
- *Read verse 13 again. What is it telling you to do? Who are "the lame"? Is that simply a figure of speech for a certain group of people? Who? How are they healed?*

## 4. WARNING! WARNING! WARNING! (12:14-21)

*What do you think of when you hear or see that word, "WARNING!"? It usually gets your attention, doesn't it? The writer uses it fairly often in*

Hebrews, so it may seem by this point that he's simply crying "Wolf" once too many, but he's not. This is a stern admonition to listen up or face tragic and painful consequences. God's wrath is serious business.

Have someone read Hebrews (12:14-21) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After reading these verses, have your class answer the following questions:

- *In your own words, giving two or three methods or examples, what does it mean "to live in peace with all men" (v. 14)? How do you live at peace with others? What does it take?*
- *Even 2,000 years ago, they seemed to have a problem with sexual immorality (v. 16). Why do you suppose that is such a problem for people to deal with? What are some of the consequences of such behavior?*
- *The allusion to the story of Esau is both an interesting and important one (vv. 16 and 17; Genesis 25:29-34). After Esau saw his error, he regretted making it but he didn't repent of it. What is the big difference between regret and repentance?*
- *The writer reminds the Hebrews of the Mt. Sinai revelation in verses 18-21. Why do you think the tone is so ominous?*

## 5. I HAVE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAINTOP (12:22-29)

*Some of you may be familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King's final address the night before he died, when he told his listeners that he had been to the top of the mountain and seen the other side. As compelling a claim as that was in 1968, we see in Hebrews 12:22-29, it was not original.*

*In these verses, the writer contrasts the mountain-*

*top experience of the Old Covenant, Mt. Sinai, with the mountaintop experience of the New Covenant at Mt. Zi-on.*

Have someone read Hebrews (12:22-29) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. Then answer the following questions as a class:

- *What is the literal meaning of Mt. Zion? (See Psalms 2:6; 9:11; 74:2; 87:2; 102:13; 137:3; Joel 3:21; Micah 4:2.)*
- *In verses 22-24, the writer reminds the readers that they have come to seven things in the New Covenant. Can you find all seven? What are they?*
- *God shook the earth, according to verse 26. Read Exodus 19, especially verses 18-20, and write down how that makes you feel.*
- *Why can't the New Kingdom (v. 28) be shaken?*

### *A Moment of Meditation*

Consider the awesome verses that you have just read: their history and their challenges, and thank God He has made promises to and provisions for you.

### **APPLY THE WORD** DISCIPLINE IS VALUABLE?

You might take this opportunity to distinguish between punishment and discipline, both by definition and by example. This activity allows them to assess options that many parents face on a daily basis and to set up criteria by which they will one day judge the effectiveness of certain disciplines.

Have them also list some of the "offenses" or "misbehaviors" that would be aligned with certain disciplines in the list. Ask them to suggest

other methods that they have seen or read about (or felt). Ask them what values are being taught with each correction.

If you have a mature group, you might even let the discussion evolve into their country's justice system and the effectiveness of prisons, fines, community service, executions, etc.

### *Discipline is Valuable?*

*As hard as it is to understand at the moment, if discipline is being administered, particularly if it's physically painful, it is one of the most valuable tools toward growing up responsible that there is. Now please don't confuse the terms, "abuse" and "discipline." They are not the same thing: the first is vengeful and hateful; the second is loving and instructing.*

*Using a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the least effective and 10 being the most effective, rate the effectiveness of the following forms of discipline. If you think any are abusive, cross them out. Spanking, Slapping with the hand, Grounding, Depriving of a privilege, Withholding affection, Screaming, Taking away something important, Early bedtime, No dessert, Canceling an already scheduled fun time, Sitting in the corner, No TV, Writing a 500-word essay, Being benched for a game (you're a starter on the team), Slapping the face, Being kicked off a team or club.*

- *Which punishments are more applicable to young children, which to older children?*
- *At what age do the "physical punishments" cease to be effective? Why?*
- *What criteria did you use to plot the effectiveness of each in the list?*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### **NOAH WEBSTER AND YOU**

This brief activity is fairly easy for youth to do, particularly based on the study they have put into Hebrews to this point. This does not have to be profound nor grammatically perfect, but it will ask them to conceptualize and capsulize their view of God.

#### *Noah Webster and You*

*You've been asked to write two entries into the new Webster's Dictionary coming out next year. Each should have three or more definitions or meanings or usages. Don't worry about parts of speech or phonetic pronunciations--they have experts who can do that.*

1. God of the Old Testament:

2. God of the New Testament:

#### *Letter to the Editor*

Most newspapers include this public forum opportunity for readers to respond to the news and opinions published every day. You could bring in a couple of examples and even have them bring some in as well (you'll have to announce this the week before, of course). Look at some of the subjects being discussed and respond to some of the tones and opinions being voiced.

This activity sets forth the idea that the misconception of God the Vindictive often prevents many from experiencing the joyful life of salvation. The fact that it is in the form of a letter will make it easier for them to compose their ideas. It's not an essay for a teacher. It might be made even easier if you propose it as a letter to their school paper.

## *Letter to the Editor*

*Your local paper has come out with an editorial to which you would like to write a response. In the editorial, they have suggested that God is to be feared, like a school vice-principal just waiting for you to make a mistake so he can punish you severely. They also claim that God refuses to allow you any pleasant experiences in life because "life is to be lived under strict obedience to His law." God is a judge who looks for every mistake, every evil thought, every impure idea, and is anxious to show you pictures of hell just to scare you. He relishes the idea that you live in constant guilt and shame. And He keeps score.*

*Your letter should either disagree or agree with that editorial stance. Give rea-sons and exam-ples from your own experiences and knowledge to support the things you say.*

After everyone is done, ask for volunteers to read their letters, and then discuss. Fo-cus on the fact that God wants to be their Savior, their Friend, their Advocate, and Heavenly Father. God is a God of love and mercy and grace, not of judgment and vengeance alone.

End with prayer.

# 7 KEEP ON

## KEEPING ON

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 13:1-25

**KEY VERSE:** “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

### **TEACHING AIMS:**

To help the learners:

1. Recognize that worshipping God under the new covenant means doing good to our fellow human beings.
2. Stay focused on Jesus, the High Priest of God, whose single sacrifice shows us the way to heaven.
3. Understand the power of prayer.

### **PERSPECTIVE:**

Whew! We have finally reached the final chapter of one of the most powerful and profound books in the New Testament. This chapter is the culmination of persuasion, warning, sermon, and exhortation offered by a man who truly and sincerely (“without wax”) believes what he is writing. And his concluding remarks are challenges to every reader of all generations.

The passage confirms God’s contentment that brings us excellence, growth, and perspective. It confirms His companionship, both personally and perpetually. It confirms His courage and gives us confidence to face both the known and

the un-known (Dr. Stan Toler, “Promises,” sermon preached January 1, 1989).

It warns against adultery, apathy, apostasy (unbelief or wrong belief), and the love of money—all facing the Hebrew church. It exhorts obedience to church leadership and departure from Judeo tradition.

In this lesson, your youth will learn that to call themselves “Christians” is a grand and glorious thing, but it is also costly in terms of priorities and ministries. It is not a call to complacency (a misreading of “contentment”) but a hearty challenge to service and agape love.

### **BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

What this book has been, for the most part, is the writer’s encouragements to hold onto the new faith in Jesus as the Messiah, despite the perils and persecutions inherent in doing so. He has concentrated his efforts in defending the Christian doctrine of single, eternal sacrifice under the new covenant, taking the place of the annual, temporary sacrifices under the old covenant.

Here in the final chapter, however, he seems to

be reminding them that the pil-grimage they are on will be taken by fellow pilgrims whose needs are to be met by the fellowship. In other words, worshiping God means serving your fellow human beings. So he concludes his sermon with several commands for Christian behavior inside and outside the fellowship of pilgrims.

The “heading” for these commands is found in verse 1: “Keep on loving each other as brothers.” This is his umbrella statement and summary for all the subcom-mands that follow. Without showing Christ’s love for each other, the journey is meaningless for that is the purpose of the journey in the first place. Adoring and revering and honoring the Almighty is not done by shedding the blood of animals. Not anymore, it isn’t. Worshiping God is imitating Christ who “so loved [his brothers]” that He laid “down his life for his [brothers]” (John 3:16; 15:13). This overriding principle, then, is followed by several “methods” to fulfill the command. The first of these is to “entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained an-gels” (v. 2). These visitors the writer refers to can be found in several places in the Old Testament: (1) in Genesis 18, Abraham is visited by three mes-sengers who tell him of God’s promise that he and Sarah will have a son at their late ages and a great nation will follow; (2) in Judges 6, we read how an angel told Gideon how he might deliver the nation of Israel from the hand of its enemy, the Midianites; (3) in Judges 13, Manoah was approached by an angel who told of the birth of a son who would be named Samson and who would deliver his people from the Philistines. There are more instances, of course, for an angel visited Joseph, the “father” of Jesus, to tell of God’s greatest revelation. The point is this, God came once in the form of a carpen-ter’s Son in a little poor town near Jerusalem, and there is every reason to believe that when He comes

again, He will be just as humble in appearance as He was the first time. Until then, His angels will continue to visit and bless, but they, too, will be disguised as “strangers.” So we are to be as hospitable to strangers as we would be to God’s “messengers” or to His Son himself.

This hospitality was very important in the Early Church, for the evangelists and preachers who carried the Good News from village to village, city to city, relied completely on the hospitality of strangers for their very lives and sustenance. The meal shared was a ritual of worship then. It was also the fulfillment of Jesus’ words in Mat-thew 25:31-46, when He tells His followers that when they feed, clothe, or give water to anyone in need, they are doing those favors to Him. People, then, be-come the sacrament of worship under the new covenant.

God’s promise in verse 5 is the recitation of Christ’s promise to His disciples just before He ascended to heaven. “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Surely these must be the most comfort-ing words ever spoken in the history of language. Can you imagine the Creator and Sustainer of the universe saying that sentence to you? Can you grasp its extraordinary meaning? It was greater than cold water to those dying of thirst. It was more powerful than food to the starving. It was the hope of all ages.

The altar referred to in verse 10 is more than a metaphor for the Cross on which Jesus Christ bore the sins of the world, marking the end of the old covenant priest-hood of Aaron and the beginning of the priesthood of Melchizedek and his High Priest, Jesus.

The leaders that the writer refers to in verses 7-8 and 17 are not to be considered national leaders or political figures. Often in overly zealous pa-



triotic fervor, we cite these verses to fight wars of greed and malice, thinking God has called us to do so. No, this is not dictatorial leaderships that we are to follow unwittingly. These leaders are church leaders whose ministries are ordained by God and honored by Him. We are to respect their authority, honor their discipline, seek their orderliness: as they imitate Christ, then, we are to imitate them.

Finally, the writer asks us to pray for him so that he “may be restored to [us] soon” (vv. 18-19). This restoration is not from prison, as many might suspect at first reading. His reference to Timothy’s imprisonment in verse 23 indicates that he would be free to join Timothy when that time comes. What he is probably talking about is his current ministerial duties keeping him away from the Hebrew church.

The Great Shepherd metaphor for Christ is used only once in Hebrews and here at the end in verse 20. Many times Jesus has been called the Good Shepherd (Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:11-16; John 10:2-3; 1 Peter 2:25; among others). You might develop this concept in terms of equipment used by shepherds, job descriptions of shepherds, characteristics of sheep and flocks, etc.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *Brotherly Love*

It’s wise to begin this activity with several definitions of “love.” Among them will be respect, appreciation, honor, etc. This will make it easier for the youth, then, to write down things they appreciate and respect about the others in the group. Make sure everybody knows everybody else’s name, and have any visitors introduce themselves, tell a little about their backgrounds,

involvements, plans, etc.

#### *Brotherly Love*

*The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to love each other as brothers. Part of that means learning to appreciate each other. Look around your group and write down everybody’s name on your paper. Following each name, write down 2-3 things that you like about that person.*

It is as important to write down these things as it is to share them orally. You can do this in a number of ways. You can simply go around the circle and have everybody give his or her list on a single individual before moving on to the next individual. This will really make the “target” person feel special. Or each person might read all of his or her list for everybody in the group all at once.

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*Have you ever read Pilgrim’s Progress by English writer John Bunyan? Written in the 17th century, it catalogues the allegorical journey of Pilgrim, a Christian, as he strives to live a life worthy of the label in hostile times and territories. Bunyan might have been reading the book of Hebrews as he wrote.*

*How about “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne in 19th century New England? It also depicts the pilgrimage of a new Christian, this time through the darkest of forests on the blackest of nights--a forest of temptation, hypocrisy, and satanic worship. Hawthorne, too, could have had Hebrews open at his table.*

*The book of Hebrews is in many ways an allegory of the Christian journey toward heaven, the tabernacle of the Most Holy God, Who, through His*

*Son, Jesus Christ, provides both the path and the guide if only the pilgrims will keep the faith and stay on the journey.*

*The concluding chapter of the book is the writer's final exhortation to keep on keeping on. It is instructive, encouraging, challenging, and loving.*

After your class has read Hebrews 13:1-25 slowly, absorbing its truths, have them answer these questions.

- *What do you find to be the most memorable line from these verses?*
- *Which of the writer's "commands" is the most difficult for you to obey?*
- *Is there a question you will ask your leader when you meet?*
- *If the writer was sitting there with you, what would you say to him?*

## 2. STRANGERS + ANGELS = STRANGELS (13:1-6)

*Have you ever met a "strangel"? Sure you have. They're everywhere. Jesus, himself, said that when we do something for even (or especially) the poorest, most miserable, and destitute person around, we are doing that something for Him (Matthew 25:40). The writer to the Hebrews says the same thing with different words. Love each other. Love strangers. Love prisoners. Love God.*

Have someone read Hebrews (13:1-6) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer these five questions as a class.

- *What "strangel" have you seen in the past 24 hours? (If you can't think of one, think of the last "strangel" you have seen.)*

- *The word "entertain" has a rather narrow definition today. What do you think the writer intended for that word to mean to you?*

- *Why do you suppose prisoners are in the list of those we should love? Aren't they there because they've done evil? How do you "love" a prisoner?*

- *Credit cards, loans, peer pressure, and all such "Pay Later" schemes teach us differently, so how can you "keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have" (v. 5)?*

- *How do you define "never"?*

## 3. FOLLOWERSHIP (13:7-10, 17)

*If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times at graduation addresses: "You students are the leaders of tomorrow." Well, of course that's true, but it's true for only half of one percent of the students graduating each year. The truth of the matter is that nearly all the seniors across this land are "the followers of to-morrow"! And instead of spending all our energy and funds teaching young people how to lead, we should also be teaching them how to follow.*

*The writer must have sensed the same thing with the people he was addressing, for these nine verses are his guidelines for productive and ordained followership. Read and heed them.*

Have someone read Hebrews (13:7-10, 17) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- *Which leaders is he referring to in verse 7, 8, and 17? Our President and Congress? Our bosses? Our pastors and teachers?*

- *What do you think it takes to be a good follower?*

- What verses in this passage might agree or disagree with those characteristics?
- The writer warns us not to “be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.” What “strange teachings” is he talking about? What “strange teachings” have you heard (not just in a church, but on television, in song lyrics, at school, in books, etc.)?

#### 4. SEPARATE YOURSELVES (13:11-16)

The writer admonishes the flock to separate itself, not simply from the world but also from the Judaism of its past. By teaching them this truth, he is asking you and me to remove ourselves from those two entities, as well, in order to free ourselves to approach and cling to Jesus, who died in disgrace outside Jerusalem. As He has sacrificed, can we not, also, allow ourselves to suffer in order to follow Him?

Have someone read Hebrews (13:11-16) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. Then answer these questions as a class.

- What does it mean to offer a “sacrifice of praise”?
- What does the “sacrifice of praise” under the New Covenant make obsolete under the Old Covenant?
- How do you interpret “the fruit of lips that confess his name”?
- Another sacrifice mentioned in these verses (verse 16 to be exact) is “to do good and to share with others . . .” How can you show that in your life?

#### 5. P. S. I LOVE YOU (13:18-25)

The first four verses of these concluding remarks are certainly the way the writer intended to end

his sermon. (You can tell that by his benedictory tone and that “Amen” sitting on the end.) The last four verses, however, are an afterthought, a post script, if you will. It’s as if he said to himself, “Oh, I almost forgot. Tim’s free. Your Italian brothers and sisters say ‘hi.’ Please listen to me.”

Have someone read Hebrews (13:18-25) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After your group finishes this great sermon to the Hebrew Christians of the Lycus Valley, have them answer the following questions.

- The writer desperately wants to be “restored” to these people soon. From what situation do you suppose he is wanting to be restored?
- This is the first time the writer refers to Jesus as “The Great Shepherd” (v. 20). Why does this metaphor fit Christ in this context?
- How does God “equip [us] with everything good for doing his will”?

### APPLY THE WORD

#### PRISON MINISTRY

The letter offers several ideas for ministry. The estranged wife could use some company, a friend to chat to. You might take her a meal or do her grocery shopping for her or mow the yard or fix her car. The little girl needs nice (NEW) clothes and plastic, disposable diapers. Or laundry service for the cloth diapers. Even baby-sitting to give Sarah a break now and then would help. And what about trying to contact one or both of the parents. Students might visit Isaac in prison. They could at least write to him. Or send a care package. And it sounds like a choir visit would be appreciated.

The point is that we are to climb out of our comfort zones and do something for these people as

if it were Jesus Christ, himself, sitting there in prison.

### **The Prison Ministry**

*Your mailbox is so full of junkmail you nearly pass over a letter from the city prison. Odd that you should be hearing from a strange inmate, isn't it? You don't open it at first (you've heard about letter-bombs), but finally your curiosity gets the better of you. Inside you find the following letter:*

*Dear Kevin,*

*Thank you for reading my letter. I'm feeling depressed and a little desperate to-day, so I thought I would write a letter, find an anonymous person to send it to, and see what happens. Maybe I'll feel better just for having written some of these things down.*

*My wife is thinking about leaving me here. She's tired of all the stress and struggle I've put her through the last couple of years and feels like she deserves better. Well, who am I to tell her she doesn't? Of course, she deserves better. She tells me it's not another guy, which I find weird because she is a beautiful woman, but it's the boredom, the loneliness, the tears she can bear no longer. She's tired of coming home to an empty house and an empty bed.*

*And then there's my baby girl, Sally Jo. I've only seen her three times, for a few minutes each time, since she was born 19 months ago. She looks so much like her mother, but she's kinda feisty like me. The last time she came to see me she had on a beautiful little dress, but Sarah told me she had bought it at a used clothing shop (to save a little money, she said). Diapers are so expensive, so Sarah uses cloth most of the time and that adds so much work and takes away so much time from Sally Jo, she*

*wishes she could get a bunch of those plastic kind.*

*My parents want nothing to do with me. Mom's in Huntsville with her mom and Dad is somewhere on the road most of the time. Mom sends me a card on my birth-day, but I haven't seen Dad since I got married.*

*Prison life is kinda boring. Same books. Same faces. Same food. There's a group of singers that come in once in awhile and they're real good, but it's the same group all the time. TV is nothing but reruns and family shows that make being here seem even worse, so I don't watch much of that. There's a VCR, but I already seen the 10 movies they have in the office. My lawyer tells me she's working real hard to get me out, but I haven't heard from her in a year. I'm afraid that if I have to stay here much longer, I'm gonna go nuts.*

*Would you please help me? Anything would be appreciated.*

*Your new friend,*

*Isaac Sunday*

*As a youth group, you want to see if you can help Isaac. What suggestions could your group come up with?*

### **LIVE THE WORD**

#### **OFFERING PLATES**

If persons are going to be taught the value of tithing, they usually want to see what they get for it. If they think stewardship is simply for the pastor's new car or the church's air-conditioning bills, they might be a bit reluctant to participate.

This activity lets them decide how God's money should be most wisely used and distributed. It's

not set up to complain about the current practices of the church, but rather to consider the ideals of New Testament giving.

You might even invite your pastor or church treasurer (or both) to visit at some point of the discussion. They might want to participate in this mock meeting and offer some “ideal” ideas.

### Offering Plates

*You are on the church board which is meeting this afternoon to decide what new projects and ministries are needed at and through our local church. The pastor has asked each board member to suggest some ideas so a list can be made and voted on. Let's make a list for some improvements, additions, special ministries, and projects that you would like to see at your church.*

After your study group shares its ideas, vote on the order of priority under which these suggestions will be considered. Try to reach a consensus. Don't fight with each other, but be prepared to defend the strengths and merits of your suggestions.

End class with prayer.

# 8 ALIENS R US

STUDY SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:1-2:25

KEY VERSE: “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5).

## TEACHING AIMS:

To help the learners:

1. Define “holiness” and discern how to incorporate it into their own lives.
2. See how submission to authority, love for the brotherhood, respect for everyone, and honor to the King are obedience to God.
3. Share the hope they have gained through God’s grace and mercy.

## PERSPECTIVE:

One of the tremendous benefits of careful Bible study, exegesis, and analysis is the realization that Scripture’s impact can be just as powerful and effective today as it was the moment it was written centuries ago. So much of life changes so little. Oh sure, the details surrounding life’s pressures and the causes of life’s setbacks may evolve from age to age, but the fact of the matter is that life itself changes very little. We all suffer aliena-

tion. We all feel persecuted. We all live under someone else’s authority, whether at work or through government bureaucracy. We all fail to love one another in brotherly, holy love. Those things have never changed.

It is during those moments, days, years of depression and loneliness that we look most intensely at and for the hope of a “new birth . . . into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven” (1:3-4). While so many search for it in vain through prestige, media personalities, material possessions, or immoral power, Peter reminds all of us that only “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (v. 3) will men and women find true hope and help.

This lesson will help your group discover that the holy life is an other-centered life that takes us out of our own self-pity and into the lives of our neighbors, co-workers, teachers, peers, and authorities.

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion times):*

Your students will come into this letter with all kinds of images of its author; after all, Peter is one of the giants of the New Testament and certainly one of the most recognizable apostles

of Jesus Christ. It was on Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ that Jesus said he would "build the church"; it was Peter whose name means "The Rock"; it was Peter who attempted to walk on the water; it was Peter who denied Jesus three times before the sun came up on Good Friday morning. It might be good, therefore, for you to have a complete portrait of Peter before you begin the study of this Epistle.

First Peter reflects both the history and the terminology of the Gospels and his experiences and associations with Jesus' ministry, according to the editors of the New International Version Study Bible (1985). Though some scholars seem to claim that the letter was written by someone else under the pseudonym or name of Peter, most accept it both traditionally and historically as the work of Peter, the apostle. The Greek that it uses, however, seems to be in parts more idiomatic than would characterize Peter, but that has been explained to be due, in part, to the influence of Silas. Peter even refers to Silas in 5:12 as his "helper," and some believe that Silas was Peter's "secretary," who polished Peter's rough Greek into what we read today. That may explain its differences from 2 Peter's rougher style.

While Peter in 5:13 indicates that the letter was written from Babylon, some have suggested that that claim might simply be symbolic, as is the reference in Revelation 14:8 and 17:5. It might have been penned in Egyptian Babylon, a military post, in Jerusalem, or in Rome (he did spend much of his later life in Rome). Most critics disclaim these theories and hold to the literal Babylon of the first century.

Though quite brief, the letter contains many and various themes that include separation from the world, suffering, and persecution as preparation for eternal glory, of courageous Christian pil-

grimage, of God's divine grace and providence, etc. Though all of those are inherent in the letter, it is essentially a call to the holy life—its duties and responsibilities and appropriate conduct.

The first two chapters of the Epistle are both praises to God for His grace and salvation and admonitions to believers to love and submit to one another. It is in the salutation that Peter sets the tone by addressing his readers as "strangers in the world" or "resident aliens," according to Dr. Roger Hahn, professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary. By so labeling, Peter recognizes both the temporary nature and trials of this earthy life, and establishes God's new covenant through the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the living hope kept in heaven. It is good to keep in mind that this letter, like most of the New Testament letters, both from Paul and other writers, was written to new Christians, first-century "heretics" according to the religious leaders of the day, who were being persecuted, alienated, and living in constant fear of retribution. So the letter shares the constant New Testament theme of encouragement and support for the church as it "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1:1). People in this area had been present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and had heard Paul preach on his missionary journeys, so Peter seemed confident in reflecting Pauline doctrines in his own writings.

It has been called a letter of hope in the midst of suffering for good reason: suffering is mentioned in 1:6; 2:12, 18-25; 3:13-18; 4:1, 4, 12-19; 5:1, 7-10, while hope is referred to in 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15. Your students will be able both to identify with and testify to the idea that hope springs strongest when circumstances seem bleakest, as this is often what happens in human struggles. It is only when we lose all hope that tragic despair

settles in. For example, the homelessness that pervades many places of poverty is the tragedy that grabs the headlines across our land, but it is the hopelessness that is etched on the faces and glazed atop the eyes that grabs the social conscience of those of us who have seen it. One might cope with the loss of a home or the loss of a job, but one might never overcome the loss of hope. Peter seems to sense this as he stresses the temporariness and the shallowness of suffering when compared to the eternal depth of glory in heaven.

Peter says in 1:7 that not only is faith itself a valuable asset, but its testing is also to be cherished. This is an echo of Romans 5:3-4, when Paul says, “We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” James says in his letter (that precedes 1 Peter in the Bible) that we should “consider it pure joy . . . whenever [we] face trials of many kinds, because [we] know that the testing of [our] faith develops perseverance.” It is much like the weight lifter who spends days and months and years in training, often painful and always hard work, in order to build his body and tone those muscles. Or the student who goes to school for 12 or 16 or more years in order to hone the mind into a thinking machine. Though the struggle may seem like sheer drudgery sometimes, take away all challenges on our lives and most of us will shriek with boredom and frustration. Human beings thrive on hard work.

The concept of holiness is often presented in such abstract terms (people blindly quoting Leviticus 11:44-45 without much development or explanation: “Be holy, because I am holy”) that most of us struggle with the concept. The Bible, however, is full of “helps” and “hints” that demonstrate how the holy life can be lived (the

Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are but two). Here in 1 Peter, the reader gets another of those “lists of holiness” that your youth reader can grasp. To be self-controlled; to obey; not to conform to former evil desires; to rid yourself of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander; to submit to authority; to show proper respect to everyone; to love the brotherhood of believers; to fear God; to honor the king.

The metaphor of the living Stone in chapter 2 reflects other such references to Jesus, found in Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; and Romans 9:33. It is living in that it is personal. It is living in that it is life-giving. It would be interesting to note other figures of speech that include living: “living water” (John 4:10-17); “living bread” (John 6:51); and “living way” (Hebrews 10:20). All of these refer to Jesus Christ. The living stone continues a long tradition of scriptural references to building a house, initially referred to in Matthew 7 and then again to Peter in Matthew 16:18. Christ is the Cornerstone, the origin, of the spiritual house, and the believers become building stones in the priesthood toward a holy nation belonging to God (2:9). The cornerstone was the most significant stone of every building, establishing the design and direction of the structure: so as Christ is the spiritual Cornerstone of the church, He alone establishes its orientation.

The last half of chapter 2 is somewhat troublesome today as it admonishes the reader to submit to all authority, even those who are harsh and are unbelievers. Peter is suggesting that such recognition is for the greatest good of the largest number of people and is therefore necessary to best fulfill the will of God in the world. “Authority established among men depends on God for its very existence,” according to the NIV Study Bible, and “when one disobeys a hu-



man ruler, he disobeys God, who ordained the system of human government.” This is difficult to swallow if you’re living in Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia. It’s even hard in countries when the ruling “authority” might rule contrary to your belief system. You might spend some time with your group discussing this passage and its hard relevance for today. Go to your study session with several “for instances” available for discussion. For good ideas, simply look at a newsmagazine or newspaper.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *You Are a Chosen People*

The activity relates a hypothetical meeting that is to establish the direction of a local church fellowship. It presents four possible ideas for focus in building a worship center, then three or four more as it concludes.

This allows your youth to see the various philosophies behind building a church; that it is always more complicated than four walls because a church is people, not walls. It will also reinforce the idea that Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone, the orientation and direction of a church. What, then, would He see as the most imperative activity and characteristic of a church? What should be the cornerstone of a church?

Be sure to follow up with an evaluation of your own local church and your denomination in general. Has the direction changed from the original plan? Why?

#### *You Are a Chosen People*

*It’s time for the people of Eastridge to build a church in which to worship and fellowship. They’ve been meeting in each other’s homes, at the Cub Scout Center, and sometimes at the nearby*

*Presbyterian Church. Now they believe they have enough members and the finances to launch their own church.*

At their planning session, the following people speak up.

Connie Compassion speaks first.

*“I don’t think we ought to spend a whole lot of money on the facility itself. Especially since that will mean taking money out of the true ministry functions of the church. We ought to build cheaply, maybe even a pre-fab building, maintain it our-selves voluntarily, and bring fans and space heaters from home when it gets too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter. We need to have a pantry for the hungry and a clothes center for the homeless. We might even consider using the sanctuary as a shelter during the week.”*

Clyde Comfort had heard enough.

*“We can’t expect to invite guests and visitors to a church that feels like a furnace in July and an icebox in February, can we? And should we immediately concern our-selves with people who will ‘take’ from the church rather than those who can ‘give’ to it? How do we expect to build a church if we end up spending more money than we take in? I, for one, want a nice sanctuary with air conditioning, heating, nice classroom facilities, bathrooms, pastoral study, modern equipment, and the like.”*

Paul Itical-Activist interrupted.

*“Whatever we decide on the structure itself, we need to consider that we will be a beacon in the neighborhood, a lighthouse of morality. Our church will become a center for town meetings that consider education curriculum, abortion clinics, AIDS hospices, AA sessions, etc., etc., etc. I think we need to invest in a good attractive sign*

out front that lets people know we're here to make a difference.”

Winnie Wirlitzer raised her hand.

“When I was a little girl, my mom and dad took me to ‘The Singing Church’ down on the corner. We called it that because no matter when you passed it on Sunday, and often in the middle of the week, too, you could hear the people inside singing and dancing and playing their music. It sounded happy. I think our church should be ‘The New Singing Church,’ I do. We need to have good pianos, a fine pipe organ, a music minister and choir director, a children’s choir director, and fine choir robes. Whatever we do, we need to invest our money in music.”

The meeting was beginning to drag on and on. Art Architect wanted stained glass windows. Penny Publicist thought computers and duplicating machines were important. Chef Stevens wanted a Friday Night Community Dinner. Ben There felt buses were a must for Sunday School.

1. Who’s got the right idea?
2. Which one best describes the way your church focuses its attention and spends its funds?
3. What elements should be stressed in a church fellowship?

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. WELCOME TO 1 PETER**

What’s the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear about Peter? Is it “Peter, the fisherman”? Is it “Peter, the one who denied knowing Jesus that night before the roster crowded”? Is it “Peter, the Apostle”? Or is it “Peter, the Rock”?

It is this last description that probably best cap-

tures the essence of his first letter to the early church as it scattered across Asia Minor, for in this epistle, written approximately the same time Hebrews was written, Peter encourages Christians to hold firm in times of persecution and despair: to keep the hope alive.

Unlike Hebrews (or even 2 Peter, for that matter), there is little debate about the authorship of the letter, for it begins with his name and continues in both the style and character of the apostle. Interestingly, many scholars believe that the letter was written with the help of Silas, an expert in the Greek language, something Peter was not (see Acts 15:22-29). It was written from Babylon, according to 5:13, a small town on the Euphrates River. (You might recall that most scientists and theologians have placed the Garden of Eden on the Euphrates, where it joins the Tigris River.)

Peter has written his letter to encourage the Christian Church in its journey. In it, not only does he describe the grace of God as the hope and glory of eternity, but he also calls the reader to separation and alienation from this world of suffering and shameless lifestyle. It is a letter of explanation and exhortation, describing in detail the conduct and duties of each believer as he/she builds the kingdom of God.

It is not a very long “book of the Bible”, and it can be read entirely in about 15 or 20 minutes. As a class, spend some time reading through it, trying to get an overview of its purpose and main ideas.

- What was the primary point of this letter from Peter to you?
- If Peter was sitting across from you, what would you ask him about it?
- What passage intrigues you the most?

- If you were Peter today, whom would you send this letter to? Why?

## 2. OVERVIEW

Let's begin to narrow our study, now, to the first two chapters of the letter. Let's read them again, this time aloud, as if we're reading a letter from a friend to our family.

- Given today's fascination with aliens and extraterrestrials, how do you respond to Peter's label for Christians--"strangers in the world" (v. 1) and "aliens" (2:11)?
- Our Key Verse talks about the Living Stone, followed by references to a Cornerstone and a Capstone (2:6-7). What do those terms mean to you?
- How would you describe Peter's tone? Urgent? Hysterical? Compassionate? Distant? Where do you see this tone most evident?
- The letter is full of commands. Which of them in these two chapters seems the most troubling to you?

## 3. WE'RE NOT HOPELESS (1:1-12)

*The people receiving this letter were pretty much homeless in every sense of the word. They were spiritual foreigners, often forced to flee the comforts of family and friends and scatter across southern coastal towns and states of the Black Sea: Pontus, Bithynia, Galatia. They felt persecuted physically and displaced spiritually.*

*You and I, put in similar circumstances, might have called the situation "hope-less." But Peter tells them that there is hope.*

Have someone read 1 Peter (1:1-12) aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer these questions:

- What is the "living hope" Peter describes in these opening verses?

- Peter mentions in verse 6 the griefs and trials they have faced that have proved their faith genuine (in v. 7). What are some griefs and trials you have faced that have tested your faith?

- What are some griefs and trials you hope never to face that would really, really test your faith?

- In the Bible, "hope" is not merely a wish or a fantasy. It is a firm conviction of faith. What is the value of hope? How does hope make you different?

## 4. CALLED UNTO HOLINESS (1:13--2:12)

*This section begins with the word that begins so many passages of Scripture: "therefore." It is the word of logicians, orators, and parents (right before they pun-ish you). It means that some conclusions are about to be drawn from what was said or written before, and usually it implies "Hey, listen up!"*

*Peter has just told them that their hope lies not in the present but in the future, more specifically, in eternity. The present is full of grief and persecution, but eternity will be filled with praise and glory and honor (1:7). He then begins this long series of "behavior modifications" that define and describe the holy life of following Jesus Christ.*

*Let's read 1 Peter (1:13--2:12) carefully as a class, then consider the following items:*

- In a single sentence, define "holiness" or "holy."
- Now, re-read this section of Peter's letter, and see if you can spot the characteristics of holiness that he lists.

- Which of the things you've spotted seems the hardest for you to "live out"?
- Do you know a "holy" person? Which description seems to fit that person best?

## 5. WHEN TO SAY "I GIVE UP" (2:13-25)

*It is becoming more and more difficult to discern the true voices of authority. It seems that everybody pretends to know what is right, who is wrong, and everything in between. You have the conservative right wing radicals vs. the liberal left wing fanatics. You have the media vs. the government. You have the Church vs. the State.*

*What's a person to think? Peter saw the same dilemmas in his day and spends these verses talking about Christian submission to authority.*

After your class has read 1 Peter 2:13-25, have them answer the following questions.

- *How do you balance this call to submission with your moral/biblical stand against some of the things government authorities ask you to do and believe?*
- *What is one issue from "an authority" to which you can never allow yourself to submit? Is that wrong, according to Peter? Why/not?*
- *Our culture tells us to fight for justice, even if that means fighting against authority (think of the Civil Rights Movement, the abortion issue, war protests, etc.). Can you think of another historical event/issue that shows this idea? Was it right or wrong? How did you decide that?*
- *What are "authorities" to which you daily submit? Explain how you submit and why you submit.*

## APPLY THE WORD

### LETTER TO PETER

This activity might be done either without any introductory remarks or with substantial directions from the leader. Either way, it could be quite productive for the students both individually and corporately.

Some will be far too shy to share their intimate thoughts aloud, so you might be prepared to do this yourself and show how it can be done constructively and without embarrassment. Surprisingly, you may find them wanting to continue their writing beyond the time you have in class. (This "tool" is used in counseling therapies and has had grand results.)

#### *Letter to Peter*

*Throughout Scripture, both the New Testament and Old Testament, writers refer to the temporary suffering of this life as preparation for the eternal glory that is to come in the next life. Peter says in 1:6-7: "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor."*

*In an earlier question, you were asked to list trials or griefs you have suffered that have tested your faith. In this section, write a letter to Peter about one of those "tests." Tell him some of the background of the incident or event and how you felt threatened or scared. Ultimately, however, explain how this strengthened your faith and how you might use this to share with others who are going through similar trials.*

*Dear Peter, ...*

## LIVE THE WORD

### THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

This is a creative activity that will have no other value than to get your learners to think concretely about what heaven will be like for them. If you'd like to discuss the theology of heaven, that would be fine, but for the most part, heaven is only briefly described through visions in Scripture, so the students' imaginations might be as accurate as any.

What students begin to see is that this is a wonderful place of "being" and that it has everything their hearts desire and none of what their minds fear. It is in the sharing of Jesus that real value might take place for this activity. Drawing, again, might be beneficial.

#### *The Hope of Heaven*

*This entire letter from Peter is about the hope of heaven in the next life, how we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, who conquered death itself. As individuals, then as a group together, offer your specific ideas of what heaven is going to be like. Use your imagination to consider each of the following points.*

*Your 'mansion'--*

*Activities--*

*Foods--*

*What won't be there?--*

*Season--*

*Who will be there?--*

*Abilities (that you don't have now)--*

Discuss answers as a class, then close with prayer.

# 9

# BLESSED ARE

## THE PEACEMAKERS

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** 1 Peter 3:1- 4:6

**KEY VERSE:** “. . . live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8).

### TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand the concepts of Christian modesty and Christlike humility.
2. Realize that holiness of heart calls for the return of good for evil.
3. Know that our suffering is only temporary and is preparing us for an eternal reward.

### PERSPECTIVE

Vanity, individualism, revenge: those are what the world teaches all of us every minute of every day. We are told that in order to be accepted, we must look a certain way, drive a certain car, listen to certain music, and wear a certain brand of clothes. We are told to stand up for our rights, fight for ourselves, and don't let people push us around. We are told to sue if we are sued, strike if we don't get our raise, and spread rumors about our enemies.

Every minute of every day.

And no matter how many times we meet with

our youth in church or Bible study, or how many verses of Scripture they read each night before they go to sleep, or how many phone calls we put in or notes we send in the mail, we will never be able to have as many opportunities to tell them “The Truth” as the world has to tell them “The Lie.” That's why we must make the most out of each chance we get to show how Christ dealt with everything He was exposed to.

This lesson is rich in Christian doctrine and holiness lifestyle. From the modesty of what we wear to the humility with which we react, Peter offers each reader the wisdom for our age. While the world teaches vanity, individualism, and revenge, Christianity teaches internal beauty, fellowship, and kindness.

### BIBLE BACKGROUND:

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

At the beginning of chapter 3, Peter makes the transition from his discussion about submission to government authority to submission of wives to husbands. Apparently this was becoming a problem to the Early Church, for it appears not only in Peter's writings but also in the letters from Paul, Timothy (1 Timothy 2:9-10), and Titus (2:5).

In these days of sexual equality, feminism, and

political correctness, it might be hard to understand and buy into Peter's admonition that wives are to submit to their husbands—particularly because it follows close on the heels of Peter's instruction on slaves submitting to masters, and some might draw an erroneous parallel. That's why it is important to grasp the meaning of the word "submit" and to comprehend the context in which it is used. Peter is not implying an inferior-superior relationship between wives and husbands in terms of their "being." That is to say, he is not suggesting that husbands are better because they are men; he is saying, however, that in order for the home to operate in an orderly fashion, hierarchy is necessary. Some critics, such as A. R. C. Leaney, editor of *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, suggest that "in the West we might well shrug off such an idea as impossible, but in the East it would still not be in the least remarkable, because in many countries the position in society is the same as is taken for granted in 1 Peter and the parallel passages [already noted above]. A woman who made herself equal to her husband would be regarded as 'fast,' and it was usually only in those pagan religions with immoral ceremonies that women were prominent in a religious community."

Not to cast the passage aside at all, it does, then, appear to be bound to its culture in some regard. One universal point Peter is making is that submission of will and humility of behavior will do more to "win over" the lost than any amount of speaking or coercion known to humanity. Let it also be noted that when Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and when Peter says "in the same way" (v. 7), they are suggesting a much more "liberated" view of the marriage relationship than was previously known in their culture.

It might be wise for you to ask your students

about their feelings toward Peter's instructions. Also find out how the decisions in their homes are made. What is usual in two-parent homes is a distribution of "responsibilities" where one spouse decides some things fairly autonomously and the other does the same in other areas. Then in major decisions there is conference and consensus. If the two disagree completely on the major decisions, many options occur to which your students might provide the group some input.

Verse 8 begins Peter's instruction for the brotherhood of believers to love one another, be sympathetic and compassionate to one another, and to be humble. These words draw close parallel to Paul's words in Romans (12:16): "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited" (RSV); and Philippians 2:2, "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (RSV). Peter then incorporates a quote from the Psalms (34:12-16) that suggests that anyone who does these things will be helped in life on earth and God will bless with a compassionate ear when He hears that person's prayer. These are Peter's reasons, as well, for the reader to obey his exhortation.

The section (vv. 19-21) that mentions Noah and his generation might be interpreted any of three ways, according to the NIV Study Bible footnotes on this passage. "1. Some hold that in his preincarnate state, Christ went and preached through Noah to the wicked generation of that time. 2. Others argue that between his death and resurrection Christ went to the prison where fallen angels are incarcerated and there preached to the angels who are said to have left their proper state and married human women during Noah's time. The sons of God in

Genesis 6:2, 4 are said to have been angels. The message he preached to these evil angels was probably a declaration of victory. 3. Still others say that between death and resurrection, Christ went to the place of the dead and preached to the spirits of Noah's wicked contemporaries. What he proclaimed may have been the gospel, or it may have been a declaration of victory for Christ and doom for his hearers." Each view is somewhat weakened by an understanding of the differences between human beings and angels or spiritual beings, and their lack of relation to Christ's death and resurrection, clearly the context of the passage.

The aspect of suffering discussed in chapter 4 as it also relates to the verses leading up to 3:18 is unjust suffering; that is, suffering from doing good, not evil. Christ's suffering and death were the result of His doing good, and it is that that serves us as a model and a warning of what is to come. We will, because we are followers of the suffering servant, also suffer unjustly and we are "to arm" ourselves with His attitude of humility. This suffering permits us to understand what is really important: to distinguish between the urgent and the important. The desires of the flesh (debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry) become unimportant when life hangs in the balance.

Finally, verse 6 may be a little confusing with the choice of verb tense and adverbs, but what it says is that the preaching was done before death occurred. The original Greek does not contain "now" in the manuscript, but it was added to clarify the English translation, which lacks the depth of the Greek tense. According to the NIV Study Bible footnote, the gospel "is preached to people in this life so that in Christ's death they may receive judgment now and avoid judgment to come." Some see this passage as evangelistic

admonition: to win those who have been lost. Others see it as comfort to those who have already accepted Christ.

All of this now sets the stage for 4:7, in which the writer predicts the eminent end of this world, which we will look at more specifically in the next lesson.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *Going to the Chapel, and We're Going to Get Married*

Because of the maturity level of some youth, you might want to enlist the help of an adult of the opposite sex who can take half your group for discussion of this material apart from the other half. After some time to get through the ideal husband and wife in groups of boys and girls, you could bring the two groups back together to draw a composite of ideals.

If you are married, you might bring your spouse to reveal some of his or her responses about you and how you fit the ideal. Then you could do the same to your spouse.

You might also want to enlist the wisdom of an older couple you know who could show how ideals and attractiveness change and do not change in many ways. You might ask them their "secrets" to staying in love.

#### *Goin' to the Chapel, and We're Gonna Get Married*

*Most of us have an idea of the ideal husband or wife. While guys tend to think of their future mates in terms of physical attributes first and personality traits second, girls tend to reverse that order. (That's because girls are much more mature than guys.) Nevertheless, both physical and psychological/spiritual characteristics go into the*



*picture we all create of the perfect spouse.*

*We're going to spend some time considering the following "traits" and describe what our "ideal" mate will act, look, and sound like.*

- *How will he/she surprise you?*
- *What will be his/her favorite thing to do?*
- *What will he/she look like?*

*Height and weight*

*Hair*

*Eyes*

*Clothes*

*Most outstanding physical feature*

- *What attribute do you like best about him/her?*
- *What will the two of you do on vacations?*
- *How will others know you two are in love?*
- *Describe the perfect date with him/her.*

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*Peter continues his admonitions to show a submissive spirit in times of struggle and suffering, this time directing his attention to the family as well as to government and employment. It is easy, perhaps, to misinterpret some of these verses at the beginning of this section, so read them carefully.*

After your group has finished reading 1 Peter 3:1-4:6, have them answer the following questions:

- *Which verse caused you to pause and say,*

*"What?"*

- *Which verse do you agree with most, perhaps even causing you to utter a quiet "Amen"?*
- *What are two or three themes you see in this passage?*

### **2. HOW DO YOU SPELL S-U-B-M-I-S-S-I-O-N? (3:1-7)**

*If you're like most people (and despite what you think about yourself, you probably are), you would much rather do something for someone without being told to do it. We're just built that way. We don't care too much for authority, commands, or demands. It makes us feel inferior in many ways. Do you agree?*

*These eight verses, coupled with Paul's address to the Ephesian church (5:22-24; see also what he says in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Colossians 3:18) are often misread and misinterpreted, and today, that can be quite alarming and dangerous.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 3:1-7 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a group:

- *What is Peter's goal in our submission to one another?*
- *Much of what Peter says about what women wear is his culture and time. What "fashion statement" of your culture and time do you find acceptable for a Christian young person? What "fashion statement" is not? How do you make the distinction?*
- *Is there anything "wrong" about making yourself "beautiful" on the outside? Can it become "wrong"? How?*
- *Characterize the authority in your home. What role does your father play in decision-*

*making? How about your mom? Where do you fit in?*

- Peter uses “submit” as the verb for wives; he uses “be considerate” and “respect” for husbands. Explain how those may all be talking about the same behavior.

### 3. MAKE YOURSELF A BLESSING (3:8-17)

*Nobody likes to be around a whining complainer, someone who sees everything through the lens of self-pity. Neither are we attracted to people who lie, seek re-venge, or spread rumors, yet we all know people who do these awful things all the time.*

*On the other hand, we love people who smile because they're happy all the time. (We may think they are a little weird, but we do love them!) While the first sees the glass half-empty, the latter sees the glass half-full.*

*This section explains how the Christian behaves differently because Christ behaved differently and the Holy Spirit has changed him/her.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 3:8-17 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following as a class

- *What is the worst thing someone at school has done to you? What “evil” could you have done to get back at him/her? What “good” could you have done in order to be “a blessing”?*
- *Why does it often seem easier and more rewarding (at least in the immediate sense) to return evil for evil?*
- *In verse 15 Peter says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” What is your answer?*

- Peter asks in verse 13, “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?” That might have been easier to answer in first century Asia Minor than it is today because then both the government and the established church were out to do harm, but give it a try. Who is going to harm you?

### 4. ONCE AND FOR ALL (3:18-22)

*Like Paul did in Philippians (2:5-11), Peter uses Christ as the model of Christian behavior and conduct. (That might seem obvious to us, but back then Christ's divinity was still being challenged.) Remember Paul said that Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7-8).*

*Peter put it this way: “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the un-righteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit . . .” (3:18).*

Have someone read 1 Peter 3:18-22 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following items.

- *Peter tells us that, like Christ, we are to be ready to suffer for doing good. Can you name three or four “good things” Christ did for which He later suffered?*
- *Paul reminds us that Jesus “humbled himself” when He became human. What do you suppose he meant by that?*
- *How can a Christian in your town today show Christlike humility? What does it mean to you to be humble? Is it more than modesty or meekness?*
- *Peter refers to the story about Noah. What*

*does he say was the source of their wickedness? (You might want to read Genesis 6.)*

## 5. CALL TO ARMS (4:1-6)

*While the world arms itself with “smart missiles,” nuclear warheads, and Star Wars technology, the kingdom of God is arming itself with an attitude—the attitude of a suffering servant.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 4:1-6 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- *In your own words, describe this “attitude” that is referred to in verse 1.*
- *Peter makes a brief list of “evil human desires” in verse 3. Let’s list and define each one.*
- *Are there any “evil human desires” you know about that Peter left off his list?*
- *On what criteria people judge? What does God use to judge people? (See verse 6.) What is the difference?*

## **APPLY THE WORD**

### BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

This two-part activity will show your youth the differences between what the world sees as beautiful and what Scripture sees as beautiful.

This is not to suggest that physical attraction is unbiblical, by any means. God created us to be sexually attractive and stimulated. It is to show, however, that physical attraction is only part (and in some cases only a small part) of the whole package of relationships.

The second part of the activity will be an exciting stimulus for discussion on some of the do’s and don’ts of Christian fashion. It is less important for you to make judgments as a group or as

a Bible study leader than to voice and listen to the differences of opinion.

You might be prepared to bring in other scriptures that deal with outer appearances and vanities. Try to get your students to understand the importance of Christian moderation and modesty in light of media pressure to conform. The other extreme (long, uncut hair, dresses only, long sleeves and long pants, etc.) might be equally “wrong” or “unbiblical.” Talk!

### *Beauty Is Only Skin Deep*

*Our society places a high importance on our outward appearances. Much money is spent annually in making ourselves look better because, basically, few of us like the way we look in the mirror each morning when we climb out of bed.*

*Peter tells us that beauty—true beauty—comes from the inside no matter what we try to do on the outside, and if we were honest with each other, we know he’s right. External looks change drastically as we get older, but internal attractiveness stays the same . . . or gets even better.*

*In the first part of this activity, I want us to describe beauty in terms of what society (and the media) tells us. It could be feminine or masculine beauty or both. Then we’ll look at what we mean by “internal beauty,” both in terms of Peter’s description and your own.*

- *What is society’s version of beauty (external)?*
- *What is scripture’s version of beauty (internal)?*

*Now I want to hear your opinions on the following “adornments” that we wear to beautify ourselves . . . or at least to de-emphasize the negatives in our appearances. Let’s answer honestly, and be prepared to share your feelings. Answer for both*

*men and women when appropriate.*

## ADORNMENT

*Pierced earrings*

*Multiple pierced earrings*

*Pierced noserings*

*Tatoos*

*Dyed hair*

*Makeup*

*Lipstick*

*Beard/mustache*

*Tanktops/tubetops*

*Tight jeans or skirts*

*Lowcut tops/bikini tops*

*Short shorts*

*Pants with “well-placed” holes or rips*

*T-shirts with suggestive sayings or logos of beers, cigarettes, etc.*

*Necklaces*

*Multiple finger rings*

*Expensive watches*

*Bracelets*

*Anklelets*

*Designer jeans*

*Ballcaps*

## LIVE THE WORD

### HEAR NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL, SPEAK NO EVIL

Here are five case studies that will offer your youth the opportunity to measure their own “instinctive” or “gut” reactions against purer responses of humility and compassion. Each case is true, and one or more may strike a familiar chord (maybe even too familiar) with one of your group.

If you would like, because you know your group much more intimately than anyone else, you might write up some other case scenarios that would be more compelling for your group to discuss.

Another approach might be to act out some of these cases, both from the initial “instinctive” reaction and to the other “biblical” reaction. Have your group watch and respond to the differences.

#### *Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil*

*We've all done evil and we've all had evil done to us, so when it comes to evil, we're pretty much experts, aren't we? Peter gives the early Church and us some strong instruction on how to deal with evil, and it may not seem too instinctive to us. That's where God's grace takes over.*

*The following scenarios are real. How would you have handled the situation--with evil or with good? What would be the worldly reaction and what might be the Christian response to each?*

1. Jeff called you late last night to see if he could borrow your math homework to check against his own so he can better prepare for the exam on Friday. Instead, he copied your homework and turned it in. The teacher calls him in because a couple of answers seem a bit suspicious, but he tells Mr. Smith that you

copied his home-work. Mr. Smith gives you an F on the assignment.

2. You're not the most attractive girl in the school, but you do have friends and you've been going out with the student body vice president, Zeke, for three months, so things could be worse. When Carla transfers to your school, you're a little surprised when she starts having lunch with you every day, but after a couple of weeks you can't imagine how you went to school without her. She is quickly becoming your best friend. In April, Zeke breaks up with you and starts asking out Carla, who immediately drops you like a rock. It gets back to you that she became your friend only because she had her eyes on Zeke from the beginning.

3. Your father has been the pastor of your church for three years and things are beginning to feel like home when suddenly he comes home from a board meeting and tell you he's been voted out. It seems a woman you barely know has accused him of sexual misconduct, and the board believed her and not him even though you KNOW she is lying.

4. Right before the school elections in which you are running for office, your opponent starts telling everybody that you lied on your application and don't really qualify to run. You even see a few posters go up that say that. The election is only two days away and you see your hopes going up in smoke.

5. All during the game, your opponent has been cheating on you without the ref's seeing it. In fact, no one except you and the opponent knows what is happening out there. Despite all your efforts and all that your team can do, the game's result comes down to the

last second. When the buzzer sounds, your team has lost and deep down you believe it was because your opponent got the upper hand on you il-legally. As you walk past the other team to shake hands, you see that smile coming toward you.

Close with prayer after the class discusses each situation.

# 10 PUT ON SOME CLOTHES

**STUDY SCRIPTURE:** 1 Peter 4:7- 5:14

**KEY VERSE:** “. . . clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).

## **TEACHING AIMS**

To help the learners:

1. Put walk to their talk, action to their brotherly love.
2. Understand that their gift from God, whatever special talent they have, was given to them for service to others.
3. Remember that temporary suffering is creating in them the spirit of Christ.

## **PERSPECTIVE**

We are a proud people. We have school pride, family pride, country pride, etc. Our culture thrives on its pride to the point that some of us are almost sinfully proud of our church. “This is THE church! There is no other church like this church anywhere near this church. This is THE church!”

Peter spends so much of his effort in his first letter to the Early Church talking about suffering and persecution in the name of Christ, he can’t help but feel humbled in the presence of God,

the Almighty. Being a follower of the Messiah can be a humbling experience. It’s supposed to be that way.

“Humility” is one of the English language’s most melodious words. Not only does it sound beautiful, but its meaning is beautiful too. It means to put others ahead of yourself. It means to be the first to admit error and to ask for forgiveness. It means to keep your eye on the eternal prize of glory when the pressures of the moment surround and push down upon you. It means to be “unproud.”

This lesson pounds this point home. Peter uses phrases like “serve others,” “re-joyce that you participate in the sufferings of Christ,” “commit [yourself] to [your] Creator,” “be shepherds of God’s flock,” “be submissive to one another,” “clothe yourselves with humility.” All of these exhortations are aimed at the heart of the believer who struggles with selfishness and self-pity. “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

## **BIBLE BACKGROUND**

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

The passage begins in an almost ominous tone: “The end of all things is near.” This verse is further enlightened in reading James 5:9, which

says, “Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!” It’s easy to understand how the anticipation of the imminent return of Jesus and of God—The Judge—would change the way we think and behave in relationships and daily activities. Peter tells us that we need to live that way, noted by the word “therefore.”

He follows that “therefore” with several behavioral modifications intended to make the fellowship function more effectively and rewardingly. First, “be clear minded.” Christians are to be rational and reasonable, able to make decisions logically and wisely. These are all signs and indications of Christian maturity. Churches that waste their time arguing over territory, jurisdiction, and rules are churches that wallow in spiritual infancy. Second, “be self-controlled.” This is not simply (though it certainly is in part) a check of temper. It is a reverence for the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to rein in our temptations and vices so that we do not become their victims. We are to exercise His will so that we might not exercise our carnal wills. Third, “pray.” It is this daily communication, petitioning, and listening that enables us to discern the voice of God among the many voices that speak to us every day. We become familiar to His voice. And we become active under its guidance. Paul says in Ephesians 6:18, “Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (RSV). Fourth, “love each other deeply.” Love is carrying each other’s burdens, encouraging one another, forgiving all offenses. Fifth, “offer hospitality.” Paul paraphrases it this way in Romans 12:13, “Share with God’s people who are in need”; and in Galatians 6:10, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (RSV). Other references include 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; and 3 John 5-8. Hospitality is

one of the great signs of graciousness. It affirms that earthly possessions are not owned solely by the Christian but are co-owned with Christ so that whenever one of His children (“sheep”) is in need, your resources are His to distribute. Finally, “serve others.” Love without action, faith without deeds (according to James), is dead. We must activate Christ’s love in the brotherhood so that His mercy, His grace, can be given to anyone who needs them. It may cost in terms of wealth or time, but its dividends are many and eternal.

The next passage reminds the reader of the point already established in 1:6-7 and 2:20-21, that following Christ means being followed by tribulation. They are two sides of the same coin. “But rejoice,” Peter says, “that you participate in the sufferings of Christ.” Remember that in Matthew 16:21-23, Peter would have nothing to do with Christ’s prophecy of suffering. “‘Never, Lord!’ he said. ‘This shall never happen to you!’” Then you’ll recall the shocking rebuke leveled at Peter, the Rock: “Get behind me, Satan!” Jesus said. “You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Peter remembered this rebuke every day of his life, particularly strongly on those days of affliction. His friend, Paul, was suffering terribly for carrying the gospel and preaching the Good News (see Colossians 1:24), and Peter has seen that suffering for Christ means suffering with Christ . . . and that means resurrection with Christ in heaven.

Alan Stibbs, in his book *The First Epistle General of Peter*, writes, “When the people of God endure undeserved suffering for Christ’s sake, they experience fellowship with Him and bring glory to His name. It is doubly important, therefore, that they should not bring justly deserved suffering upon themselves either by evil-doing



or by indiscreet action. For not only are such practices wrong in themselves; but also, when professing Christians thus clearly deserve punishment, the distinctive witness of true Christian suffering is undermined and contradicted” (161). It is intriguing that among murder and stealing, Peter includes meddling: being a busybody. This is a person who assumes responsibility for things and activities that do not belong to him or her. Many believe that it is meddling that causes both familial and commercial discord. At its very least, meddling works against humility and forgiveness. Stibbs writes, “It is imperative for the Christian to begin to order his own conduct according to new standards of purity and justice, this new awareness and concern does not qualify him officiously to interfere in the lives of others, particularly non-Christians, to try to make them live according to his light” (162).

Chapter 5 carries the metaphor begun by Christ in John 10 and Luke 15 of the Good Shepherd to its logical end. We are to become shepherds, in turn, of the flocks bestowed upon us through God’s ordination. This is not addressed simply to church leaders: pastors, Sunday School teachers, board members. It is for anyone who leads. Peter warns that we are not to “shepherd” out of feelings of obligation. Our motive is not to be greed. We are not to use it to put pressure on anyone. Not at all. We are to tend His sheep because we want to do His will, because we want to serve by being an example of Christ’s sacrificial love.

The key verse for this lesson, 5:5, refers to the putting on of clothing, a robe of humility. Humility becomes the garment we show to the world. Peter’s quote of Proverbs 3:34, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble,” should be discussed through several translations. The

NIV states, “He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.” The RSV translates Proverbs 3:34, “Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he shows favor.” Perhaps your students will have other versions that will shed light on the meaning.

It is interesting to note that in 5:8 Peter may be reflecting upon his own inattentiveness in Gethsemane. He writes, “Be self-controlled and alert.” Some believe he is referring to his own inability to stay awake during Jesus’ horrifying ordeal in the Garden before the betrayal that sent Him to the Cross.

Peter must have then taken the quill from Silas’s hand in verses 12-14 as he concludes his letter to the church. He thanks Silas for his help, not only as a courier, probably, of the letter, but also as its chief scribe. As stated in the first study (chapter 8 of this book), Silas’s skills with the Greek language were far superior to Peter’s, and he probably acted as a secretary, polishing Peter’s words for formal presentation. It is in this final greeting, also, that we learn of its origin, Babylon. Peter holds Mark in such high regard that he refers to him as “my son.” If we look at 1 Timothy 1:2, we see that it was probably Peter who led Mark to Christ. Early Church tradition binds the two together throughout their later lives. The “kiss of love” in the final verse is the same that Paul encourages in 1 Corinthians 16:20. This “holy kiss” reflects the culture of the time—kissing was a common greeting in the synagogue, and it seemed to continue in the Jewish-Gentile churches.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *The Gift of Gifts*

Everybody has a gift—a special or unique talent

that makes a person different from most people around him or her. Some of us are taught to downplay those gifts or to ignore them, often in the name of modesty, but it's not hard for others to see those gifts in us.

Peter talks about using our gifts to serve others—that's why God gave them to us in the first place. This activity, then, plays on both of those ideas. Your students will probably be much more adept at seeing opportunities of service for others than they will for themselves, but this may help them do even that.

Spend some time at the end of your session brainstorming some opportunities of service not only for the individuals in your group but for the group as a whole as well.

### *The Gift of Gifts*

*Ah, Christmas! No other season of the year has so much tradition and expectation. The Smiths gathering around their tree just now, ready to open their presents. The funny thing is, there are no packages under the beautifully decorated tree. It seems this year they are giving each other.*

*The Father said, "As you know, this year we are doing something different. Instead of toys, clothes, radios, and CD's, we're going to offer our special gifts to serving others." After he says this, he looks around the room, wondering what each one will do with his or her gift.*

*Let's make some suggestions to this family of how they can use their gifts to serve others?*

- Mom has the gift of art (she paints, weaves, makes crafts)
- Sally has the gift of writing
- Sam likes to work outside

- Stan is generous
- Grandma has the gift of hospitality
- Uncle Steve is a great speaker
- Aunt Mary is famous for her baking
- Susan can teach anybody to do anything
- Jake loves to work on machines
- Martha raises cats and dogs
- Roger has a huge vegetable garden
- George loves carpentry
- Bart plays the piano and sings
- Dad is a great listener

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### 1. OVERVIEW

*Obviously Peter felt that things were getting pretty urgent--it's not every day you write "The end of all things is near" (4:7). This is, however, precisely the attitude Peter felt was necessary for the church in Asia Minor--to live as if the end was impending every day. It should make a difference.*

Read these last verses of 1 Peter (4:7--5:14) all at once, then answer the following questions as a class.

- *What are some words that are repeated within this passage?*
- *What do you think Peter's tone is? What kind of mood is he in?*
- *Write down some "journalist's questions" to ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How.*
- *Which is Peter's most powerful instruction?*

## 2. THE END IS NEAR (4:7-11)

*If that doesn't wake you up, nothing will--"The End Is Near!" There's no hitting the snooze alarm on that one. Peter wants the church to live as if every day were its last, and he urges them to rid themselves of any complacency that might exist and to reprioritize their lives in light of what's eternally important.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 4:7-11 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following as a class.

- *If this were your last day on earth, how would you spend it? What would you suddenly find important? What might become unimportant?*
- *Peter acknowledges that each of us possesses a peculiar gift (v. 10). What is a "gift"? Is it different from a skill or a talent?*
- *What do you think is your gift? How does Peter suggest you use it? How might you do that?*
- *Most of us like to talk, though not publicly. Peter tells us how to talk. How is that?*
- *What is the goal of service, according to verse 11?*

## 3. JOY IN MUDVILLE (4:12-19)

*Have you ever had "mud" thrown at you--an insult intended to make you feel awful about yourself in one way or another? Most of us know the difference between teasing and cutting someone to the bone with a terse comment or a mean put-down, and we know first-hand because we've felt such a sting. Peter tells us in these verses that if we suffer insults because we call ourselves followers of Christ, we should rejoice.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 4:12-19 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles.

After you finish reading this section, answer the following as a class:

- What is the source of this "joy" we should feel when we are insulted?
- Verse 14 sounds an awful lot like one of the beatitudes in Matthew 5. Which one?
- There are three kinds of "criminals" mentioned in verse 15. I think most of us would agree on the first two--murderer and thief--as being violators of the law. What is the third one he mentions? How is that a "crime"? Which commandment does it violate?
- Have you ever "suffered" for being a Christian? Chances are you haven't been persecuted (though that might certainly be the case for one or two of you), but you might have been insulted or ostracized because you know Jesus. If you feel comfortable sharing with us, please tell us about your experience.

## 4. RESPECT YOUR ELDERS (5:1-9)

*This series of verses almost reads like a postscript or a parenthetical aside. "Oh, by the way fellow elders, don't forget to . . ." Yet it still possesses a great impact to the church because it addresses the leadership of the church.*

Have someone read 1 Peter 5:1-9 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles. After you finish reading this "postscript," answer the following as a class:

- *What metaphor does Peter use to describe the elders? Why does it seem to fit so well? (You might want to look at John 10 and Luke 15.)*
- *Peter suggests (vv. 2-3) three evil motives or negative characteristics and three pure motives or positive characteristics for doing what they do. What are they?*

- *Peter uses the strong image of clothing when he talks about humility in verse 5. Why is that effective? Contrast this verse to what he says about clothing in 3:3-4. What does it mean to “wear” humility? What are the benefits of doing so?*

- *If the elders are shepherds, then it seems only fitting that the enemy would be described as he is in verse 8. Why?*

## 5. STRONG, FIRM, AND STEADFAST (5:10-14)

*Peter has just told us to cast all our anxiety on God, laying it all in His mighty hand because He cares for us (v. 7). Try to imagine the Creator of the universe, the Maker of all things you see, touch, hear, smell, and taste, knowing your name and loving you all by yourself. Caring for you. Finally, Peter closes his letter with a promise of faith.*

After you finish reading Peter’s final remarks (5:10-14) aloud, answer the following as a class.

*In your own words, explain the four promises in verse 10:*

- “restore”--

- “make strong”--

- “make firm”--

- “make steadfast”--

- *Peter thanks Silas for his help in verse 12. How do you suppose Silas helped Peter?*

- *What are two or three truths about the divine calling in verse 10?*

- *Throughout this passage and the entire letter, for that matter, Peter refers to “steadfast” and “stand fast.” Given what you know about the meaning of his name (“Cephas”), why do those terms seem to fit?*

## **APPLY THE WORD**

### WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Divide your group into six teams. Each team should study one of these brief sections of Scripture:

1. *1 Thessalonians 4:9-12*
2. *2 Peter 1:5-8*
3. *1 John 4:7-11*
4. *Matthew 18:21-22*
5. *1 Corinthians 13:4-7*
6. *Ephesians 4:31-32*

*As you study your passage, answer these questions:*

- What action is associated with love?
- What kind of people might need this kind of instruction?
- How does this passage apply to us now?

*As you listen to the other teams, jot down all the characteristics you hear that you can associate with love. At the end of the sharing, circle one that you will try hard to show this week. Can you be specific?*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### FEED MY SHEEP

This activity introduces five real people with real needs. Their backgrounds are as varied as those in your own group, perhaps, but certainly at the high schools your students attend.

If one or more of these people came into your Bible study group, how would what you have been studying make a difference in the way you treat them, and therefore, a difference in their lives?

You could sit in a circle to discuss this exercise as a group, or you could have certain individuals read their stories aloud, maybe even taking some questions as that “persona.” One thing that is effective is to have a true-to-life case study from your fellowship come visit. Present the story, in writing like these five, for similar discussion. Offer alternatives for reactions to the case. Open for questions. At the end of the discussion, introduce the person who was described in the case study and allow for more questions.

### *Feed My Sheep*

*You've just been given a dream job. You're a shepherd. (You must have written one of the world's greatest resumes!) Your boss has given you one*

*thing to do with your fold and that is you have to provide it with food. That's all - you have to feed your sheep. Not bad, huh?*

*The only catch is--your fold is full of human beings, not sheep. And you're not feeding them grains or pellets--you're feeding them spiritual nourishment. To make matters even worse, on your first day on the job you run into a handful of "sheep" that can't eat the regular "food." They have special "dietary needs." You've got to figure out some way to keep these "sheep" spiritually healthy.*

*There's Shelley. She was physically abused at home for about three years by a step-mother and has a lot of bitterness. What makes matters worse is that her step-mother was on the church board and a Sunday School teacher. Shelley wants to have nothing to do with any church.*

*Then there's Mike. His parents don't make very much money, so he never really feels like he fits in. His clothes are either too big or too small for him and they're never all that fashionable. He's a bright kid, but he doesn't do as well in school as he should because of the way he feels about himself.*

*Megan, on the other hand, is a babe . . . and she knows it. Her hair is perfect, her figure is voluptuous, and her smile could be on any magazine cover around. The thing is*

*--she doesn't have one friend on the face of the earth. Girls are either jealous of her or insecure around her. Boys, well, you know, they can't get past her great looks. They either want to marry her or stare at her but not much in between.*

*Mr. Reimer down the street is scary. His yard is overgrown and the paint on his house could use a good sand-blasting. You hardly ever see him outside his house, but at night sometimes, if you look through his window you can see him walking*

*around his house, kinda stooped over.*

*Finally, you've got Skip. The class clown. He seems to have more friends than he knows what to do with . . . sometimes you wonder how he remembers all their names. One day you hear his dad has been in an awful car accident, and you stop hearing Skip's jokes in class or much laughter among his friends. Skip becomes the class frown.*

After the class has discussed the question, "If one or more of these people came into your Bible study group, how would what you have been studying make a difference in the way you treat them, and therefore, a difference in their lives?"; read the following:

*"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?'*

*'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'*

*Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'*

*Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?'*

*He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'*

*Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'*

*The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'*

*Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'*

*Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep'" (John 21:15-17).*

• What do you think Jesus was trying to communicate to Peter?

Close with prayer.

# FEELING THOSE

## GROWTH PANGS

STUDY SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:1-21

KEY VERSE: “. . . make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love” (2 Peter 1:5-7).

### TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Recognize that growth in their Christian walk is as important as their physical and emotional maturation.
2. Realize that the walk of the Christian lifestyle is more important than the talk of Christian philosophy.
3. Sense the authority of Peter and his teaching.

### PERSPECTIVE

Growing up is at once the most exciting time of our lives and the most frightening. We're never quite certain what the next day will bring, so many people, especially youth, take risks and challenges, exhilarated by the spontaneity of the unknown, while others, especially adults, seek refuge in the certainty of the past, afraid of failure.

Spiritual growth, while it too can be both tremendous and traumatic, is absolutely necessary for the Christian. Though salvation is gained in a crisis moment, following in the footsteps of Jesus means getting up from our knees and walking forward and upward with Him. It truly is like learning how to walk physically. It has its bumps and bruises, its lumps and losses, but when it is learned and mastered, it is the liberation we crave.

This lesson describes the growth process of the Christian. It begins with faith (the crisis moment of acceptance that is honed through testing) and culminates with love (the demonstration of “God with us”). It also defends the exclusive truth of the gospel: that God was made man so that man can be reconciled to God by faith.

### BIBLE BACKGROUND

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

As mentioned in the previous introduction to 1 Peter, there has been much debate as to the authorship of this second letter attributed to Peter. Some of it has to do with its chronology, since Peter died between A.D. 65 and 68, during the reign of Nero. Its heavy reliance on the teachings and writings of Paul have indicated to many Bible scholars through the centuries that it must

have been written after they were made public because 2 Peter 3:15-16 refer to Paul's letters. Others claim the difference of style between the first letter and this second letter suggests two different authors. In fact, it wasn't until Eusebius in the latter part of the third century and the early part of the fourth century that its authenticity was accepted.

First, the chronology can be explained by the probable collection and availability of Paul's letters prior to their publication. They had, after all, been written 10 to 15 years before Peter's death. Communication in the Roman world and in the Christian Church was much better than you might expect, so Peter's familiarity with them could be expected.

Second, as to the style differences with 1 Peter, it has already been established that 1 Peter was probably written by a learned scribe, most notably Silas, who was able to put Peter's words into formal and polished Greek. This second letter, however, was probably written without such benefit (no mention of a helper or scribe is made at the beginning or end) and hence reflects Peter's courser, rougher Greek, characteristic of men in his social standing.

A third criticism of 2 Peter is its obvious parallels to Jude. Throughout both letters, similar points are made and issues raised. Look at the second chapter of this Epistle next to verses 4-18 of Jude and you will see striking comparisons. Some say Jude used 2 Peter, while most contend the opposite: that the longer letter incorporated the shorter one. This is not to weaken the intended impact of Peter's letter at all, for such borrowing often took place among ancient writers.

While Peter's first letter to the Early Church deals with influences of evil and persecution outside the church coming in, this letter is

more concerned with the evil and heresy arising within the fellowship of believers. It teaches that faith must be practiced to grow, and as an example, he says that we must encourage each other toward that spiritual maturation while fighting false teachings and preparing for Christ's return.

In a not-so-subtle way, Peter starts from the very beginning to attack the heresies of the day, most notably gnosticism (salvation by knowledge). In verse 3, for instance, he says, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (emphasis added). God has provided all the spiritual food and nourishment we will ever need through our simple, yet profound, knowledge of Him. Peter is emphasizing that his knowledge and the knowledge of the other apostles was completely sufficient, and no clandestine or hidden knowledge claimed in gnosticism was necessary or meaningful. The two words at the end of that verse that are used as attributes of God—glory and goodness—reflect the two very concepts Peter will later develop for Christian growth. God's "glory" shows the excellence of His being, the righteousness of who He is. His "goodness" is the demonstration of the excellence of His deeds, the righteousness of His actions. Peter, then, is saying what James wrote in 2:17, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Verses 5-7 formulate Peter's list of virtues that will activate this excellence of being. Perhaps the metaphor of a plant would help put this in concrete form for your youth. Faith is the root of a well-rounded, fruitful life. That would naturally indicate that the eighth virtue mentioned, love, is the fruit of the tree, the kind of pervasive selflessness that leads to sacrifice for others. The stalk or trunk would be goodness, followed



by a progressive branching out of knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness as we draw nearer to the fruit. Compare Peter's list with Paul's found in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). According to gnostic heresy, knowledge, of course, made self-control and moral restraint unnecessary; whereas Peter is teaching that Christian knowledge leads to self-control and moral restraint—a big difference in motivation for Christian behavior!

Though this metaphor might make it convenient to remember this list, it is not to mean, necessarily, that they are progressive in quality. In other words, Peter is probably intending these virtues to be manifested and nurtured at the same time, though love is logically the final and end result. Christian knowledge produces holiness: "Bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (Colossians 1:10b-12).

It is interesting that Peter uses the metaphor of "the tent" to refer to his physical body. A tent is a temporary, often inadequate, and frail place to live. It is not insulated or sturdy and is therefore tossed and victimized by any and all weather conditions outside. It will barely stand up against a strong wind. Both Jesus (in Matthew 7 and John 14) and Paul (in 2 Corinthians 5:1) describe a much more stable abode being built by God in provision for us in heaven. This is Peter's indication that whatever we suffer now is only temporary and due to the inadequacy of the flesh, not the will of God. His will is for us

to cast aside the tent in exchange for the sturdy mansion built on the rock.

Peter calls the heresy of his day, in verse 16, "cleverly invented stories." His account of Jesus' life and ministry is accurate, nonfictional truth. He is telling merely what he saw and heard for three years while following the Messiah and what he saw and heard on the Mount of Transfiguration, as unbelievable as it may sound in its retelling. His purpose in retelling these events is twofold: to confirm his own authority and the authenticity of the Christ; and to foretell what it will be like when Jesus comes back to set up His eternal kingdom. This testimony rests both on the voice of God on the mountain and on the revelation of Scripture.

This prophecy is not merely Peter's own interpretation of events. No prophecy is, according to verse 20, merely the ideas of the prophet. The Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the Church, too, are parts of the interpretative process of prophecy. In producing Scripture, it is a two-way and two-part process. God is the origin of Scripture's content, and it says God's truth. In other words, it says what God says. They are the same. But the author is more than merely a scribe: he actively speaks, too, but what he says comes from God through the Holy Spirit.

## **SESSION ACTIVITIES**

### **ENGAGE THE WORD**

#### *Camp Killerdogs*

*We're going camping! You probably have a friend whose idea of "roughing it" is a black and white television set. Or you may know someone who could fall asleep atop Mt. Everest without a tent, a sleeping bag, or even a heavy jacket. Most of us are probably somewhere in the middle. As a group, we're going to plan an imaginary camping*

*trip. First, we need to decide what we need to take in the following categories:*

*What to Bring*

*Food*

*Shelter*

*Clothing*

*Equipment*

*Emergency Aids*

Discuss each category as a group before going on to the next section.

*As you know, we are all on another kind of camping trip, a journey through life. I want us to change our thinking a bit. Just like we need things to survive while camping, there are certain things we need to survive spiritually on our life journey or camping trip. What do we need spiritually in those same areas of Food, Shelter, Clothing, Equipment, and Emergency Aids?*

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*Peter must have been a wonderful friend: concerned, loyal, and honest. That probably also made him a wonderful pastor (“shepherd”), for he was willing to put forth an enormous amount of effort to make sure his flock had not only heard the truth (1 Peter) but was now following the truth (2 Peter).*

*This is more than what some might call “a sequel” to the first letter. (It’s probably more accurate to call it a “follow-up letter.”) Although the themes seem to reiterate what we have learned in the earlier epistle, this letter is even more direct and forthright. Peter wants the church to know that*

*salvation is only the beginning of this new life in Christ--now it is time to grow into mature fellowship with God. Especially before it’s too late.*

*Before we begin to look at this letter verse by verse and chapter by chapter, it would help to get a general feeling about it by reading it all fairly casually. Let’s read the whole book aloud together.*

After you’ve looked it over, answer the following questions as a class:

- *How would you compare the tone of this letter with that in the first letter from Peter?*
- *What are five or six words or concepts that you will need to study further in order to understand?*
- *Describe the face of Peter. You won’t find it in your scriptures, but his image is somewhere in your imagination.*
- *In your own words, what do you think is the theme of 2 Peter?*

### **2. GROW BABY GROW! (1:1-7)**

*Most of us are growing up. We can see it in the mirror . . . we can feel it in our clothes . . . we can sense it in our goals and actions. Face it, we’re not babies any-more. And that’s the way it should be; that’s the way it’s supposed to be. Can you imagine what the world would be like if we all stayed infants?*

*Maturation carries with it great privileges, but it also has an unbelievably hard job description. Peter relates Christian growth in similar terms in these verses.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 1:1-7 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- Peter begins to list the characteristics of the Christian (v. 5) with “faith” and ends the list (v. 7) with “love.” What does that say to you?

- Between faith and love are six other steps to Christian maturity. What are they? Let’s define each of these characteristics in our own words.

- Peter suggests in verse 3 that God’s “divine power” has given us “everything we need for life and godliness.” What specific things do we need for life and godliness?

- That verse ends by mentioning God’s “glory and goodness.” What is the difference between His glory and His goodness?

- As you look back on your life, growing up from infancy through childhood into youth, what has changed in you the most? It might be two or three things.

### 3. P-MART’S BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL (1:8-11)

When was the last time you bought something that wasn’t on sale? We all love a good bargain, and that’s why we look for those “Ten Percent Off” and “Half Price” signs all over the store.

Peter is reminding the church that God has offered us the “Bargain of a Lifetime” through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Have someone read 2 Peter 1:8-11 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- What will you have if you possess the virtues listed in verses 5-7?
- What happens to you as a Christian if you don’t have these virtues?
- It would be good to see what Paul says about

this same thing in Colossians 1:9-14. Let’s turn to it and read it aloud. Let’s re-read verses Col. 1:10-12. What do we get when we grow?

- “If you do these things,” Peter says in verse 10, “you will never fall.” What does it mean “to fall”?

### 4. LIFE ON EARTH IS ONE BIG CAMP-OUT (1:12-15)

Have you ever camped out, roughed it, and pitched a tent? Even though it can be painful, uncomfortable, and just plain hard work, it can be one of the most exhilarating experiences you’ve ever had. You are so far away from phones and televisions and street lights, you actually find yourself in absolute peace and quiet under the most incredible canopy of stars. Frankly, the tranquillity and serenity can scare you to death.

No matter how much fun you have or how much misery you suffer on the camp-out, though, you know that eventually you’ll be going home to your own bed and getting the sleep of a lifetime.

Peter alludes to this idea a bit in these verses when he says, “. . . as long as I live in the tent of this body . . . I know that I will soon put it aside.”

Have someone read 2 Peter 1:12-15 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class.

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:1. What does Paul say about this “earthly tent”? What do you think he means?
- What are three or four differences between living in a home and living in a tent?
- Peter promises to “make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able

to remember these things.” How is he intending to do that?

- The church--that's you and I--occasionally needs to have its memory refreshed (see v. 12). Why is that?

## 5. PETER--THE ANCHOR OF EYEWITNESS NEWS (1:16-21)

*It's hard not to smile a bit when we read these verses because Peter seems to be saying to us, "Hey, I'm not making this up. I was there!" You kind of get the hint that he's a little tired of defending himself against all the doubts and questions he must be facing from the church, much less the ruling governments. And he's obviously fed up fighting off every heresy that is coming down the road.*

*Think about it, though. Peter was there on the mountain when not only Christ was transfigured and ascended into heaven, but also when the voice of God boomed down from heaven, saying, "This is MY SON!" I mean, would you be able to live life the same after such an experience?*

Have someone read 2 Peter 1:16-21 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- What are some of the “cleverly invented stories” being told at the time Peter was writing this letter? What are some being told today?
- What had Christ, the Son, done in His life that would please God, the Father?
- Peter refers to the “word of the prophets” as “a light shining in a dark place” (v. 19). What other scriptures refer to “light shining in darkness”?
- Finally, Peter defends the authenticity of the

*prophets in verses 20-21. What does he say is the authority of prophecy?*

## APPLY THE WORD

### I WILL REMEMBER YOU

Peter says that he's going to make every effort to enable the readers to remember these things that he's referring to, most probably by writing them down and living them as an example.

Writing things down is one of the best ways to immortalize ourselves, and that's what this activity asks the students to do. What do they think is important and unimportant in life. This will get to their philosophies of life. How they define success and failure will force them to contemplate the value of risks and growth. God's promises and their favorite scripture will ask them to pinpoint the truths they can remember. And the greatest myth they have heard will get them to differentiate between truth and lies.

### I Will Remember You

*You know you're not going to live forever even though at this point in your life, 60 or 70 more years may seem like "forever." You do want people to remember you and what's important to you, though, so you decide one summer night to write down some things for people to remember. Write down your answers to the following items:*

*What's important in life:*

*What's not important in life:*

*The definition of success:*

pect that they neglect the other virtues of being a Christian. One, Tim, is probably the closest to pure agape love as his motives seem to be completely other-centered.

*The definition of failure:*

***“In Whom I Am Well-Pleased”***

*God’s promises:*

*God sees five of His children standing on the threshold of heaven today and is hoping to utter those six ultimate, rewarding words for each one, but He asks for your help. Don’t get Him wrong: He’s not asking you to judge. He simply wants to know what you think about these kids.*

*Your favorite scripture:*

*Lydia has gone to church every time the doors are open. She reads her Bible every night before she goes to sleep. She is the president of Youth for Christ at her high school. Unfortunately, she made a mistake one night and is six months pregnant.*

*The most dangerous myth:*

*Juan can’t stop asking questions about God. Things like: “Is there really a God?” “What if Christians are all wrong and Hindus or Buddhists are right?” “Why can’t I just be really nice to everybody and get to heaven?” “Is there really a heaven?” “Is the Bible just another religious myth?”*

*Ask people to share their answers if comfortable.*

*Tim is a servant, pure and simple. He gets up in the morning thinking of ways he can make someone else’s life easier and better. He wants to make people smile when they feel like crying. He listens to everybody and gives more away than he keeps. Today he’s mowing the yard of the elderly couple next door. With his own mower. For free. While they’re gone so they won’t know who did it.*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### **IN WHOM I AM WELL-PLEASED**

Explain to your students the difference between what this activity is asking them to do—that is to see themselves in these five characters and judging others. It will make a big difference on their attitudes going into it.

Here are five people who manifest five different views of what it means to be a Christian. Most of them concentrate so heavily on just one as-

*Peggy is a good person. She wants to keep it that way, so every morning she reads the Ten Commandments to make sure she keeps every one of them. Some of her friends call her a legalist, but she calls herself a Christian because she never does anything bad. She keeps the rules!*

*Bill and Jesus have an intimate relationship. They*

*talk to each other all the time, though not at regular times and not always through traditional ways. Bill likes to go to church on Sunday morning, but he doesn't live there like some do. He goes to movies, some "R," occasionally swears under his breath when he's really, really frustrated (never in public), but he works hard and openly confesses his faith and his shortcomings. He's probably the most transparent person you've ever known.*

After the class has discussed each situation, end the discussion by asking your youth to look at their own lives for those virtues-put-into-practice that would please God. What behaviors do they practice that might not please God? Why do they continue to do them? What makes those practices displeasing to God?

Close with prayer.



# TEACHERS

## A TRUE/FALSE QUESTION

STUDY SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 2:1-2:22

KEY VERSE: “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves” (2 Peter 2:1).

### TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Distinguish between that which is true and that which is false in what they hear.
2. Understand that the God of mercy and grace is by necessity a God of justice as well.
3. Be careful about what they pass around as “truth.”

### PERSPECTIVE

It’s too bad that our television sets, radios, computers, magazines, friends, and other associates don’t have some kind of light that flashes red every time they say something that is wrong or deceitful. That way, we could better distinguish the garbage from the truth.

Unfortunately, we are bombarded every day with more lies than truth, it seems, and we’re starting to be numbed by all of it. The younger we are, the more vulnerable we are to its detri-

mental effects. (Is it any wonder that marketing companies aim so much of their advertising at the youth of our society?) All too often, as well, some of the worst “untruths” come from people in the church. Sometimes out of ignorance, sometimes out of intention, sometimes out of greed for wealth or fame. They just speak before they think, and what they say can crush an innocent spirit.

Peter had no patience for any of this. He fires at point-blank range, leveling his sights at those false prophets who falsely profit! They will be cast into hell, he contends, like the angels who sinned, the ancient world that sinned, and the cities that sinned in the past. This lesson will help your youth become aware that only they will be able to control what stays in their minds and what comes out of their mouths as truth.

### BIBLE BACKGROUND

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

Peter has just completed his defense of not only himself as an eyewitness to Christ’s majesty but also to the prophets’ allegiance and alignment to the words of God as the Word of God. And now he begins what can only be called a tirade against those who claim to know the truth but report it exclusively for their own gain. That’s

why he begins, “But there were also false prophets . . .” (emphasis add-ed).

The prophet Isaiah (one of the good guys) also spoke about this in the ninth chapter of his prophecy (vv. 13-17): “But the people have not returned to him who struck them, nor have they sought the LORD Almighty. So the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm branch and reed in a single day; the elders and prominent men are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail. Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are led astray. Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks vileness. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.” There are several references throughout Scripture, including both Testaments, that refer to this false prophecy that continues to plague the Church: see 2 Kings 18:19; Jeremiah 5:31; 14:14; 23:30-32; Acts 20:29-30; Philippians 3:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 1 John 2:10, 19, 22-23; Jude 3-4.

Obviously, the Early Church was falling victim to the deceit among its own ranks. Unqualified people who were self-proclaimed teachers and prophets were beginning to jump on the bandwagon, grasping at any opportunity to profit from the fears and uncertainty of a group of people. Their preaching and teaching were “divisive opinions that resulted in the moral and spiritual destruction of those who accepted them,” according to the NIV Study Bible footnote. Peter writes exclusively of those whose intentions were evil and wrong, but we mustn’t ignore the many heresies that are conceived and perpetuated not out of evil intention but out of sheer ignorance. Peter’s reference to the denial of “the sovereign Lord who bought them” is not

to imply that the false teachers were Christians. It simply means that the sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross availed God’s grace and salvation to all people, but it remained moot until confession was made and trust was given to Jesus as their Savior. Contrast this to the indictments made in verses 20-23, where Peter is quite clear that at least in part or for some, there had once been a saving knowledge of Christ that was later abandoned for the immediate reaching for greed and lust. The self-inflicted “swift destruction,” referred to in verse 1, is not necessarily immediate death; it is, rather, more probably condemnation to hell after death or at Christ’s return.

It is verse 3 that Peter could be writing today’s news headlines that deal with the public’s perceptions of the church as a moneygrubbing bunch of profiteers. He notes that false teachers are motivated singularly by their lust for money that will commercialize Christianity and the Church. Jesus noted in the Sermon on the Mount that those who pray and give and teach solely for the recognition of men will indeed receive that, but they will achieve nothing eternal. It could be productive at this point for you and your youth to discuss those things in life that remain after we are gone and those things in life that are only temporary and immediate. Ask them what the enticement might be in our society and this generation for the immediate gratifying that practically does away with the everlasting qualities of biblical teaching.

The next section of the passage refers to the historical instances of God’s wrath when it comes to these lies for profit: angels being cast into hell for their sin; the ancient world being destroyed by flood; the capitals of sexual sin, Sodom and Gomorrah, being burned to the ground. Even in those times, Peter reminds his readers, however, God’s mercy can be found. Noah and his family



were saved by God's grace. Lot was spared for his righteousness. His point is that God knows righteousness from sinfulness, and He alone can judge appropriately and punish justly. And He will do it.

The heretics of Peter's generation faced judgment for two reasons, according to Bible scholars. First, they listened to their sinful desires, probably sexual desires, possibly (because of the reference to Sodom) homosexual desires. Second, they re-fused to obey authority. They defamed angels and church leaders, for example, without regard or remorse.

Peter substantiates the wickedness of these heretics in verse 13 by reminding the reader that even the secular world practices its evil at night, when it's dark and no one can see it happening. But these men, these false men of sin, blatantly take their evil to the daylight for all to see. So much more, then, will their punishment fit the crime. "They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done," Peter says. It is one thing to wrong someone when the person is not looking or where he or she cannot see; it's quite another thing, though, when you defiantly destroy someone right before his or her eyes. With a careful reading of Jude 12, it would seem that these false teachers used such sacred observances as the Lord's Supper to produce orgies of the flesh that satisfied their lusts. What began as "love feasts" of brotherly affection became "lust feasts" of human seduction.

The story of Balaam son of Beor (2:15) is a story with which your youth are probably completely unfamiliar. It can be read in Numbers 22–24, but a synopsis is appropriate here. From the NIV footnote: "Balaam was bent on cursing Israel, though God had forbidden it. He wanted the money Balak offered him. Similarly these

false teachers apparently were guilty of attempting to extract money from naive listeners. For a donkey to rebuke the prophet's madness reflects not only on the foolishness of Balaam but also on that of the false teachers of Peter's day."

Anyone who has ever been thirsty knows the cruelty of promising water but receiving sand; hence, the horror of the mirage. It appears to be the oasis one is longing for but turns out to be nothing but deceit. That's the basis for verse 17 that tells of springs of water that offer nothing but dirt. False teachers make every promise in the book to satisfy every longing, spiritual or otherwise, but when it comes to producing any, they simply have nothing to offer.

It may seem apparent to some that the last three verses of the chapter indicate that a person who is honestly following the Master may turn from that path and re-turn to the road of sin. Both choices were genuine and complete. Critics of that interpretation claim that the choice to follow Jesus must not have been sincere and authentic, for one who is genuine would be able to stick with it. They cite John 10:27-30 and Romans 8:28-39 as evidence that no genuinely saved person can be lost. We cannot know whether or not the conversion was internally real – only God knows that. Peter's words here at least show a change in external lifestyle from sinful to Christian back to sinful. The two metaphors borrowed from Proverbs 26 at the end of the chapter demonstrate that the nature of the animal (dog or sow) has not changed; rather, the change has been merely external and surface. This point could be discussed at length in the group.

## SESSION ACTIVITIES

### ENGAGE THE WORD

#### *What's My Line?*

Straight from today's headlines, this activity puts your youth on their couches with five of the most typical religious program-types on the air today. From the sen-sationally sleazy to the incredibly inane, viewers are inundated with insanity in the name of Christianity. Some of it even borders on fraud.

The first pair of Gospel Gluttons is a takeoff on the men who do weight lifting as they share the gospel, combining some kind of WWE mentality with Scripture. Another show has emotion at its base, turning viewers' tears into checks and money orders. Another plays on the sense of belonging to an intercessory prayer chain (a great idea when done with purity of motive). Yet another is the search for healing and physical miracles. Only one seems to be a sincere attempt at reaching the lost for Christ.

Challenge your youth to see the impact that this society has on false teaching. You might develop skits from these short scenarios that can be written and per-formed by your group.

#### *What's My Line?*

*Your parents are gone, none of your friends are home, your video game is broken, and you've finished all your homework. Suffice it to say, you're bored out of your gourd. So as a last resort, you turn on the TV, pick up the remote for some major league channel surfing. Lo and behold, you discover that channels 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are all religious programming.*

*Channel 6: "The Hefty Holy Boys" are being featured tonight. These twins preach the gospel and eat their body weight every day of the week. Their*

*ministry is based on their girth and they claim that if God can love someone who looks as huge as they do, then God can love you, too. They need money, though, to continue their ministry (their monthly grocery bill alone is four-digits), so they ask their audi-ences for cash donations.*

*Channel 7: All you seem to see is white hair. The preacher has pure white hair; the song leader has long white hair; and their wives have more white hair than a hu-man head can naturally support. These people either are pure holiness or they're plugging their amps into the wrong wall sockets. They parade their friends across their celestial stage at such a rate it makes their halos spin, and each friend has such a terrible need for a miracle, you feel such an obligation to send them "\$20, \$50, maybe even \$100."*

*Channel 8: Finally, a real-live church service. There's singing, clapping, dancing, and crying all at once as the congregation feels the Holy Spirit moving. You hear one of the best sermons of your life, followed by lines of people at the altar. No pleas for money. No promised miracles. Just a great service and an address super-imposed over the altar scene at the end.*

*Channel 9: Here's a man sitting alone at his desk, which is stacked a foot high with letters and cards, "all asking for a miracle," he says. As he picks each card up, he holds it to his forehead and prays for the individual by name. Toward the end of the program, he says he needs \$250,000 by the end of the month to pay the bills for the program, or he will have to consider going off the air.*

*Channel 10: Oh, now here's a program! This woman claims to be a faith healer. She speaks for about 10 minutes at the beginning then spends the rest of the hour touch-ing people "in the name of Jesus." Some of them have crutches, which she casts into the congregation. Some of them roll up*

*in wheel chairs, which she kicks off stage. Others have to be held up because they're so crippled or guided because they can't see, but all leave the stage under their own power. This is impressive.*

*You have a few extra dollars this month (mostly because your friends are out of town and there's nothing to spend it on), so you decide to mail it to one of these programs. Which one do you sent it to? Why that one and not one of the others?*

## **EXPLORE THE WORD**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

*You might get the impression from this chapter of 2 Peter that the apostle had had it with people who were abusing their profession of teaching. And with good reason: few careers hold such power.*

Read through 2 Peter 2:1-22 aloud as a class, then answer the questions that follow.

- *What makes a teacher such an influential person in the community?*
- *What are seven or eight indictments leveled at false prophets/teachers in this chapter?*
- *The type of conjunction at the beginning of the chapter indicates a contrast statement in coming. To what/whom is Peter contrasting these false prophets/teachers?*
- *What punishment will God inflict on these false teachers?*

### **2. NO TRESPASSING (2:1-3)**

*The kingdom of God is sacred territory, and you'd better have the proper identification, passport, and visa if you plan on travelling to this holy of Holy Lands. Peter is obviously more than con-*

*cerned--he sounds downright upset--about what is going on in the churches to which he is writing.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 2:1-3 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- *What else does Scripture tell you about false prophets? Look up: Matthew 24:4, 5, 11; Galatians 1:6-9; Colossians 2:20-23; 2 Timothy 3:1-8; 2 John 7-11;*
- *What's a heresy?*
- *The phrase in verse 3, "In their greed," seems right out of modern times and today's headlines. What false teacher motivated by greed comes to your mind when you read this verse?*
- *How can you or anyone else tell the false teachers from the teachers of truth?*

### **3. THE GOD OF MERCY IS ALSO THE GOD OF JUDGMENT (2:4-12)**

*Peter shows his grasp of history in these verses as he recounts four instances of God's wrath and His mercy. By so doing, he compares what happened to sinners of old and what will happen to those who blaspheme the Son of God today.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 2:4-12 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- *In verses 4-6, Peter refers to three people or groups of people who received God's condemnation. What three groups does he mention and what do you know about each?*
- *Peter points out that not everyone, of course, is condemned by God. He mentions Noah and Lot, particularly. What was different about those two men?*

- *Peter has already described these teachers as greedy. What other words or phrases does he use in this passage to describe them?*

- *This section contains several “if-clauses,” and we know that those are always followed by a “then-clause.” What does Peter say in the “then-clause” in verse 9?*

#### 4. IT'S PAY BACK TIME (2:13-16)

*As we have said before, it's our nature to seek revenge when we have been wronged, but God teaches us that vengeance is His--not ours--to seek. He is indeed a God of mercy and grace, but He is also a God of judgment who will level justice at those who have sinned against Him. These verses discuss that along with more indictments of those who are wrong.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 2:13-16 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions together as a class:

- *It's evident that the false teachers and liars will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. If you were God, what harm do you suppose is due them?*

- *What sins does Peter indicate these people are committing?*

- *The story of “Balaam son of Beor” is told in Numbers 22--24. That's three chapters, but it might be productive for us to skim that passage and discover what it's about.*

#### 5. LIKE A DOG RETURNING TO ITS VOMIT (2:17-22)

*Those are Peter's words, quoted from the Proverbs 26:11, for those who once knew Jesus as Lord but then turned their backs on Him and returned to*

*their sin. It would have been better, he says, for them never to have known the way of righteousness in the first place.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 2:17-22 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- *Peter says a very profound truth in verse 19: “a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.” What are some “masters of men” in today's society? How do those things gain such control?*

- *The passage begins and ends with an allusion to water. What do these two references mean?*

- *The false teachers seem to “mouth empty, boastful words” to new converts. Why is that so evil? What empty words do you suppose they mutter? What is it about new converts that makes them so vulnerable?*

- *Introspection time: what might you be most vulnerable to? What “false teaching” might you go for if you didn't know better?*

### **APPLY THE WORD**

#### **LIES, LIES, AND MORE LIES**

You may approach this activity in any number of ways. You may want to have your students write down their answers before any open discussion begins. You may enjoy and need the spontaneity of simply opening it up for discussion immediately. Perhaps your group is creative enough to come up with its own list of “influ-ences” to think about. Another is to take a van ride or a walk or a bike ride and see how many outside influences you can find.

For instance, beer commercials tell us that if we drink that product, our lives will be filled with

friends, virility, health, laughs, and a sense of power. None of that could be further from the truth. Have a reformed alcoholic share the truth of drink-ing.

Have your group bring in the lyrics (written down, perhaps even duplicated for everyone to see) of their favorite rock/rap songs. Note their faces when they begin to realize what those verses are telling them, often disguised so deep-

ly in the music and rhythm that they are generally overlooked.

### *Lies, Lies, and More Lies*

*We are assaulted every day by so many pieces of information and items of per-suasive power that we no longer notice most of them. You and I are products--some might suggest victims--of our environment more than we will ever know.*

*Here is a brief list of places, people, and things that influence not only what we think about but also how we think about it. Next to each, jot down a lie or deceit that you have heard coming from the place, person, or thing and into your mind.*

#### SOURCE

#### THE LIE

Beer commercials

Billboards

Teachers

Newspapers

Friends at school

Friends at church

Your favorite TV show

Your favorite secular song

Car commercials

Magazine ads

## LIVE THE WORD

*Dear Sarah*

This presents only one possibility for your group to look at. They may have other “myths” that have been told to them as truth from someone in the church. This is not to bring up names of people in your church in order to embarrass or har-ass someone. That should be a prerequisite to sharing: NO NAMES.

You may want your group to write individual notes back to Sarah, or you may want to write a group note to her. Perhaps you’ll just talk about the things that Sa-rah needs to hear. Or to the lady who told Sarah about dating Steve.

*Dear Sarah*

*Your best friend has moved to a nearby state and has written you about some-thing that has been bothering her for some time. It seems that someone in her new church has told her that she can’t date someone outside the church or she will lose her salvation. She writes,*

*“. . . and this woman told me that God will erase my name from His book (she actually said it that way) if I continue to see Steve. I don’t know what she means. I certainly don’t want to lose my Christianity, but I really like Steve. It’s not like he does anything evil or anything like that. As a matter of fact, he treats me better than a lot of ‘Christian’ guys I have dated. I really need your help. I trust your word a lot. Do you think I’m going to hell if I keep seeing Steve? If not, what’s the worst that could happen to me?”*

*You sit right down and start a letter to her.*

*Dear Sarah,*

Close with prayer after the discussion.

# 13 ON GUARD

STUDY SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 3:1-18

KEY VERSE: “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9b).

## TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Accept the promise of the end of the world and to make appropriate preparations.
2. Reflect on the loving patience and loyalty of God the Father.
3. Heed the warnings of Peter to avoid false philosophies of scoffers.

## PERSPECTIVE

It seems like every few years, someone predicts the end of the world. There are even religious television programs that focus exclusively on signs that the Lord’s return is near. These omens become even more publicized when there is a major catastrophe somewhere in the world. Whether it’s drought or flood, feast or famine, fire or rain, earthquake or hurricane, war or peace—everything seems to be a sure sign that God’s wrath is upon us . . . and we’d better all repent!

This concept is difficult for young people to grasp, because nobody likes to think about end

times—especially children who have so much of life still ahead of them. Apocalyptic thought reflects on the anger and judgment of God, whom we’d rather think of as loving, compassionate, and patient.

This lesson shows Peter not only as the bearer of bad news but also as the bear-er of Good News. For every warning, there is a promise. For every reference to de-struction, there is hope of reconstruction.

Peter also shows us that the apostle was a loyal and sincere friend, honestly concerned for his church and his people. Whereas false teachers are motivated by greed, Peter’s purpose is pure agape love.

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

*(Provided to help the leader prepare for the lesson. Share the appropriate parts with your class at suitable times during the discussion below):*

Peter begins this chapter in the same way most of us in modern writing begin a letter: “Dear Friends,” also translated “Loved Ones.” As a matter of fact, he makes that same salutation three other times in the chapter—in verses 8, 14, and 17. There is an affection here that makes his words penetrate even the hardest heart and the coldest character.

Most Bible scholars doubt that the reference in

verse 1 to an earlier letter is to 1 Peter, for he calls both letters “reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.” It would seem quite a stretch to call 1 Peter a “reminder” of anything, as it is more clearly a letter of encouragement and hope amid suffering and persecution. None-theless, 1:12, 13, and 15 also refer to this second letter as a reminder.

In 21st-century thinking, the term “last days” carries completely different connotations from the original thinking of Peter. To him and the other early Christians, time was divided by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Truly divided—not simply the calendar of history that we tend to think about. First, you had the Old Testament’s prophecy of and preparation for the Messiah; then you had the life, death, and ascension of Christ in the Gospels; and now you’ve got the New Testament or last days. During this time, the scoffers will come. These may, indeed, be the false teachers/prophets referred to in chapter 2. Their gnosticism prevented them, really, from understanding and accepting the idea of moral judgment, so they took every opportunity to teach contradictorily.

Peter reminds us that the world was created and originally destroyed by the same means: water. That will not be the case in this revelation, the second time. “the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (v. 7). The gnostics chose to ignore the flood as God’s judgment because acknowledgment of that would have necessitated the recognition that a second destruction of the immoral men of the world would be possible, if not probable. Their logical fallacy lies in this omission. God has intervened, both in blessing and in cursing, since creation.

Because God is beyond time—above and below it—He does not view it the same way you or I see time. Andrew Marvell called time a “winged chariot hurry-ing near” (To His Coy Mistress [1681]), and we tend to see time in such terms of im-patience and rush. While we look impatiently ahead for the Second Coming, noting every possible tragedy as a sign, God waits patiently. This is not to say God is com-placent or even apathetic; just the opposite. It is God’s compassionate grace that de-lays the consummation of all things as He waits for all who hear to seek repentance.

One of the problems with predictions of end times is that the doomsayers tend to read Revelation and Daniel and other scriptural references literally. Those books are full of figurative language that prevents a literal translation. They are attempts, although divinely inspired attempts, to describe what has never been seen. Imagine them trying to describe the telephone, the radio, or the television. What words might they have used to tell about nuclear power or electricity or radar? It would be easy to see the explosion of an atomic bomb and read verse 12 literally as an indication that the world will die in nuclear holocaust. It may well happen that way. The point is, we know neither how nor when the end of the world will come because God will be like a thief, unannounced and quite prepared, when He enters our world again.

Peter’s admonition to holiness and goodness in verse 11 is predicated on the destruction of everything material. He says that the world we see will disappear, and that, dear friends, ought to reorder a few priorities. Instead of “stor[ing] up for [ourselves] treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19), we should store our treasures in heaven where nothing can destroy them.



This will enable a complete separation from the world of sin and an equally complete adoption to God and His service.

Now it is quite interesting that, according to Peter, we Christians can have a hand in the timing of God's return. In verse 12 he says we may "look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." How can we help that day come more quickly? If God is waiting patiently for as many to repent as will, then the faster we get the message to the masses, the farther we spread the Good News, the sooner God will return. That makes evangelism and world outreach and lay witness programs all the more imperative if we want to see the return of God in our lifetimes. In so doing, we will be found spotless and blameless (attributes of Christ [1 Peter 1:19]) and at peace with God as a result of being justified to Him by our faith and His grace.

We are treated to a moment of deep friendship between the two giants of the New Testament Church, Peter and Paul, in verses 15 and 16. The warmth is evident as is the unity of their message. There is some firm speculation, in fact, that Paul's letter to the Romans was to the same church that this second letter of Peter addressed. There is a double meaning, of course, to Peter's claim that Paul "writes the same way in all his letters." That could mean that all of Paul's letters are consistent in style and content; or that Paul's letters are similar to Peter's. Either interpretation is probably valid.

The final verse of the chapter is to remind the church that knowledge of God's grace and faithfulness is the best medicine against those false teachers who pollute the truth with their own selfish intellectualism.

## SESSION ACTIVITIES

### ENGAGE THE WORD

#### *Will You Be My Best Friend?*

Peter's continual references to friendship, both explicit with the church and implicit with Paul, bring out the discussion of what it means to be a friend. It is loyalty and honesty, but it is also, sometimes, blunt accountability.

This activity will get your youth to focus on the qualities they find necessary for lasting friendship. The 45 ideas listed are not exhaustive by any means, but they do provide a broad enough base for selection and subsequent discussion.

The students are then asked to introspect a bit and discover what characteristics of friendship they possess that would attract others to them. Help your shyer and more modest kids to see the positives they have. Encourage the group to speak optimistically and highly of each other. It's best for the sharing to be strictly voluntary in much of this activity.

#### Will You Be My Best Friend?

Check any of the following qualities that you look for in a friend.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal         | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Popular       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good looks    | <input type="checkbox"/> Nice clothes   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great car     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cool parents   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere       | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shy           | <input type="checkbox"/> Ugly           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unpopular     | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian     | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Christian  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fat           | <input type="checkbox"/> In good shape  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stable        | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs you      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicative | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet          |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring             | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative           | <input type="checkbox"/> Daredevil       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wise               | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent         | <input type="checkbox"/> Fickle          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dull               | <input type="checkbox"/> Rebellious      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conforming         | <input type="checkbox"/> A follower      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A leader           | <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher's pet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent        | <input type="checkbox"/> A performer     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sneaky             | <input type="checkbox"/> Nerdy           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Someone like you   | <input type="checkbox"/> Super smile     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Someone unlike you |  |

Look at those attributes you checked. Now write down the 10 most important character-istics you look for in a friend--in order.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Next to each one, describe why that trait is so important to you.

Finally--and here's the hard part--what do your friends say about you? Or at least, what do you hope they say about you.

*Of all the qualities listed, which ones do you think apply to you as you think of yourself as "a friend"? (Circle them) Why are these qualities important for you to have?*

## EXPLORE THE WORD

### 1. OVERVIEW

*Earthquakes. Floods. Tornadoes. Hurricanes. Blizzards. Fires. Air pollution alerts. Amazon Forest destruction. Holes in the Ozone. It's enough to drive you to tranquilizers! With every tragedy, every catastrophe brought on by man and nature throughout history, there have been predictable predictions of the end of the world. Whether it's world war or civil war or rampaging fires or unrelenting rains, each is seen as a sign that the millennium has begun: Jesus is coming back.*

*The trouble is only the last statement is true. Nobody knows, has known, or will know precisely when that promised event will take place. "The day of the Lord will come like a thief," Peter says (v. 10), and nobody can predict that.*

*This chapter is a warning. Peter reminds us of several things, not the least of which is that we need to get ready for Gods' triumphant trumpet blast.*

Read this chapter carefully, then answer the following questions.

- *Is there something in these verses that makes you nervous?*
- *What precautions have you, your family, your neighborhood, and your society taken against being robbed?*
- *What's the most exciting event you associate with Christ's return?*
- *If you had an audience with God today, one-*

*on-one, what would you ask Him about His return (besides “When . . .”)?*

- *How can you and I prepare ourselves for the Second Coming?*

## 2. FIRE AND RAIN (3:1-7)

*Twenty years ago, songwriter James Taylor produced a song called “Fire and Rain.” About 20 years before that, poet Robert Frost wrote a poem entitled “Fire and Ice.” Though these two physical phenomena are often considered “opposites” in our minds, they share two common elements: they produce life and they destroy life. Peter must have been aware of that when writing these verses in chapter three.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 3:1-7 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following as a class:

- Peter tells the church that his letters have been intended as reminders. Reminders of what?
- Why does he feel compelled to remind them of that?
- In chapter 2, Peter condemns false teachers and false prophets. In this chapter he mentions “scoffers.” Do you think he is referring to the same people or are they different groups?
- What scriptural/historical events are you reminded of when you read verses 6 and 7?
- If God used water to create and subsequently destroy the earth the first time, why do you think Peter suggests that fire will be used the second time?

## 3. LIKE A THIEF (3:8-10)

*Paul says in 1 Thessalonians that “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (5:2).*

*John’s revelation reports the Lord saying to the angels, “If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you” (3:3). Now here, Peter tells us that “the day of the Lord will come like a thief” (v. 10).*

Have someone read 2 Peter 3:8-10 aloud slowly, maybe twice, while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the next few questions as a class:

- *If you knew a thief was coming to your house tonight, what would you do to get ready?*
- *Peter tells us that time measurement is nearly meaningless to God in verse 8. A day is like 1,000 years. Do you think that means that the creation account in Genesis 1 should be read with that time equation in mind?*
- *Is there another verse in the Bible that comes to mind when you read the second half of verse 9 (our key verse)? What ideas or words or phrases are similar to the verse you chose?*
- *Why did Peter defend God’s timing in the first half of verse 9--“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise”?*
- *What three events will occur when the Lord returns?*

## 4. CALLED UNTO HOLINESS (3:11-13)

*On the last night of any revival years ago, evangelists used to use what some thought were scare tactics in order to get people to come to the altar. They called it “fire and brimstone” preaching, and it was pretty effective. They’d tell stories about a youth who refused to seek God’s forgiveness for his sin on the last night of revival and was killed in a terrible auto accident on his way home from church. That youth, of course, never made it to*

heaven. Peter employs similar tactics in these verses.

Have someone read 2 Peter 3:11-13 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then answer the following questions as a class:

- Why is it so hard, even for Christians, to “look forward to” the destruction of the world?
- What does it mean “to live holy and godly lives”?
- Peter writes about the establishment of “a new heaven and a new earth” in verse 13. What do you suppose this “new earth” will be like?
- There’s a small phrase in verse 12 that you may have missed: “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” What do you think Peter meant? How can we “speed” the coming of God’s day?

## 5. SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS, AND PEACEFUL (3:14-18)

*The final words of any letter are usually quite powerful in their emotion, and this is no exception. Peter has written “Dear friends” four times in this chapter, alone. He wants to see these people in Paradise and is doing everything he can to see that happen.*

Have someone read 2 Peter 3:14-18 aloud while the rest of the class follows along in their Bibles, and then reflect on these questions as a class:

- This is not the first time Peter employs the phrase “spotless and blameless.” Look at his first letter (1:19) and write down what or whom he is referring to in that reference.
- How does a person live “at peace” with God?

• First Peter says that a day is like 1,000 years to God; now he writes that “patience means salvation.” How does he make that connection? How do you see those two words synonymously?

• Peter and Paul obviously had a close relationship. What do you know about their association?

• The writer mentions the bad habit of taking scriptures out of context in order to change their intent or meaning. Do you recall a particular scripture that you’ve heard taken out of context in order to make an erroneous point?

## APPLY THE WORD RESOLUTIONS

This activity will be familiar to them as they make promises to themselves on changes they’d like to see take place. They may want to look at these as surface changes, but by the time they write five of them, at least one will be a substantive alteration of behavior.

It is in the sharing of these that an oral commitment will take place. Many will see the open sharing as a moment of accountability. Ask your students how they will begin to make these resolutions come true. Who will hold them accountable? Why do they see a need to change these things?

### *Resolutions*

*Although many people reserve New Year’s Day to make new commitments for changes in their lives that they hope will benefit them, Peter seems to suggest that we make those resolutions today.*

*As you anticipate the return of the Lord, maybe today, maybe tomorrow, maybe long after you’re dead, offer a brief list of behaviors and attitudes*

*that you hope to change before it's too late.*

*I resolve . . .*

## **LIVE THE WORD**

### **SEE YOU LATER, ROCK MAN**

This activity is a capstone of what they (and you) have been studying for several weeks. It gets your group to summarize, synthesize, and publicize the teachings of Peter.

Your students might want to make a poster that reflects what Peter told them. How about a book jacket promo that tells someone something exciting about Peter's writings? Or have your students bring plain white T-shirts and provide them with permanent markers (have them design something on paper first) to fashion a Peter shirt. Or have them paint something on a big rock.

Close with prayer.

# BIBLE QUIZZING:

## A PERSPECTIVE

### WHAT IS BIBLE QUIZZING?

Bible Quizzing is a program that helps youths study and learn about the Scriptures. About once a month, youths from different churches gather for a time of fellowship and competition. In each competition, there are questions about a specific pre-announced portion of Scripture and the teams compete in order to correctly answer those questions.

The official slogan of the Nazarene Youth International is quoted from I Timothy 4:12 - "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity". The purpose of Bible Quizzing is to help cultivate the actions, attitudes, and the lifestyle that are necessary to accomplish this slogan. The Bible Quiz program intends to reach this goal through a tactic that is divided in these different areas:

- An avenue of meaningful Bible study for youth to attain a deep and intimate knowledge of Scripture.
- A means of increasing fellowship and interaction among youth around the world.
- An integral part of the outreach and discipleship aspects of local church youth ministry.
- A medium for the training and mentoring

of youth leadership.

- A catalyst for encouraging active participation in ministry and mission projects.
- A bridge for building relationships between youth from different world regions.
- An arena for exciting Christian competition.

Rules alone can never prevent unfair tactics or unsportsmanlike attitudes. However, these rules are necessary in order for the competition aspect of Bible quizzing to be clear and consistent. It is the duty of every individual associated with Bible quizzing to uphold the integrity and intent of these rules and guidelines. Any attempt to gain an advantage by circumvention, disregard, or manipulation is unethical and detrimental to the mission and purpose of Bible quizzing. The pursuit of success must never dominate the commitment to exhibit a Christ-like example.

### HOW TO ORGANIZE A BIBLE QUIZZING MINISTRY

1. Bible Quizzes are intended to be for youths between 12 and 25 years old. You may want to divide the competition into two categories: 12-18, and 19-25.
2. The year for Bible Quizzing starts in August through May or June of the following year, or January 1st and continues until

November or December (whichever works better for your district). Decide how much Scripture to be covered at each weekly meeting (e.g. one chapter or one story) and plan a calendar study chart.

3. During the year a tournament will be planned for every one or two months, generally on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon.

4. Every local church can have one or more teams that meet together for Bible study and competition practice. Each team is composed of 4 or more people in a small group setting.

5. The location for the competition events (tournaments) must be rotated amongst all the churches participating in the District.

6. For every year, there is a book (or books) from the New Testament that is used as a resource material for the questions of the competition.

Following is the 8 year cycle that is used around the world for Quizzing.

- a. Hebrews and 1 & 2 Peter
- b. Matthew
- c. Romans and James
- d. Acts
- e. Galatians, Ephesians Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
- f. Luke
- g. 1 & 2 Corinthians
- h. John

Then the cycle begins again.

7. Every church must have someone who is the Bible Quiz chairman and two or three more mature helpers to help train the teams and lead them in a weekly Bible study over the Scripture. (e.g. If meeting twice a week, spend time in Bible study, discussion, devotion and make an effort to understand the material together in one meeting. In a second meeting spend time practicing for competition. If meeting once a week divide the time between Bible Study and Competition practice.)

8. The District must have an elected or nominated Bible Quiz chairman, to plan and organize the calendar of the competition and also co-ordinate the different tournaments.

## **HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY BIBLE TEAM MEETING**

1. Before the meeting, the leader should read and study the material to be covered during the meeting. Pray for the Lord's guidance.

2. The leader should arrive at the church where the Bible Study will take place before the time in order to prepare.

3. The group can play a game that helps the group begin thinking about the Scripture being covered.

4. Pray together.

5. Read the material out loud together. Spend time asking and answering questions regarding the passage. Help everyone in the group understand what the Scripture means.

6. Allow God to speak through the message of the text. Share a story or a personal experience that relates to the Scripture.

7. Allow time for more questions or input regarding the understanding.
8. Talk about what kind of response the Scripture calls for in the life of the church or in individual lives.
9. Close with prayer.
10. Encourage the study of material for next meeting. Hand out a paper w/ the material to be covered in the next meeting, the time, the place, and some study questions.

## **HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY COMPETITION PRACTICE**

1. After the Bible Study or at a separate time during the week, practice for competition.
2. Encourage the memorization of important verses; spend time memorizing and quoting to each other.
3. Play a learning game to familiarize the group with the material being covered (ex. Hangman or Pictionary or charades).
4. Ask quizzing questions from the material being covered. (see examples)
5. Divide the group and compete against each other.
6. Keep the focus on knowing and understanding the Word and not on winning and losing.
7. Give out study “homework” for next practice.

1. Plan and attend practices
2. Arrange for personnel at practice and quizzes
3. Arrange trips to district invitationals and coach a team
4. Plan and participate on trips to off district tournaments
5. Contact quizzers on a weekly basis using notes (maybe an email) and phone calls
6. Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all quizzing events
7. Demonstrate and facilitate interest in God’s Word
8. Plan quiz parties at least twice during the quiz year
9. Recruit new quizzers and coaches
10. Plan a demonstration quiz with local pastors
11. Mentor assistant coaches
12. Organize and lead weekly devotionals (at practice or maybe during Sunday School)
13. Keep statistical records from quizzes
14. Manage a quiz budget if available from the local NYI
15. Keep an organized quiz schedule and keep parents of quizzing up to date
16. Keep local pastors updated on the state of quizzing. Encourage announcements, make sure events are on the church and NYI calendars and interact with the pastors on a regular basis

## **COACHING**

### COACH’S JOB DESCRIPTION



17. Product a newsletter to keep everyone, especially parents, up to date
18. Attend non-quizzing activities that the quizzers may be involved in. For example, a band concert or play at school
19. Integrate with the rest of the youth group. Be involved in other activities with the youths and work together with the NYI president or youth pastor. They will feel more comfortable with you when that occurs.

## **ASSISTANT COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Attend practices and assist with the quiz activities – be a quizmaster or scorekeeper
2. Coach at district invitationals and off district tournaments
3. Call quizzers during the week to encourage them to study and see how things are going
4. Check quizzer's memory verse recall at practice
5. Fill in during the coach's absence
6. Help lead devotionals
7. Assist in team formation – give opinions about how quizzers are doing and share with the coach

## **HOW TO MOTIVATE**

Every individual has a personal agenda, the "Real Reason" he or she wants to be on the team. That personal agenda is the key to motivating each person.

It has been said that the only true motivation is self-motivation. If that is true, then our responsibility is to remove the barriers that de-

vate an individual. Some factors that can limit a quizzers motivation is the fear of failure, not being successful, lack of excitement, lack of challenges and not seeing what they are capable of achieving in quizzing.

A quizzer may become less motivated because they do not realize what they are capable of accomplishing. When a quizzer experiences success or sees what they might accomplish, they become excited. Our goal should be to help them have big dreams or the desire to do better.

Quizzers like to be involved in things that provide them a sense of success. If they do not perceive that they have been successful, then they will not give more than the minimum effort required or they will drop out altogether. They must also have a sense of security and safety within the group. If they do not feel safe or accepted, many quizzers will not risk failure.

The biggest thing that makes quizzing different from any other Bible study is the competition factor. This factor is also a key to motivating most quizzers. Most people like to win and will often go to great lengths to win as long as the correct environment is there. Most quizzers are naturally motivated by the competition, but lack the safety from failure, and the vision to push themselves.

Seeing and knowing that there is more to achieve can be just the challenge needed to motivate. Help your quizzers see what they can accomplish if they work hard enough. Let them see really good teams quiz, great individual quizzers and award ceremonies. Discuss what it will take to accomplish what they have seen. It may take a while to convince them that they can accomplish the same thing.

Help them to create individual and group goals.

Make some of them easily attainable and others that require a great stretch to achieve. Most quizzers also need to see how they have been successful before they will dare try to accomplish more. Each of us is normally our harshest critic. Take every opportunity to point out the successes, no matter how small they may be. Look hard to find things to compliment every quizzers on.

True motivation is internal, but external factors can play an important role in motivation. Consider these ideas when motivating.

- Set a good example – your enthusiasm will rub off on them
- Set appropriate goals – create multiple goals including some that will challenge them
- Give lots of feedback – praise first and then improvement
- Help quizzers measure success against themselves not others
- Provide incentives for reaching goals
- Keep track of personal scores and awards
- Make trips to tournaments
- Allow quizzers the opportunity to quizmaster when they reach certain goals like quizzing out or studying a certain amount
- Provide public recognition in church

Another effective way to help motivate is to create some yearly awards. Feel free to make up some unique ones of your own. Make sure the quizzers know exactly how to earn them and try to keep them updated on how they are doing.

## **ORGANIZING A QUIZ COMPETITION**

## **TOURNAMENT**

### **WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT**

1. Announce, clearly, to all the participants, coaches, and officials the details of the Quiz (date, time and place, what to study, etc.)
2. Prepare the questions
  - a. Write down the questions or use prepared questions.
  - b. Divide the questions into groups of 22 or 23 (That would be 20 questions, plus extras for bonus questions or challenges.) You will need enough groups of questions for all the rounds.
3. Choose a format for the Quiz (Each team quiz each team; Round-robin style with each team quizzing within a group of 4-5, and the winner of each group quizzing against each other for the championship, etc.)
4. Arrange for people to serve as Quiz Chairman (he or she reads the questions and rules on the correctness of the answer) and scorekeepers/jump judges (He or she keeps score and determines who jumped first for each question. Jump judges are not used if electronic jump seats are used.) If you have enough teams, you might have 3, 4, or more competitions going on at the same time in different rooms. If that is the case, you will need a Quiz Chairman and a scorekeeper for each competition.
5. Organize with someone to provide something to eat and drink. You may charge a fee for lunch, or have each person bring their own lunch.
6. Make or buy the prizes
  - a. Choose some special prizes (Bibles,

books, trophies, etc.)

b. Make strips or ribbons (for individuals and for teams)

7. Make copies of points sheets

8. Make a list of the announcements for the beginning of the competition

9. Choose someone to lead a short devotional time before the tournament begins.

e. Tape recorder and music tapes

f. Prizes

4. Begin the quiz with the devotion and the announcements

5. After the quiz

a. Sum up the points and organize the contestants according to their points

b. Give the prizes.

c. Pray

d. Clean the church

### **WHAT TO DO ON THE TOURNAMENT DAY**

1. Arrive at the church where the tournament will take place at least one hour before the time in order to prepare the venue.

2. Items to take to the tournament

a. Points sheets

b. Groups of questions (hidden from the participants)

c. Pencils or pens for the quizzing officials

d. Prizes

e. Tape recorder and music tapes (optional)

3. Organize the venue

a. A table and chairs for the quizzing of officials. (One set needed for each competition location.)

b. 2 benches or 8 chairs for the contestants

c. Seats for the quiz officials

d. Microphones (optional) - 1 for the quiz chairman and 1 for the contestants

### **RULES FOR YOUTH BIBLE QUIZZING FOR THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

These rules are necessary to run a program whose purposes are clear and solid. Every member of the Bible Quizzing program must make sure that the rules and the program are respected. However, these rules cannot prevent unfair acts or attitudes that are not fair play. The actions and attitudes of those who are involved (teams members, coaches, competition officials, etc) must reflect the purposes and objectives of the program and of NYI. The pursuit of success must not dominate the goal of exhibiting a Christ-like attitude.

**METHODS OF COMPETITION** - Before any competition, the chairman should choose the quizzing method (electronic jump seats or jump judges) for all the teams. The methods that are going to be used must be clearly indicated to the officials, coaches, and captains of the team before the beginning of the competition.

### **THE TEAM**

1. The Team is composed of four or more contestants who regularly attend the Church of the Nazarene and are members of the local NYI. More than five contestants can be used on a team during a competition, but only five can be included in the team in each round. No one can be a member of the team if he or she has attended any university, college, Bible school, or any other educational training beyond high school.

2. The coach can talk with or assist his team only during the breaks between the questions.

3. Only four contestants per team can be competing. The fifth one is substitute.

4. Specific members of each team must be designated by the coach before the competition as the captain, and another as co-captain.

5. Only the captain can talk with the quiz chairman after a decision, either to challenge a decision, to protest, or to correct.

## THE OFFICIALS OF THE QUIZ

A. The Quiz Director - the person who organizes the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:

1. Prepare the study and tournament calendar in advance

2. Obtain all the officials necessary for the competition.

3. Provide all necessary materials for the competition: seats, groups of questions, score sheets, copy of biblical material, a stopwatch, pencil, etc.

4. Prepare enough groups of questions for the competition.

5. Prepare or buy the prizes for the quiz: certificates, trophies, or others

6. Advertise the time, place and date of the tournament in all local churches and to all the people involved.

B. The Quiz Chairman - the person who leads and controls the rounds in the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:

1. A good knowledge of the rules and of the material in the competition. During a competition, the interpretation of the Quiz Chairman is final.

2. Be unbiased and consistent.

3. Read each question during the round

4. Recognize the first contestant and ask for the answer.

5. Judge the correctness of each answer

6. Consult, if necessary and wanted, with the scorekeeper when judging answers, challenges, or appeals.

7. Note faults when they take place

C. The Scorekeeper - the person who maintains the official scoring sheet during the tournament rounds. His or her responsibilities include:

1. A good knowledge of the rules of the Bible Quiz

2. Register each member of the competing teams onto the scoring sheet.

3. Register points obtained and/or lost by each team and individual contestant.

4. Notify the Quiz Chairman when a contestant:
  - a. Has correctly answered four questions
  - b. Has committed three errors
5. Regularly notify the Quiz Chairman of the running score
6. Register the final team and individual results
7. Serve as timekeeper.

## THE TOURNAMENT

1. Duration of the tournament.
  - a. There are 20 questions in a round
  - b. If there is a draw after twenty questions, there will be play-off questions until the draw is broken. Only one question is necessary to break the draw, unless no one answers it.
2. Composition of the teams
  - a. Each team's coach must give the names of his or her team to the scorekeeper before the first question is read.
  - b. The captain and the co-captain of the team must be designated before the first question is read.
3. Breaks.
  - a. A break lasts for one minute and can only be asked between questions.
  - b. Each team can ask for two breaks per round, and only the captain, the coach, or one of the officials can ask for a break.
4. Substitutions
  - a. The coach can only change an active mem-

ber during a break. The contestant that leaves a round is a substitute and can come back in the competition later. The substitute comes back automatically to the competition when one of the contestants answers all the questions he has to answer, or makes all the faults and/or errors he is allowed to make.

b. Only a substitute can take the place of a contestant - two contestants who already are competing cannot exchange places.

## 5. Questions

a. All the questions will be based on the same version of the Bible (announced ahead of time).

b. A question for all can be read only once.

c. If no contestant stands to answer a question within five seconds after it has been read, it will be considered closed. The Quiz Chairman must read the answer, and go on. No points will be given for that question.

d. At any time before beginning to read the next question, the Quiz Chairman can throw out a question that contains incorrect information or has not been well read.

e. A captain may appeal to the Quiz Chairman if there is incorrect information in a question, if the question was not well read, or if the question could not be understood because of interference.

## 6. Electronic Seats

a. The equipment used for a Bible Quizzing competition is called "jump seats". The cushions are plugged in to a box at the officials' table. Each cushion functions as a switch that shows with a light who stood up first.

b. When all the lights are off (all the contestants are seated) the Quiz Chairman can start reading a question.

c. When the question is being read, the first contestant to stand must answer the question

d. The Quiz Chairman observes the lights while reading the questions.

e. When a light is on, the Quiz Chairman stops reading, and calls the name of the contestant whose light is on.

N.B. Most quizzing programs will not have access to jump seats to begin with. In that case, a Jump Judge (or scorekeeper) will determine who jumped first.

## 7. Answers

a. A contestant cannot answer before being recognized by name by the Quiz Chairman.

b. The time limit of 30 seconds starts immediately after the contestant is recognized by the Quiz Chairman.

c. The contestant must finish the question (if he interrupted the reading of the question) and give the correct and complete answer during the 30 seconds time limit.

d. The Quiz Chairman cannot repeat the question or give any information to the contestant. The contestant must answer without any help.

e. If the correct question and answer are given in the correct time limit, without any errors in information, the answer will be considered as correct.

## DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

The Quiz Chairman must judge if the answers

are correct this way:

1. When the contestant gives all the necessary information for the question and the answer, and sits back down, the Quiz Chairman will judge if the answer is correct.

2. The Quiz Chairman must not interrupt the contestant. The only exception is when the contestant gives enough incorrect information to eliminate any possibility to give a correct answer. If more information is necessary, the Quiz Chairman will not say anything until the contestant sits down or the 30 seconds time limit has ended.

3. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “correct” the points will be given to the team and the contestant.

4. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “incorrect”, the points will be deducted from the score of the team and/or contestant (if after question 16), and a bonus question will be read.

5. The Quiz Chairman will not judge an answer “incorrect” because of a pronunciation error.

## ERRORS AND BONUS QUESTIONS

1. If an incorrect answer is given, the contestant with the corresponding seat on the opposite team can answer that question as a bonus.

2. The Quiz Chairman must read the question completely before the contestant answers the bonus question.

3. The contestant must answer the bonus question within 30 seconds.

4. A correct answer to a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team of the contestant.

ant who answered the question. Individual points are not given for bonus questions.

5. Points will not be deducted for incorrect answers given to bonus questions.

## CHALLENGE AND APPEALS OF THE DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

1. Only the acting team captain can challenge or appeal the decisions of the officials.

2. The captain may not challenge or appeal before the question and the bonus question (if necessary) are asked, answered and judged. All the challenges or appeals must be done before the beginning of the next question.

3. There may be no communication between the coach & captain, between two contestants, or the contestants and the audience.

4. Each captain can challenge a question only once.

### 5. Challenge

- a. A captain may challenge a decision of the Quiz Chairman if he thinks an incorrect decision has been taken.
- b. The captain can ask the Quiz Chairman to read the correct question and answer before challenging.
- c. The captain of the other team can refute the challenge, once it is complete.
- d. After hearing the challenge and the refutation, the Quiz Chairman will judge the validity of the challenge.
- e. The challenge will be invalidated if it contains incorrect information, or if the argument does not justify a differ-

ent decision than the first one.

f. The challenge will be accepted when the argument justifies the modification of the previous decision. When a challenge is accepted and the previous decision is reversed. The points will be adjusted as if the error happened in the beginning.

### 6. Appeals

- a. The captain can appeal to the Quiz Chairman to invalidate the answer due to an incorrect reading, incorrect information in the question, or visual/audio interference.
- b. After hearing the appeal, the Quiz Chairman may consult the scorekeeper for the final decision.
- c. The appeal will be upheld if the argument justifies the change of the first decision.
- d. When an appeal is upheld, the question appealed will be invalidated, and another question will be asked.
- e. The official point sheet must be changed as if the appealed question was not asked. The points given after the first decision will be deducted and the points deducted after the first decision are given again.

## FAULTS

1. There is a fault when:

- a. There is communication (verbal or non-verbal) after the Quiz Chairman asks the Question and before the points are given.

b. A contestant begins answering a question before being recognized by the Quiz Chairman.

2. Any contestant who does three faults in a round must leave the round. He may be substituted.

## POINTS

1. A correct answer to a question is worth 20 points for the team and the individual contestant.

2. A correct answer for a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team.

3. Four correct answers (not including bonus questions) by any one contestant is worth 10 bonus points for the team and the contestant who answered the four questions. This is called a “quiz out”. When a contestant has quizzed out, he or she must step down from the quizzing seat and may be substituted for if there is a substitute.

4. When 3 members from the same team answer at least one question correctly, there is a 10 point bonus for the team.

a. The fourth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 points for the team

b. The fifth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 more bonus points

5. Beginning with question #16, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team for each error.

6. At the third error of a contestant, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team and of the contestant. This is called an “error out” and the contestant may no longer answer questions for that round. The contestant may be substituted for.

tuted for.

7. For the fifth error of the team (and each subsequent error) 10 points will be deducted from the points of the team.

8. The points for the play-off questions after the time limit are not part of the individual or team points.

## STUDY TIPS: MEMORIZATION MEMORY VERSES

If your quizzers plan to learn all the memory verses this year, you’ll want to pay special attention to the prejump list in the back of Book 1. The purpose of having a prejump list is to show them where the earliest “safe” place to jump on each memory verse is, and to help you learn to complete the verse with the fewest possible beginning words. Use it to perfect their skills in jumping on memory verses. Also, download the free memory verse flash cards from [www.youthquiz.com](http://www.youthquiz.com) or from the Power Tools CD.

## “15” METHOD

1. Read the verse through a couple of times.

2. Have them say it without looking. If they get stuck, check the Scripture, and then go on.

3. When they can say the verse through without looking, they’re ready to start memorizing. (You thought you were through, didn’t you?)

4. Have them say the verse through as fast as they can, five times, without a mistake. If they make a mistake, start over.

5. Read the verse again to make sure they are



saying it right. If not, do it over.

6. Have them say the verse five more times without a mistake. Then five more times. (That makes 15.) If at any time they make a mistake, start over with that group of five.

7. Do the next verse the same way, then return to the first verse memorized to make sure they still know it?

8. Continue the process until they are done memorizing.

## WRITING QUESTIONS

It's a proven fact that the more you deal with a subject, the better you learn and remember it. It is a great idea to have your quizzers write their own questions as they study the material. Make sure they have a solid knowledge of the material before they begin to write questions. Once they do, they will find that practicing forming questions and answers will really test their knowledge of the material. Once they learn this method, you might find they don't need to actually write the questions and answers down on paper; it may be enough to simply form questions mentally and answer them in their mind. Those written questions could be used in practice and compared to the questions in this book.

## PHRASE METHOD

1. Read the verse carefully, making sure they understand its meaning.

2. Break the verse into phrases (punctuation marks do this pretty well) and say each phrase several times, emphasizing words that are difficult to remember.

3. Read the entire verse again, concentrating on difficult parts.

4. Quote the verse 5 or 6 times, or until they can say it smoothly without error.

5. Review the verse about 10 times the same day they learn it.

6. Review the verse at least once a day for three or four days after they learn it.

## 3-5-7 PLAN

Assume that you've just studied 1 Corinthians 8. Now have the quizzers review the chapter three chapters before this chapter—chapter 5. Then review the chapter five before—chapter 3. Then review the chapter seven before your original chapter—chapter 1. Hence, the name 3-5-7 Plan. When the total number of chapters gets high enough, it will need to become the 3-5-7-9 Plan.

## INDEX CARDS

A great way to help quizzers learn the memory verses (or all of the material) is to create a catalog of the verses they (or you want them) want to memorize. Write or type each verse on one side of an index card and put its reference on the back. Computer programs have made this a somewhat simple task, especially with the ability to purchase the NIV for that computer. (It's important that they do this step themselves (regardless of the method); try not to have their parents or you as coach do this for them. The cards will mean much more to them—and they'll remember the verse much better as well—if they take the time to mentally process each verse as they prepare the catalog.) Once they have all the verses on cards, they're now ready to begin. They'll probably want to memorize the verses in the order as they appear in the Scripture. Have them use any of the memorization methods already mentioned to actually learn the verse.

The big advantage of this method is being able to separate those verses that they're having difficulty learning. They will also be able to review the verses by looking at the reference or review the references by looking at the verses.

### **STUDY TIP: COMPREHENSION UNDERLINE METHOD**

Have the quizzers read the chapter enough times that they know most of it, starting at the beginning of the chapter and underlining every fact in the chapter that they are not sure they would remember in a quiz without further study. Then, beginning with the first verse, have them study all the underlined phrases. To fully complete the study method, have them continue working on all these phrases until they know each of them well enough to recall details in a quiz.

### **STUDY TIP: READING**

#### **CD/Cassette Method/MP3/Podcast**

Learning comes easier when one can not only see the words but hear them as well. You can purchase a pre-made audio recording of the book to help your quizzers read and memorize. You might consider making your own recording using a blank recordable CD, (you will need a computer with a microphone and appropriate recording software) or a cassette tape and recording your own voice reading each chapter for study purposes. (Remember that it is illegal to make copies of pre-made Bible recordings, or to distribute or sell copies of your own voice recording of Bible passages without permission.) This may take some time, but you'll find it worth your while in the long run. Remember to read clearly and loudly. You might want to identify each chapter and/or verse with its reference as you come to it. Recorded CD's should be avail-

able at [www.youthquiz.com](http://www.youthquiz.com).

There are several ways you can use a recording like this in your study. Here are a couple:

- **Straight Reading**—Read along in the Bible or scripture portion, and listen carefully to the recording at the same time while reading. In this way, they will not only see the words on the page but hear the words as well. This combination will help them remember the material better. A variation is to try to quote the material along with the recording.
- **Pantomime Reading**—Turn on the CD/Tape player/MP3 player. As the verses are read, pantomime (act out) everything that is happening. Exaggerate! Do fun, crazy things to act out the passages. If they are not too self-conscious, have your quizzers act out the passages. You'll be surprised to see how well this method helps them remember the material.

### **STRAIGHT READING METHOD**

Simply have them read through the chapter carefully and thoughtfully five times. The more they read something, the better they will know it. Also, have them read the related scripture or commentary if they have some type of reference Bible. Be careful to use only the NIV for memory work but other versions can be helpful when trying to understand what the author is trying to convey.

### **REPETITION METHOD**

1. Read verse 1 (of the chapter they are studying) three times.
2. Read verse 2 three times, verse 3 three times, verse 4 three times, and verse 5 three times.

3. Now read verses 1 through 5 all together at once.
4. Read verses 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 three times each.
5. Now read verses 6 through 10 all together at once.
6. Now go back to verse 1 and read straight through to verse 10.
7. Read verses 11 through 15, each three times; then read them together once; then go back to verse 1 and read through to verse 15.
8. Read verses 16 through 20 three times each; then 16 to 20 once all together; then 1 to 20 altogether.
9. Keep doing this until they finish the chapter.

## PARAPHRASE METHOD

Have you ever stopped to think that if you were writing some of the Scriptures you're studying; it would sound a lot different from what you are reading?

Before you suggest this method to your quizzers, they'll need about three or four pieces of notebook paper. At the top of the first page they should write the number of the chapter they'll be reading. Have them read the chapter, through a couple of times. Now the goal is for them to rewrite the chapter, verse by verse, in their own words.

They can make it serious or funny, creative or normal—however they usually talk. They should paraphrase (explain how to accomplish paraphrasing) at least 10 verses of a chapter just to find out if they like this method. They do not even have to use it all the time. They should try it once in a while to lend variety to their study-

ing.

## STUDY TIP: PREJUMPING

### Question Writing

In order to fine tune your quizzers prejumping ability it is really not as important for them to write hundreds of questions as it is for them to learn how to write questions. You will eventually have them move from actually writing questions and answers to simply forming them mentally. The key to good prejumping is not simply winning the jump but being able to correctly complete the question from the point where they jumped. Learning to recognize questions and answers in their mind will be of tremendous advantage as they begin to prejump.

In the average verse, there are four or five possible quiz questions. Even though several questions may cover the same information, the way a quizzer prejumps on each question is different. So, it is helpful to be able to look at a verse and see the different questions that can come from it. To write a question, have them begin by finding the answer in the verse and then decide how to ask a question about it. Beginning at the first verse, have them look at each phrase, each noun, each action verb, each adjective, and each adverb, to see if any could be an answer to questions. Then, have them written the questions.

## KEY WORD SPOTTING

Key word spotting is to help a quizzer be able to jump faster. It is very difficult to improve their jump reaction time without learning to spot key words.

What is a key word? The key word is the word that comes at that place in the question where, for the first time, one can tell what the rest of the

question is. In other words, if they hear a question and the quizmaster stops reading just before the key word, they won't know for certain what the rest of the question is. There may be only a few possibilities, and they may make an educated (or lucky!) guess, but they won't be for certain. However, if they were to hear one more word—the key word—they would know without a doubt what the correct question is.

Your job as a coach is to help the quizzer learn to locate that key word so that they can jump at that place in the question. In a quiz, that means faster decision-making under pressure. To get started, though, have them practice with a few questions and take all the time they need to decide what is the key word.

Here is an important point to remember: the key word will not always be the same for everyone! The better they know the chapter, the sooner they will be able to jump. Right now the key word for questions may be the last word; but by the end of the year, the key word on some of the very same questions could possibly be the third or fourth word. The key word changes as their knowledge of the material improves.

### ANTICIPATING THE KEY WORD

Anticipation is accurately predicting that the next word of the question will be the key word. Why anticipate you ask? If a quizzer can tell that the next word of a question will be the key word, then they can jump just as the quizmaster begins to say it, but late enough that he or she does not have time to stop before he or she says at least the first syllable of the key word. The quizzer can then identify the key word by watching the quizmaster's mouth as a clue to the remainder of the word. This means that they will actually jump before they hear the complete question! If they can learn to anticipate accurately, they will

obviously win many more jumps than a quizzer who does not anticipate. Remember, though, that anticipating is taking a definite risk; they will want to be sure that they know the material well enough to take this risk before you jump! Prejumping is a major hurdle for most quizzers to overcome, but when they do, they will find competition much easier.

### RECORDING JUMPING

To practice their jumping and to improve anticipation of the key word, you may want to try this method. In order to use this method they will need computer recording equipment and a CD/DVD/MP3 burner, or a simple cassette recorder. To prepare for the study, record some of the questions and the answers to the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette. Start the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette and have them “jump” (either physically or mentally), and stop the recording at the point where they jump. Now have them try to complete the question and give the correct answer. To check yourself simply restart the cassette and then listen to the correct question and answer. They'll find that as their knowledge of the material increases, their ability to prejump earlier also improves.

### STUDY TIP: GENERAL REVIEW

After studying one-fourth of the chapters, take time out for a general review of all the chapters they've covered. Test them in each of the following areas:

1. Have them read through each chapter again. If there is time, they may even want to use a repetition method (Read chapter 1, then read chapters 1 and 2, then read chapters 1, 2, and 3, etc.)
2. Have them write out either a chapter-by-

chapter outline, or a list of what events are in each chapter.

3. Have them review all the underlined phrases that they thought they might not remember in a quiz. Test them to see how well they still remember those verses. If they've forgotten any of the phrases, spend some more time studying with them.

4. Work with the prejump list of memory verses, and test their ability to complete each verse and give the reference.

Repeat this general review after completing one-half, then three-fourths, then all of the chapters. In each case, review all the chapters they've covered.

#### STUDY TIP: USING A CONCORDANCE

Have you ever noticed how some quizzers always seem to be able to jump way before your quizzers do? And how you could say almost any word in the material and they can tell you exactly what verse it's in? Chances are that those quizzers have been using a concordance.

What is a concordance? A concordance is a type of index—you know, those lists in the back of books that tell you where a certain subject is mentioned. A biblical concordance will tell you where and how many times any word is used in the Scripture. (Would it surprise you to know that the word “the” is used 55,728 times throughout the Bible?!) There are several types of these concordances: entire Bible, Old Testament, New Testament, and individual book concordances.

How can you use a concordance to help your quizzers in their study? Each year, youthquiz.com makes available a Quizzer's concordance that covers only the material being covered during that quiz year. This resource will tell you

where and how many times each word is used in this book. Of special help to a quizzer is the list of “Unique Words.” These are words that are used only once in the material.

Being familiar with these words can be invaluable to a quizzer. A quizzer knowing that a particular word is used only once throughout an entire year's material will more quickly direct them toward the right passage when answering a question. Once they've acquired a concordance, find the unique word list, or go through the entire list of words and note those that are used only once. Have them mark these words with a certain color of marker or colored pencil—blue, perhaps. Then have them take their Scripture portion or Bible and locate each of these “blue” words and mark them. Now as they read and study the Scripture, they will be able to note when they come across a “blue” word. Many quizzers use the same approach with words used two or three times throughout the material, marking them with a different color, such as red and green.

Now, as soon as they hear one of these unique words, they should be able to recognize it as a key word, remember the reference, and quickly go there mentally to form their question and answer. You will find that knowing these key words will greatly enhance your quizzer's ability to prejump. (You can also tailor this system as it suits their study style).

However you decide to have your quizzers use a concordance, be sure they have a good understanding of the material, as well as of the individual words. The concordance should supplement a good study plan—don't let them rely on it to solve all of their study problems.

Knowing the Scripture in this way will also help them in the future. It may help them find a verse

that they need when speaking to a person seeking God. The Holy Spirit will bring that verse they learned years ago to memory at the appropriate time.

#### STUDY TIP: VARIETY IN YOUR STUDY

Throughout this book the quizzers will find many different study methods for use in individual study times. Chances are no one study method is right for everyone. What works best for one may not work for teammates. Just as important, however, is that their knowledge and recollection of the material will improve if they vary the study methods they use. Have them try a new method every now and then so they don't get bored and frustrated using the same technique over and over.

#### PRE-ANNOUNCING KEY

Remember that all questions will be “preannounced” in actual quizzing competition. In order to prepare your quizzers for this practice (and in case your team decides to use these questions in practice), we've included the preannouncing codes in this book as well.

#### PRE-ANNOUNCING KEY

(Code=Question Type)

G = General

X = Context

A = According to

S = Situation

I = In What Book and Chapter

Memory: Q = Quote;

V = Finish this (these) verse(s) (no

reference);

R = Finish this (these) verses and give the reference

## PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

# QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE QUIZZING

### HEBREWS CHAPTER 1

Q. Through whom did God speak to our forefathers?

A. *Through the prophets (H 1:1)*

Q. When did God speak to our forefathers?

A. *In the past (H 1:1)*

Q. What has God done in these last days?

A. *He has spoken to us by his Son (whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe) (H 1:2)*

Q. By whom has God spoken to us in these last days?

A. *His Son (whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe) (H 1:2)*

Q. What does the Son sustain by his powerful word?

A. *All things (H 1:3)*

Q. Who is the exact representation of God's being?

A. *The Son (H 1:3)*

Q. To what is the name the Son has inherited superior?

A. *The angels' name (H 1:4)*

Q. How superior to the angels did the Son become?

A. *As much superior as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs (H 1:4)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 1: verse 5, what will God be?

A. *His Father (H 1:5)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 1: verse 5, what did God never say to the angels?

A. *"You are my Son; today I have become your Father" or "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son" (H 1:5)*

Q. Whom does God bring into the world?

A. *His firstborn (H 1:6)*

Q. Whom should all God's angels worship?

A. *God's firstborn [OR the Son] (H 1:6)*

Q. What does God make his servants?

A. *Flames of fire (H 1:7)*

Q. Whom does God make flames of fire?

A. *His servants (H 1:7)*

Q. What will righteousness be?

A. *The scepter of your (the Son's OR God's) kingdom (H 1:8)*

Q. According to chapter 1: verse 8, what does God say about the Son?

A. *"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom" (H 1:8)*

Q. How has God set the Son above his companions?

A. *By anointing him with the oil of joy (H 1:9)*

- Q. Who has hated wickedness?  
A. *The Son (H 1:9)*
- Q. What did the Lord lay in the beginning?  
A. *The foundations of the earth (H 1:10)*
- Q. What are the works of the Lord's hands?  
A. *The heavens (H 1:10)*
- Q. Four part answer: what will happen to the foundations of the earth and the heavens?  
A. 1) *they will perish*  
2) *all wear out like a garment*  
3) *be rolled up like a robe*  
4) *be changed (H 1:10-12)*
- Q. What will all wear out like a garment?  
A. *The (foundations of the) earth and the heavens (H 1:11)*
- Q. What will be changed like a garment?  
A. *The earth and the heavens (H 1:12)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 1: verse 3, where did the Son sit down?  
A. *At the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (H 1:3)*
- and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (H 2:4)*
- Q. How are gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed?  
A. *According to God's will (H 2:4)*
- Q. To whom has God not subjected the world to come?  
A. *Angels (H 2:5)*
- Q. What has someone testified?  
A. *"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (H 2:6)*
- Q. Lower than whom did God make man?  
A. *The angels (H 2:7)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 8, where did God put everything?  
A. *Under man's feet (H 2:8)*
- Q. What do we not see yet at present?  
A. *Everything subject to man (H 2:8)*
- Q. Why is Jesus now crowned with glory and honor?  
A. *Because he suffered death (H 2:9)*
- Q. What was it fitting that God should do?  
A. *Make the author of many sons' salvation perfect through suffering (H 2:10)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 2**

- Q. To what must we pay more careful attention?  
A. *To what we have heard (H 2:1)*
- Q. What received its just punishment?  
A. *Every violation and disobedience (H 2:2)*
- Q. What was first announced by the Lord?  
A. *This (great) salvation (H 2:3)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 4, what did God also do?  
A. *Testified to this salvation by signs, wonders*
- Q. Why is Jesus not ashamed to call them brothers?  
A. *Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family (H 2:11)*
- Q. Whom does the writer of Hebrews describe as, "the one who makes men holy"?  
A. *God (H 2:11)*
- Q. Where will Jesus sing your praises?  
A. *In the presence of the congregation (H 2:12)*



Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 13, what does Jesus say again?

A. *“I will put my trust in him” and “Here am I, and the children God has given me” (H 2:13)*

Q. Who holds the power of death?

A. *The devil (H 2:14)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 14, what does the devil hold?

A. *The power of death (H 2:14)*

Q. How long were they held in slavery by their fear of death?

A. *All their lives (H 2:15)*

Q. Whom does Jesus help?

A. *Abraham’s descendants (H 2:16)*

Q. Why did Jesus have to be made like his brothers in every way?

A. *In order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people (H 2:17)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 17, what might Jesus make?

A. *Atonement for the sins of the people (H 2:17)*

Q. Why is Jesus able to help those who are being tempted?

A. *Because he himself suffered when he was tempted (H 2:18)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 2: verse 18, what is Jesus able to do?

A. *Help those who are being tempted (H 2:18)*

### **HEBREWS CHAPTER 3**

Q. On whom should you fix your thoughts?

A. *Jesus (the apostle and high priest whom we confess) (H 3:1)*

Q. To whom was Jesus faithful?

A. *The one who appointed him (H 3:2)*

Q. Who has greater honor than the house itself?

A. *The builder of a house (H 3:3)*

Q. Who is the builder of everything?

A. *God (H 3:4)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 3: verse 4, what is God?

A. *The builder of everything (H 3:4)*

Q. How was Moses faithful in all God’s house?

A. *As a servant (H 3:5)*

Q. When are we God’s house?

A. *If we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast (H 3:6)*

Q. What if you hear his voice today?

A. *Do not harden your hearts (H 3:7-8)*

Q. When did you harden your hearts?

A. *In the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert (H 3:8)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 3: verse 8, what did you do in the rebellion?

A. *Hardened your hearts (H 3:8)*

Q. Who saw what the Holy Spirit did for forty years?

A. *Your fathers (H 3:9)*

Q. What did the Holy Spirit say when he was angry with that generation?

A. *“Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways” (H 3:10)*

Q. What did the Holy Spirit declare on oath in his anger?

A. *“They shall never enter my rest” (H 3:11)*

Q. What should none of you have?  
A. *A sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God (H 3:12)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 3: verse 12, what should you do?  
A. *See to it that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God (H 3:12)*

Q. How long should you encourage one another daily?  
A. *As long as it is called Today (H 3:13)*

Q. What if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first?  
A. *We have come to share in Christ (H 3:14)*

Q. What if you hear his voice?  
A. *Do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion (H 3:15)*

Q. Who were all those Moses led out of Egypt?  
A. *They who heard and rebelled (H 3:16)*

Q. Who led those who heard and rebelled out of Egypt?  
A. *Moses (H 3:16)*

Q. What fell in the desert?  
A. *The bodies of those who sinned (H 3:17)*

Q. To whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest?  
A. *Those who disobeyed (H 3:18)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 3: verse 18, what did God do?  
A. *Swore that those who disobeyed would never enter his rest (H 3:18)*

Q. Why were they not able to enter?  
A. *Because of their unbelief (H 3:19)*

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 4

Q. What still stands?  
A. *The promise of entering God's rest (H 4:1)*

Q. What was the message they heard?  
A. *Of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith (H 4:2)*

Q. With what did those who heard the message not combine it?  
A. *Faith (H 4:2)*

Q. Who enter that rest?  
A. *We who have believed (H 4:3)*

Q. From what did God rest on the seventh day?  
A. *From all his work (H 4:4)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 4: verse 4, about what has God spoken?  
A. *The seventh day (H 4:4)*

Q. Where does God say again, "They shall never enter my rest."  
A. *In the passage above (H 4:5)*

Q. What did those who formerly had the gospel preached to them not do?  
A. *Go in (to that rest) (H 4:6)*

Q. Why did those who formerly had the gospel preached to them not go in?  
A. *Because of their disobedience (H 4:6)*

Q. What did God speak through David a long time later?  
A. *"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (H 4:7)*

Q. Who would not have spoken later about another day if Joshua had given them rest?  
A. *God (H 4:8)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 4: verse 8, what would God not have done?

A. *Spoken later about another day (H 4:8)*

Q. What does a Sabbath-rest do?

A. *Remains for the people of God (H 4:9)*

Q. For whom does a Sabbath-rest remain?

A. *The people of God (H 4:9)*

Q. Why does there remain a Sabbath-rest for the people of God?

A. *For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his (H 4:9-10)*

Q. Who will fall by following their example of disobedience?

A. *No one (H 4:11)*

Q. What should we make every effort to enter?

A. *That rest (God's rest OR the Sabbath-rest) (H 4:11)*

Q. Of what does the word of God judge the thoughts and attitudes?

A. *The heart (H 4:12)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 4: verse 12, what is the word of God?

A. *Living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword (H 4:12)*

Q. Two-part question: What is hidden, and what is uncovered?

A. 1) *Nothing (in all creation) (H 4:13)*  
2) *Everything (H 4:13)*

Q. Why should we hold firmly to the faith we profess?

A. *Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens (H 4:14)*

Q. What high priest do we not have?

A. *A high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses (H 4:15)*

Q. What may we find when we approach the throne of grace with confidence?

A. *Grace to help us in our time of need (H 4:16)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 4: verse 16, what may we receive?

A. *Mercy (H 4:16)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 5**

Q. How is every high priest selected?

A. *From among men (H 5:1)*

Q. For what is every high priest appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices?

A. *Sins (H 5:1)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 5: verse 2, to what is every high priest subject?

A. *Weakness (H 5:2)*

Q. What does every high priest have to offer for the sins of the people?

A. *Sacrifices (H 5:3)*

Q. Who has to offer sacrifices for his own sins?

A. *Every high priest (H 5:3)*

Q. By whom must every high priest be called?

A. *God (H 5:4)*

Q. Who takes this honor upon himself?

A. *No one (H 5:4)*

Q. What did Christ not take upon himself?

A. *The glory of becoming a high priest (H 5:5)*

Q. Who did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest?

A. *Christ (H 5:5)*

Q. Where does God say “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek”?

A. *In another place [OR Psalms] (H 5:6)*

Q. How did Jesus offer up prayers and petitions to the one who could save him from death?

A. *With loud cries and tears (H 5:7)*

Q. With what did Jesus offer up prayers and petitions?

A. *Loud cries and tears (H 5:7)*

Q. What did Jesus learn from what he suffered?

A. *Obedience (H 5:8)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 5: verse 8, from what did Jesus learn obedience?

A. *From what he suffered (H 5:8)*

Q. Who was made perfect?

A. *Jesus (H 5:9)*

Q. For whom did Jesus become the source of eternal salvation?

A. *For all who obey him (H 5:9)*

Q. By whom was Jesus designated to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek?

A. *God (H 5:10)*

Q. Who was designated to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek?

A. *Jesus (H 5:10)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 5: verse 11, why is it hard to explain?

A. *Because you are slow to learn (H 5:11)*

Q. What do you need someone to teach you all over again?

A. *The elementary truths of God’s word (H 5:12)*

Q. When ought you to be teachers?

A. *By this time (H 5:12)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 5: verse 13, with what is anyone who lives on milk not acquainted?

A. *The teaching about righteousness (H 5:13)*

Q. From what have the mature trained themselves to distinguish good?

A. *Evil (H 5:14)*

Q. What have the mature trained themselves to do?

A. *Distinguish good from evil (H 5:14)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 6**

Q. What should we not lay again?

A. *The foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (H 6:1-2)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 2, what is eternal?

A. *Judgment (H 6:2)*

Q. What will we do, God permitting?

A. *Leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity (H 6:1-3)*

Q. For whom is it impossible, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance?

A. *Those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age (H 6:4-6)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 4, what have they tasted?

A. *The heavenly gift (H 6:4)*

- Q. What is impossible for those who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age?  
A. *To be brought back to repentance if they fall away (H 6:5-6)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 6, to what are they subjecting the Son of God?  
A. *Public disgrace (H 6:6)*
- Q. What does land that receives the blessing of God drink in?  
A. *The rain often falling on it (H 6:7)*
- Q. What will be burned in the end?  
A. *Land that produces thorns and thistles (H 6:8)*
- Q. What are we, even though we speak like this?  
A. *Confident of better things in your case - things that accompany salvation (H 6:9)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 9, of what are we confident even though we speak like this?  
A. *Better things in your case (H 6:9)*
- Q. Who will not forget your work?  
A. *God (H 6:10)*
- Q. What do we want each of you to do in order to make your hope sure?  
A. *Show this same diligence to the very end (H 6:11)*
- Q. Through what do they inherit what has been promised?  
A. *Through faith and patience (H 6:12)*
- Q. To whom did God make his promise?  
A. *To Abraham (H 6:13)*
- Q. Who is greater than God?  
A. *No one (H 6:13)*
- Q. What did God swear by himself?  
A. *"I will surely bless you and give you many descendants" (H 6:14)*
- Q. When did Abraham receive what was promised?  
A. *After waiting patiently (H 6:15)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 16, what does the oath do?  
A. *Confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument (H 6:16)*
- Q. What confirms what is said?  
A. *The oath (H 6:16)*
- Q. To whom did God want to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear?  
A. *To the heirs of what was promised (H 6:17)*
- Q. What did God do because he wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear?  
A. *He confirmed it with an oath (H 6:17)*
- Q. Who may be greatly encouraged?  
A. *We who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us (H 6:18)*
- Q. What is firm and secure?  
A. *This hope (that we have as an anchor for the soul) (H 6:19)*
- Q. What does this hope enter?  
A. *The inner sanctuary behind the curtain (H 6:19)*
- Q. What has Jesus become forever in the order of Melchizedek?  
A. *A high priest (H 6:20)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 6: verse 20, what has Jesus become?  
A. *A high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek (H 6:20)*

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 7

- Q. Who was this Melchizedek?  
A. *King of Salem and priest of God Most High (H 7:1)*
- Q. What does “king of Salem” mean?  
A. *“King of peace” (H 7:2)*
- Q. Who was without beginning of days?  
A. *Melchizedek (H 7:3)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 3, what does the Son of God Remain?  
A. *A priest forever (H 7:3)*
- Q. Who was the patriarch?  
A. *Abraham (H 7:4)*
- Q. From whom must the descendants of Levi who become priests collect a tenth?  
A. *The people - that is, their brothers (even though their brothers are descended from Abraham) (H 7:5)*
- Q. Who had the promises?  
A. *Abraham (H 7:6)*
- Q. By whom is the lesser person blessed?  
A. *The greater (H 7:7)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 8, by whom is the tenth collected?  
A. *In the one case, by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living (H 7:8)*
- Q. What is collected in the other case by him who is declared to be living?  
A. *The tenth (H 7:8)*
- Q. What did Levi pay through Abraham?  
A. *The tenth (H 7:9)*
- Q. Where was Levi when Melchizedek met Abraham?  
A. *Still in the body of his ancestor (Abraham) (H 7:10)*
- Q. What was given to the people on the basis of the Levitical priesthood?  
A. *The law (H 7:11)*
- Q. When must there also be a change of the law?  
A. *When there is a change of the priesthood (H 7:12)*
- Q. Who belonged to a different tribe?  
A. *He of whom these things are said [OR Jesus] (H 7:13)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 13, who belonged to a different tribe?  
A. *He of whom these things are said (Jesus) (H 7:13)*
- Q. What did Moses say about priests in regard to that tribe?  
A. *Nothing (H 7:14)*
- Q. When is what we have said even more clear?  
A. *If another priest like Melchizedek appears (H 7:15)*
- Q. On what basis has another priest like Melchizedek not become a priest?  
A. *The basis of a regulation as to his ancestry (H 7:16)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 17, what is declared?  
A. *“You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (H 7:17)*
- Q. Why is the former regulation set aside?  
A. *Because it was weak and useless (H 7:18)*

Q. What was weak and useless?

A. *The former regulation (H 7:18)*

Q. To whom do we draw near by a better hope?

A. *God (H 7:19)*

Q. How did others become priests?

A. *Without any oath (H 7:20)*

Q. When did Jesus become a priest with an oath?

A. *When God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever’” (H 7:21)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 22, what has Jesus become?

A. *The guarantee of a better covenant (H 7:22)*

Q. What prevented those priests from continuing in office?

A. *Death (H 7:23)*

Q. Two-part question: What has Jesus become because of this oath, and what does Jesus have because he lives forever?

A. *1) He has become the guarantee of a better covenant (H 7:22)*

*2) He has a permanent priesthood (H 7:24)*

Q. Why is Jesus able to save completely those who come to God through him?

A. *Because he always lives to intercede for them (H 7:25)*

Q. What high priest meets our need?

A. *One who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens (H 7:26)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 7: verse 27, what did he offer?

A. *Himself (H 7:27)*

Q. What came after the law?

A. *The oath (H 7:28)*

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 8

Q. Where did such a high priest sit down?

A. *At the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven (H 8:1)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 8: verse 1, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven?

A. *Such a high priest (H 8:1)*

Q. What is the point of what we are saying?

A. *We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man (H 8:1-2)*

Q. What is set up by the Lord?

A. *The true tabernacle (H 8:2)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 8: verse 3, what was necessary?

A. *For this high priest also to have something to offer (H 8:3)*

Q. What is every high priest appointed to offer?

A. *Both gifts and sacrifices (H 8:3)*

Q. What if this high priest were on earth?

A. *He would not be a priest (for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law) (H 8:4)*

Q. What gifts do men already offer?

A. *The gifts prescribed by the law (H 8:4)*

Q. At what do the men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law serve?

A. *A sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven (H 8:5)*

- Q. What was Moses warned when he was about to build the tabernacle?  
A. *“See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain” (H 8:5)*
- Q. On what is the covenant of which Jesus is mediator founded?  
A. *Better promises (H 8:6)*
- Q. What covenant is superior to the old one?  
A. *The covenant of which Jesus is mediator (H 8:6)*
- Q. When would no place have been sought for another?  
A. *If there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant (H 8:7)*
- Q. What if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant?  
A. *No place would have been sought for another (H 8:7)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 8: verse 8, what did God find?  
A. *Fault with the people (H 8:8)*
- Q. With whom will the Lord make a new covenant?  
A. *The house of Israel and the house of Judah (H 8:8)*
- Q. What did the Lord make with their forefathers?  
A. *A covenant (H 8:9)*
- Q. Like what will the new covenant not be?  
A. *The covenant God made with their forefathers (H 8:9)*
- Q. What will God put in the minds of the house of Israel?  
A. *His laws (H 8:10)*
- Q. Where will God put his laws?  
A. *In their (the house of Israel’s) minds (H 8:10)*
- Q. How will a man no longer teach his neighbor?  
A. *Saying, “Know the Lord” (H 8:11)*
- Q. Two part question: what will a man no longer teach his neighbor or brother, and why?  
A. 1) *He will no longer teach his neighbor, saying, “Know the Lord”*  
2) *They will all know him (H 8:11)*
- Q. What will God remember no more?  
A. *Their sins (H 8:12)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 8: verse 13, what did God call this covenant?  
A. *“New” (H 8:13)*
- Q. What did the first covenant have?  
A. *Regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary (H 9:1)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 9**

- Q. What also had regulations for an earthly sanctuary?  
A. *The first covenant (H 9:1)*
- Q. Where were the lamp stand, the table and the consecrated bread?  
A. *In the tabernacle’s first room (H 9:2)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 2, what was set up?  
A. *A tabernacle (H 9:2)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 3, what was behind the second curtain?  
A. *A room called the Most Holy Place (H 9:3)*
- Q. What was called the Most Holy Place?  
A. *A room behind the second curtain (H 9:3)*



- Q. What had budded?  
A. *Aaron's staff (H 9:4)*
- Q. What did the ark of the covenant contain?  
A. *The gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant (H 9:4)*
- Q. When can we not discuss these things in detail?  
A. *Now (H 9:5)*
- Q. Why did the priests enter regularly into the outer room?  
A. *To carry on their ministry (H 9:6)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 7, what did only the high priest enter?  
A. *The inner room (H 9:7)*
- Q. What was the Holy Spirit showing by this?  
A. *That the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing (H 9:8)*
- Q. What does this illustration indicate?  
A. *That the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper (H 9:9)*
- Q. Until when do the external regulations apply?  
A. *Until the time of the new order (H 9:10)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 11, as what did Christ come?  
A. *High priest of the good things that are already here (H 9:11)*
- Q. By what means did Christ not enter the Most Holy Place?  
A. *By means of the blood of goats and calves (H 9:12)*
- Q. What are sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean?  
A. *The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer (H 9:13)*
- Q. Through whom did Christ offer himself unblemished to God?  
A. *The eternal Spirit (H 9:14)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 15, what is promised?  
A. *An eternal inheritance (H 9:15)*
- Q. When is it necessary to prove the death of the one who made it?  
A. *In the case of a will (H 9:16)*
- Q. When is a will in force?  
A. *Only when somebody has died (H 9:17)*
- Q. What was not even put into effect without blood?  
A. *The first covenant (H 9:18)*
- Q. What had Moses proclaimed to all the people?  
A. *Every commandment of the law (H 9:19)*
- Q. Who said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep"?  
A. *Moses (H 9:20)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 9: verse 21: what did Moses do in the same way?  
A. *He sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies (H 9:21)*
- Q. What requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood?  
A. *The law (H 9:22)*
- Q. For what was it necessary to be purified with these sacrifices?  
A. *The copies of the heavenly things (H 9:23)*

- Q. Who entered heaven itself?  
A. *Christ (H 9:24)*
- Q. What did Christ not enter heaven to do?  
A. *Offer himself again and again (H 9:25)*
- Q. Who has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself?  
A. *Christ (H 9:26)*
- Q. When is man destined to face judgment?  
A. *After he dies (H 9:27)*
- Q. Why was Christ sacrificed once?  
A. *To take away the sins of many people (H 9:28)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 10**

- Q. By what can the law never make perfect those who draw near to worship?  
A. *By the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year (H 10:1)*
- Q. Who would no longer have felt guilty for their sins if the law could make perfect those who draw near to worship?  
A. *The worshippers (H 10:2)*
- Q. What are an annual reminder of sins?  
A. *Those sacrifices (those same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year) (H 10:3)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 4, what is impossible?  
A. *For the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (H 10:4)*
- Q. When did Christ say, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me”?  
A. *When he came into the world (H 10:5)*
- Q. With what offerings was God not pleased?  
A. *With burnt offerings and sin offerings (H 10:6)*
- Q. What is written about Christ in the scroll?  
A. *“Here I am, I have come to do your will, O God” (H 10:7)*
- Q. What did God not desire, although the law required them to be made?  
A. *Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings (H 10:8)*
- Q. Why does Christ set aside the first?  
A. *To establish the second (H 10:9)*
- Q. Through what have we been made holy by that will?  
A. *The sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (H 10:10)*
- Q. When does every priest stand and perform his religious duties?  
A. *Day after day (H 10:11)*
- Q. Where did this priest sit down when he had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins?  
A. *At the right hand of God (H 10:12)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 13, what are his enemies to be made?  
A. *His footstool (H 10:13)*
- Q. Whom has this priest made perfect forever?  
A. *Those who are being made holy (H 10:14)*
- Q. How does the Holy Spirit testify to us about this?  
A. *First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more” (H 10:15-17)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 16, what will the Lord put in their hearts?

A. *His laws (H 10:16)*

Q. When will the Lord remember their sins and lawless acts?

A. *No more (H 10:17)*

Q. Where is there no longer any sacrifice for sin?

A. *Where these (sins and lawless acts) have been forgiven (H 10:18)*

Q. What do we have confidence to enter?

A. *The Most Holy Place (H 10:19)*

Q. How is a new and living way opened for us?

A. *Through the curtain, that is, his body (H 10:20)*

Q. What should we do since we have a great priest over the house of God?

A. *Draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith (H 10:21-22)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 22, in what should we draw near to God?

A. *In full assurance of faith (H 10:22)*

Q. Why should we hold unswervingly to the hope we profess?

A. *For he who promised is faithful (H 10:23)*

Q. What should we consider?

A. *How we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (H 10:24)*

Q. What should we do as you see the Day approaching?

A. *Encourage one another all the more (H 10:25)*

Q. What if we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth?

A. *No sacrifice for sins is left (H 10:26)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 27, what is left?

A. *Only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God (H 10:27)*

Q. On what did anyone who rejected the law of Moses die without mercy?

A. *On the testimony of two or three witnesses (H 10:28)*

Q. What sanctified a man?

A. *The blood of the covenant (H 10:29)*

Q. Whom will the Lord judge?

A. *His people (H 10:30)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 10: verse 30, whom do we know?

A. *Him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people" (H 10:30)*

Q. What is a dreadful thing?

A. *To fall into the hands of the living God (H 10:31)*

## **HEBREWS CHAPTER 11**

Q. What is being certain of what we do not see?

A. *Faith (H 11:1)*

Q. What is being sure of what we hope for?

A. *Faith (H 11:1)*

Q. Who were commended for their faith?

A. *The ancients (H 11:2)*

Q. By what do we understand that the universe was formed at God's command?

A. *Faith (H 11:3)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 3, what was formed at God's command?

A. *The universe (H 11:3)*

- Q. When was Abel commended as a righteous man?  
A. *When God spoke well of his offerings (H 11:4)*
- Q. What could Enoch not be?  
A. *Found (H 11:5)*
- Q. Why is it impossible to please God without faith?  
A. *Because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (H 11:6)*
- Q. Why did Noah build an ark in holy fear?  
A. *To save his family (H 11:7)*
- Q. Where was Abraham called to go?  
A. *To a place he would later receive as his inheritance (H 11:8)*
- Q. Who were heirs with Abraham of the same promise?  
A. *Isaac and Jacob (H 11:9)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 9, what did Abraham do by faith?  
A. *Made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country (H 11:9)*
- Q. To what was Abraham looking forward?  
A. *The city with foundations (whose architect and builder is God) (H 11:10)*
- Q. Why was Abraham enabled to become a father even though he was past age and Sarah herself was barren?  
A. *Because he considered him faithful who had made the promise (H 11:11)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 11, who was past age?  
A. *Abraham (H 11:11)*
- Q. Who was as good as dead?  
A. *Abraham (this one man) (H 11:12)*
- Q. Who admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth?  
A. *All these people (who were still living by faith when they died) (H 11:13)*
- Q. For what are people who say such things looking?  
A. *A country of their own (H 11:14)*
- Q. When would they have had opportunity to return?  
A. *If they had been thinking of the country they had left (H 11:15)*
- Q. For what were they longing?  
A. *A better country - a heavenly one (H 11:16)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 16, for what were they longing?  
A. *A better country--a heavenly one (H 11:16)*
- Q. As what did Abraham offer Isaac?  
A. *As a sacrifice (H 11:17)*
- Q. Who will be reckoned through Isaac?  
A. *Abraham's offspring (H 11:18)*
- Q. What did Abraham reason?  
A. *That God could raise the dead (H 11:19)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 19, what did Abraham receive figuratively speaking?  
A. *Isaac back from death (H 11:19)*
- Q. Who blessed Jacob and Esau?  
A. *Isaac (H 11:20)*
- Q. Who blessed each of Joseph's sons by faith when he was dying?  
A. *Jacob (H 11:21)*

Q. Who gave instructions about his bones?

A. *Joseph (H 11:22)*

Q. Who were not afraid of the king's edict?

A. *Moses' parents (H 11:23)*

Q. As what did Moses refuse to be known?

A. *As the son of Pharaoh's daughter (H 11:24)*

Q. What did Moses choose?

A. *To be mistreated along with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time (H 11:25)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 11: verse 25, what did Moses choose?

A. *To be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time (H 11:25)*

Q. Who was looking ahead to his reward?

A. *Moses (H 11:26)*

Q. To what was Moses looking ahead?

A. *His reward (H 11:26)*

Q. Who left Egypt by faith?

A. *Moses (H 11:27)*

Q. By what did Moses keep the Passover and the sprinkling of blood?

A. *Faith (H 11:28)*

Q. What is also known as the "Sea of Reeds"?

A. *The Red Sea (H 11:29)*

Q. Who were drowned?

A. *The Egyptians (H 11:29)*

Q. By what did the walls of Jericho fall?

A. *Faith (H 11:30)*

Q. Whom did Rahab welcome?

A. *The spies (H 11:31)*

Q. About whom do I not have time to tell?

A. *Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets (H 11:32)*

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 12

Q. What should we throw off?

A. *Everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles (H 12:1)*

Q. Where did Jesus sit down?

A. *At the right hand of the throne of God (H 12:2)*

Q. For what did Jesus endure the cross?

A. *The joy set before him (H 12:2)*

Q. Why should you consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men?

A. *So that you will not grow weary and lose heart (H 12:3)*

Q. To what point have you not yet resisted in your struggle against sin?

A. *The point of shedding your blood (H 12:4)*

Q. What should you not lose when the Lord rebukes you?

A. *Heart (H 12:5)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 5, how does that word of encouragement address you?

A. *As sons (H 12:5)*

Q. Why should you not lose heart when the Lord rebukes you?

A. *Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son (H 12:6)*

Q. As what is God treating you?

A. *As sons (H 12:7)*

- Q. What if you are not disciplined?  
A. *Then you are illegitimate children and not true sons (H 12:8)*
- Q. For what did we respect our human fathers?  
A. *For disciplining us (H 12:9)*
- Q. Who disciplines us for our good?  
A. *God (H 12:10)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 10, in what may we share?  
A. *In God's holiness (H 12:10)*
- Q. In Hebrews chapter 12, what is described as "painful"?  
A. *Discipline (H 12:11)*
- Q. What should you strengthen?  
A. *Your feeble arms and weak knees (H 12:12)*
- Q. Why should you make level paths for your feet?  
A. *So that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed (H 12:13)*
- Q. Without what will no one see the Lord?  
A. *Holiness (H 12:14)*
- Q. What grows up to cause trouble and defile many?  
A. *A bitter root (H 12:15)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 15, to what should you see?  
A. *That no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (H 12:15)*
- Q. For what did Esau sell his inheritance rights as the oldest son?  
A. *A single meal (H 12:16)*
- Q. What did Esau want to inherit afterward?  
A. *This blessing (H 12:17)*
- Q. To what have you not come?  
A. *A mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire, or to darkness, gloom and storm (H 12:18)*
- Q. To what voice have you not come?  
A. *Such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them (H 12:19)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 20, what could they not bear?  
A. *What was commanded ("If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.") (H 12:20)*
- Q. What was the sight?  
A. *So terrifying (H 12:21)*
- Q. What is the city of the living God?  
A. *Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem (H 12:22)*
- Q. Who is the judge of all men?  
A. *God (H 12:23)*
- Q. What speaks a better word than the blood of Abel?  
A. *The sprinkled blood (H 12:24)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 25, whom did they refuse?  
A. *Him who warned them on earth (H 12:25)*
- Q. What shook the earth at that time?  
A. *God's voice (H 12:26)*
- Q. What indicate the removing of what can be shaken?  
A. *The words "once more" (H 12:27)*
- Q. According to Hebrews chapter 12: verse 28, what cannot be shaken?  
A. *A kingdom we are receiving (H 12:28)*

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 13

Q. How should you keep on loving each other?

A. *As brothers (H 13:1)*

Q. What should you not forget to do?

A. *To entertain strangers (H 13:2)*

Q. Whom should you remember as if you were their fellow prisoners?

A. *Those in prison (H 13:3)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 3, whom should you remember?

A. *Those in prison and those who are mistreated (H 13:3)*

Q. What should be kept pure?

A. *The marriage bed (H 13:4)*

Q. From what should you keep your lives free?

A. *The love of money (H 13:5)*

Q. Who is my helper?

A. *The Lord (H 13:6)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 6, what will I not be?

A. *Afraid (H 13:6)*

Q. Who spoke the word of God to you?

A. *Your leaders (H 13:7)*

Q. Who is the same yesterday and today and forever?

A. *Jesus Christ (H 13:8)*

Q. To whom are ceremonial foods of no value?

A. *Those who eat them (H 13:9)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 10, what do we have?

A. *An altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat (H 13:10)*

Q. From what do those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat?

A. *The altar we have (H 13:10)*

Q. Where are the bodies burned?

A. *Outside the camp (H 13:11)*

Q. Who also suffered outside the city gate?

A. *Jesus (H 13:12)*

Q. Who bore disgrace?

A. *Jesus (H 13:13)*

Q. For what city are we looking?

A. *The city that is to come (H 13:14)*

Q. What should we continually offer to God?

A. *A sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name (H 13:15)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 15, what should we do through Jesus?

A. *Continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise (H 13:15)*

Q. Why should you not forget to do good and to share with others?

A. *For with such sacrifices God is pleased (H 13:16)*

Q. Why should you obey your leaders?

A. *So that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you (H 13:17)*

Q. In what way do we desire to live honorably?

A. *In every way (H 13:18)*

Q. Why do I particularly urge you to pray?

A. *So that I may be restored to you soon (H 13:19)*

Q. What did the God of peace do through the blood of the eternal covenant?

A. *Brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus*

*(that great Shepherd of the sheep) (H 13:20)*

Q. In Hebrews chapter 13, who is described as “that great shepherd of the sheep”?

A. *(Our Lord) Jesus (H 13:20)*

Q. With what may the God of peace equip you?

A. *With everything good for doing his will (H 13:21)*

Q. Why do I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation?

A. *For I have written you only a short letter (H 13:22)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 22, what have I written?

A. *Only a short letter (H 13:22)*

Q. What if Timothy arrives soon?

A. *I will come with him to see you (H 13:23)*

Q. Who send you their greetings?

A. *Those from Italy (H 13:24)*

Q. What be with you all?

A. *Grace (H 13:25)*

Q. According to Hebrews chapter 13: verse 25, what be with you all?

A. *Grace (H 13:25)*

## **1 PETER CHAPTER 1**

Q. Who is an apostle of Jesus Christ?

A. *Peter (1P 1:1)*

Q. How have God’s elect been chosen?

A. *According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit (1P 1:2)*

Q. What has God given us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?

A. *New birth into a living hope (1P 1:3)*

Q. What can never perish, spoil or fade?

A. *An inheritance kept in heaven for you (1P 1:4)*

Q. By what are you shielded?

A. *God’s power (1P 1:5)*

Q. In what may you have had to suffer grief?

A. *All kinds of trials (1P 1:6)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 1: verse 6, what may you have had to suffer?

A. *Grief in all kinds of trials (1P 1:6)*

Q. Than what is your faith of greater worth?

A. *Gold (1P 1:7)*

Q. What do you do though you have not seen Jesus Christ?

A. *Love him (1P 1:8)*

Q. What is the goal of your faith?

A. *The salvation of your souls (1P 1:9)*

Q. What were the prophets trying to find out concerning this salvation?

A. *The time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow (1P 1:10-11)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 1: verse 10, of what did the prophets speak?

A. *The grace that was to come to you (1P 1:10)*

Q. Who predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow?

A. *The Spirit of Christ (1P 1:11)*

Q. What do even angels long to do?

A. *Look into these things (1P 1:12)*

Q. What should you prepare for action?

A. *Your minds (1P 1:13)*



- Q. To what should you not conform?  
A. *The evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance (1P 1:14)*
- Q. In what should you be holy?  
A. *All you do (1P 1:15)*
- Q. Why should you be holy in all you do?  
A. *For it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1P 1:15-16)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 1: verse 16, what is written?  
A. *"Be holy, because I am holy" (1P 1:16)*
- Q. What does the Father judge impartially?  
A. *Each man's work (1P 1:17)*
- Q. From what were you not redeemed with perishable things such as silver or gold?  
A. *The empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers (1P 1:18)*
- Q. In 1 Peter chapter 1, who is described as "a lamb without blemish or defect"?  
A. *Christ [OR Jesus] (1P 1:19)*
- Q. Who was chosen before the creation of the world?  
A. *Christ (1P 1:20)*
- Q. In whom are your faith and hope?  
A. *God (1P 1:21)*
- Q. How have you purified yourselves?  
A. *By obeying the truth (1P 1:22)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 1: verse 22, whom have you purified?  
A. *Yourselves (1P 1:22)*
- Q. Of what have you been born again?  
A. *Imperishable seed (1P 1:23)*
- Q. Like what are all men?  
A. *Grass (1P 1:24)*

- Q. What stands forever?  
A. *The word of the Lord (1P 1:25)*

- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 1: verse 25, what does the word of the Lord do?  
A. *Stands forever (1P 1:25)*

## **1 PETER CHAPTER 2**

- Q. Of what should you rid yourselves?  
A. *All malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind (1P 2:1)*
- Q. How should you crave pure spiritual milk?  
A. *Like newborn babies (1P 2:2)*
- Q. What have you tasted?  
A. *That the Lord is good (1P 2:3)*
- Q. By whom was the living Stone rejected?  
A. *Men (1P 2:4)*
- Q. How are you being built into a spiritual house?  
A. *Like living stones (1P 2:5)*
- Q. What is laid in Zion?  
A. *A stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone (1P 2:6)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 2: verse 6, what does it say in Scripture?  
A. *"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame" (1P 2:6)*
- Q. What has the stone the builders rejected become?  
A. *The capstone (1P 2:7)*
- Q. What do men disobey?  
A. *The message (1P 2:8)*
- Q. Why are you a people belonging to God?  
A. *That you may declare the praises of him*

*who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1P 2:9)*

Q. When were you not a people?

A. *Once (1P 2:10)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 2: verse 10, what are you now?

A. *The people of God (1P 2:10)*

Q. What war against your soul?

A. *Sinful desires (1P 2:11)*

Q. Among whom should you live such good lives?

A. *The pagans (1P 2:12)*

Q. To what should you submit yourselves for the Lord's sake?

A. *Every authority instituted among men (1P 2:13)*

Q. Who are sent by the Lord to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right?

A. *Governors (1P 2:14)*

Q. How should you silence the ignorant talk of foolish men?

A. *By doing good (1P 2:15)*

Q. As what should you not use your freedom?

A. *A cover-up for evil (1P 2:16)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 2: verse 16, as what should you live?

A. *Free men and servants of God (1P 2:16)*

Q. Whom should you honor?

A. *The king (1P 2:17)*

Q. To whom should slaves submit themselves?

A. *Their masters (not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh) (1P 2:18)*

Q. What if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God?

A. *It is commendable (1P 2:19)*

Q. What is commendable before God?

A. *If you suffer for doing good and you endure it (1P 2:20)*

Q. Who suffered for you?

A. *Christ (1P 2:21)*

Q. Where was no deceit found?

A. *In Christ's mouth (1P 2:22)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 2: verse 22, what was found in his mouth?

A. *No deceit (1P 2:22)*

Q. Two-part question: When did Christ not retaliate, and when did Christ make no threats?

A. *1) When they hurled their insults at him  
2) When he suffered (1P 2:23)*

Q. By what have you been healed?

A. *Christ's wounds (1P 2:24)*

Q. To whom have you returned?

A. *The Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1P 2:25)*

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 2: verse 25, like what were you?

A. *Sheep going astray (1P 2:25)*

### **1 PETER CHAPTER 3**

Q. By what may husbands be won over without words?

A. *The behavior of their wives (1P 3:1)*

Q. When may husbands be won over without words by the behavior of their wives?

A. *When they see the purity and reverence of their wives (1P 3:1-2)*

- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 3; verse 3, from where should your beauty not come?  
A. *Outward adornment (1P 3:3)*
- Q. What should your beauty be?  
A. *That of your inner self (1P 3:4)*
- Q. To whom were the holy women of the past submissive?  
A. *Their own husbands (1P 3:5)*
- Q. Who called Abraham her master?  
A. *Sarah (1P 3:6)*
- Q. Why should husbands treat their wives with respect?  
A. *So that nothing will hinder their prayers (1P 3:7)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 3: verse 7, what should husbands be?  
A. *Considerate (1P 3:7)*
- Q. How should you live with one another?  
A. *In harmony (1P 3:8)*
- Q. How should you repay insult?  
A. *With blessing (1P 3:9)*
- Q. From what must whoever would love life and see good days keep his lips?  
A. *Deceitful speech (1P 3:10)*
- Q. Who must seek peace?  
A. *Whoever would love life and see good days (1P 3:11)*
- Q. On whom are the eyes of the Lord?  
A. *The righteous (1P 3:12)*
- Q. What if you are eager to do good?  
A. *Who is going to harm you? (1P 3:13)*
- Q. What if you should suffer for what is right?  
A. *You are blessed (1P 3:14)*
- Q. What should you be always prepared to do?  
A. *Give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have (1P 3:15)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 3; verse 15, what should you do in your hearts?  
A. *Set apart Christ as Lord (1P 3:15)*
- Q. Who may be ashamed of their slander?  
A. *Those who speak maliciously against your good behavior (1P 3:16)*
- Q. What is better if it is God's will?  
A. *To suffer for doing good than for doing evil (1P 3:17)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 3; verse 18, how did Christ die for sins?  
A. *Once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous (1P 3:18)*
- Q. Through whom did Christ preach to the spirits in prison?  
A. *Through the Spirit (1P 3:19)*
- Q. When did the spirits in prison disobey?  
A. *Long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built (1P 3:20)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 3; verse 20, when was the ark being built?  
A. *Long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah (1P 3:20)*
- Q. By what does baptism save you?  
A. *The resurrection of Jesus Christ (1P 3:21)*
- Q. Where has Jesus Christ gone?  
A. *Into heaven (1P 3:21-22)*

## 1 PETER CHAPTER 4

- Q. Who is done with sin?  
A. *He who has suffered in his body (1P 4:1)*
- Q. Who does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires?  
A. *He who has suffered in his body and is done with sin (1P 4:1-2)*
- Q. What do pagans choose to do?  
A. *Live in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry (1P 4:3)*
- Q. Who heap abuse on you?  
A. *Pagans (1P 4:3-4)*
- Q. Who will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead?  
A. *Pagans (1P 4:5)*
- Q. Why was the gospel preached even to those who are now dead?  
A. *So that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit (1P 4:6)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 4: verse 6, to whom was the gospel preached?  
A. *Even to those who are now dead (1P 4:6)*
- Q. Why should you be clear-minded and self-controlled?  
A. *So that you can pray (1P 4:7)*
- Q. What should you do above all?  
A. *Love each other deeply (1P 4:8)*
- Q. To whom should you offer hospitality without grumbling?  
A. *One another (1P 4:9)*
- Q. Complete, in essence, the following: "Offer hospitality to one another without . . ."  
A. *“. . . grumbling” (1P 4:9)*
- Q. What should each one faithfully administer?  
A. *God's grace (in its various forms) (1P 4:10)*
- Q. What if anyone speaks?  
A. *He should do it as one speaking the very words of God (1P 4:11)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 4: verse 11, what does God provide?  
A. *Strength (1P 4:11)*
- Q. How should you not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering?  
A. *As though something strange were happening to you (1P 4:12)*
- Q. What may you be when Christ's glory is revealed?  
A. *Overjoyed (1P 4:13)*
- Q. What rests on you?  
A. *The Spirit of glory and of God (1P 4:14)*
- Q. As what should you not suffer?  
A. *As a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler (1P 4:15)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 4: verse 15, what if you suffer?  
A. *It should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler (1P 4:15)*
- Q. When should you not be ashamed?  
A. *If you suffer as a Christian (1P 4:16)*
- Q. What will begin with the family of God?  
A. *Judgment (1P 4:17)*
- Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 4: verse 17, for what is it time?  
A. *For judgment to begin with the family of God (1P 4:17)*

Q. What if it is hard for the righteous to be saved?

A. What will become of the ungodly and the sinner? (1P 4:18)

Q. To whom should those who suffer according to God's will commit themselves?

A. Their faithful Creator (1P 4:19)

### 1 Peter Chapter 5

Q. How does Peter appeal to the elders among you?

A. As a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed (1P 5:1)

Q. Whom does Peter describe as a "fellow elder" in 1 Peter chapter 5?

A. Himself (Peter) (1P 5:1)

Q. For what should the elders be eager?

A. To serve (1P 5:2)

Q. What should the elders not do over those entrusted to them?

A. Lord it (1P 5:3)

Q. What will you receive when the Chief Shepherd appears?

A. The crown of glory that will never fade away (1P 5:4)

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 5: verse 5, whom does God oppose?

A. The proud (1P 5:5)

Q. To whom should young men be submissive?

A. To those who are older (1P 5:5)

Q. Under what should you humble yourselves?

A. God's mighty hand (1P 5:6)

Q. Why should you humble yourselves under God's mighty hand?

A. That he may lift you up in due time (1P 5:6)

Q. Why should you cast all your anxiety on God?

A. Because he cares for you (1P 5:7)

Q. How does your enemy the devil prowl around?

A. Like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1P 5:8)

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 5: verse 8, for what does a roaring lion look?

A. Someone to devour (1P 5:8)

Q. How should you resist the devil?

A. Standing firm in the faith (1P 5:9)

Q. What will the God of all grace do after you have suffered a little while?

A. Restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast (1P 5:10)

Q. To whom be the power for ever and ever?

A. The God of all grace (1P 5:10-11)

Q. What does Peter testify?

A. That this is the true grace of God (1P 5:12)

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 5: verse 12, in what should you stand fast?

A. In the true grace of God (1P 5:12)

Q. What does she who is in Babylon send you?

A. Her greetings (1P 5:13)

Q. How should you greet one another?

A. With a kiss of love (1P 5:14)

Q. According to 1 Peter chapter 5: verse 14, what should you do?

A. Greet one another with a kiss of love (1P 5:14)

2 Peter Chapter 1

Q. Who is a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ?

A. Simon Peter (2P 1:1)

Q. What be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord?

A. Grace and peace (2P 1:2)

Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 1: verse 2, through what are grace and peace in abundance?

A. Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2P 1:2)

Q. Through what has his divine power given us everything we need for life and godliness?

A. Our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness (2P 1:3)

Q. In what may you participate?

A. The divine nature (2P 1:4)

Q. Why should you make every effort to add to your faith goodness?

A. For this very reason (2P 1:5)

Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 1: verse 5, what should you do for this very reason?

A. Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge (2P 1:5)

Q. To what should you make every effort to add godliness?

A. Perseverance (2P 1:6)

Q. What should you make every effort to add to godliness?

A. Brotherly kindness (2P 1:7)

Q. Who is nearsighted?

A. Anyone who does not have these qualities (2P 1:8-9)

Q. Who is blind?

A. Anyone who does not have these qualities (2P 1:8-9)

Q. What should you be all the more eager to make sure?

A. Your calling and election (2P 1:10)

Q. What should you be all the more eager to make sure?

A. Your calling and election (2P 1:10)

Q. What will you receive into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

A. A rich welcome (2P 1:11)

Q. In what are you firmly established?

A. The truth you now have (2P 1:12)

Q. When does Peter think it is right to refresh your memory?

A. As long as he lives in the tent of this body (2P 1:13)

Q. What has our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to Peter?

A. That he will soon put the tent of this body aside (2P 1:14)

- Q. What will Peter make every effort to do?  
A. *See that after his departure you will always be able to remember these things (2P 1:15)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 1: verse 15, when will you be able to remember these things?  
A. *Always (2P 1:15)*
- Q. What did we not follow when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?  
A. *Cleverly invented stories (2P 1:16)*
- Q. When did our Lord Jesus Christ receive honor and glory from God the Father?  
A. *When the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (2P 1:17)*
- Q. Where were we when we ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven?  
A. *With our Lord Jesus Christ on the sacred mountain (2P 1:18)*
- Q. What dawns?  
A. *The day (2P 1:19)*
- Q. Complete, in essence, the following: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture . . ."  
A. *“. . . came about by the prophet's own interpretation" (2P 1:20)*
- 2 PETER CHAPTER 2**
- Q. Where were there also false prophets?  
A. *Among the people (2P 2:1)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 2: verse 2, what will many follow?  
A. *Their shameful ways (2P 2:2)*
- Q. With what will these false teachers exploit you?  
A. *Stories they have made up (2P 2:3)*
- Q. Whom did God not spare when they sinned?  
A. *Angels (2P 2:4)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 2: verse 4, when did God not spare angels?  
A. *When they sinned (2P 2:4)*
- Q. Who was a preacher of righteousness?  
A. *Noah (2P 2:5)*
- Q. What did God burn to ashes?  
A. *The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (2P 2:6)*
- Q. Who was a righteous man?  
A. *Lot (2P 2:7)*
- Q. In what was Lot tormented?  
A. *His righteous soul (2P 2:8)*
- Q. For what does the Lord know how to hold the unrighteous?  
A. *The day of judgment (2P 2:9)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 2: verse 10, what are these men not afraid to do?  
A. *Slander celestial beings (2P 2:10)*
- Q. What do not even angels bring against such beings in the presence of the Lord?  
A. *Slanderous accusations (2P 2:11)*
- Q. In what do these men blaspheme?  
A. *Matters they do not understand (2P 2:12)*
- Q. In what are they reveling when they feast with you?  
A. *Their pleasures (2P 2:13)*
- Q. What are full of adultery?  
A. *Their eyes (2P 2:14)*

- Q. What way have they left?  
A. *The straight way (2P 2:15)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 2: verse 15, what have they left?  
A. *The straight way (2P 2:15)*
- Q. What did a donkey restrain?  
A. *The prophet's [OR Balaam's] madness (2P 2:16)*
- Q. What is reserved for these men?  
A. *Blackest darkness (2P 2:17)*
- Q. Who do these men entice?  
A. *People who are just escaping from those who live in error (2P 2:18)*
- Q. Of what are these men themselves slaves?  
A. *Depravity (2P 2:19)*
- Q. What are they at the end?  
A. *Worse off than they were at the beginning (2P 2:20)*
- Q. Than what would it have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness?  
A. *Than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them (2P 2:21)*
- Q. To what does a sow that is washed go back?  
A. *Her wallowing in the mud (2P 2:22)*
- Q. Complete, in essence, the following: "A dog ..."  
A. *"... returns to its vomit" (2P 2:22)*
- 2 PETER CHAPTER 3**
- Q. Why has Peter written both letters?  
A. *As reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking (2P 3:1)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 3: verse 2, what does Peter want?  
A. *You to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles (2P 3:2)*
- Q. When will scoffers come?  
A. *In the last days (2P 3:3)*
- Q. What will scoffers say?  
A. *"Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation" (2P 3:4)*
- Q. Out of what was the earth formed?  
A. *Water (2P 3:5)*
- Q. What was deluged and destroyed by these waters?  
A. *The world of that time (2P 3:6)*
- Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 3: verse 6, what was also deluged and destroyed?  
A. *The world of that time (2P 3:6)*
- Q. What are reserved for fire?  
A. *The present heavens and earth (2P 3:7)*
- Q. What is like a thousand years with the Lord?  
A. *A day (2P 3:8)*
- Q. Who does not want anyone to perish?  
A. *The Lord (2P 3:9)*
- Q. Like what will the day of the Lord come?  
A. *A thief (2P 3:10)*
- Q. What kind of people ought you to be since everything will be destroyed in this way?  
A. *You ought to live holy and godly lives (2P 3:11)*



Q. When ought you to live holy and godly lives?

*A. As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming (2P 3:11-12)*

Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 3: verse 12, what will that day bring about?

*A. The destruction of the heavens by fire (2P 3:12)*

Q. To what are we looking forward in keeping with his promise?

*A. A new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2P 3:13)*

Q. What should you do since you are looking forward to this?

*A. Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him (2P 3:14)*

Q. According to 2 Peter chapter 3: verse 15, how did Paul also write you?

*A. With the wisdom that God gave him (2P 3:15)*

Q. Two-part answer: What do ignorant and unstable people distort?

*A. 1) Some things (that are hard to understand) in Paul's letters  
2) The other Scriptures (2P 3:16)*

Q. In what should you grow?

*A. The grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2P 3:18)*

Q. To whom be glory both now and forever?

*A. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2P 3:18)*

# NAZARENE YOUTH BIBLE QUIZZING SCORE SHEET

ROUND \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ Winner \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM:																								
NO	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERRORS
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

TEAM:																								
NO	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERRORS
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

20pts for each correct "jump" answer  
 10pts for each correct bonus answer

10pts bonus for 3rd, 4th, 5th quizzer correct "jump" answer  
 10pts bonus for quiz-out with no error

10pt penalty for error-out  
 10pt penalty on errors after question 15

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