



Monday

Hebrews 12:12-17
1 Peter 2:24
Isaiah 53:5

In isolation, today's reading can be seen as though the author is simply telling the reader to just "do better." However, the author's instructions in today's reading must be interpreted through the lens of the earlier verses, reminding us to cling to faith and to embrace the discipline of the Lord. Therefore, these notions of us working towards living a holy life and being cautious of the enemy's plan are rooted in our sure hope: we can trust Christ to empower us to live a life that pursues righteousness and peace.

Tuesday

Hebrews 12:18-24
Exodus 19

The author implements the examples of Mount Sinai and Mount Zion to contrast our experiences of approaching God both prior to our walk of faith and now in our life in Christ. Prior to Christ's work, the distance between mankind and God was immeasurably vast, where the very presence of God was fear-inducing and physically harmful to us (like God's presence on Mount Sinai). However, we now symbolically experience God on Mount Zion, where He dwells and where we can exist directly connected to God through the life and work of Christ. How easy is it for you to forget that your existence in Christ now is not one of opposition to God, but one of alignment?

Wednesday

Hebrews 12:25-29
Exodus 20:22
Deuteronomy 18:19
Isaiah 54:10
Exodus 24:17
Deuteronomy 4:24

Remember that the author's main point is to highlight the supremacy of Christ over everything and everyone that we know and value. So, while we acknowledge that we no longer approach God with fear and dread, we still are approaching our eternal, holy Creator Who has defined holiness and revealed truth. Therefore, while it is imperative that we listen to His voice and enjoy His presence, we also have to renew our thinking, remembering that He is an incredible Being and our standard of holiness. What does it look like and how do you now approach God with holy fear, or reverence?

Thursday

Hebrews 13:1-8
John 13:1-17
1 Corin. 6:12-20

It's fascinating that we find these "how to live" statements towards the end of this letter. The author of Hebrews insists that when we keep our primary objectives to recognize the greatness of Jesus Christ and to place our faith in Him, we will be empowered to live lives holy and pleasing to God through Jesus. The details of living a life that pleases and pursues God includes loving one another, showing hospitality, etc. However, we have to be careful when using verses 1-7 to evaluate our Christian walk. It is tempting to look at where we may struggle with these actions and determine that we must "do better" in order to be accepted. But it is crucial that we recognize that these actions are basically symptoms of our hearts' relationships with Christ, and the actions themselves are not truly valuable unless they are powered by our relationships with Jesus.



Friday

Hebrews 13:9-16
Ephesians 4

What does theology mean to you? What does church history mean to you? How comfortable are you with articulating the Gospel? For many believers, these questions can be so intimidating and we tend to pass these sort of questions on to our pastors and elders. However, what if Scripture suggests that to always pass on these questions is unacceptable? What if Scripture suggests that you have the responsibility to understand your salvation and to know the ins and outs of your convictions? How are you confident that the church you go to, the sermons you listen to, the believers who lead you, or even this devotional are not leading you by using "strange teachings" (as the author warns in verse 9)? As a believer in Christ, you are called into the priesthood of God and are a disciple of Jesus. This means that you are called to abide with Jesus, examine what Jesus taught, study God's Word, and then you can evaluate your conclusions and the input you receive against your relationship with the Holy Spirit and understanding of Scripture. We can sometimes tend to forget the importance of merging Scripture with our walk in the Holy Spirit and left wondering why we feel distant from the Lord. Therefore, allow today's devotional to encourage you to continue pursuing the truths of God in His Word and experiencing His presence and work in you through His Spirit together. They are two sides of the same coin and will work together to produce fruit in you!

Saturday

Hebrews 13:17-21
1 Peter 2-4

As the author is nearing the end of this writing, there are so many incredible verses that can be examined, but verse 21 in particular stands out regarding your life. The desire of God's Word here is that you be equipped to participate in the will of God and that you desire to be transformed to be pleasing to God. This isn't easy for us. To be equipped to do the will of God and be pleasing to Him is to sacrifice our flesh. Lean back into yesterday's reading and you will see that the author acknowledges that for the believer, actions like doing good to others and praising God is sacrifice of the flesh. This is a sacrifice because our very flesh has no desire to do those things like **continually** praise God and do good to others. Instead, we want to **conveniently** praise God and do good to others as it suits our own agenda, to feel good about ourselves, to impress others, or to pursue our comforts and sinful passions. Therefore, take a moment today to pray that God reveal any sinful aspects that may be influencing how you try and "do good" and even how you approach Him. Ask Him to guard your mind with His peace and to show you how to walk in step with Him, forsaking your fleshly desires with His own and with the right motives in mind.

**Sunday****Hebrews 13: 22-25**
1 Corinthians 16

As we close this devotion on the book of Hebrews, be reminded that this devotion is far from an exhaustive commentary of Hebrews. God's Word is living and active, which means that it has an immeasurable amount of application to your walk with God. One of the worst things you can do is pat yourself on the back and think "Okay, well, I've studied Hebrews so I'm done with that book of the Bible." Instead, be encouraged to do as verse 22 suggests: pay attention to this and every writing within your Bible throughout your life. Be encouraged to not simply mentally assent and acknowledge that Jesus is so magnificent and so much greater than any religious figure or symbol; continue reflecting and studying to know WHY He is so much greater. Embrace the whole of Scripture and let the Holy Spirit use the truth to transform you. Remember, while the story of the Bible includes you, the story of the Bible is truly about God. Worship and praise Him for who He is and the plan He is carrying out to reconcile Creation to Himself!