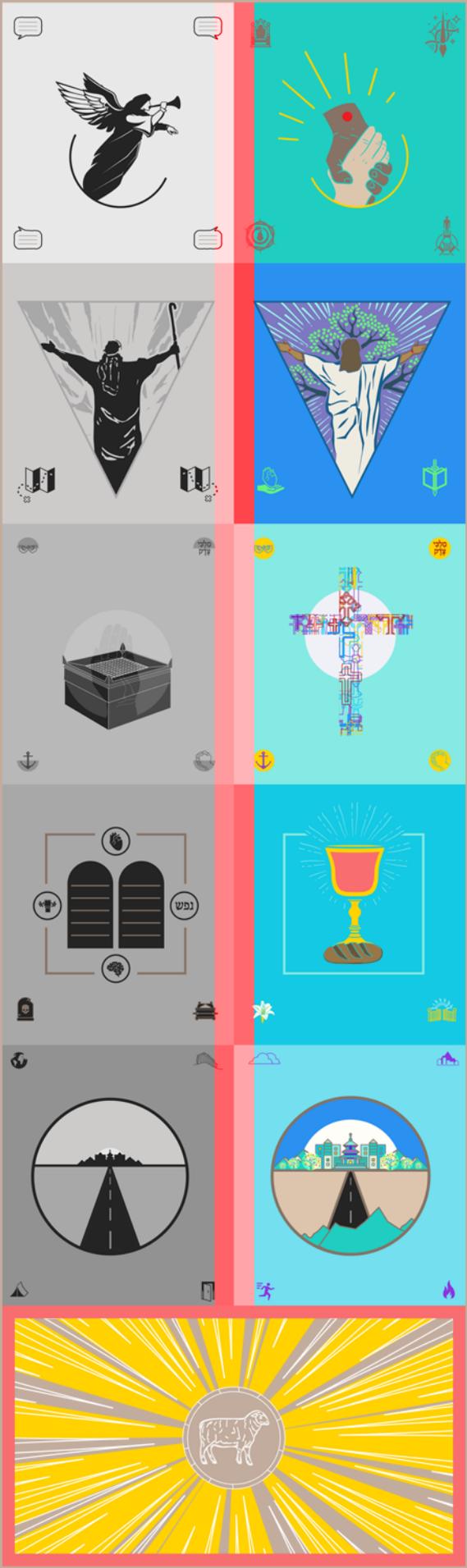


OUT OF THE SHADOWS



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

OUT OF THE SHADOWS: COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 1

LET YOUR LOVE PROVE HIS WORTH

HEBREWS 13:1-6

A NOTE TO LEADERS:

Being aware of our own context is key as we engage this last section of the sermon to the Hebrews. The surrounding culture is deeply divided, and disagreements are rarely tolerated with the kind of grace and mercy God shows and demands of us. Keep in mind that the presidential election, and all that comes with it, may stir up emotions in your group and in yourself. Rather than avoid genuine disagreement, help your group navigate their disagreement, emotion, and convictions by praying, committing to humility, and clinging to the Word of God. Let's navigate tension as we surrender to the commands to *"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."*¹

Here are 6 questions you can ask of any passage in Hebrews:

- What is the context of the original audience?
- Why did it matter to the original audience?
- How can we relate to the original audience? How might the text matter to us?
- What is the text calling us to be, do, or know?
- What does this passage say about God?
- Where is the gospel, Jesus, or grace found in this text?

PASSAGE SUMMARY

It's sometimes thought that justification (being declared righteous by God) is God's work and sanctification (the process of truly growing in righteousness and holiness) is our work. But Scripture says different: "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."² God is, right now, in the process of making Christians more like Himself in our thinking, speaking, acting, and character. So we must not disconnect Hebrews 13:1-6 (a passage containing commands about our sanctification) from what came before:

"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."³

We will grow in our obedience to commands such as those found in this passage by living in gratitude, with our eyes fixed on God and His gracious promises to us. As we give thanks to God, our trust in Him will grow⁴, and we will be among those who "let brotherly love continue."

¹ Colossians 3:12-13.

² 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

³ Hebrews 12:28-29.

⁴ Romans 4:20.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Let's remember that our true leader, our true King, is Jesus, as we remember some of His last words before He submitted to death on the cross:

Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."⁵

TEXT

1. Have someone read Hebrews 12:25-29 and then read Hebrews 13:1-6. What is the connection between these two passages?
2. Why is it significant that Christians are regularly referred to as "brothers and sisters"? What does this language tell us about God, the church, and our role in each other's lives?
3. Describe some ways that marriage can be "held in honor among all", then describe some ways that marriage is sometimes not held in honor within the church.
4. Where in Scripture is sexual immorality described or explained? Why does God judge sexual immorality?
5. Have someone read Genesis 18:1-8. How is this passage connected to Hebrews 13:2? How is hospitality connected to love?

APPLICATION

1. What are some of the horrible effects of loving money? How would someone know if they have a love for money, and how would you counsel someone who you believe has a love for money?
2. As the author wrote earlier in Hebrews, we are responsible for helping one another pursue holiness, especially as it relates to our sexuality.⁶ What are some ways we can make our group a safe place to confess sin, help each other flee temptation, and rebuke sin in one another's lives? In other words, what gets in the way of us "letting brotherly love" occur in our group?
3. What is your personal motivation for continuing to love other Christians, live sexually pure, and remembering those in prison?
4. Of the commands given in verses 1-6, which do you struggle to obey? Why do you think this is? What are some practical steps you could take to grow in this area?

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⁵ John 18:33-37.

⁶ See Hebrews 12:15-16.

PRAYER

If you're a co-ed group, separate by gender for a time of prayer. Here are some suggested prayer prompts:

1. 1 John 1:7 says "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Take time to confess sin to one another and to God.
2. Ask God to make our church incredibly generous just like Him.
3. Thank God for the gift of marriage, and ask God to remove sexual immorality and adultery from our church, and from our own hearts.
4. Spend time thanking God for all that He is to us and for us.

WEEK 2

JOIN HIM AS AN OUTSIDER

HEBREWS 13:7-16

A NOTE TO LEADERS:

Here are 6 questions you can ask of any passage in Hebrews:

- What is the context of the original audience?
- Why did it matter to the original audience?
- How can we relate to the original audience? How might the text matter to us?
- What is the text calling us to be, do, or know?
- What does this passage say about God?
- Where is the gospel, Jesus, or grace found in this text?

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus was the original outcast. The Apostle John summarizes a good portion of Jesus's ministry when he writes, "He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him."⁷ But Jesus's rejection was intended, for it was by His suffering outside the gate (i.e. outside of Jerusalem, where the worst criminals were killed) that His people have been once-and-for-all sanctified. It is in this place - rejected by the sinful current world - that we still meet Jesus today, who stands ready to welcome His people. We are called to go to Christ and give Him all that we have and all that we are, knowing full well that we have a better, eternal city guaranteed in our future. We can leave comfort, approval, entertainment, success, and applause, and join Jesus in His rejection, for our sacrifices are never worthless, even if our worship costs us all the world's treasures. When we face reproach for following Jesus, we can be certain that He remains with us, and our relationship with Him is far better than anything else in the universe.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Have someone in your group share about a time when they were mocked, rejected, or mistreated because of their commitment to Jesus and then pray for God to give your group the same heart of the Apostles:

"Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name."⁸

TEXT

1. Summarize verses 7-16 in your own words. What words, phrases, or ideas are confusing to you? What other portions of Scripture might bring clarity?
2. What are "diverse and strange teachings" and what impact do they have on our relationship with Jesus and other Christians?

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⁷ John 1:11.

⁸ Acts 5:41.

3. What does the author mean when he writes “Jesus also suffered outside the gate”? What’s so significant about suffering outside the city of Jerusalem?
4. Discipleship is described in verse 7. How does the author summarize discipleship? Why is this kind of discipleship crucial for the health and joy of the church?
5. Describe some implications of the statement “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” What does this reveal to us about Jesus?

APPLICATION

1. What makes you personally unwilling or afraid to join Jesus “outside the camp”? How can we as a group help one another be willing to bear the reproach of Jesus and His teaching and commands as found in Scripture?
2. In John 16, Jesus promised His followers that they would experience trouble and suffering in the world. Why does this happen? How has this occurred in your own life or in the lives of those you love?
3. Who are the leaders in your life who “spoke to you the word of God”? How can you step into someone else’s life right now and speak the word of God to them and show them how to live as a Christian?
4. How do you feel knowing that, if you are a Christian, Jesus has already sanctified you (i.e. made you righteous and pure) by dying for you?

PRAYER

Spend time thanking God for specific people in your life who helped you know and follow Him, and then ask God to help you commit to discipling at least one person in your life.

WEEK 3

EMBRACE HUMILITY

HEBREWS 13:17-25

A NOTE TO LEADERS:

Here are 6 questions you can ask of any passage in Hebrews:

- What is the context of the original audience?
- Why did it matter to the original audience?
- How can we relate to the original audience? How might the text matter to us?
- What is the text calling us to be, do, or know?
- What does this passage say about God?
- Where is the gospel, Jesus, or grace found in this text?

PASSAGE SUMMARY

The entire sermon to the Hebrews culminates in a call to humility, and a profound prayer for the equipping of God. The glory and greatness of Jesus, and His provision of not just eternal joy in a renewed reality but loving leaders, leads the author to call Jesus “the great shepherd of the sheep.” The Lord has a flock, and He cares well for His flock. In this passage, Christians are encouraged to humble themselves and obey their leaders, with the assurance that these leaders are being watched by the gracious Good Shepherd. Humility can be embraced because we stand forgiven, righteous, loved, and protected by God Almighty.

CALL TO WORSHIP

How has God used Hebrews to change you throughout 2020?

TEXT

1. In this passage, what are the responsibilities of leaders, and what are the responsibilities of those being led? Why is this?
2. How does this passage describe Jesus? What are some ways this description of Jesus is different than the culture’s descriptions of Jesus?
3. Name some practical ways the author of Hebrews has said we can do God’s will.

APPLICATION

1. Do you find it easy or hard to submit to leaders in the church? Why?
2. In order for leaders to truly watch over our souls, we have to be known. What are some practical steps you’ve taken, or could take, to be known by others in the church?
3. What words or phrases stick out to you in this passage? Why?

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PRAYER

Pray verses 20-21 over one another, adding any specifics you may have learned during your time in group.

Thank God for Hebrews, and the things He has taught you through it.