

## Week 48 :: End of the Year Reflection : Part 1

### Daily Reading for Week

Hebrews 1-2, Psalm 25  
Hebrews 3-4, Psalm 26  
Hebrews 5-6, Psalm 27  
Hebrews 7-8, Psalm 28  
Hebrews 9-10, Psalm 29  
Hebrews 11-13, Psalm 30  
James 1-3, Psalm 31

### Resources for Week

Read Scripture Video: [Hebrews](#) and [James](#)  
Read Hebrews 11:1-12:3, Hebrews 13:1-8, and James 2:14-26

### INTRO TO DISCUSSION

This week, we begin our final weeks of YOBL with a two-week, year-end reflection centered on Hebrews and James. As you have read the book of Hebrews and the beginning of James, you probably noticed how much of the Old Testament language is present in these letters. Hebrews references or alludes to the Old Testament over 100 times. Mentions of Old Testament characters like Melchizedek, Moses, and Aaron connect Hebrews' story to various points of Israel's history and the Old Testament's overall story. Hebrews also borrows imagery from important Old Testament stories like "the mountain that is burning with fire," referring to Mount Sinai, where God met Moses and gave him the 10 Commandments. As we have journeyed through YOBL, our hope is that it has become easier for you to read and notice these direct or indirect references.

Hebrews and James encourage us to live out our faith in very practical ways. The writer of Hebrews, for example, asks the recipients of his letter to be aware of "brothers and sisters, that [...] have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12), and to encourage those brothers and sisters "daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Hebrews 3:12). James asks the people he writes to, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?" (James 2:14-16)

Over the past year, we have read an enormous amount of Scripture, discussed it together weekly, attended lectures, watched videos, and heard various sermons. As we come to the end of the Year of Biblical Literacy, we want to pause and use our final weeks together to reflect. Hebrews and James invite us to remember the scope of the story we have spent the last 12 months reading and to pay special attention to how that story has practically impacted our lives and community.

*\*Note: This week's reflection will be centered on how we have journeyed together as a community through YOBL, how we have succeeded in loving one another like Jesus, and how we have failed. Next week's final reflection will be centered on the experience of YOBL as a whole.*

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

*There will only be large group discussion tonight.*

### **Questions for Examining Ourselves** (20 minutes):

*These questions are to help us look at ourselves, be aware and honest about who we are in light of our interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate action.*

#### **Read:**

To begin our discussion, we are going to do a reflection centered on Hebrews and several minutes of silent reflection and/or journaling. After this, we will use mutual invitation to invite every person to share their reflections with the group. Have someone read Hebrews 11:1-12:3 out loud and then read the following. As Hebrews 11 is read, notice the character(s) you find yourself most connecting to or curious about.:

This chapter is famously known as the "Hall of Faith." As we have read the stories of these Old Testament figures throughout this year, we recognized that each of these people of faith were flawed and imperfect. Despite their imperfect faith, the author of Hebrews lists each person and commends them and puts them forth as examples of what it means to respond faithfully to God. He reminds the reader that these great figures of old are a part of "a great cloud of witnesses" meant to encourage us and remind us of the importance of living obedient lives of faith. Picture yourself on a high mountaintop, surrounded by clouds, and imagine that in the clouds these biblical characters are there, sharing their stories with you, encouraging you in your life right now at this moment.

#### **Reflect:**

Take 5 minutes to meditate and journal in silence in response to the following prompts:

1. Which of the Biblical characters' stories can you most relate to and what is it about his or her story that you find yourself connecting with?
2. What words of encouragement or exhortation do you imagine this character would have for you?

#### **Share:**

Invite everyone to volunteer to share their responses.

### **Questions for Practicing Community** (60 minutes):

*These questions are to help us reflect thoughtfully on our felt experience together in light of our shared ground rules, goals, and values.*

To begin closing out our year, we want to take the time to honestly self-assess how we did.

1. How did we succeed in loving, supporting, serving, and challenging one another?
2. How did we fail?

3. In what ways did we let each other down, ignore opportunities of support, disempower, or diminish one another?

**Journal:**

Take 10 minutes to think back on the year and prayerfully journal what comes up when you think about how the group itself succeeded and failed. Use the following prompts:

1. What were the ways your group loved one another well? Be specific.
2. What were the ways your group served one another well practically?
3. Were there any moments you remember where you or someone else was hurt in the group? Was this injury recognized and dealt with?
4. What was your favorite moment of the year?
5. Are there any people you want to thank, celebrate, encourage, rebuke, forgive, or ask forgiveness from?
6. Do you have any regrets?

For those who choose not to participate in YOBL (or simply couldn't keep up with the speed of the readings):

1. What were some positive experiences you had in community during the year? And what did you find difficult or alienating?

**Share:**

Invite people to share their reflections on the year. However, try to respond to everything that is shared. If clarity is needed, ask questions. If something is shared that should be dealt with, address it. Recognize and respond to emotions that are expressed and offer care where needed. Offer thanks for people's willingness to share.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

No small group discussion tonight.