

Hebrews: Discipleship Lessons

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, JesusWalk® Bible Study Series

Appendix 2. Participant Guide Handout Sheets

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/hebrews/hebrews-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4 to 6 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. Jesus, the Father's Own Son (1:1-2:4)
2. Jesus, Who Tastes Death for Everyone (2:5-18)
3. Jesus, the Giver of Rest (3:1-4:13)
4. Jesus, Our Sympathetic High Priest (4:14-5:10)
5. Warnings Against Apostasy (5:11-6:12)
6. Jesus, Our High Priest Forever (6:13-7:28)
7. Jesus, Mediator of a Better Covenant (8:1-9:12)
8. Jesus, Our Willing Sacrifice (9:13-10:18)
9. Let Us Draw Near: Confidence of Faith (10:19-39)
10. Let Us Believe: Nature of Faith (11:1-6, 11)
11. Let Us Trust: Perspective of Faith (11:7-12:2)
12. Let Us Endure: Perseverance of Faith (12:3-29)
13. Let Us Love: Workings of Faith and Epilogue (13:1-25)

1. Jesus, the Father's Own Son (Hebrews 1:1-2:4)

Son of God (1:1-2)

Q1. (Hebrews 1:2) In what way do you think the author of Hebrews is using the word "Son"? As a metaphor? As a biological relationship? How would a Son's words have more weight than a prophet's?

The Divine Son (1:2-3)

1. H _____
2. C _____ and A _____ of creation
3. The _____ of divine glory
4. The _____ of God's being
5. The S _____ and P _____ of the universe
6. C _____

Q2. (Hebrews 1:2-3) What about the author's description of the Son makes you think that the Son described is himself divine? What role does the Son have in doing the Father's will according to these verses?

Superior to Angels (Hebrews 1:4)

Messianic Quotations from the Old Testament (1:5-14)

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|--|
| 1:5a | Psalm 2:7 | "You are my Son, today I have become your Father." |
| 1:5b | 2 Samuel 7:14 | "I will be his Father and he will be my Son," speaking of David's descendents, and ultimately the Messiah. |
| 1:8-9 | Psalm 45:6-7 | "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.... Therefore God ... has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." |
| 1:10-12 | Psalm 102:25-27 | "... and the heavens are the work of your hands [which the author refers to Christ as the co-creator, vs. 2b] ... "but you remain the same and your years will never end." |
| 1:13 | Psalm 110:1 | "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" |

An Exhortation to Be Attentive (2:1)

Q3. (Hebrews 2:1) In what ways are we not immune to drifting away from the gospel? According to the author, how can we successfully resist the tendency to drift? How did Jesus describe this phenomenon of "drift" in the Parable of the Sower?

The Salvation Declared and Confirmed to Us (2:3-4)

S _____
W _____

M _____
G _____

Q4. (Hebrews 2:3b-4) In what way has the truth of salvation been confirmed to you? Would signs and wonders help or hinder establishing the truth of Christ's ministry today? From which portion of the Bible have you formed your opinion of the value of signs and wonders today?

Answers: 1. heir, 2. co-creator, agent, 3. radiance or reflection, 4. exact representation, express image, etc., 5. sustainer, preserver, 6. co-ruler. Second set of blanks: 1. Signs, 2. wonders, 3. miracles, 4. gifts

2. Jesus, Who Tastes Death for Everyone (Heb 2:5-18)

Jesus the Son of Man (2:6b-8a)

A Little While Lower than the Angels (2:7a)

Crowned with Glory and Honor (2:7b)

Subjection to the Ascended Christ (2:7b-8)

Suffering Death (2:9)

- "... now crowned with glory and honor because he **suffered** death" (2:9)
- "... make the author of their salvation perfect through **suffering**" (2:10).
- "Because he himself **suffered** when he was tempted..." (2:18)
- "He learned obedience from what he **suffered**..." (5:8)
- "Then Christ would have had to **suffer** many times..." (9:26)
- "... You stood your ground in a great contest in the face of **suffering**" (10:32)
- "Remember ... those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were **suffering**" (13:3)
- "And so Jesus also **suffered** outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood" (13:12)

Q1. (Hebrews 2:9) In what ways did Jesus suffer during his life and death? In what ways are we likely to suffer? Does suffering have any value? What happens when we live in such a way to avoid all suffering?

Tasting Death for Everyone (2:9b)

Q2. (Hebrews 2:9) In what way did Christ "taste death for everyone"? Why is this so dependent upon God's grace? If Christ died for your blackest and most stubborn sins, what are the implications for you?

Perfect Through Suffering (2:10)

"Perfect" is the Aorist infinitive *teleioō*, "to overcome or supplant an imperfect state of things by one that is free from objection, bring to an end, bring to its goal or accomplishment." The word is used here and in 5:9; and 7:28. The idea here is that the state of perfection and the culmination of God's purpose for Jesus is the heavenly, glorified, conquering Christ.

Q3. (Hebrews 2:10) What does it mean, to bring many sons and daughters "to glory"? In what sense did Jesus become "perfect" through suffering? What are the implications for our own lives?

Not Ashamed to Call Them Brothers (2:11-13)

The Devil's Power of Death (2:14)

1. Satan brought _____ to the human race (Genesis 3:1-7), the result of which is _____ (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; Wisdom of Solomon 2:24).
2. Satan is behind the _____ of Christians (Luke 12:4-5; Rev 13:7; John 8:44).
3. God has placed _____ on Satan. (Job 2:6; Matthew 10:29).
4. Satan is a _____. God has not granted him _____ to control death (John 10:10a).

The Destruction of the Devil's Power (2:14-15)

"Destroy" is *katargeō*. "make ineffective, incapacitate." (1 John 3:8b; Luke 11:21-22; Colossians 2:15.

Freed from the Fear of Death (2:15)

Q4. (Hebrews 2:14-15) What was the purpose of Christ's death according to verses 14 and 15? In what sense is this mission accomplished? In what sense will it see its final completion in the future? What is the result in our lives from Christ's accomplishment?

A Merciful and Faithful High Priest (2:16-18)

Q5. (Hebrews 2:16-18) Why in God's plan did Jesus have to become human like us? How does his humanity provide encouragement and help to us when we are in trouble?

Answers: 1. sin, death, 2. persecution, 3. limits, 4. usurper, legal rights

3. Jesus, the Giver of Rest (Hebrews 3:1-4:13)

God's Household: Faithful as a Son Over God's House (3:1-6)

Q1. (Hebrews 3:6b) Why is the writer exhorting his readers to "hold on" to Christ? Why must we continue in our faith? According to the writer of Hebrews, what happens if we don't?

The Negative Example of Unbelieving Israel in the Wilderness (3:7-11)

Keep from Being Hardened by Sin's Deceitfulness (3:12-14)

Q2. (Hebrews 3:12-14) What is the importance of faith in our relationship to Christ? How does sin trick us? How does it harden us? What is the value of Christian fellowship to keep our faith strong?

Rebelliousness and Unbelief Made It Impossible for Israel to Enter the Promised Land (3:15-19)

Combining the Message with Faith (4:1-3a)

Promise of God + faith = receiving fulfillment of the promise

Rest in the Old Testament

It Remains for Some to Enter God's Rest (4:3b-7)

A Sabbath-Rest – Resting from Your Own Work (4:8-11)

Q3. (Hebrews 4:8-11) What do you think the writer of Hebrews means by this promise of "rest" for the believer? Why does the writer urge us: "Make every effort to enter that rest"? What is the difference between apostasy from Christ and the kind of falling into sin that all Christians experience from time to time?

The Living, Active Word of God (4:12-13)

Q4. (Hebrews 4:12-13) What do these two verses have to do with what precedes them? How is the Word described? What effect does the Word have on us? Why do we need to continually expose ourselves to the Word of God?

4. Jesus, our Sympathetic High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-5:10)

Hold Fast to Your Confession (4:14)

Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3

Q1. (Hebrews 4:14) What is so important about “holding fast to our confession.” What is our confession or profession of faith? Why is maintaining this confession so vital?

A Sympathetic High Priest (4:15)

Q2. (Hebrews 4:15) In what ways did Jesus share our weaknesses? In what ways was Jesus tempted? Because we know he didn’t sin, were his temptations easier or more difficult than ours? Do we have any temptations he didn’t have? Why does it comfort us that he can sympathize with our temptations and weaknesses?

Approaching the Throne of Grace (4:16)

M_____ (*eleos*), “kindness or concern expressed for someone in need, mercy”

G_____ (*charis*), “goodwill, favor”

H_____ (*boētheia*), “assistance offered to meet a need, help.”

T_____ help (*eukairos*), “well-timed, suitable.”

Q3. (Hebrews 4:16) Why should we approach the “throne of grace” with boldness and confidence? What are the promises contained in this verse? On what basis is God able to offer us unrestrained mercy and grace for our sins while still retaining his justice as judge?

Qualifications for High Priest (5:1-4)

A Priest Forever in the Order of Melchizedek (5:4-6)

Learning Obedience through Suffering (5:8)

Q4. (Hebrews 5:8) In what sense did Jesus “learn obedience from what he suffered”? How did Jesus’ learning process differ from ours, since he didn’t sin and suffer the consequences of his sin – the way we usually learn?

Being Made Perfect (5:9-10)

Q5. (Hebrews 5:9) In verse 9, what does “made perfect” refer to, since it obviously isn’t talking about Jesus’ moral growth and perfection? (Hint: The word *teleioō* means “bring something to its goal or accomplishment.”)

Source of Eternal Salvation (5:9-10)

Answers: Mercy, Grace, Help, Timely

5. Warnings Against Apostasy (Hebrews 5:11-6:12)

Traditionally, they have divided into two camps, largely on philosophical and dogmatic grounds:

1. _____ deny that true Christians can commit apostasy and lose their salvation, stressing the final perseverance of the saints.
2. _____ agree that true Christians can indeed commit apostasy and lose their salvation, stressing the free will of man.

Milk vs. Solid Food (5:11-14)

Q1. (Hebrews 5:14) How does a person become mature in God's Word according to verse 14? What can you do to grow in maturity?

The Elementary Teachings about Christ (6:1-3)

Spirit-Filled Believers? (6:4-5)

1. E _____
2. Tasted the _____
3. _____ of/in the Holy Spirit.
4. Tasted the goodness of the _____
5. Tasted ... the _____ of the coming age.

Q2. (Hebrews 6:4-5) What difference, if any, would you find between the description in verses 4-5 and a Spirit-filled Christian today? What is the writer's point in forming this description?

Impossible to Restore to Repentance (6:4-6)

The Scandal of Apostasy (6:6)

Q3. (Hebrews 6:4-6) What is apostasy? Why is it impossible from a practical standpoint to restore apostates to Christian faith and practice? What point was Jesus making in his Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)? What is Jesus' point of the Parable of the Tares or Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)?

Crops and Thorns (6:7-8)

A Practical Observation

To hold a position that it is impossible for a truly born again Christian to lose his salvation, it is necessary to:

1. Demonstrate that Hebrews 6:4-5 doesn't _____ describe a truly born again Christian.
2. Argue that that this is somehow a _____, not an actual case.
3. Discredit the _____ of the letter.

Show Diligence to the Very End (6:9-12)

Inheriting through Faith and Patience (6:12)

See also 6:15; 3:6, 14; 10:36; 12:1; Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Luke 8:15; Romans 8:25; Galatians 6:9; 2 Timothy 1:14; 4:7; James 1:12; Revelation 3:10; 13:10; 14:12)

Q4. (Hebrews 6:12) If we take seriously the writer's exhortation to exercise both faith and patience for the long haul, what effect does that have on our Christian life? On our perspective? How can we resist the subtle temptation to think that our salvation depends upon our endurance rather than Christ's atonement and the grace of God?

Answers: First series: 1. Calvinists, 2. Arminians. Second series: 1. Enlightened, 2. heavenly gift, 3. partakers, sharers, 4. word of God, 5. powers. Third series: 1. necessarily, 2. hypothetical, 3. authority

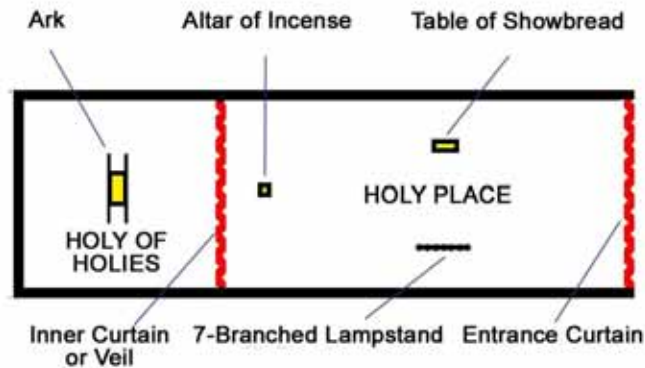
6. Jesus, Our High Priest Forever (Hebrews 6:13-7:28)

God Takes an Oath on Himself (6:13-18)

Hope as an Anchor for the Soul (6:18b-20)

Q1. (Hebrews 6:18b-20) In what sense have we “fled to a place of refuge”? Why are we to “take hold of” this hope actively? How does Christian hope differ from hoping that something is true? In what ways does an anchor illustrate the idea of hope?

Jesus Enters the Heavenly Sanctuary (6:19b-20)



Melchizedek Is an Everlasting Priest (7:1-2)

Comparing Melchizedek with the Son of God (7:3)

Melchizedek is Greater than Abraham and Levi (7:4-10)

A Priest by Reason of an Indestructible Life (7:11-17)

The Guarantee of a Better Covenant (7:18-22)

Q2. (Hebrews 7:22) What is a guarantee or surety? In what sense is Jesus the guarantor of the New Covenant?

Always Living to Make Intercession (7:23-25)

1. Jesus _____ forever
2. Jesus has a _____ priesthood.
3. Jesus is able to save _____ those who come to God through him.
4. Jesus always lives to _____ for us. (Romans 8:21, 34; 1 John 2:1)

Q3. (Hebrews 7:24-25) Why is Jesus able to save people “completely” – “to the uttermost” according to verse 25? What is the essential function of a priest? Why is intercession the essence of being a priest?

Our High Priest – the Son – Made Perfect Forever (7:26-28)

In 7:26-27, our author describes Jesus our High Priest with five adjectives or adjectival phrases:

1. H_____
2. _____
3. _____
4. S_____
5. _____

| | Human High Priest | Christ |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Frequency of offering | Daily | |
| Sacrifice for sins | For himself and people | |
| Strength | Weak | |

Q4. (Hebrews 7:26-28) How is Jesus described in verse 26? How does Jesus differ from human high priests? What about Jesus' role as High Priest gives you special confidence?

Answers: First series: 1. lives or continues, 2. permanent or unchangeable, 3. completely or utterly, 4. intercede. Second series: 1. holy, 2. blameless or harmless, 3. pure, 4. set apart or separated, 5. exalted or made higher. Third series: once for all, for the people only, made perfect forever.

7. Jesus, Mediator of a Better Covenant (Heb 8:1-9:12)

Our High Priest in the True, Heavenly Sanctuary (8:1-2)

The True Sanctuary Is in Heaven (8:3-5)

A Superior Covenant with Better Promises (8:6)

Q1. (Hebrews 8:6) In what sense is Jesus the “mediator” of a new covenant? What did he do to mediate this?

Jeremiah’s Prophecy Looks Forward to the New Covenant (8:7-13)

The promises of this “greater covenant”:

God’s law will no longer be _____, but will become _____ by the Holy Spirit.

They will be together as _____.

They will all know the Lord _____.

They will be _____ from their sins.

Q2. (Hebrews 8:7-13) Why did the Old Covenant fail? What are the primary promises of the New Covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34?

The Old Covenant Is Obsolete (8:13)

Furniture in the Holy Place and Holy of Holies (9:1-10)

Worship in the Tabernacle (9:6-7)

Q3. (Hebrews 9:7) Did the Old Covenant provide forgiveness for intentional, active, maintained rebellion against God? Does the New Covenant provide this forgiveness? What is required for forgiveness to be granted?

The External Awaiting the Actual (9:8-10)

Q4. (Hebrews 9:9) Why were external sacrificial regulations unable to cleanse or perfect the conscience? How does a guilty conscience keep us from intimacy with God? What is necessary for us to be able to come “boldly” (4:16)?

Christ Entered by His Own Blood (9:11-12)

| | Old Covenant | New Covenant |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Sanctuary | Man-made, earthly temple | |
| Sacrifices | The blood of goats and calves | |
| Frequency | Every year | |
| Forgiveness | Temporary forgiveness | |

Q5. (Hebrews 9:11-12) What does “redemption” mean? What were we redeemed from? What was the price of our redemption? How long does our redemption last?

Answers: First series: 1. external, internalized, 2. God and his people, 3. personally, 4. forgiven. Second series: Perfect sanctuary in heaven, God’s own presence, Christ’s own blood, Once for all, Eternal redemption

8. Jesus, Our Willing Sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-10:18)

In every day speech we often use the word “sacrifice” to mean something we’ve given up, as in parents sacrificing so their children can go to college. But in the Bible, “sacrifice” (*thisia*) refers to an offering made to God. Under Mosaic law, sacrifices typically involved the sacrifice of animals as a burnt offering at the tabernacle, though grain offerings were sometimes made as well.

Offering His Own Blood (9:11-14)

Holiness, Sanctification, and Cleansing

The Cleansing Blood of Christ (9:13-14)

Q1. (Hebrews 9:14) In what way does Christ’s sacrifice of himself cleanse the conscience in a way that the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not?

The Mediator and Ransom of the New Covenant (9:15)

Q2. (Hebrews 9:15). Read also 1 Timothy 2:5. In what sense does Jesus serve as a mediator? In what sense is Jesus a ransom from sin?

The Necessity of the Shedding of Blood (9:16-22)

The Copy and the True Sacrifice (9:23-26)

Christ’s Once for All Sacrifice (9:26b-28)

The Inevitability of Death and Judgment (9:27)

Christ’s First and Second Comings (9:28)

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------|---|
| First coming | Bear/take away sin | Suffering Servant |
| Second coming | Bring salvation | Traditional Jewish understanding of Messiah |

- The Parable of Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:37-39)
- The Parable of the Two Men and Two Women (Matthew 24:40-42)
- The Parable of the Thief in the Night (Matthew 24:42-44)
- The Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant (Matthew 24:45-51)
- The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Q3. (Hebrews 9:28) How did the purpose of Christ’s First Coming differ from his Second Coming? Which did the Jews expect? How does the mission of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 fit here?

Impossible for the Blood of Animals to Take Away Sins (10:1-4)

Greater to Lesser

From Ralph F. Wilson, *Hebrews: Discipleship Lessons* (JesusWalk, 2011). Copyright © 2011, Ralph F. Wilson <pastor@joyfulheart.com>. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to make copies of these participant handouts, one set for each member of a local group, at no charge, provided that this copyright information remains intact on each copy.

External vs. Internal (Psalm 50:8-15; Isaiah 1:11-15; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-25)

Shadow vs. Reality

Q4. (Hebrews 10:4) Why *can't* the blood of bulls and goats actually take away sin? What happened then to the sins the Old Testament saints *thought* were atoned for under the Old Covenant?

Support in Psalm 40:6-8

The Sacrifice that Makes Perfect and Holy (10:11-14)

There Is No Longer a Continuing Sacrifice for Sin (10:15-18)

9. Let Us Draw Near: Confidence of Faith (Hebrews 10:19-39)

Let Us Draw Near (10:19-25)

Q1. (Hebrews 10:19-21) How did the veil of the Tabernacle function in Old Testament worship? What is the significance of the veil being ripped in two at Jesus' crucifixion? Why is our access to God called a "new and living way"? In what sense is it *new*? In what sense is it *living*?

Three Exhortations for Believers (10:22-25)

The Exhortation to Draw Near to God (10:22)

Four elements of 10:22

S _____

F _____

C _____

B _____

The Exhortation to Hold On (10:23)

The Exhortation for Christian Fellowship (10:24-25)

- A. Stimulating Other Believers (10:24)
- B. Meeting Regularly Together (10:25)

Parakaleō, "to urge thoroughly, appeal to urge, exhort, encourage," literally "to call to one's side." See: "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." (3:13)

Q2. According to Hebrews 3:13 and 10:24-25, what should be a prime motive for meeting together with other Christians? What is our usual motivation? Why do Christians so often get out of the habit of attending church or a small group? How can we help these individuals?

Warning Against Deliberate Apostasy (10:26-31)

Q3. (Hebrews 10:26-31) What kind of sin is expressed by the phrase, "deliberately keep on sinning" (10:26)? Is this talking about sins related to the weakness of our flesh or apostasy? What elements in 10:29 contribute to your understanding that this is indeed flagrant apostasy, not garden-variety sin?

Remembering Former Persecution (10:32-34)

Persevere in Christ (10:35-36)

Q4. (Hebrews 10:35-36) Why is perseverance in faith hard sometimes? Why is perseverance so important? How is Christian fellowship important in perseverance? (3:12-14) What can we do to encourage other Christians in this sometimes difficult journey?

Don't Shrink Back (10:37-29)

Answers: 1. Sincerity, 2. faith, 3. cleansing, 4. baptism

10. Let Us Believe: The Nature of Faith (Heb. 11:1-6, 11)

The Nature of Faith (11:1-2)

| Key word | Greek | NIV | NRSV | KJV |
|-------------------|-------|---|---|---|
| <i>pistis</i> | | Now faith is | Now faith is | Now faith is |
| <i>hupostasis</i> | | being sure of what we hope for | the assurance of things hoped for, | the substance of things hoped for, |
| <i>elenchos</i> | | and certain of what we do not see. | the conviction of things not seen. | the evidence of things not seen. |

Hupostasis, translated *substantia* in Latin. The root meaning of the word is *hypo*, “under” + *stasis*, “stand,” or “that which stands under.” The word has been used twice before in Hebrews, in two different senses:

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Objective | “Substance, real essence” | “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being... ” (1:3) |
| Subjective | “Confidence, assurance, conviction.” | “We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.” (3:14) |

Objective translations: “substance” (KJV, NKJV, Douay-Rheims Bible), “Faith gives substance to our hopes” (New English Bible).

Subjective translations: “being sure of” (NIV), “assurance” (NASB, RSV, NRSV), “confident assurance” (Weymouth), “guarantee” (New Jerusalem Bible), “realization” (New American Bible), “to be sure of” (TEV)

Faith that Brings Understanding of God (11:3)

Edward J. Carnell used to call it, “a resting of the mind in the sufficiency of the evidences.”

Q1. Using Hebrews 11:1-3 as your source, how would you put in your own words what faith is and does?

Faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah (11:4-7)

Faith that Pleases God (11:6)

Two elements of faith in verse 6

1. Believe that he _____
2. Believe that he _____ those who seek after him.

“Earnestly seek” (NIV) “diligently seek” (KJV), or “seek” (NRSV) is *ekzēteō*, “to exert effort to find out or learn something, seek out, search for.” (See Matthew 7:7-8; 6:33; 13:45-46)

Q2. (Hebrews 11:6) The first element of faith is belief in God's existence. Why is the second element just as essential to true faith? What does it mean to "seek" God? What difference does it make whether or not you believe God will reward seekers?

Q3. Every religion has its own kind of faith. What is the content of the Judeo-Christian type of faith that sets it apart from any other? What is the basis of Noah's faith (11:7)? What is the basis of our faith? How does faith grow (see Romans 10:17)?

Considering God Faithful (11:11)

Q4. (Hebrews 11:11). Which part of faith is related to (1) the depth of Abraham's confidence in God? Which part of faith is related to (2) the real existence and power of such a God? How would you describe a faith that lacks either element? Based on verse 11 (not on verses 1-2), formulate in your own words a definition of faith.

Answers: 1. exists or "is". 2. rewards.

11. Let Us Trust: Perspective of Faith (Heb. 11:7-12:2)

The Faith of Abraham (11:8-19)

Living by Faith (11:13a)

Citizens of a Heavenly Country (11:13b-16)

“**Aliens**” (NIV), “strangers” (NRSV, KJV) is *xenos* (from which we get our word “xenophobia,” fear of strangers), here as a substantive, “stranger, alien.”

“**Strangers**” (NIV), “foreigners” (NRSV), “pilgrims” (KJV) is *parepidēmos*, pertaining to staying for a while in a strange or foreign place, here as a substantive, “stranger, sojourner, resident alien.” The word is also used in a similar sense in 1 Peter 1:1 and 2:11.

Q1. (Hebrews 11:8-19) Abraham was on a faith-quest, looking for a city (verse 10) and a country (verses 14-16). How does his faith-journey encourage yours? In Scriptural typology, what is the final “city” which we shall see? (12:22) What is the final country of which we are citizens? (12:28)

Q2. (Hebrews 11:13b) In practical terms, what would be the characteristics of a believer who lived his life as an “alien” and “stranger” here on earth? What is the balance between “in” the world but not “of” it? (John 15:19; 17:13-16; 1 John 4:4-6).

Abraham’s Faith for Isaac (11:17-19)

The Faith of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (11:20-23)

The Faith of Moses (11:23-28)

Q3. (Hebrews 11:23-28) How did Moses’ faith affect his willingness to suffer? What kind of vision did faith create for Moses? What kind of vision does faith create for us?

Faith to Enter the Promised Land (11:29-31)

Q4. (Hebrews 11:8-31) What was the powerful motivating factor behind the actions taken by the people mentioned in these verses? What was this faith based on? At the Red Sea, how did the Israelites’ faith differ from that of the Egyptian army? Did Rahab have real faith or was she a shrewd opportunist – or is there a difference?

The Faith of a Multitude of Judges, Prophets, and Believers (11:32-38)

Gideon, a man who put to flight the invading armies of the Midianites and Amalekites with just 300 men, each armed with a torch, a pottery jar, and a ram’s horn trumpet (*shophar*; Judges 6-8)

Barak, a general inspired by the Prophetess Deborah who attacked Sisera’s invading army (Judges 4-5).

Samson, a selfish, Spirit-filled Israelite, whom God used – in spite of himself – to deliver Israel from the Philistine invaders (Judges 13-16)

Jephthah, an Israelite warrior, son of a prostitute, who delivered Israel from the Ammonite armies (Judges 11-12).

From Ralph F. Wilson, *Hebrews: Discipleship Lessons* (JesusWalk, 2011). Copyright © 2011, Ralph F. Wilson <pastor@joyfulheart.com>. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to make copies of these participant handouts, one set for each member of a local group, at no charge, provided that this copyright information remains intact on each copy.

David, Israel's greatest king who escaped King Saul's attempts to kill him, conquered the surrounding kingdoms, and established Jerusalem as his capital (1 Samuel 16-31; 2 Samuel)

Samuel, the last of the Judges, a prophet who anointed Saul and later David to be king over God's people (1 Samuel 1-25).

The prophets. Many prophets are mentioned in 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, as well as those who authored the Major and Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. Many prophets were killed for standing without compromise for God's Word through them.

Their Faith Fulfilled Only with Ours (11:39-40)

A Cloud of Witnesses to Our Race (12:1)

- **Negative.** "Throw off" (NIV) or "lay aside" (NRSV, KJV) is *apotithēmi*, "take off," here figuratively, "lay aside, rid oneself."
- **Positive.** Run with "perseverance"

Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith (12:2)

Q5. (Hebrews 12:1-2) Who are the "great cloud of witnesses" mentioned in 12:1? What analogy to the life of faith is offered in 12:1? In what way is Jesus the "author" or "pioneer" of our faith? How did he live by faith? In what way is he the "finisher" or "perfecter" of our faith?

12. Let Us Endure: Perseverance of Faith (Heb. 12:3-29)

Enduring a Long-Standing Spiritual War (12:3-4)

Q1. (Hebrews 12:3-4) Spiritual warfare can be lost by weariness. Why is spiritual warfare so wearying? Why must we continue to resist, on and on? Have you ever been overcome by Satan because of weariness?

Enduring the Lord's Discipline (12:5-7a)

"Discipline" (NIV, NRSV) or "chastening" (KJV) translate the noun *paideia*, "the act of providing guidance for responsible living, upbringing, training, instruction," in our literature chiefly as it is attained by "discipline, correction."

Enduring a Father's Discipline (12:7b-11)

The Blessings of the Lord's Discipline (12:9b-11)

The benefits of the Father's discipline:

1. E_____
2. Sharing in his H_____
3. A peaceful harvest of R_____

Q2. (Hebrews 12:5-11) How does it help when you to look at your struggles and hardships as the Father's discipline and training? What are the benefits of such discipline to the Christian?

Is God Punishing Us?

Q3. (Hebrews 12:5-7) I've sometimes heard, "God never punishes anyone." Is that true according to these verses? If so, how does punishment fit into the larger overall concept of discipline and child-rearing? What is the purpose of God's discipline?

Strengthen Your Weak Knees (12:12-13)

A Call to Holiness (12:14)

Warnings against Self-Deception (12:14-17)

Three things the Christian is to pursue in his ethical quest for holiness:

1. P_____ with everyone (12:14; Romans 12:18).
2. S_____. A *pornos* is "one who practices sexual immorality, fornicator."
3. G_____ is the flip side of godless or worldly unbelief.

Q4. (Hebrews 12:14-17) Is the writer of Hebrews teaching salvation by being holy? Why or why not? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Galatians 5:19-21. Can habitual sin deprive us of heaven? If so, how?

Mt. Sinai vs. Mt. Zion (12:18-24)

The Heavenly Jerusalem (12:22)

- “For [Abraham] was looking forward to **the city** with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” (11:10)
- “God ... has prepared **a city** for them.” (11:16)
- “For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for **the city** that is to come.” (13:14)

Revelation 21:1-2; cf. 3:12; 21:10

Mount Zion = Heavenly Jerusalem = the City of the Living God

The Residents of the City of God (12:22-24)

1. A _____
2. B _____
3. G _____
4. J _____

Warning Against Rejecting (12:25)

Shaking and Fire (12:26-29)

Three attitudes in verse 28 that are appropriate or pleasing to God:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q5. (Hebrews 12:25-29) Is a fear of God healthy? If so, how? When does fear of God become unhealthy? How does the fear of God fit with 1 John 4:18?

Answers: Series one: 1. eternal life, 2. holiness, 3. righteousness. Series two: 1. peace, 2. sexual purity, 3. godliness. Third series: 1. angels, 2. believers, 3. God, 4. Jesus. Fourth series: 1. thankfulness or grace, 2. service or worship, 3. reverence, fear, or awe.

13. Let Us Love: Workings of Faith (Hebrews 13:1-25)

Love within the Christian Community (13:1-3)

Brotherly Love (13:1)

Show Hospitality (13:2)

Philoxenia in this sentence is a compound word from *philos*, "love" + *xenos*, "stranger," that is "hospitality," translated "entertain strangers" (NIV, KJV) or "show hospitality to strangers" (NRSV). See Genesis 18.

Remember the Prisoners (13:3)

Q1. (Hebrews 13:1-3) How do hospitality to strangers and visiting prisoners relate to brotherly love (*philadelphia*)? Where are you strong in brotherly love? Where are you weak?

Sexual Purity (13:4)

This teaches three things:

1. We are to _____ marriage
2. We are to keep our marriages _____
3. God will punish _____

Adulterers (*moichos*), "one who is unfaithful to a spouse, adulterer," both male and female.

The sexually immoral (*pornos*). Originally the word meant "male prostitute," then more generally, "one who practices sexual immorality, fornicator." The word includes a whole range of sexual practices, such as sex with a prostitute, homosexuality, sex with boys, and bestiality.

See also 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Corinthians 7:9, 36-37

The Security of God's Presence (13:5-6)

Q2. (Hebrews 13:5-6) How can we recognize greed in ourselves? What will be the signs? What is the antidote for greed in our lives? What would be the earmarks of a greed-free life? If not money, what should be the basis of our security for the future? What promises do you find in verses 5 and 6?

Imitate Your Leaders (13:7)

Christians are given three commands regarding leaders:

- I _____ their faith (13:7)
- O _____ them and submit to them (13:17)
- G _____ them on the author's behalf (13:24)

The Unchangeable Christ (13:8)

Q3. (Hebrews 13:8) What is the significance of this verse for the original readers? For you? For understanding just who Jesus is? For believing in the power of God for today?

Strengthened by the Altar (13:9-10)

Three possibilities: (1) The cross of Christ is the Christian altar, (2) the Eucharistic altar is the altar, (3) The word 'altar' is used by metonymy for 'sacrifice' – 'as when, for example, we say that a man keeps a good *table*, meaning thereby good *food*.'" Read: 1 Corinthians 10:18.

Christ's Suffering as the Sin Offering (13:11-14)

The Sacrifice of Praise and Sharing with Others (13:15-16)

1. The Sacrifice of _____ (13:15)
2. The Sacrifice of _____ (13:16; Matthew 5:16)

Q4. (Hebrews 13:15-16) Though the sacrifice for atonement have been completed in Christ, what kinds of sacrifices or offerings are Christians called upon to make? What effect do these offerings have on God?

Obey Leaders Who Are Responsible to God (13:17)

"Obey" is *peithō*, "convince," here with the meaning, "to be won over as the result of persuasion," specifically, "obey, follow."

"Submit" (KJV, NRSV) or "submit to their authority" (NIV) is *hupeikō*, originally, "withdraw, give way to," then figurative, as in our passage, "to yield to someone's authority, yield, give way, submit."

A Request for Prayer (13:18-19)

A Benediction from the God of Peace (13:20-21)

Q5. (Hebrews 13:16, 20-21) What are the actual requests being made of God in this great benediction? What "pleases" God according to verses 16 and 20? Why should we "make it our aim to please him" (2 Corinthians 5:9, NRSV)?

Concluding Words (13:22-25)

Answers. Series one: 1. honor, 2. sexually pure, 3. sexual sin. Series 2: imitate, obey, greet. Series three: 1. praise, 2. good deeds.