

STUDY GUIDE



NEW VISION

STUCK

WEEK 3: ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

HEBREWS 10:23-25

08/21/2016

MAIN POINT

God drives us to encourage those around us.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is the most encouraging person you know? How has he or she encouraged you lately?

We often think about people only needing encouragement when they are down, but how can we benefit from encouragement when things are going well?

When Christians identify with and commit to the church, they find a source of love, encouragement, and accountability. But these benefits are not only for when things are falling apart. On the contrary, such bonds are what hold the community of faith together and keep it properly functioning. God has designed the unique encouragement of Christian community to help and sustain us in all of life.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:23-25.

The opening verses of this section speak of benefits we have been given in Jesus. What commands arise out of having confidence to enter God's presence through the blood of Jesus (vv. 23-24)? Where do you see these commands at work in your Christian community?

If we took these "let us" commands seriously, what would change in our lives?

When we recognize that Jesus shed His blood to restore us to a right relationship with the Father, we will draw near to God (v. 21). This drawing near transforms our relationships with one another. Together we "hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering" (v. 23), and become "concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works (v. 24). Trusting in Christ's sacrifice on the cross enables us to draw near to God because, through His death and resurrection, Jesus has cleansed us of all our sin. Christ's sacrifice demonstrates the manner in which we are to encourage and serve one another, as Jesus set aside the glory due Him in order to meet our deepest needs.

How might participating faithfully in the community help you more clearly see the areas in your life that need to grow or change?

The writer of Hebrews says, “let us . . .” in each of the three commands that he gives in verses 22-24. This tells us something important about how God intends for us to mature. God saves each of us individually, but He also calls us to grow in community. Our sin nature keeps us from having an accurate view of ourselves; yet when we commit to biblical community, we surround ourselves with people who can help us begin to see ourselves the way God sees us. Community is a gift from God that He intends to leverage to help us seek Him, remain firm in Him, and help others seek Him, too.

What does it look like practically to “promote love and good works” (vv. 24-25)? Why do we need encouragement from others to do this?

What are some practical ways that we might demonstrate generosity in the way we live in community with one another?

The writer of Hebrews gives us two ways we might spur each other on to love and good deeds. First, we must not neglect to meet together. Secondly, we must actively encourage one another. In other words, fellowship with believers requires faithful commitment. If we hope to cultivate spiritually edifying relationships with each other we must take the time necessary to build those relationships so that we might learn how to encourage, pray for, and hold each other accountable.

Why did the writer of Hebrews remind his readers that “the Day” is “drawing near” (v. 25)?

What is taking place in our world today that causes us to take this seriously? How is community an encouragement and shelter from the world?

The “Day” that is drawing near is the return of Christ, which is the foundation of all Christian hope. Together we should long to see that day come, and when it comes we want to be found working diligently with our hand to the plow (Luke 9:62). Much about our world and our culture is uncertain, but we have a firm and unshakable hope that Jesus will return and fully redeem a people for Himself. We experience a shadow of that community in the fellowship of believers in the church.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Identify one person that you can encourage this week. In what ways will you encourage him or her?

What distinct ways have you been encouraged by walking through life with the people in this group? How can we make this a more regular aspect of our time together?

If we are making encouragement and concern for one another a regular part of our time together, what impact might that have on people looking in from the outside? How can our community of believers be missional before we even look outward?

PRAY

Thank God for the grace and encouragement that you find in the community of faith. Pray that He

would strengthen and sustain your fellowship and make you a people who are devoted to encouraging one another in the good and the bad.

COMMENTARY

HEBREWS 10:23-25

10:23. This exhortation appeals to us to maintain spiritual consistency. We are urged to hold firmly to the hope we profess. This hope offers glory which beamed more brightly than the glories of the old order. "Unswervingly" denotes an object which stands absolutely straight, not departing from the perpendicular. We are to lay hold of Christ and never let go, even in the slightest. No persecution, real or feared, was to lessen the ardor of these believers for Christ.

10:24-25. This exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works. Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures.