



## Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 9/19/21

LifeGroup Leaders,

The fall has kicked off, and we can't wait to see what God will do in both big and small ways. *A win for your LifeGroup is having someone in your group take a step in their faith journey.* These steps might look different. Here are some examples:

- If someone in your LifeGroup shares a personal prayer request for the first time, it's a win.
- If someone in your LifeGroup talks about wrestling with God's Word and obeying, it's a win.
- If someone in your LifeGroup asks for you to hold them accountable for their trusting God, it's a win.

Sometimes we only catch the "big things" God is doing in someone's life and miss all the "small things" that define a life of faith. Above all, each week, we seek to make disciples. Stay faithful, stay prayerful, and know that we are praying for you this week.

### Share a Meal

Enjoy the presence of eating together. Did you know some of Jesus' major conversations happened around meals? The New Testament often reveals Jesus breaking bread with his friends. As you participate in sharing a meal, you are declaring to the world that all are welcome to the table of Christ. As you share a meal, you affirm that we "who are in Christ" will ultimately feast with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's so much more than just eating together.

### Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 3

Read Hebrews chapter 3 as a group before discussing the questions below. We strongly recommend picking only a few rather than trying to answer them all...answering just a few can set your group up for a deeper, more meaningful discussion. ***For this week, question 6 is one that we hope every group will include as it is the central issue of the chapter.***

**Potential Icebreaker:** What famous examples can you name of builders, artists, or entrepreneurs who have "built" or created something great? How does their glory or

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prestige compare with that of those who came after them to maintain, preserve, or develop what was created?

This topic comes directly out of the text this week. Examples to include could be:

- Michelangelo's sculpture of David or the Sistine Chapel painting
- Gutzon Borglum's Mt. Rushmore
- Steve Jobs and Apple Computer

We don't usually know the names of the painters who help maintain the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or the workers who repair and maintain Mt. Rushmore. Tim Cook is pretty well known because of his present role at Apple, but his name is not nearly as "glorious" as Steve Jobs.

**1.** The author of Hebrews addresses the listeners as "holy brothers [and sisters]." What comes to mind when you hear the word *holy*?

Ask people for their response. There's no right or wrong answer here.

How could these people...and we ourselves...qualify as being *holy*?

"Holy" means to be set apart as sacred from what is common or ordinary. It's astounding that human beings can be described as "holy," but chapter 2 from last week presents the case. Jesus, in his humanity, represented humanity at the cross and overcame death so that those who trust in him have him as their "merciful and faithful high priest" (2:17).

**2.** Like Jesus, Moses was revered for his faithfulness (v. 2). Why, though, has Jesus "been counted worthy of more glory than Moses" according to these first 6 verses?

The author could have pointed out how Moses wasn't always faithful, but he doesn't do that. Instead, he chooses to emphasize Moses' faithfulness and compare how Jesus was also faithful. Jesus' greater glory comes from the fact that he is *like a son over the builder's house* rather than *a servant in the house*. The faithful servant is worthy of a level of glory, but the faithful son is worthy of an even higher glory!

**3.** Christ is the faithful son over God's house. What do you think it means in verse 6 that "we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope"?

The "house" here could be thought of as the "household," or "family," of God's people. In other words, God's work is to build or assemble a community of people whose ultimate allegiance is to Him. We see something here that will be repeated throughout Hebrews and will be emphasized more in following weeks—that our place in this household calls for perseverance in faith. That's what the rest of the chapter turns our attention to.

**4.** Take a minute to read Psalm 95. What is the "rebellion" spoken of in the psalm? (See Numbers 13-14 if you're not sure.) Why were these events from over 1,200 years earlier still relevant for these first century believers?

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These words point back to the wilderness period when God miraculously provided water from the rock while the people complained about God's lack of provision. They also remember Israel's failure to believe in God's deliverance when the spies brought back a negative report about entering the promised land.

What about for us? Do we face a similar danger? If so, how?

The correct answer is "YES"! Every generation faces tests of faith about God's presence and power to deliver us...financial problems, legal challenges, relationship pain, health concerns, tragedies, opposition to our faith, etc.

**5.** What do you think it means for people to "harden their hearts" like verses 8 and 15 warn against?

In the words of commentator William Lane (*Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47A, p. 86), a hard heart can be understood as "the refusal to believe God...[and] turning away from God in a deliberate act of rejection." Ultimately, only God perfectly knows a person's heart; however, that doesn't mean that we are unable to notice when a heart is hard. This could be an opportunity to share an experience you've had with someone who refused to believe...or at least has so far in life (which is a good reminder to pray!).

**6.** From the passage, how should we guard against having "an evil, unbelieving heart, leading [us] to fall away from the living God" (v. 12)? What are you doing to guard against this in your life right now? Is there an action you should take?

This is arguably the central issue of the passage, and verse 13 is key: "exhort one another every day..." You can explain "exhort" as *strongly urging* or *encouraging* (according to one major Greek lexicon). So, the question comes down to helping people in your group think through who's committed to exhorting them and who they are committed to exhort. It's something we're to do daily, so by implication, a once-per-week pat on the back isn't enough. We all need each other to preach the gospel to each other and to be in prayer together. Hopefully, your LifeGroup will be a significant part of this "exhorting"! Feel free to point this out to the group as a major purpose for why you are in a LifeGroup.

**7.** If you're familiar with the Exodus account, think of all God's miracles witnessed by that generation. Verses 16-19 point out how this was the same generation who rebelled! What does this say about the claim sometimes made that "I would believe if only God would show a sign"?

These same people witnessed the plagues in Egypt, including the Passover. They walked across the sea-turned-to-dry land. They saw water miraculously provided out of a rock. They received the manna. In other words, they were not lacking in first-hand supernatural displays of God's power. Yet, they still rejected God.

**8.** Verses 17-19 tell us that the Israelites' unbelief was at the root of their sin or rebellion. What do you think the relationship is between sin and unbelief? Perhaps it's helpful to think through examples of sin and examine how that sin relates to unbelief. Here are a few examples of sin:

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- Anger (i.e., not a righteous form of anger, which does exist): It could be understood as a failure to trust in God's awareness of and sovereignty over everything that happens in our life.
- Lust: It could be understood as a lack of trust that God knows what best for us and that His design is what's best. With lust, we long for something/someone that's not ours.
- Lying: It could be seen as an attempt to distort reality and bring about a desired outcome apart from trusting God.
- Retaliation or revenge: It could be seen as a lack of faith in God's perfect and final justice.

### **Closing: Prayer Time** (15 minutes)

It can be helpful to discuss these basic ideas for group prayer time:

- Short prayers can encourage people to participate.
- Simple prayers are direct and honest.
- Spirit-led prayers rely on God's power.
- Silent prayers are okay for anyone, especially newcomers.

Remind the group that we want to share personal requests, and those of our immediate family. Ask your prayer coordinator will write them down and email the group.

For this week, the format is for a person to share a request, and then have 2-3 people pray for that request. You may consider speaking with someone in your group ahead of time who is willing to share honestly and model the type of request and level of intimacy you are trying to develop. All levels are appropriate as you begin together. Go around the group until everyone has shared and been prayed for.