



## **Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide**

Week of 10/3/21

### **Warm Up**

Welcome to October! As the trees start to change color it is a good reminder that we all go through seasons in our lives. We may have seasons of growth and health, seasons where the color is starting to change and we are becoming stagnant, or seasons where we are bare and have no growth. You will have people in your groups that are all in different seasons. Do you know what seasons the people in your group are in? How can we best serve and facilitate discussions to encourage, challenge, grow, and care for everyone in our group if you don't know what season everyone is in? Remember what the goal of your group is:

The goal of your LifeGroup is to provide EVERYONE  
in your group the OPPORTUNITY to GROW SPIRITUALLY  
through a Biblical Community on Mission.

If you haven't already, spend some time this week to gauge where everyone in your group is in their lives. Here are some questions that can help you in that endeavor:

-If you had to pick a season of the year to describe your relationship with Jesus, what would it be and why?

-When was the last thing you thanked God for in your life?

-What is something that God is teaching you right now.

Use these questions as a part of your discussion, or informally in conversations before and after your official discussion.

Icebreaker: In your opinion, who's the most powerful or influential person alive today?

With this person in mind, answer these two questions:

(1) What would it take for you to have 24/7 access to this person?

(2) How well do you think person could relate to your life and your needs?

**This is intended to help us think about how incredible it is that we have such open access to Jesus, who understands what it's like to be human.**

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and loving others.*

## Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 4:14-5:10

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10 as a group, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together.

1. What do you think the purpose is of these verses? In other words, for what outcome or response is the author writing?

There are a couple key statements in this passage that clue us in. First, the purpose is that the listeners and the author would “hold fast [their] confession” (v. 14), and that they would “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that [they] may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (v. 16).

How does this purpose or outcome relate to our lives today?

You could spend time here talking about how easy it can be for people to grow apathetic or even adversarial toward God. Maybe you or others in the group have seen people not hold fast to their confession of faith in Jesus. You could also think about our constant need to experience God’s grace. We often fail to live faithfully, which puts us in need of “the throne of grace,” which we can come to with confidence because of Jesus.

2. According to this passage, how was Jesus’ ministry like that of a high priest?

This whole passage is drawing the parallel between Jesus’ ministry and how a high priest would enter into the innermost section (i.e., the Holy of Holies) of the tabernacle/temple on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for sins on behalf of himself and for the people of God (see Lev 16 for background). The parallel here is not coincidental! The whole system of sacrifices and the priesthood was pointing ahead to, or foreshadowing, what Jesus would one day accomplish. That’s why Jesus is known as the “great” high priest in v. 14.

3. One of the greatest comforts is when someone knows what it’s like to face what we’re facing. Verse 15 says that Jesus can “sympathize with our weaknesses” because he “in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” What comes to mind when you think about this claim?

This is intended to be an invitation to get people thinking and to offer a blank slate for conversation about this central claim of Hebrews. A priest is an official who stands between God and humanity. (On one side, priests instruct people on what God requires and call them to live accordingly. On the other side, priests offer sacrifices on behalf of the people and know first-hand the experience of humanity, including weakness.)

Some will find a great comfort in these words. Others may find it difficult to believe that Jesus, as the Son of God, could possibly know human temptations and weakness. It’s important to remember that sin is the result of humanity’s rebellion against God, but not inherent to what it means to be human. The heart of this claim, then, is that Jesus has “stood in” for humanity. He was not shielded from the lure of sin, but experienced our weaknesses, yet he did not succumb to them.

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What relevance does this claim have for our lives today?

Think of the struggles, temptations, weaknesses that we experience. Jesus can relate as one who has himself experienced similar temptations.

4. What does it look like for us to confidently “draw near to the throne of grace”?

We can come before the Lord in prayer at any time. The imagery here is of a sanctuary that’s always available for us to enter into in the midst of life’s “time[s] of need.” Our weaknesses are not a disqualification from God’s presence but are causes for us to prayerfully seek the mercy and grace offered at the throne of grace. This is a great place to encourage each other to commit to regular prayer. It’s also good to include prayer that is “off schedule,” meaning spontaneous and unplanned, according to our needs.

What kind of things can keep us from confidently drawing near God? What are we missing out on when we fail to do this?

There’s no right or wrong way to answer. A lack of faith would certainly be central, including faith that God is merciful toward the broken and that God is present. Others could include spiritual apathy, busyness, distraction, burnout, discouragement, or feelings of guilt. We are missing out on the grace and mercy of God when we fail to come before Him.

5. With verses 1-10 in mind from chapter 5, why is it important for a priest to be appointed by God? Why, then, does it matter that Jesus was appointed by God?

Since priests represent God to the people and the people to God, it is essential that they are not self-appointed! It’s a divine office that only God can establish and affirm. Although different from the priesthood, think of the example of an ambassador who is appointed by the ruler of a nation to represent that nation to another. How ridiculous would it be—and ineffective—for someone to attempt to take the role on without such an appointment! Even their best efforts would be wasteful since they do not have the authority to act or represent that nation.

6. Verse 8 speaks of how Jesus “learned obedience through what he suffered.” What does it mean that Jesus “learned obedience”?

“Learning” here does not mean Jesus lacked information or knowledge; rather, it points to the experience of suffering at the cross. As NT scholar William Lane explains, “Jesus learned experientially what obedience entails through his passion in order to achieve salvation and to become fully qualified for his office as eternal high priest (2:10; 5:9–10).” This is not to pit one form of learning against another, but it does make the point that Jesus not only intellectually understands suffering, but he has personally experienced and endured it.

7. Jesus modeled obedience and is the “source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (v. 9). How do you think *obedience to God* compares with *faith in God*? Are they at odds or are they somehow related?

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Isn't this what Paul spoke so fervently against in passages like Ephesians 2:8-9?! Well, not if we understand it correctly. "Obedience" can suggest that we earn God's favor by our own works, which the Bible repeatedly speaks against. The kind of obedience that we should have, though, is obedience that results from, or is the natural byproduct of, a genuine faith. Faith saves us, but that saving faith is demonstrated by what we do. That's why, for example, Paul's letters are packed with so many commands and instructions on how we are to live in light of our faith. As Jesus put it in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." In sum, a "faith" that makes no difference during our lives should not be expected to make a difference at the end of our lives.

What could you all do as a group to encourage each other in obedience this week (think back to Heb. 3:13)?

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