



Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 10/10/21

Warm Up

LifeGroup leaders—we are excited for your conversation this week and thankful that you're in place to help facilitate it with your group! This week is another example of how rich God's Word is for us. It's also a week to be especially aware of how the main topic of the text can present difficult questions. It's likely that we all know people who had formerly given every indication of faith in Jesus but who are now no longer "seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt 6:33). Instead, they seem uninterested or even opposed to God. Thoughts about those people might come up this week as you're reading and discussing the passage together. Please be sensitive to those kinds of questions or comments. One of the best responses you might give this week is simply, "I'm sorry to hear that...let's pray for that person."

Icebreaker: Has there been a time in your life when you were a part of something that you wanted to quit? What happened and how did you handle it?

Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 5:11-6:12

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:12 as a group, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together.

1. When you think of your own story of faith in Jesus, how would you describe the depth of your relationship with Jesus today in comparison to when you first came to faith?

This is an invitation for each person to examine the spiritual growth they've experienced since coming to faith in Jesus. We should be able to see signs of growth and maturity as we look back over the course of those weeks, months, and years of following the Lord (depending, of course, on how long a person has been a follower of Jesus).

If someone has difficulty seeing growth, there could be an opportunity for you to help them examine their lives even more. If needed, reach out to a pastor on staff for guidance.

2. The expression in verse 11, "dull of hearing," can be understood as being sluggish or "lazy in hearing" when it comes to matters of faith. According to the passage, what is the danger of this kind of situation?

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Verses 12-14 tell us that this kind of laziness or sluggishness in our listening to the Lord (e.g., his commands, instruction, and the message of the gospel) can stunt our growth spiritually. It leaves us immature in our faith, limiting our usefulness for God's purposes.

What kind of circumstances can make someone dull of hearing?

There could be a lot of different answers here. It's likely that the audience of Hebrews is facing increasing opposition or persecution, which could inspire them to back away from their faith. Ironically, another potential circumstance could be when our lives seem to be flourishing—when we're healthy, happy, and content.

3. In 6:1-3, the author calls the listeners to advance beyond their foundation of "elementary doctrine"—their basic set of beliefs about Christ. What, according to the passage up to this point, is this foundation of doctrine supposed to lead to?

In a word, it should lead to maturity. Maturity means retaining what they've learned, but moving beyond it as a builder of a home lays a foundation but doesn't stop there! Maturity is described in 5:14 as "those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." Commentator George Guthrie summarizes this as "how to make the right choices when confronted with critical decisions." The language is reminiscent of Genesis 3 and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Maturity ultimately leads us to (literally) counter-act the consequence of the Fall, as much as is possible this side of eternity.

4. What kind of attitude is reflected in the words of verse 3? Why is this attitude essential as we think about moving on to maturity in our faith?

The words show a dependance upon God's grace to enable us to move on to spiritual maturity. The listeners are to move beyond the elementary doctrine they had been taught, implying they have a responsibility and role to take, but God's grace is required for any growth to take place. It's a good reminder for us that we cannot achieve our own maturity, but that it comes from a constant reliance upon God's provision.

5. Verses 7-8 illustrate the author's point from verses 4-6. What do you see in this "parable" that relates to the issue of spiritual growth and maturity?

These verses portray the danger of apostasy—abandoning one's beliefs about Jesus. It's a picture of enjoying or receiving God's blessings but not producing the expected fruit of those blessings. Instead, there's the imagery of thorns and thistles, being cursed and burned—all imagery echoing Genesis 3 (again—see question 3). There's a question commonly associated with these verses: *Where these people ever true believers?* While that's an intriguing question, we do not recommend trying to debate or resolve it in your discussion. Instead, a more helpful observation to emphasize is that *those with true saving faith persevere in their faith* (see verses 9-12).

6. Verses 9-12 express confidence in the audience's maturity. According to these verses, what are the characteristics that accompany or reveal maturity?

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The author includes their ongoing practice of loving service toward the saints. In addition, their perseverance in hope and faith will prevent them from the very kind of sluggishness or “dullness of hearing” that verse 11 of chapter 5 warned against.

7. What do you think is the role of your LifeGroup and other forms of Christian community in helping you mature and persevere in your faith?

This is an invitation to reflect on our need for encouragement from each other to continue on in faith. We need each other’s example, each other’s words of encouragement, and at times, even a loving challenge or rebuke.

Wrap Up

This week's discussion had some heavy lifting! Although it's a challenging topic to wade through, let's remember the warning about abandoning one's beliefs about Jesus. The need to persevere in our faith is an important Biblical truth emphasized in Hebrews. Close your LifeGroup time by sharing with them how your group encourages you to stay faithful to Jesus. Be specific to your own story and this season. Sometimes leaders/facilitators forget that leading is a formative experience, and we are shaped by leading others in an exploration of the Bible. Again, share some encouraging thoughts about your journey and close with a prayer of thanksgiving for your group members.

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