



Calvary LifeGroup Leader's Guide

Week of 11/14/21

Warm Up

One big-picture goal for LifeGroups is to simply get to know each other at a deeper level, so here's an idea that can be used in any week's gathering. It's inspired by the "Community" piece in our Biblical Communities on Mission framework.

Sharing Your Story of Faith (a.k.a., your personal testimony)

1. Invite one person who you think would be good at going first (and maybe that person is YOU)!
2. Ask them to tell the story to the group of how they came to faith in Jesus. (Or, if someone is not yet a believer, ask them to tell the story of their journey up until the present.)
3. Keep the story to a limit of 5:00-5:01 minutes! 😊
4. Use the following categories to help structure the story:
 - What life was like before I began to follow Jesus. *(This may be less helpful for someone who came to faith at a young age... "I used to steal toys.")*
 - How I came to faith in Jesus. *(Did someone tell me the gospel? Did I have a dramatic event? Was the process slow and unsensational?)*
 - What life has been like since I began to follow Jesus. *(What impact has faith made in your life? What internal attitudes or external behaviors have changed?)*
5. Let the group ask clarifying questions or make nonjudgmental comments celebrating God's work.

There's a golden opportunity here to remind everyone about listening well! For tips on this, you can check out this [active listening content](#) from the *Center for Creative Leadership*, including "The Big 6 Active Listening Skills."

The idea is to hear one person's story per week, but you don't have to necessarily do this in consecutive weeks. Consider trying it out this week or next and see how it goes.

Icebreaker: Think of a time or situation where you had great need of confidence. What gave you that confidence and what was the outcome?

Discussion Questions for Hebrews Chapter 10:19-39

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Read the passage, then select 2-3 questions from below to discuss together.

1. The word *confidence* shows up in 10:19 and 10:35. Why is confidence important for Christians, and what should our confidence be in (what should be the object of our confidence)?

The word used for confidence can also mean *boldness, especially in the presence of or in relation to God*. The author of Hebrews has been talking a lot about how Jesus gives us access to God through the shedding of his blood. Confidence is important because it helps sustain and preserve our faith. In terms of this passage, it allows us to boldly give ourselves to the three main "let us" phrases in verses 19-25. The original audience was facing pressure to compromise in their faith, but confidence is a key protection against compromise. From vv. 35-36, confidence "has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that...you may receive what is promised."

A basic, but essential, point is that our confidence to do these things is in Christ alone. We have no access to God apart from Jesus' blood.

What have you seen so far in Hebrews that gives you confidence?

There are many potential answers here and this invites us to mention specific ideas from Hebrews that are meaningful.

2. What is the author talking about or referring to in verses 19-21 with expressions like, "enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus," "that he opened for us through the curtain," and "we have a great priest over the house of God"?

This question may be best suited for groups that meet every other week and didn't meet last week. If this is true for you, we encourage you to take a look at the illustration of the tabernacle from last week's discussion questions as it depicts visually what the text describes here. The confidence spoken of in this week's passage is directly related to what was covered last week ("Therefore...since..." in v. 10:19). These phrases relate back to the image of Jesus entering into the presence of God (i.e., the Holy of Holies) to offer a one-time and final sacrifice for our sins by his own blood. He has opened "a new and living way...for us through the curtain." It's a rich explanation of what Jesus has done!

3. The confidence we have through Christ should lead us to respond in actions ("let us...") described in verses 22, 23, and 24. Take a minute to think through these. What do you think we can learn or be reminded of from these statements about what it means to follow Christ?

The first statement in v. 22 portrays our ongoing position in relation to God because of Jesus. We have a privileged access that allows us to "draw near," knowing that Jesus' blood has made us clean. The "bodies washed" expression is likely a reference to baptism when someone first comes to faith in Christ.

The second in v. 23 points to the need for us to hold on to faith. We don't simply make a one-time decision and then live any way we'd like, but true faith is transforming and persevering—one of the major themes of Hebrews (see also 10:36).

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The third in v. 24 underscores the importance of community in living out the implications of faith—love and good works. Community also encourages us over the long haul. Question 4 gives more attention to this.

4. With verses 24-25 in mind, think of your experience of being in community with other believers. How has Christian community stirred you up “to love and good works” and given you encouragement?

You get extra credit if you select this question! Hopefully people in your group have had experiences that align with these verses. If it’s helpful, this could be a place to restate the framework for LifeGroups at Calvary—that they would be Biblical Communities on Mission:

- Biblical: God’s Word is at the center of our discussions and attention.
- Community: We meet regularly in smaller groups than our Sunday gatherings so that we can know each other and be known, seeking to love each other.
- Mission: We commit to “turn outward,” seeking to meet the needs of others outside our group.

On the flip side, what causes “some” to neglect meeting together? Which of these is most tempting or difficult for you?

This is like preaching to the choir but think about all the various things that keep people isolated from Christian community! In general, we’re overcommitted or busy. We prioritize other things. We’d rather go camping/skiing/etc. We may find it difficult to be around people...and people may find it difficult to be around us!

5. Verses 26-30 paint a stern warning against “sinning deliberately” after realizing what Jesus has done. What do you think the author means that “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” in verse 26?

Here are a few things to know: (1) we are not giving much attention to these verses this week because we’ve already given attention to previous “warning passages” in Hebrews, (2) if you choose this question, do so carefully since this is a topic that could easily overshadow the rest of the discussion, and (3) keep the attention on the continuous call in Hebrews for the audience/listeners to persevere in faith.

The fact that “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” makes sense if we consider that these verses describe someone who realizes what Jesus has accomplished yet persists in deliberate (i.e., intentional, planned) sin. This person isn’t struggling with sin because he/she has embraced and is settled with their sin. This is someone who decides that Jesus’ sacrifice makes no difference for their life. It’s the complete opposite response to the gospel from the “let us” statements earlier in the passage.

6. Verses 32-39 reinforce the need to persevere or endure in faith and include an appeal to “recall the former days” of their faith. How can remembering the past like this help us to keep going in the present?

In general, remembering the past can help us gain perspective in this present moment. As an example, someone could be reminded of their faith in college which could

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encourage them to live more boldly in their current workplace or home. This kind of remembering can also help us think of the kind of legacy of faith that we've been a part of and encourage us to continue in that legacy or identity—"we are not of those who shrink back...but of those who have faith and preserve their souls."

This kind of remembering is usually focused on God's faithfulness (e.g., celebrating the Passover and Easter), but we can also look back on how God faithfully worked in and through us at a more personal level.

Is there someone you've been close to who you could encourage by reminding them of their faith in the past?

It could be great to follow what the author of Hebrews is doing here—reminding others of their past faithfulness so they would continue in the present.

Wrap Up

Like every other meeting, be sure to take time to pray for each other as you wrap up. We're now less than a month away from the end of the series (Dec 12th). If you haven't done so already, this is a great week to decide as a group what your plans will be for December and early January. Our break from writing discussion questions will span from the weeks of Dec 19th-Jan 2nd (questions will resume the week of Jan 9th).

Finally, we'll be talking more in the following weeks about this year's [*Heart of Advent*](#) effort. Feel free to talk as a group about how you could work together to contribute to this year's causes.