

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



**FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH**  
Produced Weekly

***Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith***  
Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13

**Copy pages 2 and 3 for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

### **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #11). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Make sure there are enough places for everyone to be comfortable.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Enlist ahead of time any readers you intend to use. Prepare by writing the “headings” beforehand on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper. Those are shown ready to copy on the final page of this session.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

## **Music Sources:**

**Seek Ye First**, *The Worship Hymnal* #524; CCLI #1352

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

**Find Us Faithful**, *The Worship Hymnal* #598; CCLI #18259

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith*****Focal Text**

Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13

**Background**

Hebrews 3:1—4:13

**Main Idea**

We must live in obedient faith to God to enter fully into the joyous salvation God provides.

**Question to Explore**

Is living faithfully and obediently to God optional for salvation?

**Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the meaning of the role of living faithfully and obediently in the Christian life.

**Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Seek Ye First**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 524; CCLI #1352

**First thoughts:****Don't Worry—Seek the Kingdom**

**Matthew 6:25**

***“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”***

### **Matthew 6:33**

***But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.***

These verses are part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is teaching His disciples to get their focus off temporal, secular, and temporary aspects of life. When one's focus is upon earthly things there is the temptation to worry. There is more to a believer than the temporal.

It is the worldly person who spends time worrying about one thing or another. If one has too much he/she worries about losing it. If one has too little there is worry about he or she is going to get by. The spiritual person is content with what God provides. The conjunction "but" puts this verse 33 in context with the preceding verses. Get your focus on God's kingdom and his righteousness. Do this and worry will not be a problem.

If you focus on the kingdom then you cannot miss focusing on the King who is Jesus. A theme that runs through the study of the Book of Hebrews is to keep one's eyes on Jesus. A believer is to keep eyes on Christ and not look right and left. Looking around is one of Satan's great devices to entice a believer. There is much in the world that looks good but it is not what satisfies the soul.

When you seek righteousness you are seeking Jesus. When you seek righteousness you are obeying God and placing yourself where God can and will bless.

Are you seeking the kingdom and the King who can make your life abundant? Or are you putting yourself and worldly goods first?

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Encourage the group to read the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5—7.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith*

#### **Focal Text**

Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13

#### **Background**

Hebrews 3:1—4:13

#### **Main Idea**

We must live in obedient faith to God to enter fully into the joyous salvation God provides.

#### **Question to Explore**

Is living faithfully and obediently to God optional for salvation?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the meaning of the role of living faithfully and obediently in the Christian life.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Manford George Gutzke wrote in his commentary Plain Talk on Hebrews “Holding fast unto the end is the whole substance of this book. Do not quit.”

God has a place for His people. It is a place of blessing which is called “rest”. In order for man to get to this rest He must be obedient to God’s commands. Over and over again one can see the patience of God as He offers again and again a place of rest. It will be offered as long as a person lives a mortal life.

Once one accepts Christ’s invitation to participate in His rest it is imperative that one continue on.

### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #11) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

**1. HEED GOD’S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Place All Your Attention on Jesus. Hebrews 3:1-6.**

***1 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.***

“Therefore” is an important word. It is used often in Scripture. It usually connects what was written before to what followed. Here the first two chapters connect with what was about to be written.

The author addresses his readers for the first time and calls them “holy brothers and sisters”. Holy is a word used many times in Scripture that describes the character of God. Believers have a new character. They are now holy or separated even as He is. They share a “**heavenly calling**” given by God which also defines them. In the Greek it reads they are “of the calling heavenly.” They not only responded, but because they responded they become a part of the calling.

The challenge to the readers is to “**fix your thoughts on Jesus**”. , The idea is that they were to perceive clearly in their mind who Jesus is. They were to concentrate upon Him in order to understand what He had done for them. It is important to use one’s brain as well as one’s heart in understanding and responding to Christ.

The author also claims to share in the life of the readers. He uses the pronoun “we”. They share a confession as to who Jesus was. He was “**our apostle and high priest.**” Here he will spend time describing Jesus’ apostleship and later His role as high priest.

This verse contains the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called an apostle. An apostle, by definition, is one who is sent. He is like an ambassador. Jesus was sent from heaven to do the will of His Father.

An interesting side to this verse is found in Latin. The Latin for priest is *pontifex* which means ‘bridge builder’. Jesus came to bridge the great chasm made by sin so that man would have access to God the Father.

***2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. 3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. 5 ”Moses was faithful as***



***a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. 6 But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.***

Both Jesus and Moses were faithful to the calling placed on them. Each had a specific purpose which they faithfully fulfilled. Because the author was writing to Jewish Christians who still had a deep devotion to Moses and his legacy, he had to show that Jesus was even greater. This is a key theme of the letter.

Moses was of the past. Jesus was of the future. His purpose was forward looking ***"bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future"***. In the past God has spoken through prophets like Moses, now His Word would come in and through His Son.

Moses served the house, the people, of God. Moses faithfully carried out what He was called to do. He was a "faithful servant". Servant in this case means a person who holds a position of high honor and trust. He was not a bond slave which is one of the ways Paul described himself before God. Paul describes the role of the servant or steward in 1 Corinthians 4: 1-2 ***"So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."***

Jesus has come and His purpose is greater than Moses. He is ***the Son over God's house***. He is the creator and redeemer of the house, the people of God.

The universal house of God is made up of all believers. One defining trait of a believer is to ***hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory***. This coincides with the theme of Hebrews that of keeping on keeping on.

Repeating what was in these verses, the readers were challenged to fix their attention on Jesus because:

***"He was faithful to the one who appointed him."***

He ***"has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses."***

He ***"is faithful as the Son over God's house."***

Notice carefully two words "faithful" and "worthy". Because He is faithful one can count on Him. He can be trusted. Because He is worthy, it behooves believers to worship Him and Him alone. He is the One to whom we confess our sins. He is our Confessor.

## **2. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Do Not Turn Away. Hebrews 3:12-19.**

**12. See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.**

Once again the author addresses the readers as “brothers and sisters” calling them to be very observant. Look around and see: take into count where you are. A Christian should always be aware of the wiles of Satan who would cause them to doubt and deny. The word for sin used here means to miss the mark. Turning away from God would be missing the mark God has for you in life.

Turning away does not mean become lost again. It means to turn from the walk that was once enjoyed with God. Such actions begin within the heart. **“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:”** (Proverbs 14:14, King James Version).

**13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.**

The word for encourage means one who comes alongside and walks with you. One of the greatest ministries one can have is that of an encourager. The author admonishes encouragement daily. This corresponds with his writing about the significance and importance of today. Letting issues slide only compounds a problem. A person who backslides has a history of issues that lead up to it. A faithful friend and encourager could be the difference between a healthy Christian and an unhealthy one. If sin is allowed to remain it makes the heart hard.

**14 We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.**

Hebrews 3:6, 3:12, and 3:14 have the same basic appeal. Stay the course. Be obedient to the call of God upon your life. Do not provoke God. Once again the believer’s mark is said to be seen in faithful commitment to remain until the end. This is the task of a believer. God cannot hold one if that one does not wish to be held. He includes himself when he says it is important to hold firm.

**15 As has just been said:**

**“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.”**

**16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.**

The background for these verses is found in Psalm 95, Exodus 17:1-7, and Numbers 20:1-13. The Spirit of God speaks to your life, do not rebel. Israel rebelled at Kadesh Barnea and forfeited their chance to enter the Promised Land. Moses and the children of Israel were disobedient. Therefore, they forfeited their right to enter the Promised Land, the place of rest. God does not take disobedience and unbelief lightly.

God offers mankind His love and salvation. Mankind, in order to have that offer fulfilled in their lives, must trust Him and obey Him. That offer is limited to man's lifetime on earth.

"Today" is the time to make a decision for Christ. Yesterday is gone and tomorrow has not come. One cannot go back and decide, neither can one count on tomorrow for a time to decide. With God it is to be "Today". He identified Himself to Moses as "I am", not I was, nor I will be. God is always in the present. A time line is for man's benefit.

Decide for Christ today.

### **3. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. There Is a Sabbath-Rest for the People of God (Hebrews 4:1)**

***Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.***

Remember that "therefore" is a connecting word. There was a generation of Israelites who did not enter the Promised Land. But, that did not invalidate God's plan. The offer of rest or salvation still stands. Be careful and do not follow the example of those who disobeyed God.

William Barclay (The Letter to the Hebrews, page 30) wrote that the writer of Hebrews was using the word "rest" in three ways. One, it is the peace of God. Two, it is the Promised Land. And, three it is the rest of God after the sixth day.

God created heaven and earth in six days. On the seventh He rested. He did not rest because He was tired. He rested to set an example for mankind. When God rested on the seventh day there is no reference to it ending. Six days for labor and then one day of rest. The day of rest is to be taken by faith. Man was to trust God to take care of his needs on the Sabbath. He was to give one day over to worship.

Ray Stedman in his sermon "Jesus Is Our Sabbath Rest" (Late Sleeper Website, September 28, 2012) gives some definitions to the idea of God's rest which was begun in Eden. It is one of the oldest institutions in the world. It was included in the Ten Commandments. Listed below are truths he found concerning the Sabbath.

- It never ends.
- It is finished.
- It is complete. It is perfect needing nothing else.

The heart of the meaning of Sabbath is rest. Therefore, the true Sabbath is not the keeping of a special day but the ending of a specific effort.

There was a specific effort from which He rested. He rested from finishing creating. His creative activity is finished.

Saturday is not the real Sabbath. It is a picture of the real Sabbath. It was a part of the shadows in the Old Testament that pictured for man the rest God has awaiting the obedient.

The weekly shadow ended at the cross.

Christians worship on the first day of the week and not the Jewish Sabbath. Because Jesus has become the rest of God, the true Sabbath rest is available today. This is seen in Hebrews 4:9-10 ***There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.***

Ray Stedman also wrote "That is what the true Sabbath is, to cease from your own labors, your own efforts, your own activity; to cease from your own works". You cease to trust in your own efforts and trust in the indwelling Spirit of the Lord. In order to do that one must have faith in Christ. The Sabbath represents God's willingness and desire to bless those who are obedient and by faith trust Him to provide.

#### **4. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Trade Disobedience for Obedience (Hebrews 4:6-11).**

***6 Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, 7 God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."***

God set aside a time for everyone to be saved. Therefore, there is still room in the place called rest. All have not come to Christ. Heaven is not full. For those who would be obedient there is still time. It is "Today". Just as the Sabbath at the end of the six days of creation has not ended so the opportunity for obtaining it does not end until life ends. The Sabbath rest is God's blessing for obedience.

***8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.***

Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. He divided the land according to God's instructions. Each tribe helping each other was to subdue the inhabitants and claim the land. By the time Joshua died the task was not complete. In fact, it never was completed. Many assimilated the inhabitants of Canaan into their tribes through intermarriage which had been forbidden by God.

The writer calls for his readers not to harden their hearts, as the Israelites did in the Wilderness. Their disobedience forfeited their right to enter Canaan which God had given to those who would be obedient. Even though the Israelites disobeyed God they still remained His chosen people. Wandering for forty years in the wilderness was judgment for their disobedience.

***“For the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.”*** (Matthew 12:8, King James Version) Jesus is God. He blesses on the Sabbath as on any other day.

## **5. HEED GOD’S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Nothing is Hidden. (Hebrews 4:12-13).**

***12 For the word of God is alive and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***

God is not dead. His word is alive. By being obedient to His word one is made alive too. His word is what makes effective His warnings to the disobedient and His promises to the believer.

God looks on the inner man. He sees one’s motives. It is from the heart that actions proceed. Inside man is where God makes a change. To fully know one’s heart one must know God.

Verse 13 speaks of the omniscient God who sees all things. A sinner can hide his face, but God still sees him. No one can hide from the all searching eyes of God. According to the Tyndale New Testament commentary on Hebrews “to whom we must give account” means “that we should believe His Word, obey His voice and seek His power in our lives, so that when we stand before the Judge we may not be ashamed, but be judged worthy, through a heart of faith, to enter His rest”. We follow God with our heart.

Our prayer should be as David’s, ***“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try, me, and know my thoughts:”*** (Psalm 139:23, King James Version).

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

Lead the group to make a decision to discontinue going life alone. Show them how to put their trust and obedience in Christ to provide blessings for them.

## **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the **Focal Text** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the **Main Idea** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the **Questions to be Explored** by the group.

#### **Focal Text**

Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13

#### **Background**

Hebrews 3:1—4:13

#### **Main Idea**

We must live in obedient faith to God to be fully able to enter into the joyous salvation God provides.

#### **Question to Explore**

Is living faithfully and obediently to God optional for salvation?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the meaning of the role of living faithfully and obediently in the Christian life.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Ask: What areas of your life require obedience? Why is that so?

#### **Guide the Study:**

**Have your headings written on a white board or large piece of paper. You may also choose to have these copied on individual pieces of paper with space for note taking. (See example at the end of the Worship Time). This is a difficult passage and teaching helps are important.**



1. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH . Place All Your Attention on Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1-6).
2. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Do Not Turn Away. (Hebrews 3:12-4:1).
3. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. There Is a Sabbath-Rest for the People of God. (Hebrews 4:1).
4. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Trade Disobedience for Obedience. (Hebrews 4:6-13).
5. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Nothing is Hidden. (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Begin the session by telling the group: Most people have an interest in spiritual things. This lesson will help the group focus on what it means to live the Christian life day by day. It contains encouragement for those who for whatever reason are tempted to fall away.

1. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH . Place All Your Attention on Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1-6).

***1 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.***

Ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 3:1. This acknowledgement or confession of Jesus is seen in Philippians 2:11; Romans 10:9 and Matthew 16:16. Have three participants read these verses.

Explain the importance of “therefore”. It is an important word to note. Whenever you see it used it reminds the reader that what is about to come is connected to what already has been written. In this case it connects the first two chapters with chapter three.

Continue with this is the first time in the epistle the author addresses his readers. He calls them “holy brothers and sisters”. Holy is a word used many times in Scripture. It describes the essence of God and the character of a new believer. Believers become separated and different even as Christ is. To be holy is to be set apart for service.

Discuss how Christians as “holy people” can be a negative perception for some people. How can we avoid that?

Ask: What do all believers share? They share a heavenly calling. Persistence and hope characterize members of God's family.



Remind them A heavenly calling defines them. When a believer responds to that calling it makes him/her a part of the calling.

Ask: What important challenge is given to the readers? They are to fix their thoughts on Jesus.

Explain that this means they are to clearly perceive who Jesus is. In order to have a strong faith one must understand what Jesus did for them. The brain and the heart are both used. Paul wrote in Romans 12:1-2, ***Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God---this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*** This sounds like the writer of Hebrews was teaching the believers of that day and ours how to live.

Pause here for any comments or questions.

Call for an answer to What is an apostle? If no one knows then explain that an apostle by definition is one who is sent. It is like an ambassador. Jesus was sent from heaven to do the will of His Father. As an interesting note, this is the only time in the New Testament where Jesus is called an apostle.

Now ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 3:2-6.

***2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. 3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. 5 "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. 6 But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.***

Basing their answer on these verses, ask for someone to describe Moses. He was a faithful servant of God. He was held in high esteem by the Jews. He oversaw God's house that is, he oversaw the people of God.

Explain to the group servant does not mean a slave, but it means one who has a position of high honor and trust. Have someone read 1 Corinthians 4: 1-2.

Let someone in the group define faith. The definition should include trust.,

Say the purpose of these verses is to make sure the readers understand that Jesus is better or superior to Moses. Moses is not to be the object of one's worship. Because Jesus was "faithful" and "worthy" believers should worship Him.

Remind the group of the challenge in verse 1, **“fix your thoughts on Jesus”**.

## **2. HEED GOD’S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Do Not Turn Away. (Hebrews 3:12-4:1).**

***12. See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.***

Ask for a volunteer to read verse 12 of chapter 3.

Question: How would you or someone else describe you? Take time for several to respond.

Now explain that the writer of Hebrews is asking his readers to take a good look at their relationship ***with the living God.***

Ask: does turning away mean loss of salvation?

State that this action is on the part of a believer. God is not turning away. Once a person comes to Christ salvation is permanent. Just as repentance is turning to God, sin can cause a turning away. God always remains stable. Instability is with man. Such actions begin with the heart. ***“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.”*** (Proverbs 14:14, King James Version).

Pause for any questions.

Encourage a member of the group to read Hebrews 3:13 aloud.

***13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.***

Remind the group encouragement is a major theme of the Book of Hebrews. The word for encourage means one who comes alongside and walks with you. In John 14:12-14 the word is translated Counselor or Comforter. It is the Holy Spirit.

Let the group respond to this question Have you ever had someone who helped keep you on the right path?

Ask: according to this verse, when is the right time to get right with God? Today.

Remind them yesterday is gone and tomorrow has not come. Now is the time to make a decision for Christ.

State the ministry of encouragement is important for the unity of the church. Let no one be left behind.

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 3:14.

***14 We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.***

Question: Would you agree that the author is saying “stay the course”, do not give up?

Say: He has included himself in the need to take hold of that original conviction and stay with it until the end.

Once again ask for a volunteer to read verses 15-19 aloud.

***15 As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.”***

***16 Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.***

Tell them the Holy Spirit speaks to the heart of a believer.

Emphasize the story. Israel had to wander in the Wilderness for forty years because they did not believe God would enable them to conquer the land He had promised them. They feared the inhabitants of Canaan. Their disbelief was sin and that kept them wandering in the wilderness until the generation of disbelievers had perished. God does not take disobedience and unbelief lightly.

Remind the group that disbelief is serious to God.

**3. HEED GOD’S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. There Is a Sabbath-Rest for the People of God. (Hebrews 4:1).**

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 4:1.

***Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.***

Ask for a response to this question. What still stands? What opportunity is still available to God’s people? Rest

Say the key word in this passage is “rest”. There is a rest for the people of God.

Explain: The biblical scholar William Barclay wrote in his commentary on Hebrews that the writer of Hebrews used the word “rest” in three ways. One, it is the peace of God. Two, it is the Promised Land. And, three it is the rest of God after the sixth day of creation.

Say: Someone tell me why some of the children of Israel did not enter the Promised Land?  
Lack of faith, and a disobedient heart.

Question. Did the lack of obedient faith on the part of Israel cause God to withdraw “rest” for His people? No, of course not.

Let the group know the doctrine of Sabbath rest began with God in the Garden of Eden. He created six days and rested on the seventh. The day was not for Him to rest but was made as an example for His children to rest.

Clarify the doctrine using the information from Ray Stedman’s sermon. Give to them the truths he found concerning the Sabbath.

- 1.The Sabbath rest never ends. That is because it is complete - needing nothing else.
- 2.The Sabbath’s true meaning is not in keeping a special day but the ending of a specific effort. God rested from creating.
- 3.Saturday is not the real Sabbath. It is a picture of the real Sabbath. It is part of the Old Testament shadows for the rest God has for the obedient. It ended at the cross.

Continue with the true Sabbath is a cessation of work. It is a time to trust God and worship God. It represents God’s willingness and desire to bless those who are obedient to His command (Exodus 20:8).

Discuss the question Do you believe it is possible to give one day a week to God and trust Him to provide all you need? Why or why not?

#### **4. HEED GOD’S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Trade Disobedience for Obedience. (Hebrews 4:6-13).**

***6 Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, 7 God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.***

Read Hebrews 4:6-7 to the group and say This last section is very important. Once again we see “therefore” used. After laying out the reasons for not backsliding the writer calls for repentance. He calls for a change of mind. Remember what was written in Hebrews 3:1, “***fix your thoughts on Jesus*”.**

Ask: Is there still time for the lost to be saved? Why? God has set aside time for some?

Ask: When is the time set aside for some to come to Christ? Today, right now!

Tell the group the Sabbath has not ended. It is God's blessing for obedience.

Tell them to look carefully at Hebrews 4:8-11. Did the children of Israel find rest? Why? Disobedience.

***8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.***

Comment. It is very important to understand that the disobedience of Israel resulted in wandering for forty years. It did not result in their being cast away as God's chosen people. The wandering was a judgment placed upon them.

**5. HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH. Nothing is Hidden. (Hebrews 4:12-13).**

***12 For the word of God is alive and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***

Ask What do you think "***For the word of God is alive and active***" means?

Ask another What do you think the writer meant when he wrote "***it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit . . . it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart?***"

Give this summary after the volunteers have spoken. The word of God reveals the heart. One cannot hide sin from Him. One cannot feign obedience and then sin expecting to get by with it. Nothing is left covered. All is in plain sight before God. Each one will give account of the deeds of this life.

## Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Tell the group: There is always the temptation to lose the fervor of our original commitment to Christ. By fixing one's thoughts upon Jesus and remembering what Israel had done is a way to fortify oneself against it.

Say: As we wrap up this lesson can you think of other ways in which you can strengthen your faith against sin and disobedience? Can we share a few of these together?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### *Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith*

Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Begin the application by asking for a volunteer to read Exodus 20:1-17.

Ask: Is there anyone who can tell me what those verses are called? If no one answers tell them they are the Ten Commandments which God gave to the children of Israel. They were the basic laws that were to govern their lives.

Tell the group to look closely at verse 12.

Now ask what does it mean to honor your father and your mother? Write their answers on a sheet of paper or on a board.

After a short discussion of the answers ask where does obedience fit in this commandment? Are we to obey our parents?

Say, God expects us to obey all of His commandments.

Read John 14:15 to the group. Jesus said if a person loves Him they will keep His commandments. It is the same principle found in Exodus 20:12. If you honor your parents then you will obey them.

Ask: What can you do that would honor your parents? Ask each one to write down on a piece of paper what they would do today to honor their parents.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Heed God's Call to Obedient Faith*****Hebrews 3:1-6, 12—4:1, 6-13****Beginning the Service:**

Begin this time with prayer. Ask for understanding and courage to heed God's call to obedient faith.

Sing songs of worship and praise.

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

**Find Us Faithful**, *The Worship Hymnal* #598; CCLI #18259

**Offering:**

Specify for what the offering will be used.

Ask God to bless and multiplying the offering

**Praying for the World:**

Use this time to pray for individual needs among the congregation and for known needs around the world. Prayer links congregations together with one another. Mention any current crises that are in your news this week.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**



## **Christ's Abiding Love** **John 15:9-17**

**9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit---fruit that will last---and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.**

### **Introduction**

The passage is found in John's account of the Passion Week. Jesus knows that the cross is imminent. He is giving His disciples a "crash course" in how to survive in a hostile world. He had already made them a promise to return and get them (John 14:1-6). He provided for His Presence among them with the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-26). In the passage for this message Jesus teaches how to appropriate the blessings already defined.

Beginning with John 15:1 we find some important words of encouragement and the corresponding responsibilities of the disciples. They must abide with Jesus. They must love each other.

### **1. Now remain in my love.**

Remain is also translated abide in some versions. In the preceding verses the disciples were painted as branches on a vine. The branches were only alive and bore fruit when they remained attached to the vine.

The secret of Jesus' life was His constant contact with His Father. Love flows outward from the Father. It flows through the Son and on to the disciples. The love is to be appropriated by the disciples and they are to remain attached to it. Jesus said, "With the same love I received of the Father I give to you. Remain in it."

One cannot truly love another as Christ loved unless there is an abiding in Christ's love. To love as Christ loved is impossible for an unbeliever.

### **2. Keep my commandments.**

Notice the word “if” in verse 10. It is important. It teaches that the disciple has a free will to choose or not to choose to remain in Christ’s love.

Christ give a promise to those who respond positively. Keep Christ’s commandments and you will abide or remain in His love. The example is the relationship Christ has with His Father.

### **3. Be filled with My joy.**

The reason for all this teaching is so the disciples lives will be filled with joy. The overflowing joy in Christ becomes the overflowing joy in the disciple. That joy is going to remain. It is going to be a permanent part of the believer’s life and witness. It is totally provided by God. The disciples could add nothing to it.

The joy Christ gives is like no other. It is a quality that will enable to disciples to stand against the hatred of the world in the coming days.

### **4. Christ’s example of love.**

Jesus knows the cross is in His future. He is alluding to the cross when He states ***My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*** The love Christ commands His disciples to have is a self-sacrificing love. It is the kind that makes a person willing to lay down his life for the cause of Christ. Love like that is not an option for a disciple. It is commanded.

### **5. The object of Christ’s love.**

***14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.***

The objects of Christ’s love were those who did what He commanded. They are His friends. A characteristic of a friend of Christ is that they receive all Christ’s knowledge He received from His Father. Jesus withholds nothing from His friends.

### **6. Christ chooses to love.**

Jesus is sovereign. It is He that seeks out the lost. He chose the twelve to invest in them the ministry of seeking and saving the lost. Man has a choice as to how he will respond.

Just as in the teaching on the vine and branch on fruit bearing so it is taught here. The disciples were to bear “much fruit”. Everything taught here was to prepare them to give away their faith. They were to pass all of this along. Fruit would be changed lives as well as the fruit of the Spirit that draws others to God.

The fruit will be permanent. It will last.

## **Conclusion**

The end repeats the beginning. ***Love one another.*** He had already taught the disciples that the love they had for one another would be a mark of their discipleship (John 13:35).

One cannot love as Christ loved if Christ is not residing within. Therefore, the question must be asked of everyone, “Do you know Jesus as your Saviour and Lord?” If not, why not receive Him into your life today?

These verses are vital to the believers as they face a hostile world. Matthew 28:19-20 are words that challenge the believer to share with others. Always remember that Christ resides within you and He is greater than anyone.

Understand this. Loving one another is not an option if one wants Christ's abiding in you.

## **Call to Commitment:**

**Leader:** Call for a response from unbelievers to give their lives to Christ. Call for a response from believers to commit themselves to following the commandment of Christ to love one another.

## **Concluding the Service:**

Pray for the group to become one in Spirit and in love.

Copy for use by participants during the Bible Study Time or print out to list on a whiteboard.

## **HEED GOD'S CALL TO OBEDIENT FAITH:**

**Place All Your Attention on Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1-6).**

**Do Not Turn Away. (Hebrews 3:12-4:1).**

**There Is a Sabbath-Rest for the People of God. (Hebrews 4:1).**

**Trade Disobedience for Obedience. (Hebrews 4:6-13).**

**Nothing is Hidden. (Hebrews 4:12-13).**