

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking
Hebrews 12:25—13:8, 20-21

Copy this sheet 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:

Be early and have the facility set up for the meeting.

Bible Study Leader:

Have blank sheets of paper and pencils for the youth.

Worship Time Leader:

Copy the verses which are the focus of the worship time and give them to three different readers who will conclude the worship time. The verses are given at the end of the Worship Time resources (final page of this session).

Music Sources:

See **A Mighty Fortress** by Christy Nockels on YouTube

Thy Word, *The Worship Hymnal* #342; CCLI #14301

Speak, O Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #432; CCLI #4615235

Speak to My Heart, *The Worship Hymnal* #428; CCLI #82773

Spirit Song, *The Worship Hymnal* #329; CCLI #37824

Spirit of the Living God, *The Worship Hymnal* #330; CCLI #23488

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking

Focal Text

Hebrews 12:25—13:8, 20-21

Background

Hebrews 12:18—13:25

Main Idea

We must live our personal and public lives in accord with God's teachings.

Question to Explore

In a world of many words, to whom are you listening?

Teaching Aim

To help the church decide how they will respond to God's teachings.

Gathering together:

Choose from the following:

Thy Word, *The Worship Hymnal* #342; CCLI #14301

Speak, O Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #432; CCLI #4615235

Speak to My Heart, *The Worship Hymnal* #428; CCLI #82773

First thoughts:

These Had Been With Jesus

Acts 4:13 (NIV)

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

How do you turn two ordinary fishermen into sold-out witnesses for Jesus? Prior to this time both had been fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. They never attended any rabbinical school for religious training. All their training had been in the fishing industry.

Then one day an itinerant preacher named Jesus came along and called them to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men. For three years they walked with Jesus. They heard Him speak and saw Him work miracles. He prepared them to be able to do the same.

The scene is set in Acts 3: 1-10 with the healing of the lame man. They put into practice what they had learned from Jesus. As with the miracles displayed by Jesus, an opportunity presented itself for Peter and John to declare the Gospel. People came running to see the man who was healed and wanted to know how it could be. Peter preached the gospel to them and five thousand were saved.

Two ordinary men dared to make a difference because they had spent time with Jesus. What an astounding difference Jesus had made in the lives of Peter and John. These men had not been to the best of schools of their day. They were not polished speakers. They just took Jesus, whom they had met, and presented Him to the world in word and deed.

As a result of the witnessing of Peter and John the spiritual leaders arrested them and confined them. The next day they brought Peter before them and asked “by what power, or by what name, have ye done this”? Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit preached unto them Jesus. An ordinary man filled with God’s power was up to the task.

After a miracle and confrontation the greatest compliment the religious leaders could make about Peter and John was that they “had been with Jesus”. They did not mean it as a compliment, but it was. It was not that they just knew about Him, or had heard about Him, but that they had been in His presence. It was in His presence that they learned to be “fishers of men”. From their schooling at the feet of Jesus they learned all they needed to know to courageously spread the Gospel to the middle east and beyond.

If you are to be a courageous witness then you must spend time in the presence of Jesus. Where will you find His presence today? You find it in the Scriptures, in prayer, and in worship.

Christians today have the same opportunities to step up and proclaim the Gospel. Most do not respond to the opportunities because they have not been in the presence of Jesus nearly enough.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Pray for opportunities to speak a word for Jesus.

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

Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking

Focal Text

Hebrews 12:25—13:8, 20-21

Background

Hebrews 12:18—13:25

Main Idea

We must live our personal and public lives in accord with God's teachings.

Question to Explore

In a world of many words, to whom are you listening?

Teaching Aim

To help the church decide how they will respond to God's teachings.

Introduction to your personal study:

It has been said: “If we are going to talk the talk then we better walk the walk”. What one preaches must be matched by one’s life. Remember, a Christian’s life is observed by others. The test of one’s Christianity is not inside the church building. It is out among others being a witness on a daily basis. Make sure your group gets this message. Make sure, also, that they understand that a Christian’s loyalty is to Christ. He said: “Come follow me”.

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:

LISTEN WHEN GOD SPEAKS (Chapter 12:25-28).

²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will not only shake the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷ The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken---that is, created things---so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

It would be good to go back and read Hebrews 1:1ff. The author reminds his readers at the beginning of this book and at the end of this book that God speaks to His followers. It is important to listen when God speaks. He spoke in the past, He is speaking in the present and will speak in the future. When the Hebrews were at Mt. Sinai they saw the mountain shake (Exodus 19:18). It was a fearsome sight (Deuteronomy 4:33). Once more there will be a shaking of the earth. Everything that is not a part of the Kingdom of God will be destroyed.

GOD IS SPEAKING. This is a plea to those wavering to listen to Him. It is a plea from a third party advocate. It is a plea for people to focus again. The greatest speaker is God. ***"In the past God spoke."*** (Hebrews 1:1) and He continues to speak.

There must have been those who did not listen for the author of Hebrews to mention it. Perhaps they had attended worship services in body only. They had been present physically, but were not listening. As such, they did not develop spiritually and were susceptible to failing in their commitment.

Moses warned Israel but they did not listen. That was in the past. Now God speaks from heaven. If they will not listen, then judgement follows. No one who denies God past or present will escape His wrath.

The background for verse 27 is also found in the Exodus experience (Exodus 19). God told the people not to come too close to Mt. Sinai lest they be destroyed. The mountain shook and there was fire and smoke. Both heaven and earth will be shaken.

The picture is one of sifting or panning or winnowing. A cook sifts out flour to get the best. A prospector pans or sifts out sand and clay looking for gold. An earthquake shakes the ground and only the strong structures remain. God will separate the wheat from the chaff (See Matthew 13:24-27, 31). He is going to sift out the unbelievers to indicate those who are true. Those who remain true and obey God will remain. They are unshakeable. That which is spiritual will come through.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our “God is a consuming fire.”

(See 2 Peter 3:10). This is the application for the preceding verses. Something good comes from the “shaking”. There is coming a time when all the things that consume our lives and desires, worthless works, will be burned up. Be thankful for what you will have left. Recognize the awesomeness of God and worship Him and Him alone.

LISTEN TO GOD AND LIVE ACCORDINGLY (Chapter 13:1-6).

The concluding exhortation is to live by faith. The following verses are evidences of faith as it is worked out in the life of a believer.

1 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. 3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

The first exhortation is to keep the church family intact. Don't stop loving one another as brothers and sisters. The word translated love is brotherly love (*Philadelphia*). A fellowship ceases to be if there is no love one for another.

The second exhortation is to be hospitable to strangers. In the day this was written, inns were few and far between. It was common practice to take in strangers into one's home to spend the night. The illustration is from Genesis 18:1-5 where Abraham welcomed angels who brought news that Sarah would have a child within the year.

The third exhortation is to be compassionate. The direction for this compassion, which is an action word, is for them not to forget those in prison. Prisoners were not well treated. Families had to help take care of them. They did this by providing food and other necessities. It could be that the church was helping those imprisoned for their faith. To remember meant “do not forget”. Believers were to sympathize by figuratively walking in their shoes.

4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Fourth, we see the exhortation to be true to one's spouse. There is to be fidelity between husband and wife. God judges those who do not abide by this.

The writer calls for contentment. What a difference it would make if we could learn to be content. A daily remembering of one's blessings helps to keep one content. Do not love money. Keep one's eyes on the Lord. Knowing that He will always be present is the basis for contentment.

All of these exhortations are given so that the church will have a positive testimony before the world.

⁶ So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"¹

Last, but not least, be confident. God is your helper. What more can one want?

Listen to God Through Your Leaders (v. 7).

⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and forever.

Look back and remember those who taught the word of God to you. They were examples of faith to you. The thought here is that those who were instrumental in the lives of the readers when they came to Christ are still strong in their faith. Imitate them.

Jesus has not changed. He is the same Jesus in whom they had put their faith. He can be trusted to fulfill His promise today and in the future.

Benediction and Final Greetings (vv. 20-21).

²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A good teacher ends the lesson with a wrap up of the important material. Here is a summary of the book. It is in the form of a prayer for the readers. The writer speaks of who God is, the eternal covenant brought by Christ, the "great Shepherd", and what God is doing in their lives and why He is doing it. It is not them working to obtain salvation, it is the Presence of God working in them. He will "***equip you with everything good for doing his will***". What an amazing promise!

There is no reason for them to consider going back to Judaism when that covenant is no longer in force. God is moving forward. Christ is the one who should now be glorified.

¹ Psalm 118:6.

They are encouraged to move beyond the rituals and beauty of temple worship and look forward to a future with Christ.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This beautiful lesson should encourage those who study it to faithful Christian living. Your goal as leader of the study is to enthusiastically encourage your group to consider God's presence in the past history of Israel and the early Christians, His presence in our daily lives, and His promise for the future.

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)

Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking

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 12:25—13:8, 20-21

Background

Hebrews 12:18—13:25

Main Idea

We must live our personal and public lives in accord with God's teachings.

Question to Explore

In a world of many words, to whom are you listening?

Teaching Aim

To help the church decide how they will respond to God's teachings.

Connect with Life:

Have a large sheet of paper prepared beforehand. Ask each person in the class to name individuals they listen to for advice and counsel. Write them on the paper.

Ask: Who above all else should we be listening to? Why?

Guide the Study:

Be sure you have their attention and pose these questions:

How important is it that you pay attention today?

Does God have your attention right now?

Call for a volunteer to read Hebrews 1:1-4 and another person to read Hebrews 12:25-26.

Tell them: The author of the letter reminds the readers both in the beginning of the letter and here that God speaks to those who listen and follow Him.

Question: When, in history, has God spoken to His people? (Some answers should include Moses and the Exodus, the time of the prophets.)

Call upon one to answer: Is God still speaking today?

Ask: What experience had God's people had with Him shaking the ground? (Mt. Sinai.)

Have someone read Exodus 19:18 and another person read Deuteronomy 4:33.

Say: The symbolism in the shaking of the ground is letting the readers know that God is going to pass judgment and only that which is grounded in Him will remain.

Discuss with the group some of the illustrations that might help them understand the illustration of shaking. (Sifting, panning, winnowing)

Ask: Is your faith in God unshakable?

Tell the group: All this section exhorts a person to be sure their faith is evident in their lives.

Call upon a person to read Hebrews 13:1-6.

Tell the group to listen for the exhortations in the passage from Hebrews.

List the exhortations on a sheet of paper.

- Keep the church family intact.
- Be hospitable to strangers.
- Be compassionate.
- Be faithful to one's spouse.
- Be content.
- Be confident.

Emphasize: An intact church family is a powerful witness to the world.

Explain: There were no motels or hotels in those days. Inns were few and far between and usually consisted of empty rooms. A person brought what they needed to rest up for the next day. It was common practice to house traveling strangers in one's home. In a way it provided a window on the world. Travelers had interesting stories to tell.

Have someone read Genesis 18:1-10.

Continue: Compassion is an action word. A need is seen. A need is met. Compassion is a characteristic of Christ.

Add this new thought: Faithfulness to one's spouse is a biblical principle both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The family is what society and government are grounded upon.

Question: What causes the most discontent in a person's life? (It is often a lack of enough money.)

Ask: What does the writer say to keep one's life free from? (The love of money.)

Have someone read 1 Timothy 6:10.

Discuss why the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. We keep ourselves from loving money by learning to be content with the many blessings we have.

Tell them the last exhortation is to be confident. What kind of confidence is important here? (It is confidence that God is our helper and we will therefore lack for nothing.)

Ask: Are these exhortations still valid today?

Why are they possible for a believer? ***The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?***

Ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 13:7.

Have the group tell who has meant the most in their spiritual lives?

Tell them: It is good to remember those who have been instrumental in their spiritual walk. Remember their lives and imitate them.

Explain: Now we come to the wrap up of the letter. A good teacher ends the lesson with a wrap up or summary of the important material. The author uses the form of a prayer.

Ask: What are the major points in this benediction?

The answers should include:

Who God is.

The eternal covenant brought by Christ.

The great Shepherd of the sheep.

What God is doing in their lives and why He is doing it.

Conclude with this thought on the problem raised in the passage: The presence of God is working in those Christians. So, why should they want to leave that for the rituals of Judaism?

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.

For the application, question the group with this: Why should anyone want less than Christ?

Close by asking a person who is comfortable praying aloud to pray that each one in the church would resist any temptation to want less than Christ's complete Lordship over their lives.

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.

Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking

Hebrews 12:25—13:8, 20-21

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.

Application on next page

Pass out pencils and paper to each one present.

Say: This will be a lesson in listening and following directions.

Direct them to write out directions for making a peanut butter sandwich. Make sure each step is labeled and is specific. Start them by saying that they should write out a list of the ingredients.

ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR EACH ONE TO COMPLETE THE TASK.

TAKE UP THE PAPERS AND REDISTRIBUTE THEM SO NO ONE GETS HIS/HER OWN.

Ask: Would a couple of you volunteer to try to make a sandwich following the directions in your hand.

Once the exercise is completed discuss what happened.

Ask: Was it possible to make a sandwich with the directions you have? If not, why not?

Tell them the sandwiches represent one's life. The directions represent God and Satan. If it was possible to make the sandwich then the directions were good and correct. That is how God wants your life to be. If the directions were faulty and it was impossible to make a sandwich then that represents the kind of life the devil wants you to have.

Ask: Which life would you rather have? If you want a life that is complete and good then you have to listen to God. If you want a life that is incomplete then listen to Satan.

Have them bow their heads and ask if there is anyone who wants to follow the voice of God speaking to their hearts to raise their hand.

After prayer follow up with those who made a decision by referring it to an adult.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Do Not Refuse the One Who Is Speaking***
Hebrews 12:25—13:8, 20-21**Beginning the Service:**

Spirit Song, *The Worship Hymnal* #329; CCLI #37824

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

On the same day in February, 2015 news came of the burning of 68 churches in the country of Niger by Islamic militants called Boko Haran and the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya by another militant group called ISIS. In October of 2017 over 300 were killed in a terrorist attack in Somalia. Many other horrific incidents have occurred between 2015 and now. Many Muslims are as alarmed by these unprovoked attacks as are Christians and other faith groups. Pray for those who are so overcome by hatred that their only goal is to destroy. Pray for young people from many countries whose lives are so lacking in purpose that they join in the activities of terrorist groups. Pray that those who are innocent believers in Christ but who face death to remember the verse ***The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*** Pray for comfort for their families.

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.

Telling Stress Goodbye

Introduction:

A Chinese woman lost her dear son and could not find comfort. She went to wise old man and asked what to do. He said, “go to a home that has no sorrow or grief, and bring back a mustard seed, and I will restore your son”. Several days went by, and she returned and said, “**I have been so selfish in my grief...sorrow is common to every home.**”

1. Come. There is rest for the weary and burdened.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

Have you ever heard someone say, “When you get to the bottom the only way out is up”. When one has done all one can do to provide for life and happiness only to find that is not enough, then one should look up. There is one waiting to provide rest from the utter exhaustions and burdens of life. His Name is Jesus. Listen and respond to His invitation to “come unto me”. Jesus always meets people at their point of need.

Not everyone has wealth but everyone has burdens. What can you do with them. You can come to Jesus. He is always willing and waiting to get under the load with you. It is a “come as you are” invitation.

2. Come. Learn from Me.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29).

He is the way to relieve oneself of weariness and burdens. Jesus says in order to get rid of burdens, “**Learn from me**”. The heart of Jesus is gentle and humble. It is not distressed and disturbed. Following His example will result in a life patterned after Him.

In order for one to learn from Jesus one must be in sync with Him. Oxen have to pull together to get a job done. They are yoked together for that purpose. They agree. For one to learn from Jesus one must agree with Him. We need to be gentle and humble in our hearts, not proud, in order to be teachable.

3. Come. Find the way to rest.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

Being able to walk the Christian walk would be impossible without the help Jesus gives. Do not make it hard by going it alone when His ever present help is available. There is a challenge. And, it comes with His promise to make it easy and light.

Our Call to Commitment:

What is the greatest burden man labours under? What is it that makes us so weary? It is sin. Jesus can take away sin if only His invitation is heeded. Listen to the one who is speaking to your heart.

The question for consideration today is, "Who am I listening to?" There is a spiritual war going on with you. God and Satan are battling for control of your soul and life. To whom will you say yes? Make the choice, JESUS.

Concluding the Service:

Ask the church to sing:

Spirit of the Living God, *The Worship Hymnal* #330; CCLI #23488

Ask the three scripture verse readers to conclude the service by reading their assigned verses.

Copy the verses which were discussed in the worship time and have three different readers read them to conclude the worship time.

++++++(Cut here)++++++

Reader #1

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

++++++(Cut here)++++++

Reader #2

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29).

++++++(Cut here)++++++

Reader #3

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30).

++++++(Cut here)++++++