

Growth Groups Lesson

January 1-2

Hebrews 3:12-14

Big Idea: Jesus gives us hope to enter the final Sabbath rest with Him, so we should not harden our hearts towards Him. We need each other, with God's help, to encourage one another from becoming hardened by sin.

Spend some time praying with your group to invite God into your study and ask for help in seeing and applying His Word.

The goal of the letter of Hebrews is to show how Jesus is superior to and fulfills all of the Old Covenant systems, such as the Law (Torah), bringing God's people into rest, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system. Today, we will spend time in Hebrews 3, where the writer points to our final Sabbath rest with Jesus.

Read Hebrews 3:1-11

This section compares the ministry of Moses with Jesus. Moses built the tabernacle and led the people of Israel through the wilderness toward the Promised Land. However, the people rebelled and an entire generation lost their chance to enter the rest God had planned for them. Jesus' ministry leads to a much greater rest, eternal life. The price for missing out on this rest is much greater, so the warning given to us is to not be like Israel, do not harden your heart toward God.

1. What is your understanding of "eternal life?"
2. **Read John 3:36, 4:13-14, 5:20, 6:44-51, 17:3, 1 John 2:24-25.** How does your understanding compare or contrast with these verses?

The author quotes Psalm 95 to point to Israel's rebellion and hardness of heart. **Read Psalm 95**

3. What is the Psalmist's solution to not hardening our hearts? **Verses 6-7**

Read Hebrews 3:12-19

The author continues his warning for us, do not have "a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God." Sin's deceitfulness hardens our hearts.

4. Looking at your own life, what often draws you away from God?
5. How is that sin deceiving you? What is it that you believe you are accomplishing or getting?
6. What is the truth in this situation? How does that truth set you free in this situation?
7. How can others in this group come alongside you to walk toward God with you?

We have an advantage that Israel did not, a *new regenerated heart* that is responsive to God and the *indwelling Holy Spirit* that transforms us into the image of Christ. **Read Ezekiel 36:25-27**

8. How does having the Holy Spirit change our ability to love and be obedient to God and others? **Read Galatians 5:13-26**
9. How does having the Holy Spirit allow us to experience eternal life now? **Read Romans 8** and note the number of times the Holy Spirit and what He is doing

Another great advantage is that the Holy Spirit works through fellow believers to draw us toward God. We must be encouraged by one another so that “none of [us] may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”

10. What do other believers do for us that we cannot do for ourselves? **Read Ephesians 4:11-16**
11. Tell a story of how other believers encouraged you away from sin.

We need help from other believers in taking the specks out of our eyes, presuming they have already taken the log out of their own eye. That means other believers are there to comfort and care for one another in distress and suffering, to correct and teach one another in love when we sin, to provide for one another when they lack, to hear one another’s confession and give loving acceptance and guidance to be restored and pushed toward God, and more.

For us to experience the eternal life Jesus offers now and to prevent us from hardening our hearts and turning our backs on God, we need other believers.

12. Will you commit to being an encourager of the faith in your Growth Group?
13. Will you commit to being encouraged and challenged in love by others in your Group?
14. How do you plan on doing these things this week?

15. Who do you need to share this Good News with this week?