

A Guide Through Hebrews

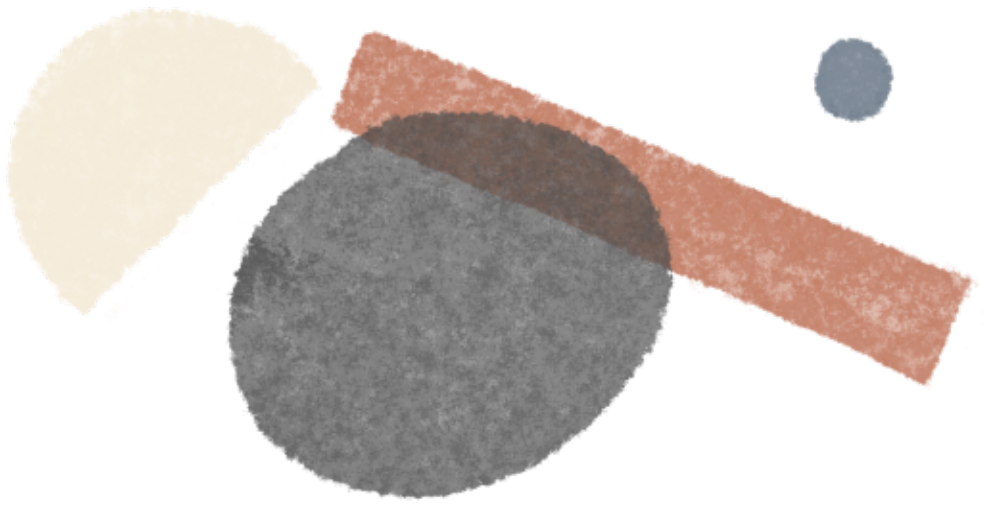
PART 1: CHAPTERS 1 - 4



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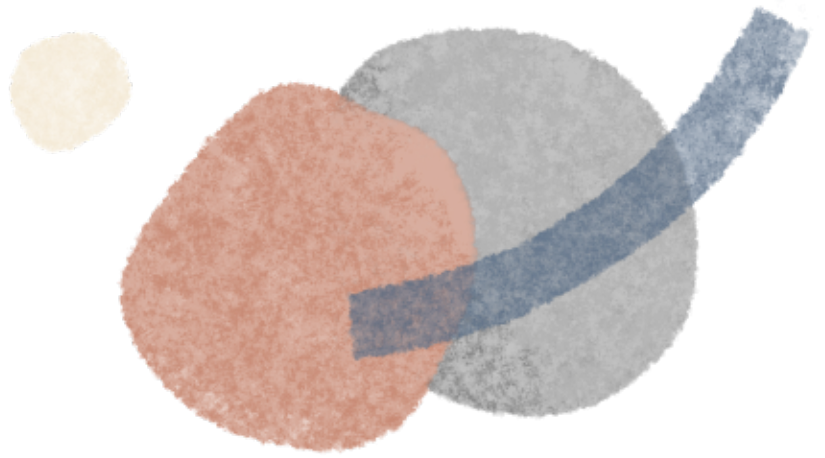
WELCOME

As a church family, we will be walking through the book of Hebrews during weekend services and in our TC groups. The book of Hebrews reminds us to remain faithful to God and His Word amid uncertainty. We cling to the hope that Jesus is better than our circumstances. While we may be tempted to search for something better than Jesus, we can remain confident that He is our ultimate and sustaining hope. As we learn to love God completely, we learn to love ourselves correctly and others compassionately, sharing this hope with them. As we study Hebrews together, our prayer is that we would grow deeper in our love for God and our encouragement of each other.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Hebrews was written primarily as a letter to Jewish Christians who lived in Rome. However, the author of Hebrews is unknown. While there are many theories as to who wrote the book, we do not know for sure. When it was written is also debated and unclear. Many theologians believe it was written between AD 50 and AD 95.

Nevertheless, during the time it was written, the Jewish Christians in Rome were experiencing persecution, leading some of them to flee. This persecution also compelled them to return to their previous vices instead of remaining steadfast in their faith. The author of Hebrews wrote this letter as an encouragement and challenge to the Christians in Rome, imploring them to endure. It is a reminder that Jesus is their utmost security despite their difficult circumstances. The same is true for us today.



Chapter 1

READING

In the opening chapter of this letter, we are immediately met with a description of the ultimacy of Jesus Christ. God has revealed Himself through the prophets in the past, but His ultimate revelation comes through Jesus Christ. If you have ever wanted to know what God is like, all you have to do is look at Jesus. Since Jesus possesses all of the same characteristics as God, He is God. He is the creative power, as well as the sustaining power of God. If you have ever felt like you were falling apart, you can trust that Jesus holds you together. From this chapter, we can gather that Jesus is a prophet, priest, and king. He proclaims God's truth, provides purification for our sin, and sits enthroned beside the majesty of God. Take time to reflect on these characteristics of Jesus. Pay close attention to the Old Testament passages that the author uses to support their claims. How does this help you shape your view of the Old Testament?

Chapter 1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UPWARD

Read **Hebrews 1:3**. What are the characteristics of God the Father, and how are they expressed through Jesus?

Make a list to remind yourself of who God is when you start to forget.

INWARD

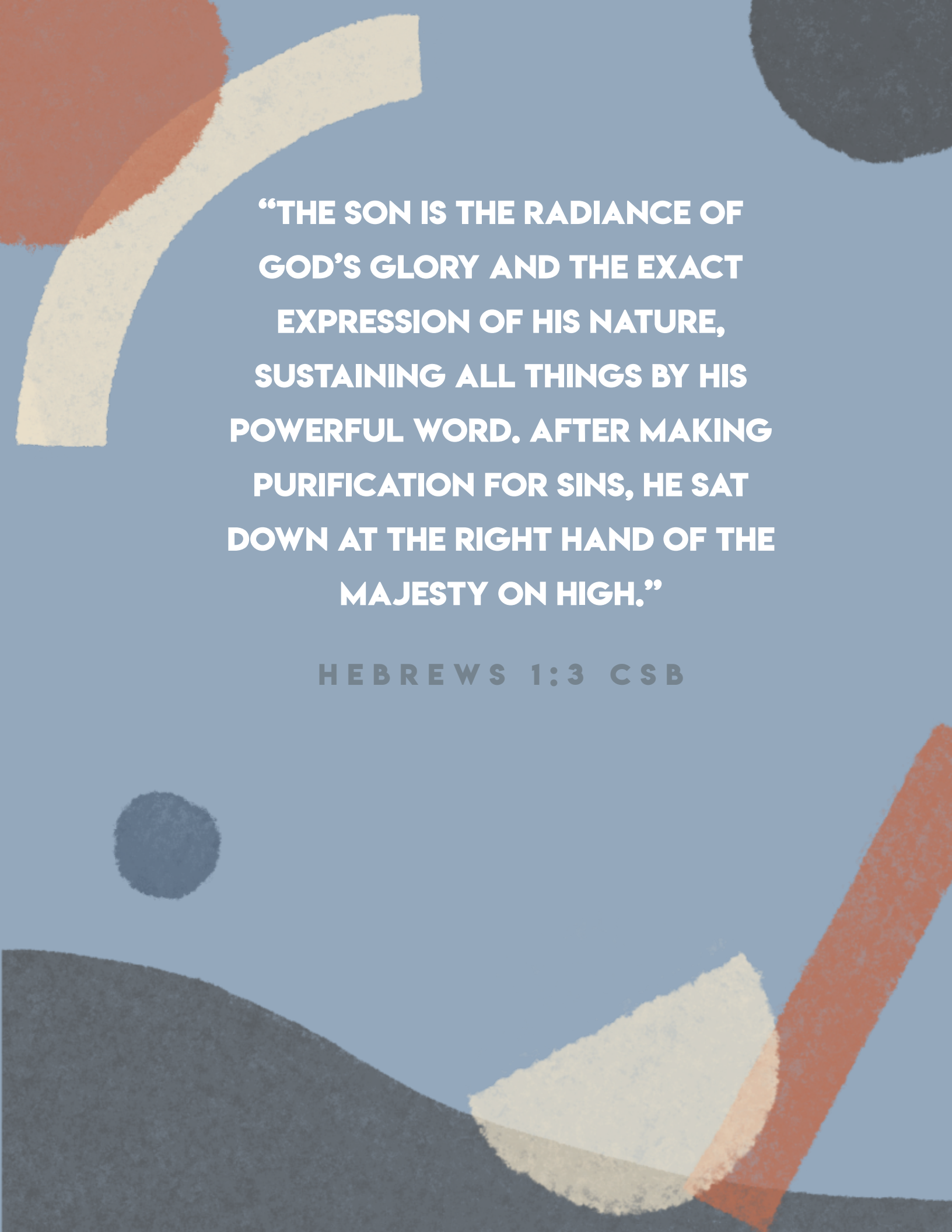
The author of Hebrews writes that God made the universe through Jesus and sustains all things through Jesus. How does this change the way you trust Him to sustain you?

How is God asking you to trust Him in this season?

If you have a hard time believing that He can sustain you, take time to pray and talk it through with someone you trust. Ask the Holy Spirit to build your faith.

OUTWARD

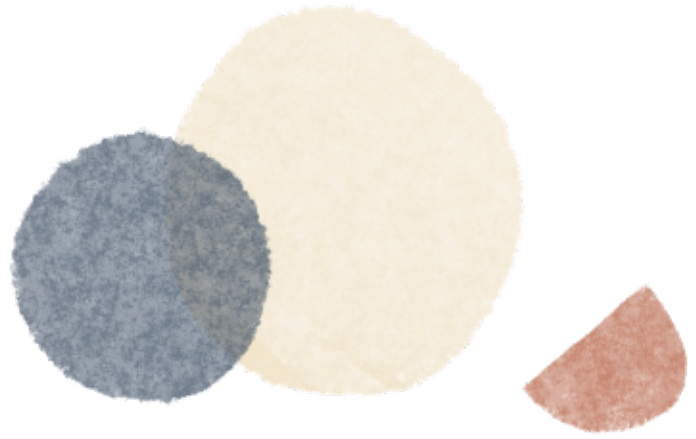
Is God leading you to share this message with someone in your life? Who around you needs to be reminded of the ultimacy of Christ? There may be a close friend, family member, or co-worker who is struggling to remember that Jesus sustains them. Take time to pray with and encourage them.



**“THE SON IS THE RADIANCE OF
GOD’S GLORY AND THE EXACT
EXPRESSION OF HIS NATURE,
SUSTAINING ALL THINGS BY HIS
POWERFUL WORD. AFTER MAKING
PURIFICATION FOR SINS, HE SAT
DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE
MAJESTY ON HIGH.”**

H E B R E W S 1 : 3 C S B

Chapter 2



READING

The second chapter of Hebrews continues to elevate Jesus. The author gives a clear warning to the readers that they should “pay attention” and not “drift away.” Jesus is better. The author starts by comparing Jesus to the angels. Yes, angels are magnificent, but Jesus is even more so. In the Bible, when someone saw an angel they were overcome with awe and fear. Angels delivered important proclamations from the very mouth of God. The Son, however, is superior to the angels. Again, we see the author use Old Testament scripture to cement the argument that the revelation brought by Jesus is the final word. In this chapter, we see that we are united to Jesus (He calls us brothers and sisters) and that we can trust Him. “For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.” What a beautiful reminder that Jesus is always with us, understands our hardships, and helps us in our time of need.

Chapter 2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UPWARD

Read **Psalms 8**. What does this passage say about God?

When we tie this passage to what the author says in **Hebrews 2:5-8**, we come to understand that God is sovereign. He has total control and authority over creation. How does this truth comfort or challenge you?

INWARD

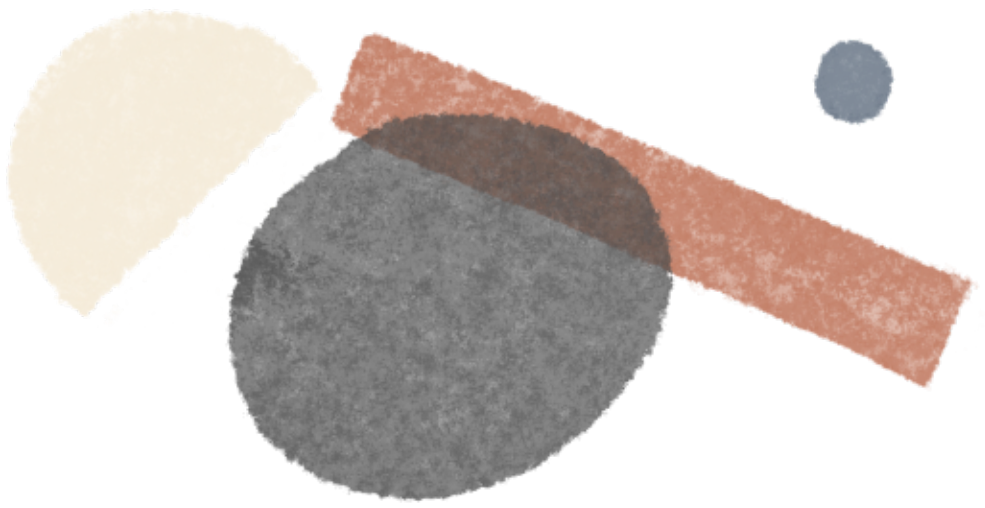
Read **Hebrews 2:12-13**. When was the last time you proclaimed the name of Jesus? Knowing that Jesus is sovereign and trust-worthy inspires worship. When was the last time you worshipped Him in song or music or dance?

We can also worship Jesus in everyday life, not just music, because all of life is worship. How will you live out your week with an attitude of worship?

OUTWARD

Keeping in mind that all of life is worship, how can we interact with others in a worshipful way?

Just as Jesus understands our suffering, perhaps you also have had experiences that allow you to empathize with others. Just as Jesus sits with us in our pain, we can sit with others in their pain. Who has sat with you in your pain? Who can you sit with in their pain?



Chapter 3

READING:

In this chapter, the author continues to warn the reader not to drift away, saying, “encourage each other daily.” There are times when we may be tempted to drift away from God’s truth and into sin. In **Psalm 95:8-1**, the psalmist warns against following the example of the rebellious Israelites who hardened their hearts and did not enter the Promised Land. (You can read **Numbers 13-14** for that account) Here is the good news! We can approach God with confidence, knowing that we will be met with grace and mercy. More on that in the next chapter! But from chapter 3, we learn that we are to heed the warning not to drift away because God has a plan for our lives to partner with Him in ministry. We are also reminded of the importance of biblical community, one in which we can encourage each other to remain faithful to the mission God has for us, despite the hardships we experience.

Chapter 3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UPWARD

After reading **Psalm 95** and **Hebrews 3**, do you think God wanted His people to enter His “rest”? What clues do you find in the text?

What is God’s heart for His people?

INWARD

Read **Hebrews 3:7** and **Hebrews 3:15**. What is the main warning?

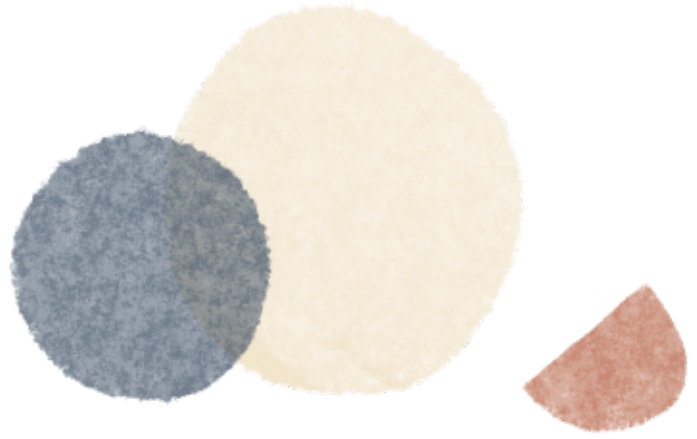
What does it mean to “harden your heart”?

What spiritual habits and rhythms can you develop to keep your heart tuned to His heart?

OUTWARD

Read **Hebrews 3:13**. There is a sense of urgency as the author says to “encourage each other daily while it is still called today.” In a biblical community, we can help each other persevere. Who can you encourage today?

How can you help someone in your life to avoid sin’s deception?



SABBATH IN THE BIBLE

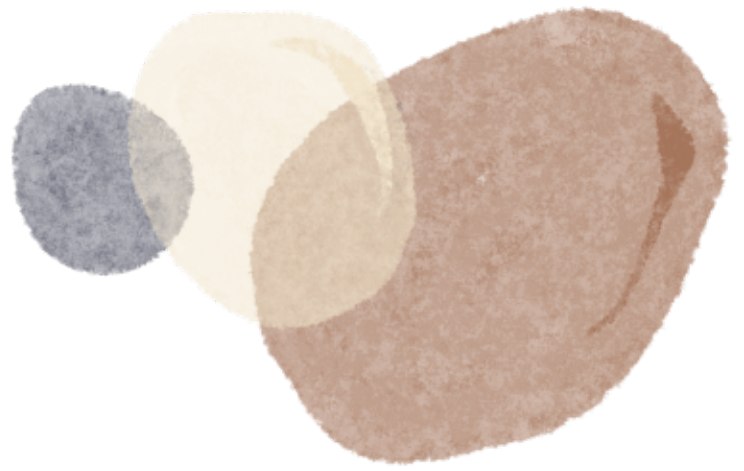
In the Old Testament, there are two words for Sabbath in Hebrew.

The first is *shabbat* and simply means to “stop working.”

תָּבַשׁ

The second is *nuakh*, which means to “dwell” or “settle.”

חִוֵּן



Chapter 4

READING

God has promised us rest. Perhaps you have a hard time with rest. We live in a society that rewards hustle and “busy-ness.” Even under circumstances when one is forced to rest, it may still be challenging. That is why you see people sneaking off to answer emails while on vacation or ignoring flu symptoms to get that work out in or staying up until late at night to squeeze in a few more hours of work. Rest does not sound that appealing to us. God’s rest, however, is unlike any we know. The rest God promises us is participation in, and enjoyment of, the blessings He has planned. The Israelites in the wilderness squandered their inheritance, but the author of Hebrews wants us to know that we do not have to follow in their footsteps. We can choose to believe that God’s promise of rest is worth it. We can choose to delight in Him and His plans for us in the Kingdom. We can choose to stop working and dwell, settle in, with Him. The author urges us to approach God’s throne of grace with boldness. We do not sheepishly come to Him, we come to Him knowing that He has good for us.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UPWARD

Read **Genesis 1:31**. In this chapter, the author mentions that God rested on the seventh day. Why did God rest?

INWARD

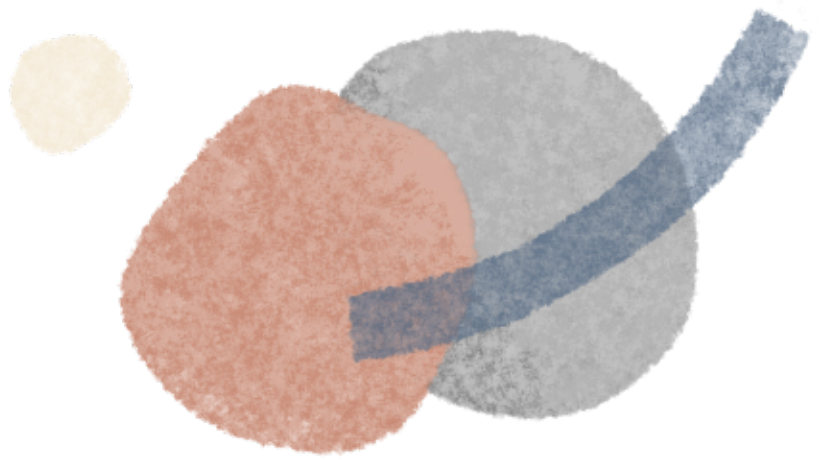
God instituted a sabbath (day of rest) so that we could cease work and delight in Him. If you currently practice the sabbath, what are your favorite ways to spend the day, and how do these activities help you rest in God?

If you do not yet practice the sabbath, what are some things you can do to begin?

OUTWARD

Read **Hebrews 4:16**. We can approach God with boldness, knowing that we will receive grace and mercy. How does this affect how we treat others? How can we extend the grace and mercy that we have been freely given?

Think of a real-life situation in which God may be calling on you to respond graciously and mercifully. Pray with boldness for the Lord to empower you to act on His prompting.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As you study the book of Hebrews and work through the Discussion Questions, you may be interested in additional resources. Here are a few we recommend:

- *The New Testament in Its World* by N.T. Wright and Michael Bird
- The Tony Evans Study Bible or Commentary
- The Bible Project Hebrews Overview Video (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/hebrews/>)
- The Faithlife Study Bible App
- *Hebrews for Everyone* by N.T. Wright