

# **faith applied**

## **the book of hebrews**

**hebrews 12-13**  
**small group guide**

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# How to Use This Guide

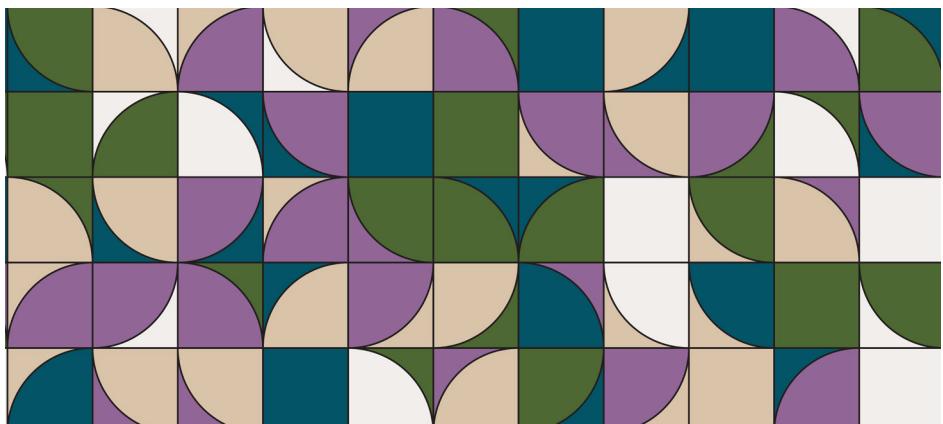
Welcome to the Hebrews Faith Applied Small Group Guide!

For this Hebrews 12 & 13 Faith Applied churchwide series, your available resources are as follows:

- A **Sunday morning message**, centered on the Scripture verses for that week.
- A **Video** and/or MidWeek Podcast with identical audio, with the interviewees discussing how they live out the verses for that lesson, applying those verses to daily life. The video and podcast will help you see how people in the Westover body are living out their faith in Christ.
- This **Small Group Guide**, providing additional insights and small group discussion questions to guide understanding and application of the passages.

Depending on your group's time availability, your group leader may ask the group to watch the video outside of group time and focus your discussion on the questions in this Small Group Guide. The videos provided for the Faith Applied series are anywhere from 5 - 15 minutes in length.

We encourage everyone to have their own copy of this Small Group Guide for personal notes and insights. If you want to supply your group with their own copies, stop by the Westover Bookstore located in the Lobby.



## The Small Group Guide has two sections:

- A **Discussion Guide** for each week with questions pertinent to the text and theme.
- A **Study Guide** for each week, consisting of three parts:
  1. A Bible Study / journal area using the H.E.A.R. method (Highlight, Explain, Apply, Respond);
  1. A commentary on that week's text;
  2. A biographical devotional that highlights men and women standing firm and living out their faith in life-altering circumstances. These biographical sketches were taken from the Reformation era (500+ years ago).

If you're not doing this study as part of a group, pray about inviting someone to go through this with you. Don't hesitate to email us at [faithapplied@westoverchurch.com](mailto:faithapplied@westoverchurch.com) and we will provide you with a **Leader's Guide**.

We are so thankful you are joining us in this study, and we pray for you as we walk through this Hebrews 12 & 13 series!

Serving our Savior together,

*Michael Carter*

*Diana Brown*

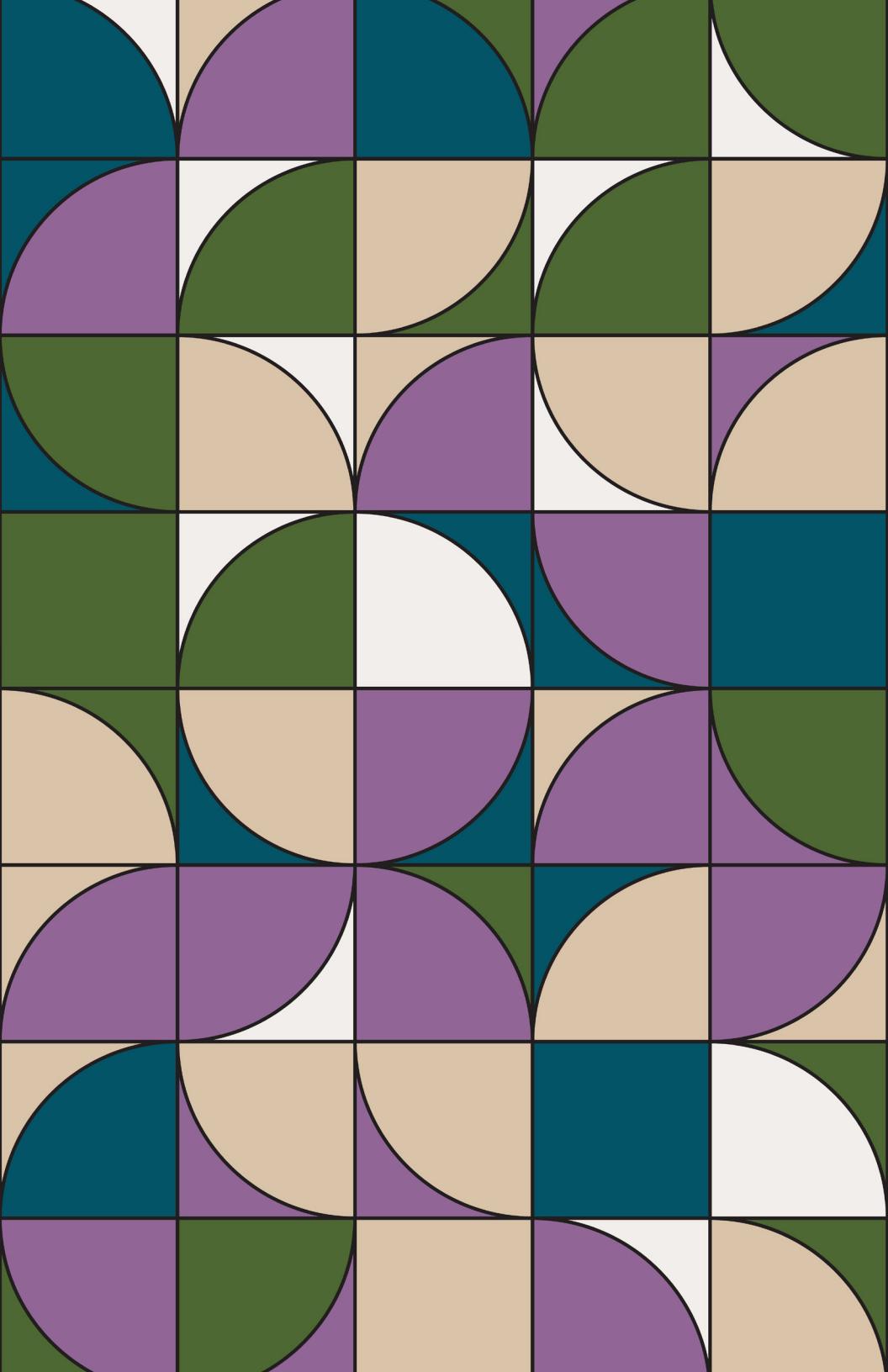
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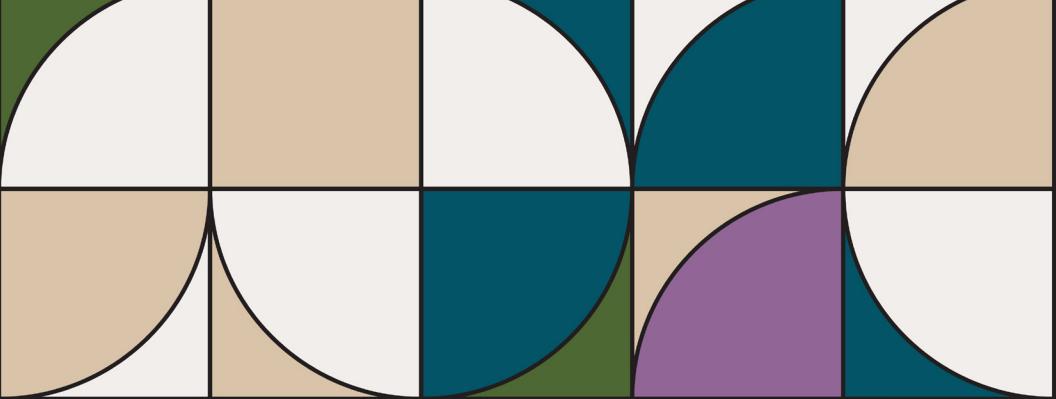
*Kevin Lotz*



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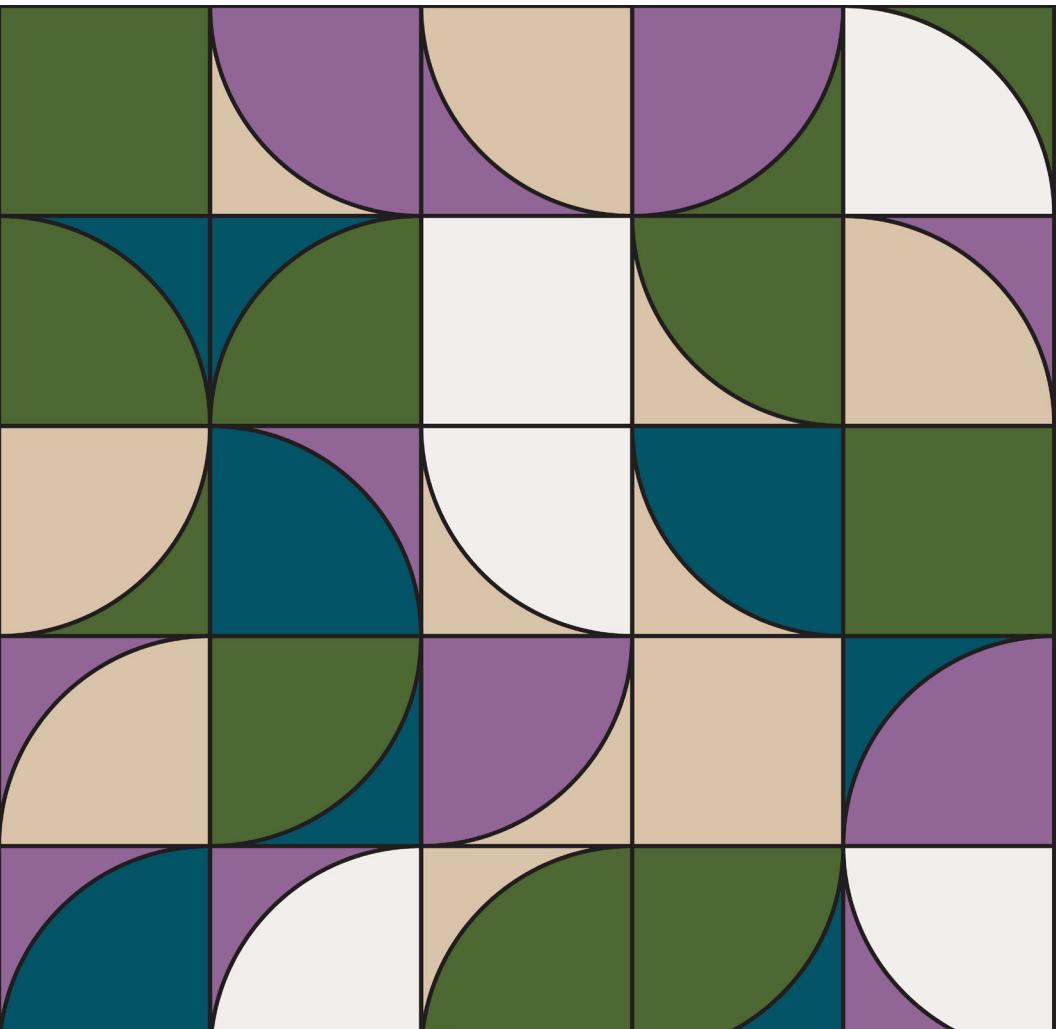
You can find the **videos**, the **Group Finder**, **digital copy** of this Small Group Guide, and more by scanning this QR code.





# discussion guide

*small group discussion*



# Week 1 - Fix Your Eyes on Christ

*Hebrews 12:1-6: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?*

*“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
nor be weary when reproved by him.*

*For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,  
and chastises every son whom he receives.”*

## Principle

Christ bolsters our faith under hardship when we focus our eyes on Him.

## Gather

1. Tell of a time when you had to compete or perform in front of a large crowd. How did the crowd's presence impact you?
2. **Tom and Emily** tell an incredible story of landing in Kenya with their 6 children for the first time and not knowing what was next. Recall a time when you were in despair and someone came alongside to help set your eyes on Christ.

## Discuss

3. Using Matt. 13:18-23 as a reference, what **weights and sin** in your life could hinder you from running with endurance (Heb. 12:1)?
4. How does considering Jesus' endurance of the cross and His journey to Heaven help us in our race?

5. Endurance comes up a lot in this section. It's also mentioned in Heb. 10:36. Look at the previous list of characters in the Hall of Faith in Ch. 11, and describe how endurance characterizes their faith account. How does thinking upon Christ support the believer's endurance?
6. For what end does this passage urge the Christian to endure in the race?

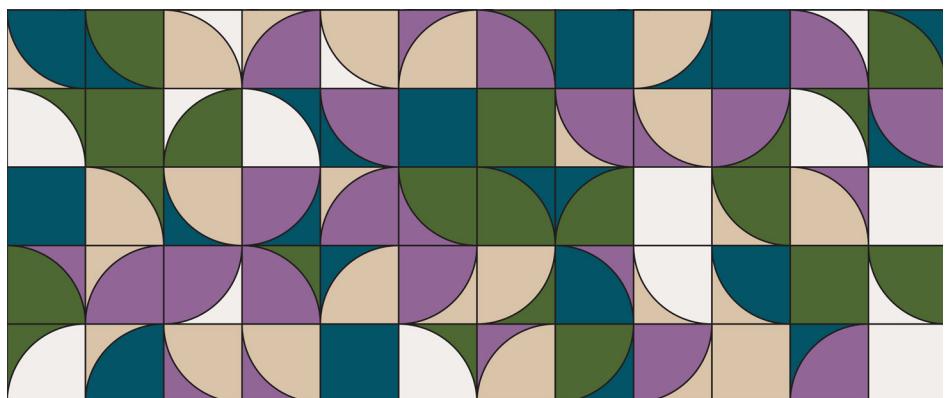
## Apply

7. How can we apply this truth to our lives as it relates to persevering: Jesus is the founder and perfecter of our faith?
8. What are the dangers of "regard lightly" God's discipline in our lives?

## Further

Here at the start of this series, **begin a Faith Journal** to capture your thoughts, concerns, questions, and steps of faith over the next six weeks. Begin by writing out a prayer, asking God to help you live out your faith over the next 6 weeks and beyond. Many weeks you'll be encouraged to write your thoughts and/or prayers in your Faith Journal. Begin this week. Consider writing a prayer about persevering in a situation you're currently facing.

Additionally, we encourage you to complete each week's **H.E.A.R. study** in the Study Guide at the back of this book.



# Week 2 - Endure Hardship as Discipline for the Prize of Christ

*Hebrews 12:7-17: It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

*Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholly like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.*

## Principle

God trains us for our good to become spiritually mature and finish well.

## Gather

1. Recall a time when you trained for an event (a race, a sport, a music recital, a speech, etc.). Who encouraged you to keep going when the training was hard?
2. Is **discipline** the same as punishment? Why or why not?

## Discuss

3. What does it mean to you to be a son or daughter of God, the Loving Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Heb. 12:7)?
4. Hebrews 12:10 says, "...He disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Describe a time when you experienced God's discipline, and how it ultimately helped you become more like Him, possibly recognizing its benefits later.
5. What does the "**peaceful fruit of righteousness**" (Heb. 12:11) look like, and how do we obtain it?
6. Hebrews 12:15-17 indicates that we have a responsibility to watch out for one another. How can we do this without becoming legalistic/judgmental or condoning of sin?

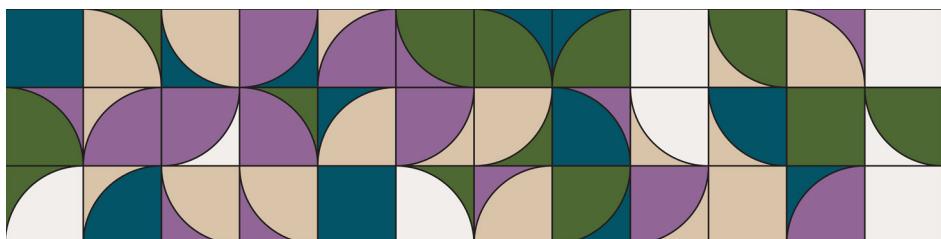
## Apply

7. Hebrews 12:12-13 lists some physical training activities that bring healing (lift drooping hands, strengthen weak knees, make straight paths for your feet). What are some spiritual equivalents of these for our lives?
8. Read Heb. 12:14 and Rom. 12:18. What are some practical ways we can **initiate peace** with those around us?

## Further

Tough times can often test our faith. In this week's video, the Crisp family faced a crisis of faith, and how God met them in their need.

Think of a person in your life who is facing a crisis. Spend time this week praying for them. Record these prayers in your journal. Check in on them this week.



# Week 3 - Embrace the Unshakable Kingdom with Gratitude

*Hebrews 12:18-29: For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

*See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*

## Principle

Christ has secured an eternal inheritance for us.

## Gather

1. Name a product or system you were sure would always be around, yet no longer exists. What might be the reason that it is no longer needed?
2. How do experiences shape **fears**? What could be the difference between one who fears (flying, storms, snakes, etc.) versus one who doesn't?

## Discuss

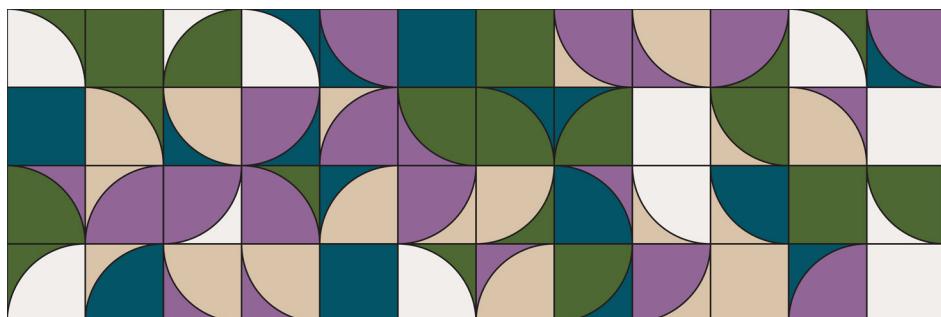
3. Compare the Israelite's experience at Mt. Sinai (the Old Covenant site in Exo. 19) with Mt. Zion (the New Covenant) as described in Heb. 12:18-24. Choose one word to describe each mountain.
4. Verses 23-24 contain three legal terms: judge, mediator, covenant. How is Jesus' role as mediator the same or different from today's legal definition of mediator?
5. What is the word we use for "the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven" (v. 23)? Why do you think the writer used this description? How does this help your eternal perspective?
6. What is God warning those on earth about? How is he speaking today? Why should this lead to **gratefulness**? (vv. 25-29)

## Apply

7. In the video, Sandy spoke about a time when her life was shaken. What does it mean to receive an "**unshakable kingdom**" (v. 28)? How does this bring hope?
8. God has always been particular about how He is to be approached. His holiness and power have not changed. How do we balance verses like Heb. 4:16 with Heb. 12:28-29?

## Further

Uncertainty about the future leads to worry and anxiety. Psalm 37:5 charges us to "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will act." Confess your fear to God and perhaps share with a friend. How do you want God to deepen your faith? Write this as a prayer in your journal.



# Week 4 - Commit to Each Other in Sacrificial Love

*Hebrews 13:1-6: Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say,*

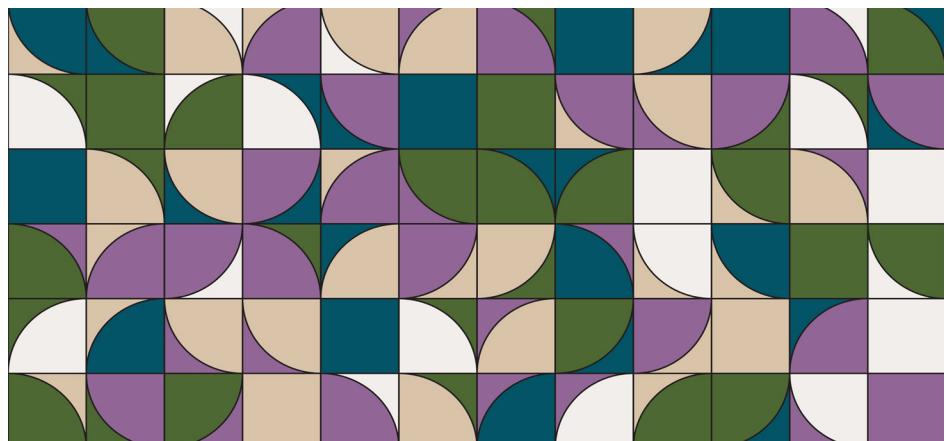
*"The Lord is my helper;  
I will not fear;  
what can man do to me?"*

## Principle

Christ empowers us to love sacrificially and live contentedly.

## Gather

1. Describe a time someone **loved you well**. What did they do? How did it impact you?
2. What areas of your life are you least content in, and how do you know?



## Discuss

3. What are 5 actions we are challenged to live out with other believers specified in verses 1-5?
4. Like **Todd and Amy Cox** in this week's video, what can we lean on to push beyond our comfort zones and take the actions listed above?
5. Verse 6 asks, "What can man do to me?" What are common things people fear "man" doing to them?
6. How does God being our **constant helper** enable us to live a contented life?

## Apply

7. Where might you struggle in serving the body of Christ? What are areas we can serve the church body on and off campus?
8. What fears do you have in publicly identifying with Christ? How can we come alongside you in overcoming your fears?

## Further

When it comes to loving others sacrificially, **reflect** on the five specific challenges listed in verses 1–5:

- Loving fellow believers
- Showing hospitality to strangers
- Remembering those in prison or being mistreated
- Honoring marriage and avoiding sexual immorality
- Being content with what you have

Which of these is most challenging for you, and why?

Spend time writing a prayer in your journal, asking God to give you opportunities to practice this and to strengthen you for victory. Consider inviting a small group member or close friend to pray with you and help you stay accountable. We were never meant to walk this journey alone!

# Week 5 - Follow Your Leaders as They Follow Christ

*Hebrews 13:7-17: Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

## Principle

God has entrusted leaders with the Gospel for His glory and our good.

## Gather

1. Describe the **leadership** qualities of your favorite teachers or bosses.
2. Some grow up thinking God is out to get them, disinterested, or perhaps a personal vending machine. What former ways of relating to God have been hard for you to let go?

## Discuss

3. The writer urges believers to remember those who brought them the Gospel message (v. 7) and to watch out for false teaching (v.9). How does verse 8 connect these two imperatives?
4. Some Hebrew Christians were still participating in sacrificial meals to “strengthen” their relationship with God. How might we sometimes try to bolster our own salvation beyond what Christ has already done?
5. What does it mean to go “outside the camp” and bear the “reproach” that Jesus bore (vv. 12-13)? In a modern context, what might this look like?
6. In what ways are Christians to **sacrifice** according to verses 15-17? How can we keep this from becoming a checklist? (See Rom. 12:1).

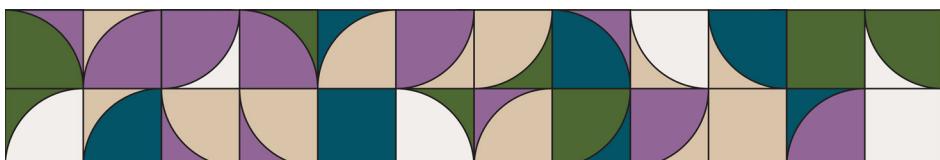
## Apply

7. We are thankful for our pastors, staff, and elders such as Seth, who shared in this week's video. How can your thoughts, words, and actions enable your church leaders to lead with joy? (v. 17).
8. What “gospel” is our current culture preaching? How are you living counter-cultural to the gospel?

## Further

As you continue reflecting on this passage, **record** one specific way God is calling you to “go outside the camp” and follow Christ more boldly in your journal. Note any old habits or mindsets you need to release, and write out a prayer asking the Lord to strengthen your trust in the sufficiency of Jesus.

Additionally, pray about a practical step you can take to support and encourage the leaders God has placed in your life. Consider inviting your small group or a friend to join you in putting that step into action. Experience what a blessing it is to bless others!



# Week 6 - Live Out God's Will for God's Glory

*Hebrews 13:18-25: Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

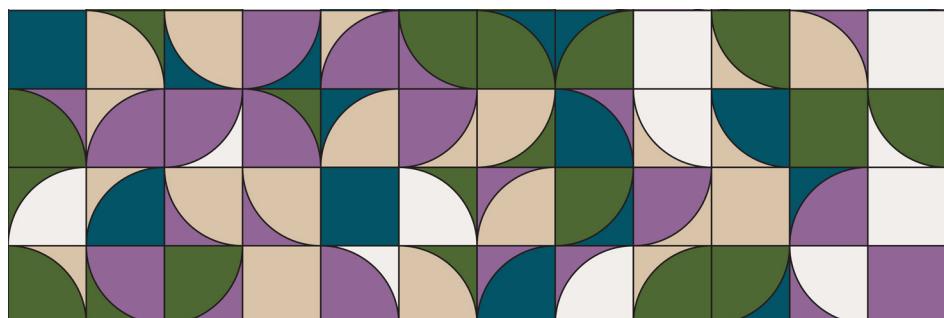
*I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with all of you.*

## Principle

God is glorified when we allow Him to work in and through us.

## Gather

1. What are some words you often include in your **goodbyes**?
2. As you live your life day to day, what drives your decision-making? What's the difference between living for God's glory vs. living for your own pleasure, comfort, or convenience?



## Discuss

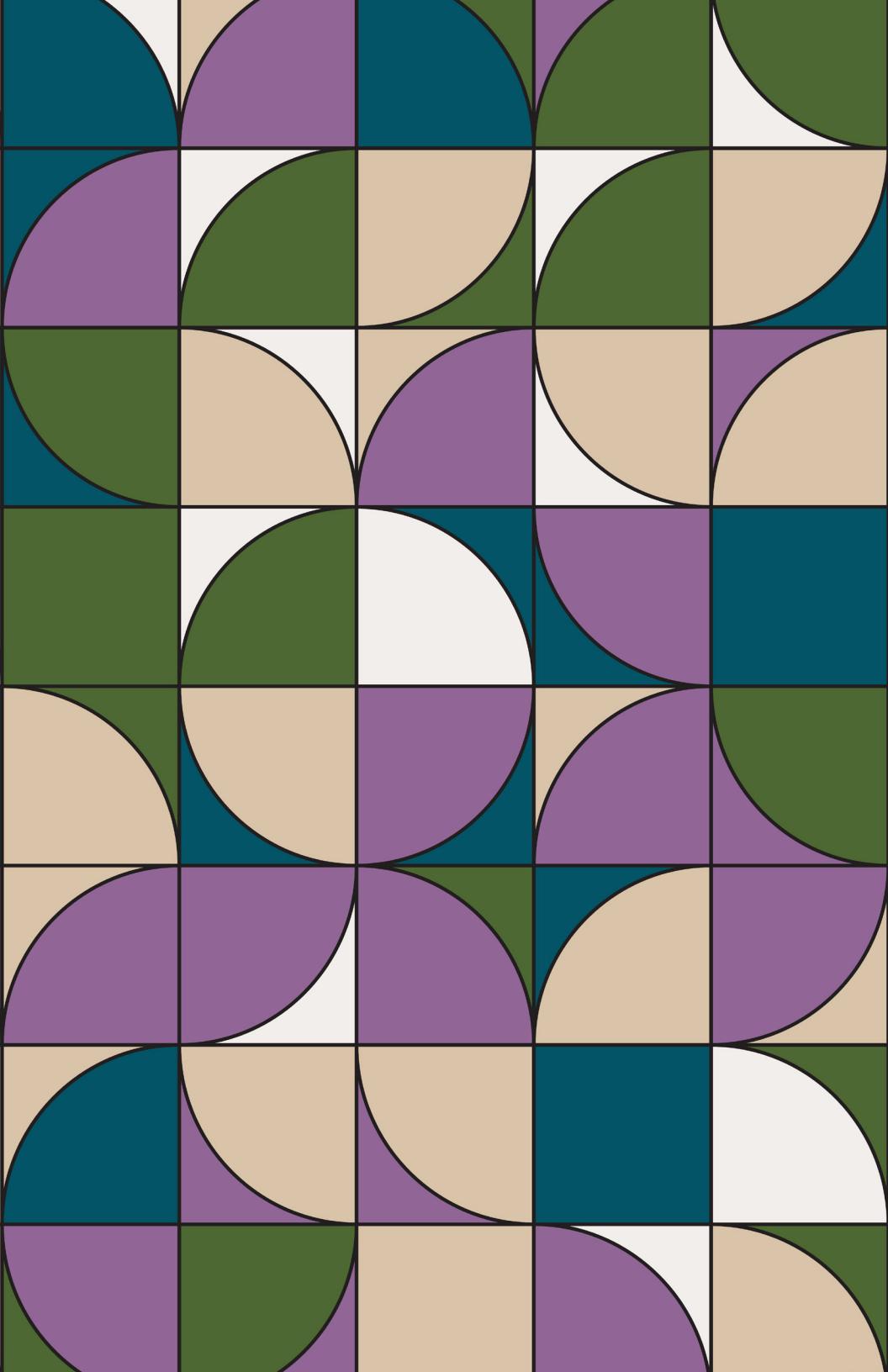
3. In Heb. 13:18, the author lists two specific prayer requests: 1) a clear conscience, and 2) desiring to act honorably. What makes our leaders' work challenging, and how can we pray for them using verse 18 as a guide? How might Dave Koris' comments in the video assist you in living this out in your life?
4. In Heb. 13:19, the author pleads with the recipients to **pray** earnestly. As you pray, what helps you to decide whether to seek growth in your character or relief from your circumstances?
5. Hebrews 13:20-21 is a benediction, a blessing given by the author to the readers. What is the author asking God to do? What is the author asking the readers (and us!) to do? How does the benediction in verses 20-21 offer hope and assurance for believers, and what should be our response to such a powerful blessing?
6. Hebrews 13:21 says that God equips us to do His will, and that is pleasing in His sight and brings Christ glory. How do we know God's will? How can we allow God to equip us for this work?

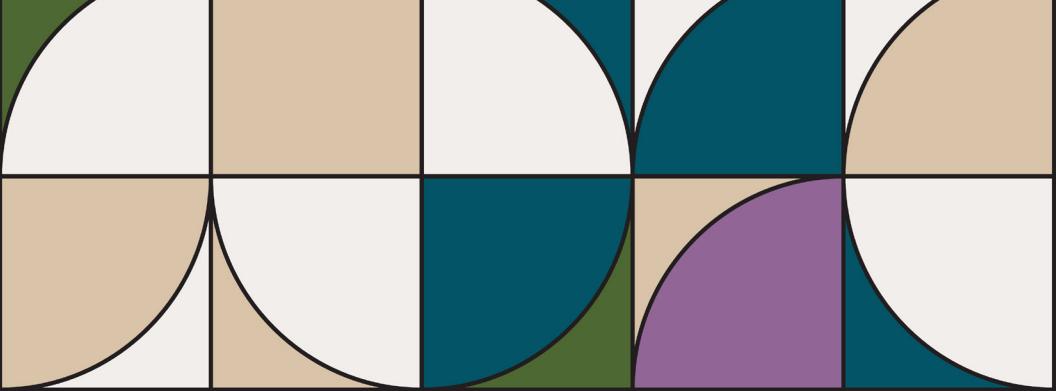
## Apply

7. Spend some time praying for our church staff and missionaries, using Heb. 13:18 and 13:25 as your guide.
8. What would it look like to **offer God's grace** to someone today? To whom might you offer this?

## Further

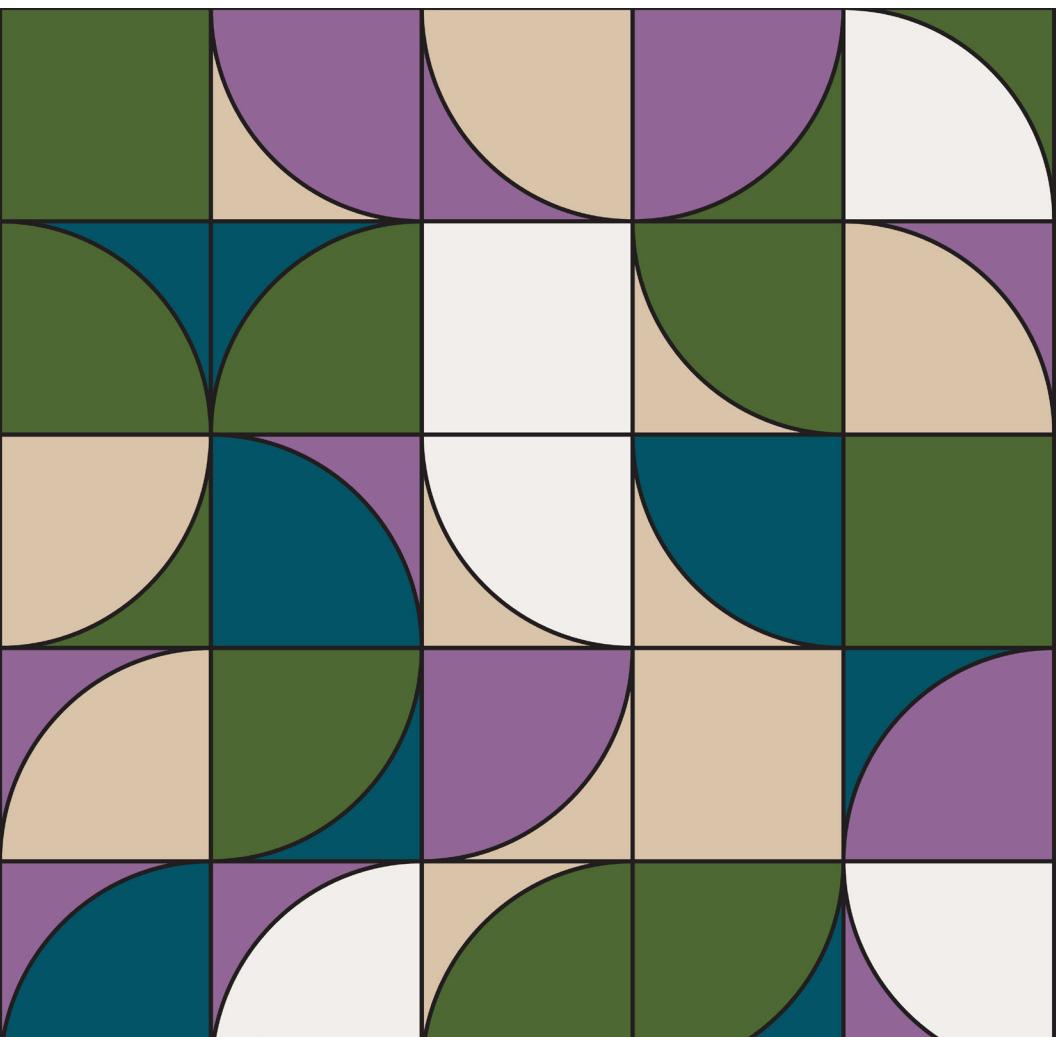
Set aside time to write a prayer in your personal journal asking God to equip you for His will in a specific area of your life. Be honest about where you need His transforming work—in your character, your choices, or your daily rhythms. Consider reaching out to a small group member or close friend to share one way you want to grow and invite them to pray with you or check in going forward. God delights to work in and through His people, and we grow best when we walk in community.





# study guide

*H.E.A.R. I commentary I devotional*



# Week 1 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 12:1-6*

## **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

## **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

# Week 1 - Commentary

Imagine your child demonstrating interest and engaging in a specific activity or skill. Once the initial excitement and novelty fade, the real effort towards improvement starts. As a parent, how can you motivate your child to keep pursuing their activity? One effective approach is to inspire them by sharing stories of others who have faced challenges, persisted, and achieved mastery in their activity or skill.

The writer of Hebrews presents numerous examples of faith in Hebrews Chapter 11, known as the Great Hall of Faith. As we start Chapter 12, the author urges us to draw on that inspiration and actively run the race set before us. Jesus serves as our ultimate example of endurance, perseverance, and victory.

The author of Hebrews starts Chapter 12 by mentioning a “cloud of witnesses.” Who are these witnesses, and how do they influence us as we run the race set before us?

Indeed, the author is referring to the Old Testament saints mentioned in Hebrews Chapter 11, who lived by faith in God, even if they did not see the promised fulfillment of their faith during their lifetime. Their lives of faith serve as inspiration for us to endure hardships and follow after Christ in our lifetime.

Here's one theologian's thoughts on this “cloud of witnesses:”

“The OT ancestors are described as “a large cloud of witnesses.” They are witnesses in the sense that they function as examples for the readers; “the emphasis … falls on what Christians see in the host of witnesses, rather than on what they see in Christians.” But it is probably also the case that they are conceived of as spectators as well. They witness by their lives, and they “cheer on” those who are in the race.<sup>1</sup>

These witnesses might also be looking down from heaven, silently encouraging us as we follow Christ. Like audience members, they don't affect our race's result but serve as motivation to keep going and not give up. We do not pray to these saints or seek their guidance; instead, we direct our prayers and requests for wisdom and discernment to God and His Word. Additionally, conversations with godly men and women can often be beneficial.

As we run the race ahead of us, we will face trials and challenges. It's

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, Hebrews, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 376.

essential to remember we are not alone in these struggles. Matthew 28 and Psalm 23 serve as reminders that Christ is with us every step of the way. The author of Hebrews also reminds the readers that while they may be suffering persecution, they are not martyrs; they have not yet suffered like Christ, shedding their blood.

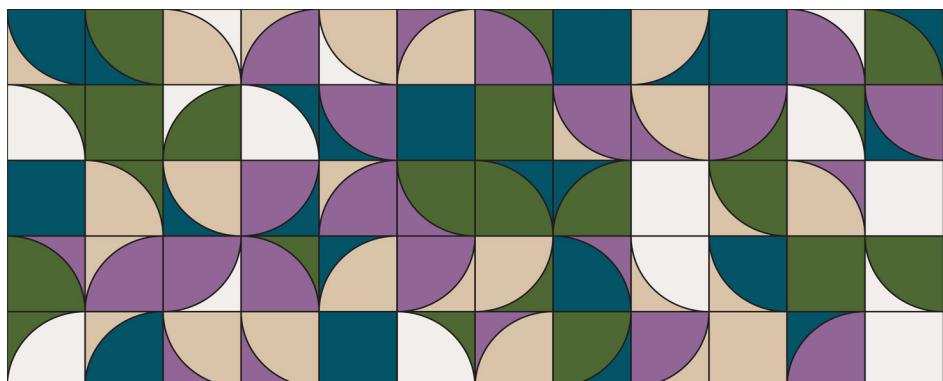
The author of Hebrews also reminds the readers (and us!) that God sees us (Christ-followers) as sons and daughters. The author quotes Pro. 3:11-12, and will expand on that thought in Heb. 12:7-17 (the Faith Applied Week 2 passage).

Are you discouraged or weary in your faith walk?

Here are some additional verses that might help:

- Romans 5:1-6; 8:18-25; 15:4-6
- 2 Corinthians 6:4-9
- 1 Timothy 6:11-12
- 2 Timothy 3:10-15
- James 1:2-4; 5:10-11
- 2 Peter 1:5-8

This week's Bible text starts and concludes with our responsibility to focus on Christ. When we keep our eyes fixed on Him and give Him our undivided attention, He then works in and through us for His glory and our good.



# Week 1 - Devotional

## *Zacharius Ursinus - The Happy Professor*

The opening of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) makes one of the most ringing affirmations of faith in all of Christian history:

Q: What is your only comfort in life and death?

A: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

The Heidelberg Catechism was the product of a team of authors commissioned by the German elector Frederick III, a devout Protestant prince during the early decades of the German Reformation. Chief among the catechism's authors was University of Heidelberg professor Zacharius Ursinus.

Ursinus was a student of Philip Melanchthon, who himself was one of the key disciples of the great German Reformer Martin Luther. Luther had died in 1546. As a young man in the 1550s, Ursinus journeyed through many of the major capitals of the European Reformation, meeting Geneva's John Calvin, among other key Reformed leaders.

During this era, German Reformers were deeply divided over theological questions such as the exact nature of the Lord's Supper. When the humble Ursinus was called to become a professor at Heidelberg in 1561, he declared, "Oh, that I could remain hidden in a corner!" But God was calling Ursinus to Heidelberg to help secure the legacy of the Reformation.

The Heidelberg Catechism was published anonymously, but most observers today credit Ursinus with taking a lead role in writing it. Its emphasis on Calvinist doctrine made it one of the most broadly influential catechisms of the Reformation era.

The Heidelberg Catechism was quickly translated into a number of other languages, including English, in 1572. It would be surpassed in notoriety in the English-speaking world only by the Westminster Confession of Faith, produced in England during the next century. One of the reasons the Heidelberg Catechism was so successful is that it used unifying language about disputed issues, such as those related to the Lord's Supper. Ursinus did not wish to further exacerbate divisions among Protestants.

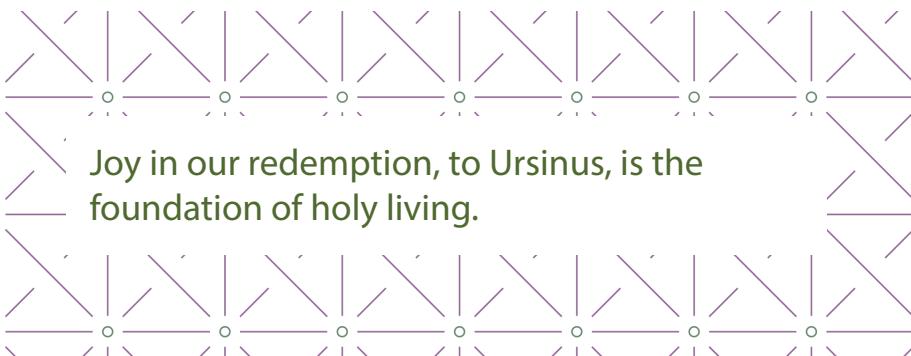
Befitting Ursinus's Calvinist convictions, however, the catechism paints a grim picture of the state of humanity outside of Christ. In question

and answer (Q&A) 5 of the catechism, Ursinus tells us (based on a host of supporting biblical references) that we are “inclined by nature” to hate God and our neighbor. Q&A 8 asks whether we are “so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good.” Ursinus answers that yes, we are that corrupt “unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.”

Conversely, a life redeemed by God is one of holiness, contentedness, and unspeakable joy into eternity. The comfort contained in the first question comes from understanding the great depth of our sin, the great rescue Christ brings from the “misery” and wrath we face because of that sin, and the great thankfulness to God that the knowledge of our deliverance brings. Ursinus explains that our “new nature” in Christ is a “heartfelt joy in God through Christ, and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in good works.” Joy in our redemption, to Ursinus, is the foundation of holy living.

In spite of Ursinus’s efforts to unify the feuding Protestant factions, Frederick III’s successor removed him and other Calvinist professors from the Heidelberg faculty in the 1570s. Ursinus found work at a Reformed academy not far from Heidelberg. He died in 1583 at age 48.

Through the Heidelberg Catechism, and through the extensive lectures he published defending the theology behind the catechism, Ursinus left a rich repository of biblical instruction for future generations of believers. Ursinus’s teachings still inspire much joy today, not least because of the great work God did through him and the whole host of Reformers.<sup>1</sup>



**Joy in our redemption, to Ursinus, is the foundation of holy living.**

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<sup>1</sup> Kidd, Thomas S. “Zacharius Ursinus – The Happy Professor” DesiringGod.com, captured 25, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-happy-professor>.

## Week 2 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 12:7-17*

### **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

### **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

## Week 2 - Commentary

“Discipline” is a powerful word, isn’t it? For some, it signifies dedication and effort to reach a goal. For others, it evokes unpleasant memories of punishment, sometimes harsher than the original offense.

What did the word “discipline” mean when Hebrews was written? It described the entire process of educating and training a child—covering mental, moral, and physical development. This also involved nurturing the soul, correcting errors, and learning to control passions. Most often, this was carried out in a spirit of instruction and nurture. Sometimes, “discipline” involved using stronger words (for example, reproof or admonishment); other times, “discipline” involved chastisement (physical correction for the child’s benefit).

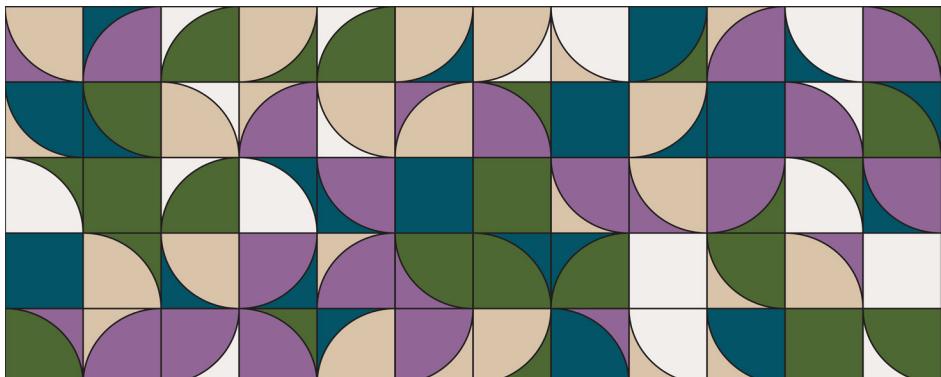
Referring again to Heb. 12:5 and this entire passage, the author emphasizes that God trains and cares for us as His children. In Heb. 2:10, God regards Christ-followers as His children. As His children, we rely on His training, provision, protection, and correction for our well-being.

David expressed this idea again in Psalm 23, reminding us that God supplies our needs, calms our fears, leads us, and grants rest. God also corrects and protects us, and we can rely on His security and blessings now and forever.

Is this training and correction enjoyable at the time? No.

Are there any positive outcomes when we learn these lessons in training and correction? Yes!

We share in His Holiness (v. 10), we have Peace (v. 11) and Righteousness (v. 11).



After the author of Hebrews reminds us not to become weary of God's discipline in our lives, the author offers guidance on how to fulfill our role in this process:

- Endure - don't give up or give in (vv. 12-13)
- Strive for peace with everyone (v. 14)
- Seek holiness (v. 14)
- Watch out for each other (v. 15)
- Don't allow bitterness to turn us away from God (v. 15)
- Don't follow Esau's example of sin and unrepentance and miss God's blessings (vv. 16-17)

Did you notice the recurring theme of peace in this section, which results from the Lord's training and discipline?

We attain peace with God through Christ. As we stick with His training (discipline), the author of Hebrews says our faithfulness will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

As we learn to deny ourselves and follow Him, Christ supplies us with the strength to pursue peace with others (v. 14).

This was not a new teaching; Jesus and Paul also taught this:

- Mark 9:50 - be at peace with one another
- Romans 12:18-21 - live at peace with all
- Romans 14:19 - pursue peace and mutual upbuilding
- 2 Corinthians 13:11 - aim for restoration... live in peace

What's our most significant deterrent to yielding our lives to Christ and learning the lessons He uses to make us more like Himself? Our own sinful nature. And what's the main thing we need to learn in our training? Fighting against our own sinful nature.

Jesus said it clearly:

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24).

# Week 2 - Devotional

## *Hellen Stirke – The Ordinary Virgin Mary*

The drama of the Protestant Reformation casts big personalities and major characters, the types of men now etched into myths, legends, and giant stone figures. But the Reformation is also the story of everyday, ordinary followers of Christ, mostly forgotten, who lived out Reformation theology on the ground — and who paid the price for it with their lives. Martyrs like Hellen Stirke.

Hellen was a fairly average Scottish Christian in the city of Perth, dedicated to daily domestic work as a wife and mother. Her life remained unnoticed to history until the birth of her last child.

When the time arrived for Hellen's labor and delivery, Catholic tradition called for earnest prayers to the Virgin Mary. Having a good sense of Scripture, Hellen repudiated these petitions. It was a tradition she would not follow. Her baffled midwives pressed her to make such a prayer, but she refused the ritual. The physical risk was real, but the prayers were nothing more than superstitious insurance.

"If I had lived in the days of the Virgin," Hellen said with poise, "God might have looked likewise to my humility and base estate, as he did the Virgin's, and might have made me the mother of Christ." Her childbed sermonette must have triggered gasps. But Hellen was settled and comforted by her theology, knowing her prayers were going directly to God through her Savior Jesus Christ.

News of Hellen's refusal to pray to Mary, and her bold claim that she was on equal standing before God, very soon found its way to the ears of the local Catholic clergy and quickly up the chain to the presiding cardinal. His response was swift to snuff out this spark of Protestant theology. Before long, Hellen was arrested and imprisoned, along with her husband and four other outspoken Protestants in the city. The



We shall have joy forever.

small group was soon found guilty of “heresy” and sentenced to death. The following day, soldiers brought Hellen, her husband, and the condemned Protestants to the gallows.

Hellen asked to die side by side with her husband, James Finlason, but her request was denied. Men were to be hanged, women drowned, and James would go first. Holding her young child in her arms, Hellen approached her husband, kissed him, and gave him these parting words:

“Husband, be glad, for we have lived together many joyful days, and this day, in which we must die, we ought to esteem the most joyful of all, because we shall have joy forever. Therefore I will not bid you good night, for we shall shortly meet in the kingdom of heaven.”

James was hanged before her eyes. His life on earth done, eyes fell to Hellen, who was forced to hand her newborn to a nurse entrusted with the child’s care from this point. The authorities led Hellen to a nearby pond, bound her hands and feet, put her into a large gunnysack along with stones or weights, and threw her into the water like a bag of garbage. All for the crime of “blaspheming the Virgin Mary.”

Heaven has all the details, but this is all we know of Hellen’s life. She was a bold woman made strong by Scripture. Her birthbed claim, that she was equally qualified to mother Jesus, was a radical ceremonial insubordination — but at the heart it was an act of faith, rendering the strata of all human superiority irrelevant in the presence of Christ’s supremacy.

Look deeper into the Reformation, and you will see that it’s more than printing presses and theses nailed to doors and theological debates. It’s the story of ordinary believers, husbands and wives and fathers and mothers, poised in the words of Scripture, reclaiming the primacy of Jesus Christ for their lives, their marriages, their families, and their eternal hopes, who stand as a cloud of witnesses calling us to do likewise. They call us to hold our biblical convictions without wavering, to enjoy God’s earthly blessings, and to endure all momentary afflictions now for the great eternal joy set before us.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reinke, Tony. “Hellen Strike – The Ordinary Virgin Mary.” DesiringGod.com, captured 22, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-ordinary-virgin-mary>.

# Week 3 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 12:18-29*

## **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

## **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

## Week 3 - Commentary

In this week's passage, the author of Hebrews mentions a familiar Old Testament story—the Mosaic covenant given at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:12-25, 20:18-21, and Deut. 18:16), which the Jews would recognize well. This event, permanently etched in Jewish history, was terrifying for everyone involved—obeying God's commands at Mount Sinai was a matter of life and death.

Even Moses trembled with fear when he learned that the Israelites had made a golden calf to worship while he was receiving the Ten Commandments from God (Deut. 9:19). God informed Moses that He planned to destroy the Israelites and start anew with Moses. According to Deut. 9:18, Moses prostrated himself on the ground for forty days and nights without eating or drinking, pleading with the Lord to spare His people.

Once again, the author of Hebrews uses the lesser-to-greater analogy to show us that the new covenant through Christ (exemplified through the Mount Zion imagery in verse 22) is even greater than the old covenant given at Mount Sinai.

The old covenant came with blazing fire, darkness, gloom, and warnings from God Himself. The new covenant comes with images of heaven, a new Jerusalem, angels in festive gatherings, those Christ-followers who have gone before us into heaven, God Himself as the ultimate judge, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

A mediator, in today's terms, is a neutral third party who helps resolve conflicts between two disputing sides. However, Jesus does not fit this role; He is not neutral. He is God. He acknowledges that we are sinners and deserving of death. Through His death and resurrection, He accomplishes the work to restore us to the Father.

Verse 24 demonstrates Christ's ultimate work through the new covenant, illustrating that Abel's blood crying out for vengeance and justice (Gen. 4:10-11) is fulfilled by Christ's blood shed on the cross (v. 24).

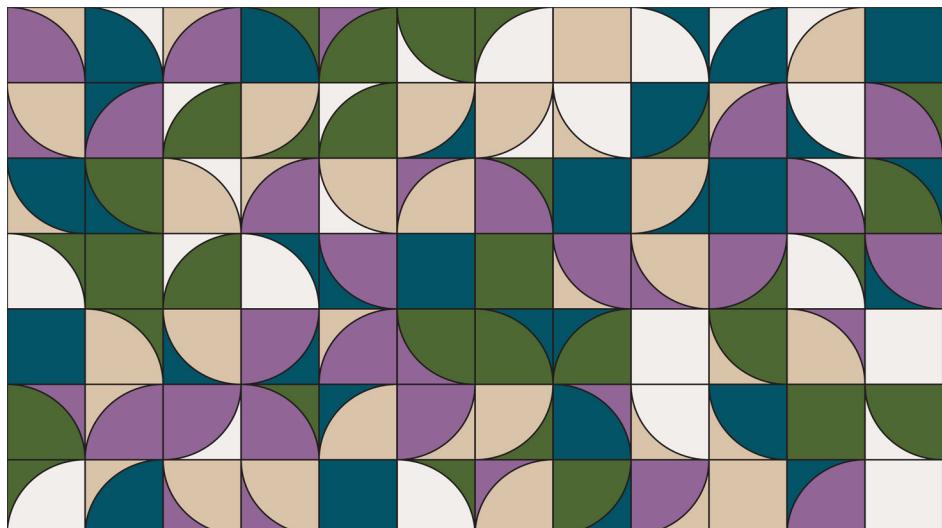
So, what is the author trying to say? If you found the voice of God frightening on Mount Sinai, don't dismiss the voice of God in heaven and on Mount Zion. God's character, holiness, and power remain the same—let us not take God's commands for granted or treat them lightly.

So, what should be our response to God's creation of an unshakable kingdom for His followers? First, let us express our gratitude by worshipping Him with reverence and awe (vv. 28-29). Some theologians think Heb. 13:1-19 provides practical ways to show our faith and worship of God. Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom. 12:1-2) echoes this idea with a similar message.

Second, let us live out our faith in the confidence that God is creating an unshakable, eternal kingdom for His followers. Note the descriptions of the participants in verses 22-23. This is a victory celebration! Christ has risen - He has risen indeed! He has conquered sin and death and lives forevermore!

Author James Bryan Smith summarizes this well in the following quote:

"I am one in whom Christ dwells and delights.  
I live in the strong and unshakeable kingdom of God.  
The kingdom is not in trouble, and neither am I."



# Week 3 - Devotional

## *Jan Hus – The Goosefather*

On December 17, 1999, the pope issued the ceremonial equivalent of a modern apology: “Our bad.”

John Paul II addressed a crowd in the Czech Republic, expressing “deep regret for the cruel death” inflicted upon their hero. “Deep regrets” were the very least the Catholic Church could offer.

Lured to the Council of Constance under the promise of safety, Jan Hus was immediately thrown into prison for six months, given a mock trial, and ordered to recant — which he refused. In July 1415, he was stripped, adorned with a dunce hat painted with devils, and labeled “Arch-Heretic” — all as he prayed for his enemies.

They then led him past a burning pile of his books and chained him to the stake. In response to being chained up like a dog, he said, “My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this one for my sake, so why should I be ashamed of this rusty chain?” They told him once more to recant, but he refused, proclaiming, “What I taught with my lips I will now seal with my blood.” And that he did.

As the flames climbed higher, he sang. The secretary of the council pronounced, “O curse’d Judas, because thou hast abandoned the pathways of peace, and hast counselled with the Jews, we take away from thee the cup of redemption.” Thankfully, the Catholic Church did not have the authority to take the cup of redemption that day.

After his death, outrage filled Bohemia. In his name, followers revolted against Rome in violent protest that lasted for over a decade. Jan Hus was a preacher, a political figure, a prophet, a proto-Reformer, and a martyr of the first class.

Around 1369, Jan Hus (Czech for goose) was born in Hussinec (Czech for Goosetown) in the Kingdom of Bohemia. Born into a poor family, the goose left the gaggle for the priesthood in search of a better living and prestige. He came to be a renowned preacher at Bethlehem Chapel, but spent much of his time serving in academia as the dean of the philosophical faculty in Prague.

Hus lived in a time when immorality infected the priesthood of the Catholic Church. He soon began preaching “violent sermons” against the rampant iniquity of the clergy until they reported him to the archbishop and had him banned from preaching. As Hus read Scripture and watched the popes of his day abuse their power, he

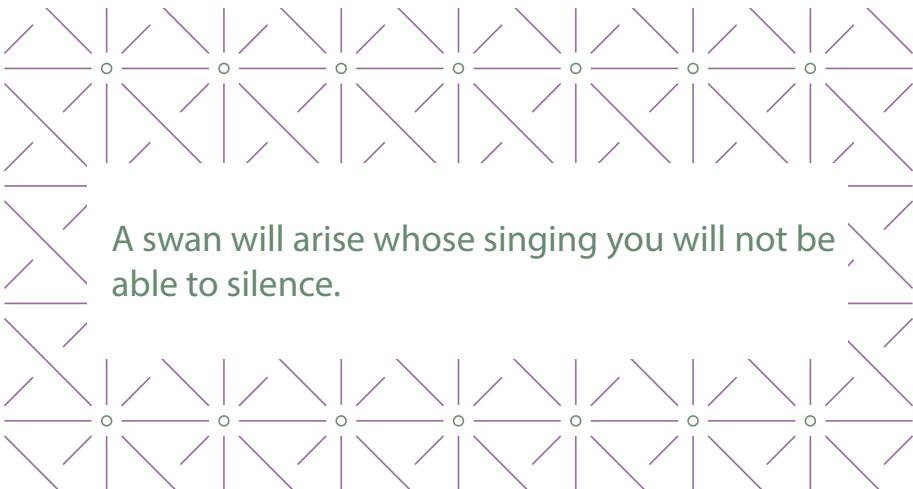
concluded that papal authority was not ultimate. He built his life and ministry on the word of God.

His views about Scripture's ultimate authority were set ablaze as he began to read the condemned works of John Wycliffe. Wycliffe found a loyal disciple in Hus. Hus defended his works with such tenacity that one historian called Hus "Wycliffe's bulldog" (The Unquenchable Flame, 30).

After Hus was finally condemned to death, he proclaimed, "You may roast the goose, but a hundred years from now a swan will arise whose singing you will not be able to silence." Exactly 102 years later, a sprightly monk nailed ninety-five theses to Wittenberg's door.

During the Leipzig Debate, Luther was disparagingly condemned as a "Hussite." He rejected the title in the moment, but took time to read his works during an intermission, returned, and commended the teaching of the condemned Hus. Luther was Hus's swan, and would later own the association. He's often painted with swans to this day.<sup>1</sup>

The Goosefather, a prominent forerunner to the Reformers, stood his ground and was martyred. The Swan followed the Goose, and Rome still has not silenced him.



A swan will arise whose singing you will not be able to silence.

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, Greg "Jan Hus – The Goosefather" DesiringGod.com, captured 22, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-goosefather>.

## Week 4 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 13:1-6*

### **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

### **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

## Week 4 - Commentary

In Chapter 13, the author of Hebrews shifts from emphasizing personal responsibilities to highlighting the importance of community within the local church.

The author opens verse 1 with “Let brotherly love continue,” referencing Jesus’ new commandment found in John 13:34-35 and John 15:12-17.

Paul echoes this command in multiple passages, including Rom. 12:10, 13:8; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:12, 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3. Peter also reminds us of Christ’s command in 1 Pet. 1:22, 4:8, and 5:14. The Apostle John reiterates this message in 1 John 3:11, 3:23, 4:7, 4:11-12, and 2 John 1:5.

Let’s also remember that the author of Hebrews mentioned something similar in Heb. 10:24-25, how to “stir up one another to love and good works... encouraging one another...”.

The author of Hebrews provides additional examples of loving brothers and sisters in Christ well:

- Showing hospitality to strangers (fellow Christ-followers)
- Visiting those in prison because of their faith in Christ
- Caring for those who are being mistreated because of their association with Christ

Showing hospitality to Christ-followers was more than a Jewish cultural expectation; it was a means of protection and provision, since travel was dangerous and difficult and staying in inns was risky at best.

Paul encouraged showing hospitality to fellow Christ-followers in Rom. 12:13, 1 Tim. 3:2, and Titus 1:8.

What does the phrase ‘...some have entertained angels unawares’ mean? The writer of Hebrews likely references several Old Testament instances where hospitality was extended to divine visitors—such as in Gen. 18:1-15, Judg. 6:11-24, and 13:3-24. Even Jesus disguised His appearance when interacting with travelers on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Occasionally, God reveals our true feelings towards others by bringing strangers into our lives.

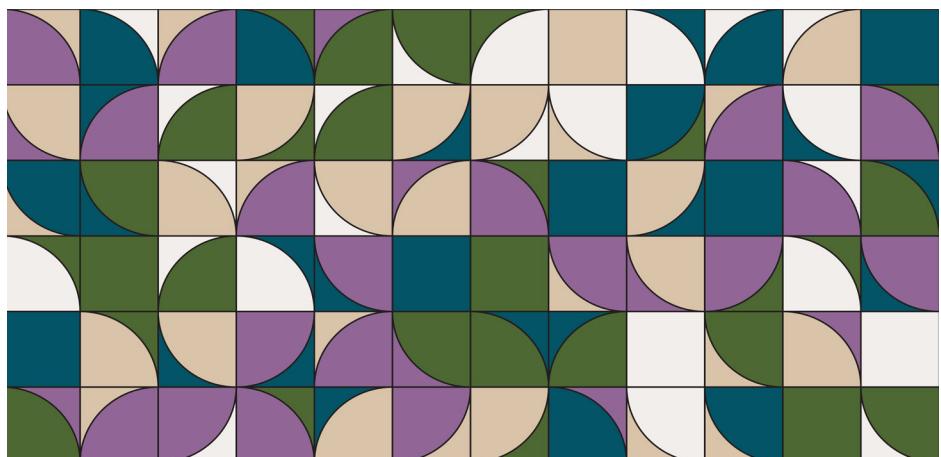
Caring for fellow Christ-followers in prison was an act of service for Christ because it identified the visitor as a Christ-follower. It represented an act of faith, overcoming fear and shame for the sake of Christ. Acts 28:14-15 recounts an instance of Christ-followers visiting

Paul in prison, illustrating how Jesus linked prison visitation with hospitality, as seen in his teachings about loving and following Him (Matt. 25:35-36).

The author of Hebrews aligns marriage and sexual relationships with God's standard of love, honor, and fidelity. This view directly contrasts with the prevailing societal standards of the time (infidelity, polygamy, sex outside of marriage, pedophilia, etc.), which often lacked consistency or held double standards for men and women. The same societal standards continue today and we can add to the list homosexuality and pornography which have become widespread even within the church.

Finally, the author of Hebrews urged the readers to live contentedly within their financial means. This approach required trusting God for their needs and keeping their attention on Him, rather than on societal ideals of greed, wealth, and power. Avoiding the love of money also created space for acts of love and hospitality—caring for traveling fellow believers, visiting Christ-followers in prison, and supporting brothers and sisters in Christ who faced abuse and mistreatment.

The writer emphasizes God's promise of provision by citing Ps. 118:6. Trusting in God extends beyond financial needs - it keeps our focus on Christ (Heb. 12:2) and encourages us to live in faith, not fear of others. May we live out our faith accordingly.



# Week 4 - Devotional

## *Katharina von Bora - The Runaway Nun*

On a chilly April night, twelve nuns crept silently into a fish wagon and waited for city councilor Leonard Koppe to begin driving, counting the tense minutes until their monastic vocation would end forever.

These women, smuggled from the convent in Nimbschen, Germany (in a breakout masterminded by Martin Luther), risked punishment as criminals if caught, and braved an uncertain future if successful. They were entirely dependent upon their family's willingness to "harbor" the fugitives by receiving them back into their homes. Nuns whose families refused them would need to avail themselves of a husband, or discover some rare form of female employment by which they could independently support themselves.

Katharina von Bora, one of these nuns, found no recourse in these options. The feisty Katharina finally insisted that she would only marry Luther or his friend Nicolas von Amsdorf. Apparently, Luther accepted the challenge and wed the runaway nun on June 13, 1525.

Marriage to Luther was a social step down for Katharina, who was born into a noble family. It also catapulted her into scandal and public ridicule. Erasmus of Rotterdam even predicted that the union would result in the birth of the Antichrist!

In spite of the tumultuous environment for their controversial marriage, the allegiance proved affectionate, loving, fruitful, faithful, and enduring. The couple moved into their new home, and Katharina pioneered a "new" calling that had been absent in medieval times — the pastor's wife.

The morning after her wedding, Katharina initiated her new vocation by serving breakfast to the few friends that had attended the ceremony the night before. Katharina's role as spouse of the famed Reformer, mother to six biological (and several orphaned) children, and manager of their parsonage (another innovation of the Reformation) and property became an instructive model for Protestant pastors' wives of that era.



The Reformers firmly established this role as a high vocational calling with theological and biblical foundation and gave new dignity to Christian women by including domestic work in the ministry of the gospel, thereby transforming the ideal Christian woman from its former medieval ideal (i.e., nun).

For Katharina, this calling involved caring for Luther, supporting his work and travels, nurturing their children, and a wide variety of tasks involving their parsonage. She renovated the abandoned monastery that served as their home; hosted the guests that stayed in their forty rooms; served meals to thirty or forty people regularly and banquets for more than a hundred; and created a self-sustaining household by purchasing and cultivating farmland for gardens, orchards, and animals to feed family and guests — as well as making bread and cheese and brewing beer.

In keeping with the Reformers' view that all of life is spiritual, Katharina did not distinguish between "practical" and "spiritual" tasks, but found fuel for her daily work in that she served God in all tasks.

In 1542 Katharina and Luther grieved the loss of their 13-year-old daughter, Magdalena, of which Luther wrote, "My wife and I should only give thanks with joy for such a happy departure and blessed end [for Magdalena] . . . yet the force of our natural love is so great that we cannot do this without weeping and grieving in our hearts or even without experiencing death ourselves. . . . Even the death of Christ . . . is unable totally to take this away, as it should."

This grief would only be paralleled by Katharina's grief at Martin's own death in 1546, which she described in one of her few surviving letters:

*"I am in truth so very saddened that I cannot express my great heartache to any person and do not know how I am and feel. I can neither eat nor drink. Nor again sleep. If I had owned . . . an empire I would not have felt as bad had I lost it, as I did when our dear Lord God took from me — and not only from me but from the whole world — this dear and worthy man."*

Katharina spent the rest of her days seeking support from Luther's former supporters in hopes of maintaining their home and children, until she died in December 1552. On her deathbed, she proclaimed, "I will stick to Christ as a burr to a topcoat."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tabb, Kristin "Katharina von Bora – The Runaway Nun" DesiringGod.com, captured 22, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-runaway-nun>.

# Week 5 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 13:7-17*

## **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

## **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

## Week 5 - Commentary

This week's text opens and closes with the author's emphasis on various aspects of local church leadership.

First, the dedicated efforts of their leaders' in preaching and teaching God's word to the local churches (v. 7).

Second, their godly way of life serves as an example of faith and trust in Christ, even during difficult circumstances (v. 7).

God holds these local church leaders accountable for the spiritual well-being of the congregation (v. 17).

The local church attendees can either make their church leaders' tasks joyful or burdensome; the author urges them to choose actions and words that promote joy.

In verse 9, the author warns against heresy, especially concerning doctrines about foods.

But what about verse 8? Is this simply an unrelated remark about Christ's reliability? Is there a deeper meaning behind it?

The author references three different time frames of Christ and links them together in this letter to the Hebrews.

- Yesterday, in Christ, creating the world and setting all things in order (Hebrews 1:2-4).
- Today, through the salvation Christ provides to everyone (Hebrews 4:7-11).
- Forever, Christ has established His authority and reign through His finished work on the cross and His everlasting resurrection (Hebrews 10:10, 12-14).

Verse 8, then, serves as a bridge and transition between verse 7 (the local church leaders trusting in Christ and modeling their lives after Christ) and verse 9 (strange teachings that are departures from Christ, who is always the same).

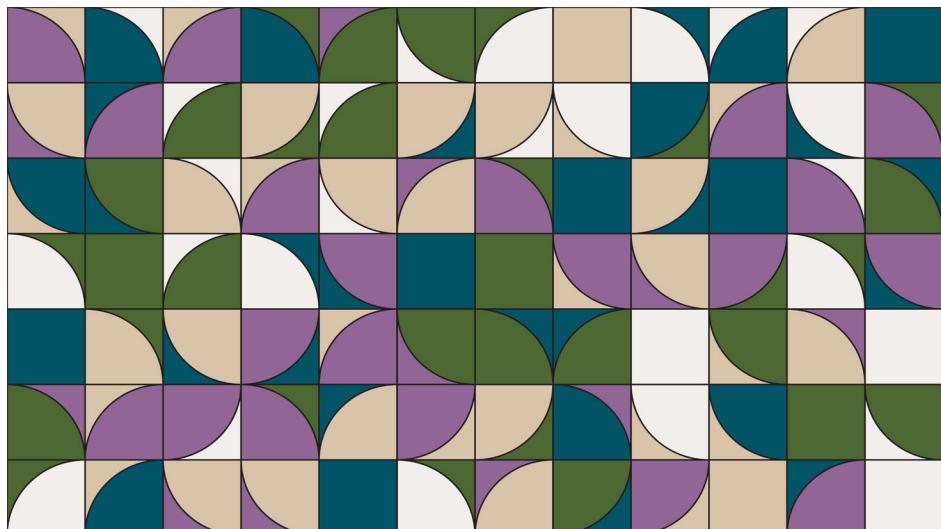
Verses 10-12 employ the imagery of the tabernacle, the dietary laws of the Old Testament, and the sacrificial system as metaphors to highlight the differences between Jewish practices in the Old Testament and those of Christ's followers in the New Testament. Our hearts are now strengthened by God's grace, not by following the Old Testament dietary laws. Additionally, because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was a one-time payment for our sins (Hebrews 10:10-14), the Old Testament

laws regarding sacrifices are now obsolete.

The author of Hebrews connects the dots between the Old Testament sin offerings “outside the camp” and Jesus’ death on the cross “outside the gate” to remind us that Christ’s sacrifice has sanctified us, not anything that we have done, are doing, or will do in the future.

The author of Hebrews invites us to go with Christ “outside the camp,” taking our stand with Christ and leaving behind the love of the world, the desire for its approval, living as foreigners and aliens in the world around us, enduring any reproach that may come (v. 13). This world is temporary; Christ promises us a city that is permanent and yet to come (v. 14). Our aim is not to align ourselves, the church, or the Gospel with the surrounding world. Rather, we seek to live our lives transformed by the Gospel, serving as beacons of hope and faith to those around us.

What does a life lived for Christ look like? Verses 15-16 offer some practical examples: expressing praise to God through words and sacrificially sharing our resources with others are ways to bring glory and honor to Him. Coming full circle, the author of Hebrews reminds us that God has instituted leaders within the local church to support and encourage us in our walk with Christ, and holds them accountable for our spiritual health. Let us turn their responsibility into a source of joy rather than a burden, while regularly praying for them.



# Week 5 - Devotional

## *Lady Jane Grey – The Teenage Martyr*

February 10, 1554: Two days before Lady Jane Grey climbs the scaffold. The Catholic chaplain John Feckenham enters Jane's cell in the Tower of London in the hopes of saving her soul. Or so he thinks.

Queen Mary (aka "Bloody Mary") had already signed her cousin Jane's death warrant, but she sent her seasoned chaplain to see if he could woo Jane back to Rome before her execution. Jane is about seventeen years old.

A charged debate follows — Feckenham the Catholic apologist and Jane the Reformed teenager. He presses that justification comes by faith and works; she stands her ground on sola fide. He asserts that the Eucharistic bread and wine are the very body and blood of Christ; she maintains that the elements symbolize Jesus's saving work. He affirms the Catholic Church's authority alongside Scripture; she insists that the church sits underneath the piercing gaze of God's word.

"I am sure we two shall never meet [again]," Feckenham finally tells Jane, implying her damnation. But Jane turns the warning back on him: "Truth it is that we shall never meet [again], unless God turn your heart."

From one angle, Jane's life is a story of manipulation, of powerful people using a teenager girl as a social and political prop. Her parents forced a severe education regimen upon her in the hopes that she could marry the heir to England's throne. When that opportunity passed, the Greys colluded with the king's chief minister to wed Jane to Guildford Dudley, a man she despised. And then, at the king's passing, a group of political conspirers handed her the crown that would cost Jane her head.

Through a different angle, the lens of God's providence, a different Jane appears. A Jane who used her Greek and Hebrew to study the Scriptures in their original tongue. A Jane sent to Henry VIII's court for grooming, only to meet Jesus through the Christian witness of Queen Katherine Parr. And, finally, a Jane who faces trial, imprisonment, and beheading with God's very words on her lips.

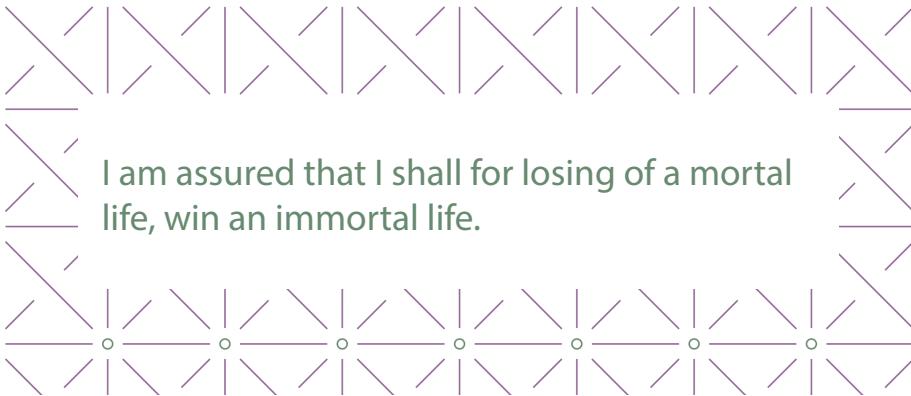
Lady Jane reluctantly took the throne on July 10, 1553, and willingly left it on July 19, 1553, when Mary gathered an army to depose her cousin queen. So Jane is often remembered by a number: the Nine-Days' Queen.

On February 7, 1554, Mary signed the death warrant that would lead Jane to the scaffold just five days later. Jane spent her final days preparing a brief speech for her execution and sending some last remarks. On the inside of her Greek New Testament, she wrote to her younger sister, Katharine,

“This is the book, dear sister, of the Law of the Lord. It is his testament and last will, which he bequeathed unto us wretches, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy. . . . And as touching my death, rejoice as I do, good sister, that I shall be delivered of this corruption, and put on incorruption. For I am assured that I shall for losing of a mortal life, win an immortal life.”

The morning of February 12 brought Jane to the wall of the central White Tower, where a small crowd and an executioner awaited her arrival. Turning to the onlookers, Jane announced, “I do look to be saved by no other mean, but only by the mercy of God, in the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ.” She then knelt and recited Psalm 51: “Have mercy on me, O God. . . .”

Once blindfolded, Jane groped her way to the execution block and laid her head in its groove. The last sound the crowd heard before the axe thudded into the block was a prayer from Jane’s seventeen-year-old voice: “Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” So ended the life of Lady Jane Grey, the teenage martyr.<sup>1</sup>



I am assured that I shall for losing of a mortal life, win an immortal life.

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<sup>1</sup> Hubbard, Scott “Lady Jane Grey – The Teenage Martyr” DesiringGod.com, captured 22, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-teenage-martyr>.

# Week 6 - H.E.A.R. Method

*Hebrews 13:18-25*

## **H**ighlight

Read with purpose, noting any verse that stands out. Write out the following: book name, scripture passage, a title summarizing the passage.

## **E**xplain

Explain the passage's meaning by asking: Why was it written? To whom was it addressed? How does it fit within the context? What is the Holy Spirit communicating?

## Apply

Write how the passage applies to you with questions like: How does this help me? What does this mean today? Write 2 to 5 sentences on its relevance to your life.

## Respond

Write your response - this could be a commitment, an action plan, or a prayer based on what you've learned.

## Week 6 - Commentary

The author of Hebrews brings this letter to a close with a prayer request, a benediction, and a few personal greetings.

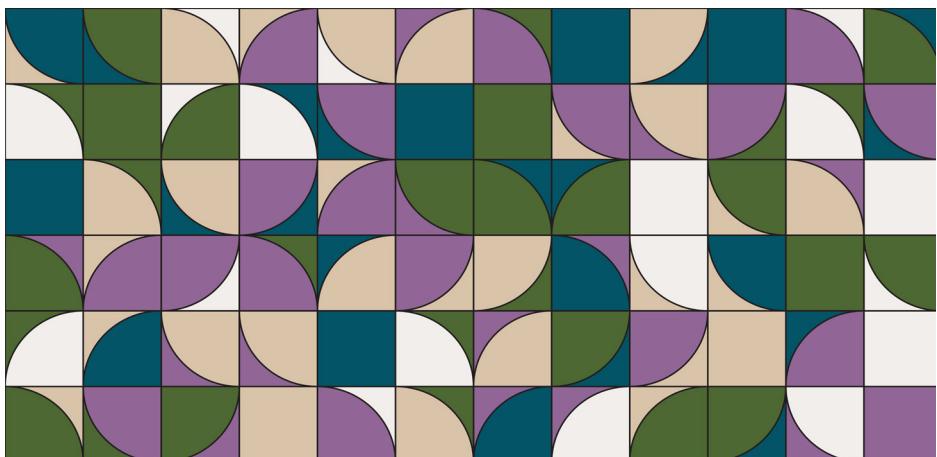
Most people pray for a change in their circumstances, such as relief from discomfort/pain or a favorable change in a situation; however, the author prays for character—specifically, a clear conscience and acting honorably in all matters while trusting the Lord with the outcomes. Oh, that we would learn to trust the Lord and have the deep faith to pray this same way!

Paul shared these same desires and prayer requests as the author of Hebrews:

- Acts 24:16 - to maintain a clear conscience before both God and people.
- 2 Corinthians 1:12 reflects the testimony of his conscience through his behavior in the world, by the grace of God.
- 2 Timothy 1:3 - expressing gratitude to God with a clear conscience as he prays daily for Timothy.

We would be remiss if we overlooked the urgency of the author's desire for these prayer requests. The author views the letter's readers as active participants in God's work and wishes to be with them in person, sooner rather than later.

Notice that the author does not ask the readers to pray and then follow up with various strategies to fulfill prayer requests through human effort, relying on oneself or others. The author shares his heartfelt



desires and simply asks the readers to pray, trusting the outcomes to the Lord.

The author concludes this letter to the Hebrew readers with a benediction. A benediction is essentially a blessing from God invoked upon the listeners or readers. A blessing was a common practice in the Old Testament; it would be well-known and welcomed among the letter's readers. The author starts with the phrase '... may the God of peace...', which likely evokes the Hebrew word 'shalom.' This term encompasses wholeness, completeness, and harmony, and also suggests healthy, vibrant relationships and the fulfillment of personal pursuits. For persecuted Christ-following Jews of that time - who faced rejection by family and social exclusion - these words probably offered comfort and healing across all areas of their life: spiritual, social, mental, and emotional.

The author reminds us that Christ has been raised from the dead, conquering death and sin once for all, and is now the victor and the Great Shepherd of the sheep (the church). By Christ's blood, He has established the eternal covenant forever. As the author and mediator of this eternal covenant, Christ equips us with everything necessary to fulfill His will. Furthermore, Christ not only supplies us with what we need but also works within us to accomplish what is pleasing in His sight. At the end of this benediction, the author emphasizes that everything is for Christ's glory, both now and for eternity. Amen!

The author also shares that Timothy, a mutual friend of all, had been released from prison. The author mentions that Timothy would accompany his visit if the Lord permitted (thus, the earlier urgency of their prayer request to visit them - v. 19).

The author also passes along greetings from "those who come from Italy" - most likely greetings from the churches around Rome. The author's final remarks are the blessing and presence of God's grace over everyone. Amen!

# Week 6 - Devotional

*Thomas Becon - The Monday Morning Protestant*

Though almost entirely overlooked in church history, Thomas Becon was a prolific pamphleteer, popular bestseller, and godly cleric in sixteenth-century England during the Reformation.

His writings on godliness are relevant and helpful for all Christians, particularly for those who tend to partition their lives into categories of “sacred” and “secular.” Becon, recognizing no such divisions, exhorted Christians in his day to pursue godliness in the rhythms of their daily routines.

Becon, born in Thetford, Norfolk, around 1512, was educated at St. John’s College in Cambridge. Upon his graduation with a degree in theology, Becon took two clerical posts in southern England, but following the ratification of the Six Articles of 1539, Henry VIII targeted evangelicals for noncompliance and “heresy.” Consequently, Becon was arrested in 1541 for his “evil and false doctrine.”

After his release, Becon produced numerous tracts under the pseudonym “Theodore Basil” in order to avoid detection from the local authorities. Under even heavier scrutiny and surveillance from the local magistrates at the order of Henry VIII, Becon fled to the Midlands of England and he hid for four years.

When the nine-year-old Edward VI, a friend and defender of the English Reformation, ascended the throne in 1547, Becon emerged from exile and returned to London, where he was appointed a chaplain in the royal court. Around the same time, he became rector of the prestigious parish in London, St. Stephen Walbrook.

With Mary I’s accession to the throne in 1553, however, many evangelicals, including Becon, were arrested. He was eventually



Worship is an incessant activity that is to weave its way through the liturgy of daily life.

released, but taking no risks, he immediately escaped to Strasbourg, where he joined a community of other exiled English evangelicals. From there he relocated to Frankfurt, where he assisted in developing a new liturgy for the English congregation composed of exiles.

One of Becon's primary foci in his pamphlets was how Christians were to attain godliness and how to integrate that godliness within their daily lives. First, the word of God, contended Becon, was sufficient for all Christians and was the catalyst to godliness. Becon envisioned an English commonwealth where "people maye learn even from theyr cradles . . . to knowe God, to understand his worde, to honour hym aryght, and to walke in his holy pathwayes" (New pollicye of warre).

Second, Becon instructed Christians to view their lives as a continual stage of worship where godliness was on display, even in the mundane on Monday morning. For Becon, worship was not limited to Sunday gatherings. Nor was it confined to certain spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading or prayer. Worship, rather, was an incessant activity that was to weave its way through the liturgy of daily life: the eating of meals, laboring at one's place of employment, spending leisure time, and retiring to bed.

Becon published two prayer manuals containing model prayers for specific activities of one's daily schedule. One of those manuals submitted model prayers for those in specific occupations, including magistrates, clergy, merchants, lawyers, mariners, soldiers, mothers, and children. Becon maintained that one occupation was not more essential than another. He argued that the work of the shoemaker and tailor was just as crucial in the kingdom of God as that of the lawyer and magistrate, because God was the one who called them to their vocations.

While many Christians subtly dismiss certain occupations as insignificant and view non-ministry work as "secular," Becon's assessment of all work as an activity of God and for God is a motivating corrective. We should embrace our calling and see the ultimate purpose of our work and vocation: godliness through employment blesses a society so that all "may [ac]knowledge thee, the gever of al[I] good things, and glorify thy holy name" (Flour of godly praiers).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hanson, Brian. "Thomas Becon – The Monday Morning Protestant" DesiringGod.com, captured 25, Nov. 2025, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-monday-morning-protestant>



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