



spiritual infant

DISCIPLE ME

THE ONE ABOUT GATHERING

ICEBREAKER: BETTER TOGETHER

Together, come up with a list of five activities or experiences that are way better when they are done with others rather than alone. Discuss why each of these activities would be worse if you had to do them alone.

READ: HEBREWS 10:23-25

In the passage we will explore today, the writer of Hebrews wants to encourage new Christians who are facing hardship and persecution to remain strong in their faith. So, he lists a few key ideas about how they can make sure they don't fall away from their newfound faith. He writes:

²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

STUDY: IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

To get a better understanding of what the author of Hebrews means by these statements, let's take a closer look at some of the Greek words used in this passage. You may not realize this, but the New Testament wasn't originally written in English; the majority of it was written in Greek. Often, when we want to understand the meaning behind a specific passage better, going to the original language and looking more closely at the meaning of the words can be helpful.

Let's start with the first verse where the author says: *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*"

The word that stands out in this first verse is the word "unswervingly". In Greek, the word that is used is the word: ἀκλινής (*aklinēs*). This word is actually a compound word that means "not bending or leaning", conveying the idea of steadfastness, firmness, and unwavering stability. In the first century, when this letter was written, the word was used by Philosophers to describe people who were devoted and committed to virtue. It was also used to describe soldiers or warriors who stood firm in battle, refusing to signal retreat even when under immense pressure.

DISCUSS:

- As you've been following Jesus, what has been challenging or difficult about following Him "unswervingly"?
- Have you ever been tempted to give up and "retreat", going back to how you used to live before you met Jesus?

In the next verse, the author of Hebrews writes: ²⁴ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,*

The phrase that stands out in this verse is "spur one another on". In the Greek the word that is used here is another compound word: παροξυσμός (paroxusmos). It combines the word "para", meaning beside or alongside and "oxus", which means sharp or pointed. The meaning of this word was to provoke, incite, or stimulate, sometimes with a sense of urgency or even agitation. This phrase is meant to tell these new Christians to be bold in their encouragement of one another, and not to be passive.

DISCUSS:

- Have you ever experienced another follower of Jesus "spurring you" on to do the right things and make the right choices? What happened? What was that like?
- Why might we need others in our life to provoke us toward making the right decisions?

In the last part of this passage, the author of Hebrews writes: ²⁵ *not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

In this final section, the focus is on the idea of "not giving up meeting together". The word used here is: ἐγκαταλείπω (egkatalaipō). This word means to abandon, leave behind, or desert something deliberately. Part of what the author of Hebrews believed was necessary for these followers of Jesus to remain strong in their faith was that they needed to gather intentionally and not forsake gathering together.

DISCUSS:

- Why do you think gathering together as a community of believers is important?
- What real obstacles or challenges do you face when it comes to making it a priority to gather with other followers of Jesus?

CHALLENGE: SPUR ONE ANOTHER

- This week, intentionally encourage three people in their faith. Send a text, make a call, or pray with them.