



THE COMMUNITY

All You Need is Love | OUR NEED FOR COMMUNITY

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Hebrews 10:24-25; 3:12-13

Hebrews 10:24-25

The passage deals with the powerful role Christian community and fellowship play in encouraging Christians to grow and persevere in their faith. God has designed us to need one another. Often, we are unaware of how great that need is until we actually experience true Christian community – community that propels us forward in our holiness, ministries and walks with Christ. As a plant grows strong and healthy in good soil, God has designed us, too, in such a way, that we will only grow spiritually strong and healthy within the soil of a close-knit group of Christians.

The way in which “meeting together” as Christians causes spiritual vitality is manifold: there is encouragement in hearing of others’ struggles and victories in their walks of faith; there is motivation that comes from hearing the Word of God and learning insights others have into the Scriptures; and, in a less tangible way, there is the experience of the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in and through the lives of others, which fans-to-flame the Spirit of God in our own lives.

The study focuses on a particular aspect of Christian community that is often overlooked – the visible manifestation of God’s grace. Although God knew our deepest sin, He chose to love us in and through Jesus Christ. Being known in all of our weakness, insecurity and hidden sin, and yet being loved and accepted is critical to our lives being transformed by grace. Because we cannot visibly see God, He has designed Christian community to manifest this grace so we can truly experience it. To enjoy this transforming grace, we must have a few close Christian friends with whom we can be extremely honest and vulnerable.

Let Us Consider

While there are many ways that our faith and heart are reflexively strengthened through Christian fellowship and relationships, the word “consider” in Hebrews 10:24 (“let us consider how we may spur one another on”) points to the need for intentionality. Fellowship can be reduced simply to a social time, if we are not intentionally considering how, in the context of meeting together, we might encourage particular individuals to press on in their walks with the Lord.

What’s the Big Idea?

God has designed us to need community. Community allows us to experience lifetransforming grace, protects us from the hardening and deceitfulness of sin and spurs us on toward love and good deeds.

What’s the Problem?

We continually move toward isolation and independence even though God created us to live in community.

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Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together

Hebrews 10:25 exhorts believers to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” because we are all in the habit of doing it. As these life-giving relationships are only found in community, Satan tries to “deceive” us into thinking we don’t need to get together. He often uses our fears, insecurities and the distractions of our busy lives to lure us into living independently. Yet, a Christian life lived in isolation will always lack the spiritual health and vitality of a life lived in community.

Hebrews 3:12-13

In Hebrews 3, these verses follow a quote from Psalm 95:7-11, which is a reference to Exodus 17:1-7. In Exodus, the Israelites were complaining and failing to trust God. The text says that they “hardened their hearts.” The Israelites were facing a real problem and a real need – a lack of water. Having a need was not wrong. Neither was it wrong to express their need to God. But the way they went about it showed their disbelief in God. It is this lack of belief that made God angry.

The passage points to the vital nutrients found only in the soil of community, which protects our hearts from hardening, and minds from unbelief. It is the “daily” encouragement and interaction with other believers, that helps maintain our spiritual vitality.

Check out what The Bible Knowledge Commentary says on this subject:

Each Christian brother, therefore, should be most careful to guard against a sinful, unbelieving heart which God’s flock in the wilderness displayed, the kind of heart that turns away from the living God. One preventative against such a tendency would be a spirit of mutual concern and admonition among the Christian brotherhood. Accordingly, they were to encourage one another daily...so that none would be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. This exhortation is just as pertinent today, where the hardening tendencies of sin can often be counteracted by truly concerned fellow Christians. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord and Zuck, p. 787)

What’s Our Response?

You want to help the group see that they need each other and that they are needed in the lives of others.

You want them to realize that God has designed them to need community. They need it to experience life-transforming grace, protection from the hardening and deceitfulness of sin and encouragement to persevere in their walks with God.

They need to believe that a Christian life lived in isolation will always lack the spiritual health and vitality of a life lived in community.

Last, they need to see that one of the most vital ways they will experience Jesus is in the context of community.

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What Are the Questions?

Hebrews 10:24-25; 3:12-13

Launch

Describe your first experience attending a Bible study. did it seem strange, awkward? Why did you go? Why did you go back?

Explore

Hebrews 10:24-25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 3:12-13:

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

1. In Hebrews 10:24-25 and 3:12-13, the term “one another” is used three different times. What instructions are given about how we are to relate to “one another”?
2. What is the purpose in “encouraging one another”?
3. The word “consider” means to ponder, observe or study. “Stimulate” means to spur or excite to action. Who are the people God has placed in your life to observe and think about?
4. What personally spurs you on to good deeds and loving others?
5. What could be some reasons for someone not wanting to speak into the lives of others by ‘considering’ and ‘encouraging’ them?
6. What do you think it means when it says “all the more as you see the Day approaching”? Why “all the more”?

7. Scripture tells us to “not give up meeting together.” What are the encouragements and benefits of meeting together as Christians that we cannot get on our own?

8. What personally draws you to a body of believers? What turns you away?

9. What would make those outside of your fellowship want to be a part of it? In what way(s) would they see Christ?

10. What was the last thing you did to encourage someone?

11. Has there ever been a time in your life when someone else's encouragement protected you from turning away from God? Have you ever been there for someone else?

12. Satan often uses fears, insecurities and a busy schedule to lure us away from Christian community. What typically tempts you to avoid “meeting together”?

Being known in all of our weakness, insecurity, and hidden sin, and yet being loved and accepted is critical to our lives being transformed by grace. Because we cannot visibly see God, He has designed Christian community to manifest this grace so we can truly experience it.

13. Who knows your hidden “badness” and is still committed to loving and encouraging you? Who, specifically, do you manifest God's grace, love and acceptance to?

Apply

14. Where have you felt your heart hardening or becoming less responsive to God?

15. Who is someone who could use your encouragement this week?

16. Why do you think Jesus looks to meet certain needs only through His body, the church?

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What Are the Answers?

1. Allow the group to make observations.
2. We need to spur one another on to love and good deeds.
3. Allow the group to discuss.
4. We are spurred on by seeing someone else do it, or by hearing of someone else's steps of faith.
5. Some reasons: No one is doing that with me! My life is not together. Who would want to follow my example? No one will listen to me. I have no influence.
6. The Day refers to Christ's return and the longer that Day is delayed, the more we need to encourage one another.
7. Meeting with Christians helps a person's spiritual progress and protects him from the deceitfulness of sin. Allow the group to share what draws them to a body of believers, what turns them away and whether they think their own group is attractive to others.
8. Allow the group to share.
9. Allow the group to discuss.
10. Allow the group to discuss.
11. Allow the group to discuss.
12. It is important for the group to see how Satan desires to keep Christians from true fellowship.
13. This is really the heart of the study. It's critical for those in your group to have these kinds of relationships.
14. Allow the group to share.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. He desires us to connect to one another – love one another. This would be rather difficult if we didn't need one another.

Memorize

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:24



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