



## NG Study Guide: Hebrews 13:8-25 :: “Jesus Greatness Works In You” [2.4.24]

### Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. Regularly review the notes at the bottom.

### The Study

**Thesis:** God is working in you so that you honor God, and as you honor God His work in you is manifest. Let’s discover the dynamic of Jesus’ greatness working in us to transform us for good.

**Subject: The Work God Does in You**

**Object: Honor God**

**Context:** The author urges Jewish Christians to continue in Christ despite scorn from the culture they were part of, because of the greatness of Jesus and the new covenant.

#### A. Jesus’ Greatness and God-honoring Worship (8-17)

##### 1. Jesus is worthy to be worshiped (8-13)

###### a. Worthy because of His unchanging nature and grace (8-9)

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. <sup>9</sup>Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.*

All Christlike attitudes and actions flow from the truth that the eternal God will not change His nature or plan to redeem humanity regardless of the cultural moment. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever (8). His perfect immutable nature in and of itself makes Him worthy of worship. He cannot get any better and he will not get any worse.

Their transformation would be by God’s grace, not from rules about kosher and non-kosher foods contained in the law of Moses (9). Grace is unmerited favor, and God’s nature is full of grace (Exodus 34:6, John 1:14, Hebrews 4:16). The gospel message is about God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

###### b. Worthy because of His sacrifice (10-12)

<sup>10</sup>*We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.*

<sup>11</sup>*For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup>Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*

The unbelieving Jewish culture could point to elaborate ritual and a sacrificial system, but Christians have a better altar or place of sacrifice the cross; and the unbelieving Jews did not get to partake in that privileged worship (10). The sacrificial system pointed to Jesus, the perfect sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin. Part of the ritual on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, was to take the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy Place as an offering for the sins of the people, but the animal bodies were burned outside away from the tabernacle, later the temple,

and away from the people (11, Leviticus 16:14-15). Jesus fulfilled this type, by being crucified outside of the city (12). The blood of sacrifice provided a temporary covering for sin. The blood of Jesus *sanctifies*: sets believers apart to God as forgiven through faith in Jesus (12).

## **2. God-honoring worship (13-17)**

*13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

### **a. Go to Him (13-14)**

The first act of God-honoring worship is to go to Jesus, and then keep coming to Him (Matthew 11:28-30). He is *outside the camp* is a reminder to them and to us that following Jesus will always be counter-cultural (13). Thus there will always be reproach or ridicule from a prevailing culture. Be comforted this is not your “true home” heaven is, *For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come* (14). Go through this life preparing for the life to come.

### **b. Offer the sacrifice of praise (15)**

*Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.* The author describes the outflow of a life transformed by Jesus and His gospel of grace, the mouth declares *praise* and *thanksgiving* to God. Whether in song, in prayer, or conversation adoration flows a God-honoring worshiper.

Cane a farmer and Abel a shepherd, the sons of Adam and Eve, offered sacrifices to God. God accepted Abel’s offering but did not accept Cane’s. Either it was the wrong offering, the wrong heart, or both (Genesis 4). Thus, we discover that not all worship is acceptable to God. God is seeking worshipers who worship in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

### **c. Offer the sacrifice of resources (16)**

*But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

You reveal your worship, or love for God, by your love for people (Matthew 22:37-39). We are called to do good and to share of our resources of time, talents, and treasure. We serve God as we serve, care for and support others and the gospel. James observes that pure worship is to care for widows and orphans (James 1:27).

Near the end of King David’s life he sought to purchase land on a hill to erect an altar and offer sacrifices to God to end a plague. The owner of the land sought to give it to the king. David replied that he would purchase the land, because he could not truly worship God with that which cost him nothing (2Samuel 24:18-25).

### **d. Offer the sacrifice of self (17, Romans 12:1-2)**

*Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

The object of obedience and submission is not really pastors and spiritual leaders who are caring for your soul, but God. Truly, yielding to God is what is best for all of us individually and as a community. Calvary Nexus is truly a blessing and my experience has been characterized with an abundance of joy, and whatever grief pales in comparison.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

## **B. Jesus' Greatness and God-honoring Prayer (18-19)**

<sup>18</sup> Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. <sup>19</sup> But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

### **1. Prayer declares our dependence upon and devotion to God**

The author, and presumably one or more others known to the recipients, are asking for prayer so that they can be restored to the recipients. The Greek tense could be translated, "Keep praying." The author affirms that he is trying to have the right attitude and actions when he writes, *in all things desiring to live honorably* (18).

God desires His people to be a people of prayer (Matthew 21:13, Isaiah 56:7). God already knows our needs and desires (Matthew 6:8) so why should we pray? Through prayer we honor God by declaring our dependence and devotion. As we submit prayer requests and pray over the prayer requests that others have submitted ([Prayer@calvarynexus.org](mailto:Prayer@calvarynexus.org)), as we are prayed for at the end of services, as we pray individually and together (e.g. NGs) we honor God.

## **C. Jesus' Greatness Produces God-honoring Good (20-25)**

### **1. A declaration of praise to God (20-22)**

<sup>20</sup> Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, <sup>21</sup> make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**a. He is the source of peace:** *Now may the God of peace* (19, Isaiah 9:6, Romans 5:1).

**b. He is resurrected:** *brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead* (20, 1Corinthians 15:1-4).

**c. He is the great Shepherd:** *that great Shepherd of the sheep* (20, John 10:11, 1Peter 2:25). A shepherd nurtures, protects and leads their flock.

**d. He is the Mediator of the new covenant:** *through the blood of the everlasting covenant* (19, 9:15). This covenant, the gospel of grace, is everlasting and will never be replaced by an improvement (Cf. Jeremiah 31:31).

**e. He makes you complete:** *make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen* (21). This is a prayer and praise that God will provide everything good for doing His will. God will supply what is needed for you to live a life that is pleasing to Him. God is working through Jesus in you. So, the glory for the transformation goes to Jesus. It is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

The term translated *complete* is the Greek *katartizo* which is translated elsewhere as perfect, mend, restore, and is the idea of making one what he or she ought to be. A search of this term reveals some of the tools God uses to equip you: the Bible (2Timothy 3:16-17), prayer (1Thessalonians 3:10), a community of faith (Ephesians 4:11-12), other believers (Galatians 6:1), and suffering (Hebrews 12).

### **2. Final words (22-25)**

<sup>22</sup> And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. <sup>23</sup> Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. <sup>24</sup> Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. <sup>25</sup> Grace be with you all. Amen.

Bear with this letter of exhortation, and receive the encouragement and exhortation (22). An update re Timothy's freedom and the author's desire to bring him along when he visits the recipients (23). Greet the church leaders and all the believers (24). A reference to *those from Italy* perhaps revealing the location of the author or recipients (24). And finally a reminder of God's grace, where the letter and our study of Hebrews ends.

**Study Guide Qs:**

**Q1. What are some reasons why Jesus is worthy to be worshiped?**

**Q2. What are some characteristics of God-honoring worship?**

**Q3. What are some ways that prayer honors God?**

**Q4. What are some ways that you've observed Jesus produce good in your life or the life of others?**

**"Disciples Who Dig Deeper" (optional or alternative study)**

**1. What about the study of Hebrews has been most significant in your life?**

**2. Read the book of Hebrews and note at least three verses that you want to learn, love and live.**

**Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:**

**1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors inside or outside the group?**

**2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?**

**Disciples who make disciples:**

**1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?**

**2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:**

**Engage and befriend a neighbor where you live, work, study, play or worship to enjoy a meal together.**

**Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:**

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

**Notes:**

**1. Preparation and participation:** Group participants should read the teacher's notes contained in this study guide prior to your meeting and be prepared to discuss the content. Remember the purpose of preparation and participation is to accelerate growth as disciples who loves God supremely, loves neighbors like self, and make other disciples who do likewise. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.

**2. Consider what about the passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?**

If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.

**3. The “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.

**4. The “Love your neighbors” section encourages participants to love neighbors inside and outside the group better.** As a leader, discuss this section frequently.

**5. The “Disciples who make disciples” section provides a helpful idea, and encourages participants to be disciples who make disciples.** Leaders should regularly encourage the group to review and discuss this section.