



## NG Study Guide: Hebrews 5:12-6:20 :: “Jesus Offers A Greater Hope” [10.29.23]

### 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:** Life in this world can be very discouraging, but today we find a hope that will be sure, steadfast, and provide encouragement and comfort for your soul!

**Subject: The need for spiritual growth**

**Object: Keep growing in Christ and know His hope.**

**Context:** An exhortation to Jewish Christians experiencing persecution to remain steadfast in Christ. It is a warning of the risks and dangers of drifting away and a rebuke of spiritual immaturity.

#### A. Traits of those who don't grow (5:12-6:6)

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. <sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

#### 1. Spiritual immaturity (12)

They had been followers of Jesus long enough chronologically that they should be able to teach others, but they still needed to be taught the *first principles* or basics of the faith (12). Although not everyone is called to teach a large group, every mature believer should be able to mentor or disciple another. They were *partakers of milk* or (12,13) indicating they only consumed and were satisfied with basics of the faith. They lacked a mature understanding of the *word of righteousness*, the Bible (13).

#### 2. Spiritually ignorant (14)

*Solid food* or spiritual meat is the diet of *those who are of full age*, the spiritually mature. They learn the word of God, love it and live it. The spiritually mature *discern both good and evil*. The spiritually immature are ignorant of what God declares good or evil.

Barna research (3.16.22) only 30% of Christians responded that progress in their spiritual life was important.

#### 3. Neglect to grow past the basics (6:1-3)

*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.*

Because of the dangers of spiritual immaturity and ignorance, we are urged to grow past the *elementary principles of Christ* or the basics of the faith (1). We are exhorted to *go on to perfection* (1) meaning completion or maturity. Use the basics as a foundation to build upon, but grow beyond the basics. The author lists six foundational principals of the Christian faith: 1. *Repentance* (1) which refers to changing our thinking about God and sin towards God's view, 2. *faith in God* (1) means belief and yielding, 3. *baptism* (2) is a symbol of

identification with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. 4. *Laying on hands* (2) is a symbol of God's authority, 5. *Resurrection of dead* (3) is focused on believers receiving new bodies that will be enjoyed in a new heaven and earth for eternity in God's presence. 6. *Eternal judgment* (3) refers to being separated from God for all who rejected Jesus and his gospel.

#### **4. Danger of rejecting Jesus (4-6)**

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame*

Who are these people who it is impossible to restore? Commentators disagree whether it is a reference to true believers, people who claimed faith but were never really saved, and some assert it is a hypothetical. They had heard the gospel (*once enlightened*), had a sense of *the heavenly gift* (4) and were *partakers of the Holy Spirit* (4) (there was conviction of sin and need for a Savior, but not sure if they received the Holy Spirit {John 16:8}). They had *tasted the good word of God* (5) implying interest in Jesus and His gospel. *If they fall away* (6) refers to rejecting Jesus more than a temporary drifting there is a warning that they won't renew to repentance when there is no conviction of totally rejecting Jesus. *Since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame* (6), because they are in effect declaring Christ's sacrifice was for nothing or is unnecessary.

This is a warning that if someone wanders too far, too often and too long they may not be saved. The purpose is not to frighten them, but to encourage them to grow and abide in Christ.

**Note:** we believe that true believers cannot lose their salvation (1John 5:13, John 10:26-30, Romans 8:28-39).

### **B. The Blessings of growth [7-20]**

#### **1. Results of growth (7-10)**

*<sup>7</sup> For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; <sup>8</sup> but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. <sup>9</sup> But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

#### **Christ-like attitudes and actions, and confidence in salvation**

God's desire to bless is seen in nature as rain and seed produce fruit to benefit those who cultivate (7). *Thorns and briers* (8) are the opposite of fruit, and are the consequence of rebellion against God (8, Genesis 3:18). The author affirms his love and confidence, *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation* (9). True believers bring forth fruit as evidence of salvation. *God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister* (10). Their past and present service towards God's people was evidence of their faith. God is just and would not forget their *work and labor of love*. Good works that are motivated by love for God and love for neighbors are evidence of saving faith (James 2:26); and shall be rewarded by God (1Corinthians 3:11-15). We are saved by faith in Jesus not good works (Ephesians 2:8-10), but good works flow from a transformed life. Serving others is the nature of Jesus, and His disciples (followers) (Mark 10:45).

The transformation produces confident assurance in your salvation.

#### **2. Requirement for growth (11-12)**

*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

#### **Enduring passion for God**

*We desire that each of you show the same diligence* is a call for all of God's people to be passionate for God with *full assurance of hope* (11). As we grow in our faith, we have a greater appreciation of the hope that we have in

Christ not only in the life to come but in this life. The hope fuels continued passion, and the passion fuels continued hope. The diligence or passion for God is contrast with *becoming sluggish* or apathetic (12).

*Imitate people who through faith and patience inherit the promises* (12). We need people in our lives who trust God and patiently trust that God will fulfill His promises, and we need to be those people for others to imitate. The Apostle Paul declared, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1). Certainly, Paul did not perfectly imitate Jesus. Yet, Paul knew if others followed His example they would grow in their Christlikeness. You need those people in your life who are growing in their faith and passion for God to help you to grow and experience God's hope.

### **3. Reliability of growth (13-20)**

*<sup>13</sup> For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." <sup>15</sup> And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup> For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. <sup>17</sup> Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, <sup>18</sup> that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us..*

#### **God's promises are reliable (13-18)**

God promised Abraham countless offspring and descendants (14-15), and they would receive the Promise Land. (Genesis 15). At the time Abraham was 75 years old and had no children. Abraham believed God, despite the circumstances, and it was counted as righteousness. It would be 25 years later when he was 100 years old that Isaac was born. Abraham's faith wasn't perfect during that time, but he patiently endured believing God, and discovered God is faithful.

When people have a conflict, and someone swears an oath on something greater it can resolve the conflict (16). God can't swear by anything greater than Himself (13, Genesis 22:16-17). God wants the *heirs of the promise* (17) (the promise is the promise of salvation (9). In other words, God wants believers (saved people) to know there are two *immutable* or unchanging *things* (18). First, *God cannot lie* (18). So, what God has promised will surely come to pass. Second, God has promised salvation (life with God in this life and the life to come) and that promise is sure. God wants us to know this so that *we might have strong consolation* or encouragement and comfort (18)

#### **Jesus' hope is reliable (18-20)**

*Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. <sup>19</sup> This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, <sup>20</sup> where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Those who have *fled for refuge*, seek refuge in Christ from the madness of this world. *The hope* of life with God in this life and the life to come is an *anchor for our soul* that keeps us from drifting from God (19). Jesus has gone before us into God's Presence as a forerunner so that we might follow and experience the *Presence* of God (19-20). As you grow in Christ that hope and rest for the soul becomes a greater reality. This is the beauty of a mature follower of Jesus!

#### **Study Guide Qs**

**Q1. What are some of the warning signs that may often precede someone drifting from God?**

**Q2. As a group discuss how you have seen spiritual growth in one another.**

**Q3. How has your sense of hope been impacted by your growth?**

**Q4. What tips would you give for growing closer to Jesus?**

## “Disciples Who Dig Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is a helpful article re hope as an anchor: <https://www.gotquestions.org/hope-as-an-anchor.html>
2. Watch this brief Bible Project Video overview of Hebrews: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/hebrews/>

### 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:  
[Invite people where you live, work, study, play or worship to check out your NG.](#)

### 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.