

DRAW NEAR

Hebrews 8-13

ev/church

HEBREWS 8-13: DRAW NEAR

TERM 4	PASSAGE	
Week 1	Hebrews 8	New and Better Covenant
Week 2	Hebrews 9	New and Better Sacrifice
Week 3	Hebrews 10:1-18	Once For All Forgiveness
Week 4	Hebrews 10:19-39	Confidence to Draw Near
Week 5	Hebrews 11	What Faith Does
Week 6	Hebrews 12:1-3	Run the Race
Week 7	Hebrews 12:4-17	Endure Hardship as Discipline
Week 8	Hebrews 12:18-29	Acceptable Worship
Week 9	Hebrews 13:1-8	Holy Love
Week 10	Hebrews 13:7-25	Our Pleasing Sacrifices

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?

Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for three friends, once a week, for one minute (3-1-1).

List the names of your family and friends here:

TERM 4 – 2022

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

1. Personal reading

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by his Spirit, through his word.

2. Growth Groups

- Take this guide with you to your Growth Group each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.



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GIVING AT EV CHURCH

The New Testament teaches us to give generously, regularly and joyfully. Please join with us in bringing to the Coast solid hope in Jesus.

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READ THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

Something you might like to use to extend your daily Bible reading.

The Bible is truly an extraordinary book, unique among all other books. It consists of 66 individual books, written by 40 different authors, in three different languages across 1,500 years of history. Yet for all of this diversity it contains a unified message that focuses on the coming of Jesus and the amazing salvation He offers through His death and resurrection!

The Bible contains words written by men in all the richness of literary types making it fun, challenging and enjoyable to dig into. Yet, at the same time, the Bible is also the very words of God given to us by His Spirit (1 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). These are not just words spoken in times past, but words that are alive for us to read today (Hebrews 4:12-13). The God of the universe actually addresses us today clearly in the pages of the Bible – amazing!

Jesus says the entire Bible points us to Him, that He is the focal point of it all. Listen to what He says, “He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44). Or, again Jesus says, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40).

Knowing this is helpful in motivating us to read the Bible regularly, to keep building a bigger understanding of God’s purposes and how they are being fulfilled in Jesus. To help with this, the Daily Reading Notes now include an extra challenge: to read the whole Bible in two years. It’s totally optional, are you up for it?

There is a list of around 15 chapters of additional reading for each week of the term that will help you achieve this challenge. These readings can be done on whatever days work best and in whatever order you prefer to read them. At the end of each term you have a chance to catch up before the next term’s suggested readings begin again. You can also track your readings across the two years right here. Enjoy!

YEAR 1: TERM 1

Week 1	Genesis 1-5; Psalms 1-4; Genesis 5-10; Matthew 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Genesis 11-15; Psalms 5-7; Genesis 16-20; Matthew 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Genesis 21-25; Psalms 8-10; Genesis 26-30; Matthew 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Genesis 31-35; Psalms 11-16; Genesis 36-40; Matthew 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/>

Week 5	Genesis 41-45; Psalms 17-19; Genesis 46-50; Matthew 10-11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Exodus 1-5; Psalms 20-24; Exodus 6-10; Matthew 12-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Exodus 11-15; Psalms 25-27; Exodus 16-20; Matthew 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Exodus 21-25; Psalms 28-31; Exodus 26-30; Matthew 16-17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Exodus 31-35; Psalms 32-34; Exodus 36-40; Matthew 18-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Leviticus 1-5; Psalms 35-37; Leviticus 6-10; Matthew 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 1: TERM 2

Week 1	Leviticus 11-15; Psalms 38-41; Leviticus 16-20; Matthew 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Leviticus 21-27; Numbers 1-3; Proverbs 1-3; Matthew 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Numbers 4-13; Proverbs 4-6; Matthew 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Numbers 14-23; Proverbs 7-9; Acts 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Numbers 24-33; Psalms 42-44; Acts 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Numbers 34-36; Psalms 45-48; Acts 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Deuteronomy 1-7; Psalms 49-51; Acts 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Deuteronomy 8-17; Psalms 52-54; Acts 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Deuteronomy 18-27; Psalms 55-57; Acts 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Deuteronomy 28-34; Joshua 1-3; Psalms 58-61; Acts 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 1: TERM 3

Week 1	Joshua 4-13; Psalms 62-65; Acts 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Joshua 14-23; Psalms 66-68; Acts 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Joshua 24; Judges 1-9; Psalms 69-71; Acts 19-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Judges 10-19; Psalms 72; Proverbs 10-11; Acts 21-22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Judges 20-21; Ruth 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-4; Proverbs 12-14; Acts 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	1 Samuel 5-14; Proverbs 15-17; Acts 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	1 Samuel 15-24; Proverbs 18-20; Acts 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	1 Samuel 25-31; 2 Samuel 1-3; Proverbs 21-22; Mark 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	2 Samuel 4-13; Psalms 73-75; Mark 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	2 Samuel 14-24; Psalms 76-77; Mark 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>

READ THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

YEAR 1: TERM 4

Week 1	1 Kings 1-5; Psalms 78-80; 1 Kings 6-10; Mark 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	1 Kings 11-15; Psalms 81-83; 1 Kings 16-20; Mark 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	1 Kings 21-22; 2 Kings 1-8; Psalms 84-86; Mark 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	2 Kings 9-13; Psalms 87-89; 2 Kings 14-18; Mark 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	2 Kings 19-25; 1 Chronicles 1-3; Psalms 90-93; Mark 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	1 Chronicles 4-8; Psalms 94-96; 1 Chronicles 9-13; Romans 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	1 Chronicles 14-18; Psalms 97-101; 1 Chronicles 19-23; Romans 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	1 Chronicles 24-29; Psalms 102-104; Romans 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	2 Chronicles 1-5; Psalms 105-106; 2 Chronicles 6-10; Romans 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	2 Chronicles 11-15; Proverbs 23-25; 2 Chronicles 16-20; Romans 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 1

Week 1	2 Chronicles 21-25; Proverbs 26-28; 2 Chronicles 26-30; Romans 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	2 Chronicles 31-36; Ezra 1-4; Proverbs 29-31; Romans 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Ezra 5-10; Nehemiah 1-4; Psalms 107-109; Romans 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Nehemiah 5-13; Psalms 110-113; 1 Corinthians 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Esther 1-10; Psalms 114-117; 1 Corinthians 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Job 1-5; Psalms 118; Job 6-10; 1 Corinthians 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Job 11-15; Psalms 119:1-48; Job 16-20; 1 Corinthians 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Job 21-25; Psalms 119:49-96; Job 26-30; 1 Corinthians 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Job 31-35; Psalms 119:97-144; Job 36-40; 1 Corinthians 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Job 41-42; Ecclesiastes 1-8; Psalms 119:145-176; 1 Corinthians 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 2

Week 1	Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Songs 1-5; Psalms 120-122; 1 Cor 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Songs of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1-7; Psalms 123-125; Luke 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Isaiah 8-12; Psalms 126-130; Isaiah 13-17; Luke 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Isaiah 18-22; Psalms 131-135; Isaiah 23-27; Luke 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Week 5	Isaiah 28-32; Psalms 136-138; Isaiah 33-37; Luke 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Isaiah 38-42; Psalms 139-142; Isaiah 43-47; Luke 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Isaiah 48-52; Psalms 143-145; Isaiah 53-57; Luke 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Isaiah 58-62; Psalms 146-147; Isaiah 63-66; Luke 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Jeremiah 1-5; Psalms 148-150; Jeremiah 6-10; Luke 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Jeremiah 11-15; Luke 17-21; Jeremiah 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 3

Week 1	Jeremiah 21-25; Luke 21-24; Jeremiah 26-30; 2 Corinthians 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Jeremiah 31-35; 2 Corinthians 2-7; Jeremiah 36-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Jeremiah 41-45; 2 Corinthians 8-13; Jeremiah 46-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Jeremiah 51-52; Lamentations 1-5; Galatians 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Ezekiel 1-5; Ephesians 1-6; Ezekiel 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Ezekiel 11-15; Philippians 1-4; Ezekiel 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Ezekiel 21-25; Colossians 1-4; Ezekiel 26-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Ezekiel 31-35; 1 Thessalonians 1-5; Ezekiel 36-40; 2 Thessalonians 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Ezekiel 41-48; 1 Timothy 1-6; 2 Timothy 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Daniel 1-10; Titus 1-3; Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 4

Week 1	Daniel 11-12; Hosea 1-8; Hebrews 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Hosea 9-14; Joel 1-3; Hebrews 8-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Amos 1-9; James 1-5; 1 Peter 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Obadiah; Jonah 1-4; 2 Peter 1-3; 1 John; 2 John; 3 John	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3; Jude; Revelation 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Habakkuk 1-3; Revelation 6-19:10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Zephaniah 1-3; Revelation 19:11-22:21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Haggai 1-2; John 1-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Zechariah 1-14; John 13-17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Malachi 1-4; John 18-21	<input type="checkbox"/>

INTRODUCTION: HEBREWS 8-13

Last year in Hebrews 1-7, we saw that this letter was written to persecuted Jewish converts to Christianity (hence the name 'Hebrews') who were tempted to turn back. The message was simple: "Don't fall away from Jesus! Instead, hold fast, and draw near!" (See Hebrews 2:1, 3:1, 3:12-14, 4:1, 4:11, 6:4-8.)

That message continues in chapters 8-13, as we will see this term. The focus continues to be on helping these Christians, tempted to drift, to endure (Hebrews 10:35-36). So again we see both the **warnings** against falling away (10:26-31) alongside **encouragements** to press on and grow in the Christian life (10:19-25, chapters 11-13). Yet, in this half of the book there are fewer warnings and more encouragements: we're encouraged not only to *Hold Fast* (our title last term) but also to *Draw Near* (our title this term).

The reality is that although the warnings are necessary, they are not enough. The best antidote to the danger of drifting is not fear; it is intimacy. It is to really treasure Jesus, to know his worth and value, and most of all, to walk closely with him in nearness of relationship.

So, these chapters weave an intricate argument for Jesus' superiority to the Old Covenant, which the hearers of this letter were tempted to return to in order to escape persecution. In fact, Hebrews will show us that Jesus is the whole point of the Old Covenant.

We will pick up this argument midway through a section on Jesus as the greater High Priest. We will see that he brings a better covenant (chapter 8) and offers a better sacrifice (chapter 9). So the theme of Jesus as High Priest begun in chapter 4 continues to build until the crescendo of chapter 10, which is really the key call of the entire book: since we have a great priest, let us draw near to God with full assurance!

Be praying that as we study this book, our church will be filled with the confidence we can have in approaching God relationally and in prayer because Jesus' blood has truly and completely cleansed our consciences once and for all. This is the confidence that will help us continue to hold fast to him even in sin, suffering, or temptation (10:35-36).

The key appeal of chapter 10 then overflows in encouragement to keep trusting Jesus (chapter 11), looking to him (12:1-3), allowing God to use our

circumstances to grow us (12:3-17), while we live holy lives (12:18-29) in every way (chapter 13).

The box below points to some special themes to look out for, but would you pause now and pray for the term ahead in the words of Hebrews 13:

"God of peace,

Through the blood of the eternal covenant you brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

Please equip [me and our church] with everything good for doing your will, and please work in us what is pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen"

The key to understanding the Old Testament sacrificial system

Have you ever read Exodus and Leviticus and scratched your head about what to make of it? Perhaps you thought, "I should find a good commentary to read." Well, there's obviously value in that, but in Hebrews 8-10, God has given us his own Spirit-inspired commentary! Hebrews 8-10 are some of the most helpful chapters in the Bible for showing how the Old Testament sacrificial system and temple points to Jesus. The writer of Hebrews takes you on a guided tour of the whole system, showing how those things were scale models of Jesus' ministry.

As we see this, we'll understand why our church doesn't have an altar, or priests, or robes, or a holy place, or any of the things God commanded the Israelites to have in Exodus and Leviticus. Those commands were part of the Old Covenant, and were to point to Jesus. Now that Jesus has come, we don't need an altar – his cross was the altar. We don't need a holy place – we are the holy place where God dwells by his Spirit.

See pages 16-18 of this guide for more.

A Spotify Playlist for this term in Hebrews



Visit evchurch.info/sing to find a curated Spotify playlist of songs that are soaked in the themes of Hebrews 8-13. We hope this playlist helps you to let God's word dwell richly in your mind and heart throughout the day.

Book Recommendation:



God's Big Picture by Vaughan Roberts

This book is an essential read for all Christians. It is like finally installing the maps app on your phone – you will feel a lot less lost in the Bible.

It is easy to understand and easy to follow, and will help you every time you open a Bible for the rest of your life. How's that for a sell?

If you have ever wondered how to understand and apply a chapter of Genesis, or Leviticus, or 1 Samuel, or Hosea, or any other part of the Bible, then this surprisingly short book has the answer.

In just 150 pages, Vaughan Roberts shows how the whole Bible fits together and points to Jesus. He breaks the unfolding of God's plan down into stages and shows the unique lessons from each stage.

So wherever you are in the Bible you will know where on the 'map' you are and where the road is to Jesus.

This book will really complement our time in Hebrews because Hebrews has a lot to say about how the Old Testament points to Jesus.

If you read one book this year, make it *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts.

WEEK 1: HEBREWS 8

We pick up midway through a section of Hebrews in which Jesus is described as the new and better High Priest. The argument began in chapter 4.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 8:1-6

This is a great point to pick up the thread because chapter 8 begins by summarising the point of chapters 5-7.

1. According to verses 1-2, what is our high priest's:
 - a. Posture? (See also Psalm 110:1-4)
 - b. Location?
 - c. Role?
2. What do the words "true tabernacle" imply about the Old Covenant tabernacle?
3. Why is it good news that we have this kind of High Priest? (From what you can remember of Hebrews last year, or from 4:14-16, 7:26-28.)

Prayer: Thank God for giving us a priest who can both sympathise with us and save us.

WEEK 1: HEBREWS 8

DAY 2

Read Hebrews 8:3-6

1. What was the “copy and shadow”, and what is (or was) the reality it was a copy of?
2. Where does the writer get this idea from in the Old Testament? (Compare verse 5 with Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; Acts 7:44.)
3. How would knowing these things help the readers, who may be tempted to turn away from Jesus back to Judaism?
4. A key point of Hebrews is that the sacrificial system in the Old Testament was the shadow and Jesus is the reality. The Old Testament ‘scale model’ was given to God’s people to teach us about how a Holy God relates to an unholy people, so that we would be able to understand the real thing, Jesus. The next few chapters of Hebrews will unpack how various pieces point to Jesus. But for now – how does this enrich the way you read the Old Testament pointing to Jesus?

Bonus – see article on pages 16-18.

Prayer: Thank God for providing so many different ways for us to understand him and his Son in his word. Ask that as we study this chapter this week your understanding of both the Old Testament and Jesus will deepen.

NEW AND BETTER COVENANT

DAY 3

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Daniel 11-12; Hosea 1-8; Hebrews 1-7

Read Hebrews 8:6-9

A covenant is a binding agreement (usually involving promises or requirements, or both). God enters relationship with people by making covenants with them. The big one in the Old Testament was made at Mount Sinai, as told in Exodus. Hebrews 8:7 calls this 'that first covenant'.

1. How does Jesus' ministry compare to the ministry of the priests in that first covenant? And why?
2. What in the quote from Jeremiah 31:31-32 proves that there was another big covenant coming?
3. Put yourself in the shoes of a first century convert to Christianity tempted to turn away from Jesus and back to the Jewish religion (i.e. the first covenant) to escape persecution. What in this passage would persuade you to hold fast to Jesus?

Prayer: Praise God for being a God who enters stable and reliable relationships through covenants, and thank him for giving us a new covenant on even better promises.

WEEK 1: HEBREWS 8

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 8:7-13

1. What was the problem with the first covenant?
2. Underline, highlight, or bullet-point things you find in this passage that are amazing about the New Covenant.
3. How is it different from the Old Covenant?
4. We often thank God for what he has done in the past (the cross) and what he will do in the future (the new creation). But what aspects of the New Covenant make a difference to your daily life in the present?

Prayer: Thank God for the privileges you will enjoy today, including a changed heart, a relationship with God, and a clean conscience because your sins are forgiven.

NEW AND BETTER COVENANT

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 8:7-13

1. Focussing on verse 13: as Christians today, are we still under the Old Covenant?
2. How do you think we should relate to the Old Covenant today? (e.g. its laws, instructions, promises?)
 - a. As you reflect on this, consider how verses 2, 5 and 6 might shape your answer
3. How would the things we've seen this week help the readers resist the temptation to turn away from Jesus back to Judaism?
4. What would it look like for you today to fully enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant (verses 10-12)?

Prayer: Thank God that we have been set free from the Old Covenant law to serve Jesus from a changed heart. Thank him for new and better promises, and ask that you will enjoy your relationship with him today.

WEEK 1: HEBREWS 8

BONUS ARTICLE: TYPOLOGY

Throughout the Bible, God uses certain things to promise or teach us about other things.

For example:

- The Passover Lamb is a picture of Jesus whose blood causes God's wrath to pass over his people.
- The Promised Land (where Israel was promised rest as God's people under his rule and blessing) is a picture of our eternal future in the New Creation.
- Moses himself, as the great prophet, predicts a future prophet to come who will be like him. Of course this is Jesus who reveals God even more fully than Moses did (Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:1-12).
- When David fights Goliath on behalf of his people, he is a picture not of us fighting our battles but of the ultimate humble shepherd who fought our great enemy Satan on behalf of us, his people.

The word 'typology' comes from the Greek word 'type' (typos), which happens to be the word translated 'pattern' in Hebrews 8:5. (The word is also used in Romans 5:14, 1 Corinthians 10:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:9, but typology happens in lots of places where the word isn't used as well.)

A sensitive reader of the Old Testament will be astonished at how many places, people, events, and things are actually types (pictures) that correspond to something about Jesus and the kingdom he brings. A growing awareness of these types will help us appreciate the unity of the whole Bible as being all about Jesus. It also helps us to make sense of many things in the Old Testament, and should make us thankful for God's kindness in teaching us about himself in so many ways over so many centuries so that we might understand him more and more.

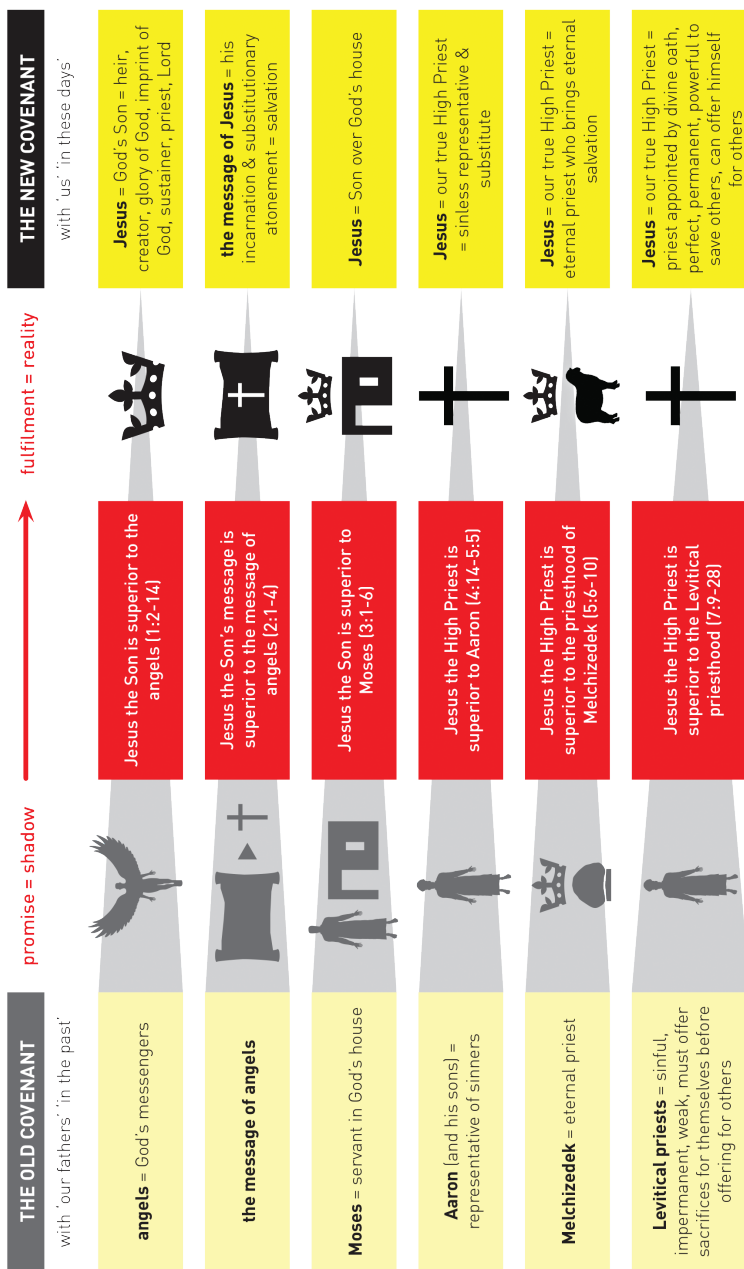
A really helpful book to understand how the Bible points to Jesus is *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts (see page 10 of this guide)!

The following diagrams are a great summary of some of the typologies that Hebrews identifies for us.

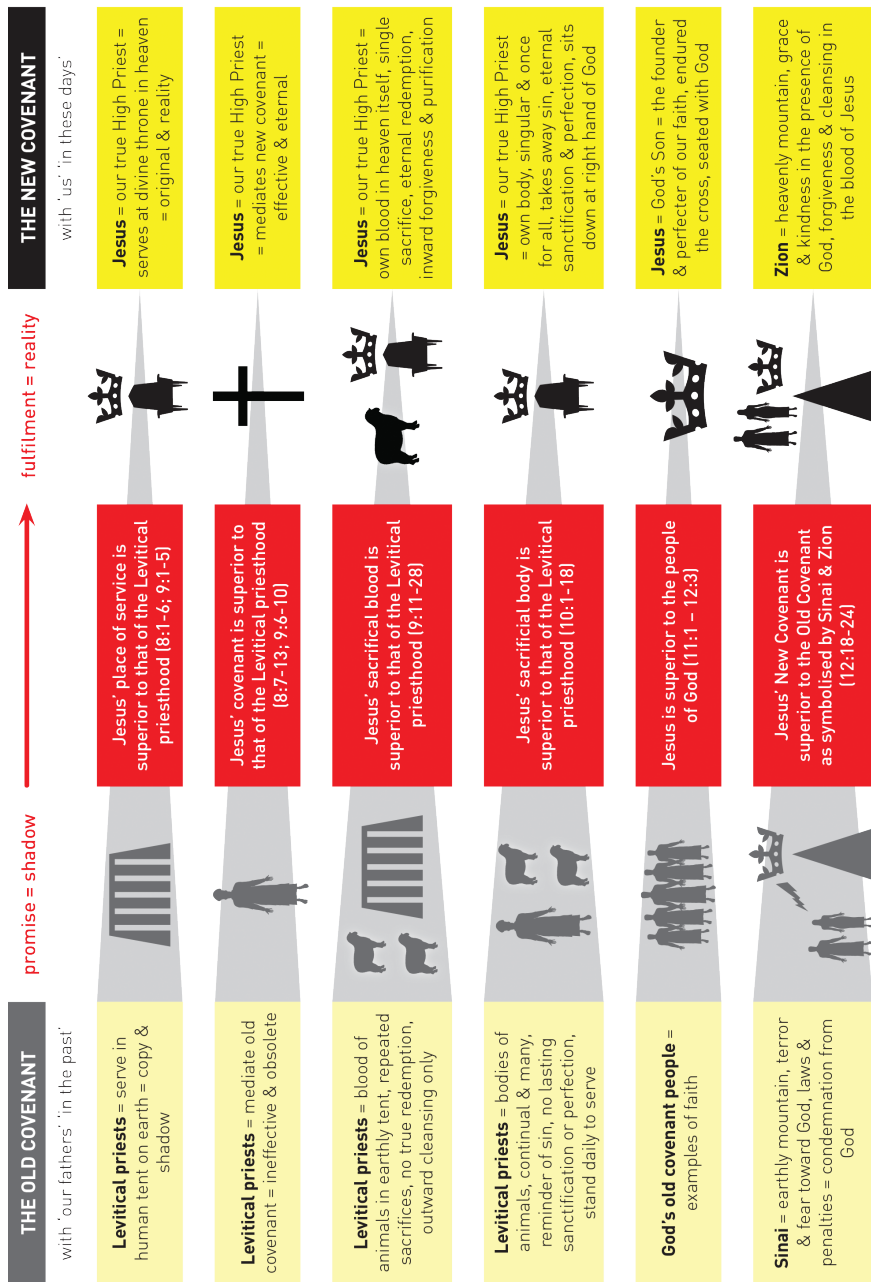
NEW AND BETTER COVENANT

JESUS IS BETTER THE SHADOW & THE REALITY IN HEBREWS

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WEEK 1: HEBREWS 8



NEW AND BETTER COVENANT

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 2: HEBREWS 9

This week unlocks the message of Exodus and Leviticus. We see what the sacrificial system was designed to teach us. And we see how it points to a better, 'once for all' sacrifice that does not need to be repeated because it really worked.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 9:1-10

1. Draw a 'floor plan' of the Old Testament tabernacle from verses 1-5.
2. Who entered the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place, and how often?
3. What was the Holy Spirit teaching the Israelites through this set up? (verses 8-10)
4. What does this teach you about God's holiness and human sinfulness?

Prayer: Pray that God will grow your understanding of the Old Testament this week and the ways it points to Jesus. Ask for a deeper understanding of the meaning of God's holiness and so a greater appreciation of the privilege of relationship with him.

NEW AND BETTER SACRIFICE

DAY 2

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Hosea 9-14; Joel 1-3; Hebrews 8-13

Read Hebrews 9:11-15

1. Compare Jesus' ministry with the Old Covenant set up we saw yesterday (verses 1-7). In what ways is Jesus' ministry better (e.g. what is better about the offering, the location, the impact, etc)?
2. Focusing on verses 14-15, list the things you personally receive from Jesus' better offering, and circle one that you think you have not been fully appreciating lately.
3. How should all of this change us, according to these verses?

Prayer: As you pray, spend some time talking to God about any benefits of Jesus' offering that you haven't been appreciating. Thank him for them and ask him to help you believe that you have them, enjoy them, and serve him rightly in response.

WEEK 2: HEBREWS 9

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 9:16-22

1. What is the connection between blood and:
 - a. Making a covenant?
 - b. Forgiveness?
3. Why do you think sin and uncleanness is connected with death?
4. How might this help you understand Jesus' death better? In particular:
 - a. How does Jesus' death relate to the beginning of the New Covenant?
 - b. How does Jesus' death relate to the forgiveness of sins?

Prayer: Thank God that Jesus' death sealed a new covenant and achieved forgiveness. Tell God how you feel knowing he has forgiven your sins, and ask for his help to continue to remember and rejoice in this fact.

NEW AND BETTER SACRIFICE

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 9:23-26

1. How many times did the High Priest have to make sacrifices, and how many times did Jesus offer himself?

2. *It is the official teaching of the Roman Catholic church that in the Mass, the priest offers up Christ as a sacrifice. (For example, a person is "accursed" if they say the sacrifice of Mass is not a propitiatory sacrifice offered for sins [Council of Trent, 1545–63, Session 22, Canons 1-3]).*

Do you think this understanding of the Lord's Supper fits with Hebrews 9:25-26?

3. "Jesus' offering of himself is better than the Old Testament sacrifices because it actually worked to cleanse us. It worked so well that it only needed to happen once."
 - a. Do you think this is a true summary of these verses?

 - b. How does this truth make you feel?

 - c. How could this truth affect the way you live the Christian life?

Prayer: Pray, thanking God for these things and asking for the wonder of these truths to take deep root in your heart in the form of joy, confidence, and hope.

WEEK 2: HEBREWS 9

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 9:27-28

1. Some religions teach that life goes through a cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. What do these verses say?

2. According to these verses, who can be confident as they wait for Jesus' second appearing? And what is the basis of that confidence?

3. In light of these truths, what should be our attitude to:
 - a. Our own personal future?

 - b. The future of those who are not yet 'waiting for him'?

4. How would the things we've seen this week help the readers resist the temptation to turn away from Jesus back to Judaism?

Prayer: Ask God to help you be one who is waiting for him with hope, and ask that this will transform the way you view today and every day.

NEW AND BETTER SACRIFICE

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 3: HEBREWS 10:1-18

Many Christians do not realise just how completely and permanently forgiven they are. This week, we will see that Christians are decisively forgiven of all sin, past, present, and future; thoroughly holy, completely clean. Even as we ask for forgiveness, we ask knowing we already have it.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 10:1-4

1. List what animal sacrifices can and can't do:

Can do	Can't do

2. What was the point of the sacrificial system, according to the start of verse 1?
3. What does this mean for:
 - a. The way we read Exodus and Leviticus?
 - b. Other religions?
 - c. You – if Jesus had not come?

Prayer: Thank God that he gave not only the tabernacle (chapter 9) but also the sacrifices offered in them to help us understand Jesus and his greater perfect sacrifice. Confess your inability to save yourself and your need for Jesus – and thank him for providing exactly what you needed in Jesus' death.

ONCE FOR ALL FORGIVEN

DAY 2

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Amos 1-9; James 1-5; 1 Peter 1-5

Read Hebrews 10:5-10

1. What problems with animal sacrifices were known even in Old Testament times, according to the quote from Psalm 40?
2. After highlighting problems with the old way of animal sacrifices, the speaker of the psalm 'then' brings something new and better. Notice the echoes of an old way (covenant) versus new way (covenant).
 - a. What did God really want?
 - b. How did Jesus fulfil this part of the psalm in his life and death?
 - c. The incarnation is mentioned ("came into the world" ... "a body you prepared" (verse 5)). Why do you think a human body sacrificed can accomplish what a goat's could not?
3. What is the result for us, according to verse 10? And how does that encourage you as you seek to do God's will today?

Prayer: Thank God for Jesus' incarnation, where he took on a human body to fulfil what God wants from humans – both in his perfect life for us and especially in his death for us. Pray that you will seek to do God's will, and enjoy the confidence of knowing that Jesus has already done it for you.

WEEK 3: HEBREWS 10:1-18

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 10:10-14

At the end of a hard day's work, you sit – a sign that the job is done.

1. Compare the postures (body positions) of Jesus to the priests.
What point is being made about the status of Jesus' saving work?
2. List (or underline) the phrases that say Jesus' sacrifice:
 - a. Worked
 - b. Does not need to be repeated
3. Compare verse 10 with verse 14. Are we holy already, or are we still being made holy? How do these ideas fit together?

Martin Luther described Christians in this life as “simultaneously righteous and sinners” (*simul justus et peccator*). This is the staggering truth that Jesus has taken away all our sin and made us perfect, blameless, pure before God – even though in our actions we still commit sin. Our **position** before God is 100% holy, which means we can be in relationship with him, even though we are still making **progress** towards holy living in our lives.

Prayer: Thank God that Jesus' sacrifice has made us perfectly suitable for relationship with God, no matter what we have done. Ask for help to live a holy life that matches the holy status you have in God's eyes.

ONCE FOR ALL FORGIVEN

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 10:14-17

Again, the writer quotes the Old Testament to back up his point. This time he returns to the passage from Jeremiah 31 that began this section in chapter 8, which suggests we have reached the conclusion he has been building towards.

1. Out of these wonderful New Covenant promises, which one does the writer draw special attention to in 10:17?
2. Compare verse 17 with verse 14. How does this quote support the point made there?
3. If you are a Christian, who remembers your sin better – you or God? (Double check your answer – verse 17)
 - a. How can this be possible? (verse 14)
 - b. Martin Luther said this is the hardest thing to believe in the whole Bible. Is this how you see yourself and your relationship with God? How can you keep growing in your confidence in these truths?

Prayer: Praise God that in Jesus you are completely saved, your sins are so completely forgiven they are basically forgotten by God! Ask that this truth would sink deeply into your heart and mind, and free you from unnecessary guilt so that your relationship with God would be enriched by growing confidence and joy.

WEEK 3: HEBREWS 10:1-18

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 10:17-18

1. When we sin, we can sometimes feel the need to 'make it up to God'. Is that necessary, according to verses 17-18?
2. It can be appropriate to ask God for forgiveness when we sin (Matthew 6:12, 1 John 1:9). But... from verses 17-18:
 - a. Are we only forgiven after we ask, or are we forgiven already before we ask?
 - b. Is our forgiveness a 'maybe', or can we be more confident?
 - c. What would it look like to ask for forgiveness as someone who is confident you are already forgiven?
4. If the things we've seen today and this week really landed in your heart – how would they shape your relationship with God, your prayer life, your mood, and your behaviour?

Prayer: Thanking God that we never need to make it up to God, confess your sins to God and ask for forgiveness knowing that if your faith is in Jesus you are already forgiven even before you ask.

ONCE FOR ALL FORGIVEN

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 4: HEBREWS 10:19-39

We arrive at the climax of the book. The key to staying with Jesus is not just to fear falling away, although that helps. It is even more important to have a lively and confident relationship with God. The more we value drawing near to him the less we will be tempted away.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

1. 'Therefore' (considering chapters 8-10), what three things are we encouraged to do? And how do each of the three things help you do the others?
2. What do you think it means to 'draw near to God'?
 - a. The earthly tabernacle was only a temporary shadow (Leviticus 16:2, Hebrews 9:6-8, 9:11-13), so what does it mean for us to 'enter the Most Holy Place' in this life? What about in the next?
 - b. Does anything here promise that we will 'feel' God's presence? How do we know that we are with God? (Matthew 28:20, Acts 18:10)
3. What is the orientation of your heart? Are you moving toward God or away from him?
4. How is your intimacy with God (prayer, enjoyment, awareness of being with him, confidence of his favour, dependence on him)? What would it look like for you to continue to 'draw near' to God today?

Prayer: Spend time drawing near to God, enjoying knowing that you are in his presence. Enjoy relating to him as your Father and friend. Tell him your thoughts, concerns, desires, and what you are thankful for.

CONFIDENCE TO DRAW NEAR

DAY 2

The writer seeks to grow our confidence in drawing near to God by summarising the letter so far in the form of reasons for confidence ('since...').

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Obadiah; Jonah 1-4; 2 Peter 1-3; 1 John; 2 John; 3 John

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

1. List the reasons a Christian can have confidence in drawing near to God.
2. Many Christians feel guilty even after hearing that their sins are forgiven. What imagery in verse 22 shows that you are no longer guilty or defiled?
3. What attitudes are we to have toward God as we draw near to him? (Verse 22)
4. Imagine a person fully grasped this passage. What do you think their boldness in relating to God and praying would look and feel like?

Prayer: Thank God that Jesus' decisive sacrifice has opened new access to God. Ask him to help you enjoy the fact that you now have a clean conscience. Ask him to help you to approach him relationally, especially in prayer, often and with confidence.

Note: Is 'bodies washed' a reference to baptism? Possibly, but baptism itself does not affect our ability to draw near to God. It is more likely that the writer is using imagery drawn from Old Testament purification rituals to depict our new spiritual cleanness in Jesus. (See the New Covenant promises in Ezekiel 36:25.)

WEEK 4: HEBREWS 10:19-39

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

1. What actions and habits should we have towards other Christians? What should our goals be in these actions and habits, and why?
2. Remember the original recipients, which included Christians tempted to turn away from Jesus. Is the Christian life meant to be done solo? What difference would it make to those people if their church community lived out these verses?
3. In what ways should these verses shape your approach to:
 - a. The time before and after church?
 - b. The way you use text messages / social media / phone calls?
 - c. Growth group?
 - d. Your family or close friends?

Prayer: “Consider” means to spend time thinking. ‘If you fail to plan, you plan to fail’. Pick one area above and make a plan for the next week or two so you can make the most of your opportunities to spur on your brothers and sisters.

CONFIDENCE TO DRAW NEAR

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 10:26-31

1. What is warned against in this passage? What consequences would follow, and why?
2. Every Christian is aware that although we try to follow God, we still sin (1 John 2:1, James 3:2). What clues in this passage suggest it describes something more serious than the normal Christian struggle with sin?
3. How would the popular understanding of God re-write verses 30-31?
4. Consider the place of fear in the Christian life. If you feared God more, what effect might it have on other things you fear in life? What would it look like to have verse 31 and verse 22 in mind at the same time as you relate to God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when I feel like giving up, help me cling to your promises. Hold on to me. Please help me never to turn away from Jesus and stop living with him as Lord. Help me to fear that so that I will stay close to you always.

WEEK 4: HEBREWS 10:19-39

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 10:32-39

The author is a good persuader: warnings, promises, and even examples.

1. We saw the warning yesterday. What promises are made here about the future?
2. What do they need to do to receive these promises?
3. 'Confidence' has been a big theme (10:19, 35). To motivate the readers he gives an inspiring example: themselves! "Remember" – possibly back to their expulsion from Rome under Claudius in AD 49, which may have led to the looting of their abandoned houses. Despite all of that, what were they confident of, and how did their confidence help them live the Christian life?
4. Consider how you are going spiritually. Are you tempted to throw in the towel? Or can you think of someone who is? What in this chapter most motivates you to keep holding on? What 'next steps' could help you (or the person you thought of) to keep going?

Prayer: God you are mighty. I trust your promises that you will come. I trust that I will be richly rewarded. Please help me to persevere and even rejoice when I am persecuted because I know I have greater and lasting possessions in you and in my eternal future.

CONFIDENCE TO DRAW NEAR

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 5: HEBREWS 11

The letter finishes with an extended exhortation ('call to action') section, from 10:19 to 13:22. And the writer doesn't just tell us what to do. In this chapter, he moves us to continue living in faith by unrolling a highlights reel of the 'heroes of the faith'. See what faith helps God's people to do! And see how their faith is rewarded by our faithful God!

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 10:35-11:2

Hebrews 11:1 is often taken out of context. Today we will look at it in its context:

1. Verse 1 says 'Faith is confidence in what we hope for'. Compare this with 10:19-22 and 35-39. Why is faith or confidence important for Christian perseverance?
2. Prominent atheist Richard Dawkins defines faith as "belief in spite of... the lack of evidence." Does this definition agree with the Bible's view? Consider whether the writer has tried to give us any evidence or reasons for confidence in chapters 4-11 (e.g. 10:19-22, 11:11-12, 29-30).
3. What reward did the ancients receive for their faith in 11:2? (Also in verses 39, 4, and 5.)
4. Obeying Jesus can mean losing the approval of our peers. Whose approval matters most to you? What is the path to God's approval according to verse 2?

Prayer: Thank God that faith is not something we simply need to summon up inside us. Ask him to grow and sustain your confidence as you understand the reasons we can trust him. Thank him for giving us many reasons even in these chapters.

WHAT FAITH DOES

DAY 2

As we dive into the chapter's extensive list of examples, we will find overwhelming evidence that faith is central to life as God's people and is always the best course of action.

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3; Jude;
Revelation 1-5

Read Hebrews 10:1-12

1. "By faith [person] did [action/event] and [positive result happened]."
For each example of faith, write down:
 - a. What did faith enable the person to do?
 - b. What outcome followed?
2. Review the outcomes. How do they encourage you to continue to trust and obey God?
3. Write one sentence to yourself expressing something you need to hear or remember from these verses. "[My name], always remember..."
4. Bonus – if time: what is the relationship between faith, bringing God pleasure, drawing near to God, and reward, in verse 6?

Prayer: Ask that these examples of faith and God's faithfulness to them might help you to trust God and so obey him today and always.

WEEK 5: HEBREWS 11

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 11:1-16

1. Use the table below to explore how faith enables belief in God’s promises before they can be seen (verse 1).

Person	What their eyes told them	What they believed based on God’s word
Us (verse 3)		
Noah (verse 7)		
Abraham and Sarah (verses 8-12)		

2. What key lessons are we to learn from these examples, according to verses 13-16?
3. What is similar to your experience as a Christian?
4. Picture the place that you most naturally think of as home. Where does this passage say is our true home? What truths or phrases might help you set your heart on the “better” home to come?

Prayer: Ask God to help you trust his word and promises before they can be seen, and especially that your heart will be set on your true heavenly home with God and all his people forever.

WHAT FAITH DOES

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 11:17-31

1. Use this table to explore how faith enables courageous and sacrificial obedience to God:

Person	How they showed courage and sacrificial obedience	What they believed that helped them do that
Abraham (verses 17-20)		
Moses and his parents (verses 23-28)		
Rahab (verse 31)		

2. How do you think their sacrifices or acts of obedience felt at the time?
How do you think they feel about them now?
3. Write down one or two areas of your life in which you think God would want you to obey him more courageously or sacrificially.
 - a. What would greater obedience look like?
 - b. How do you feel about that now?
 - c. What truths from God's word would help you obey?
 - d. How do you think you will feel in eternity about it?

Prayer: Thank God for his faithful care for his people, and ask for faith to boldly and sacrificially live for him knowing that Christ and his reward is of greater value than anything you might lose in the process.

WEEK 5: HEBREWS 11

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 11:32-40

1. "But I'm no hero!" What in verses 32-34 is encouraging for Christians aware of their weaknesses and sinfulness? (e.g. what do you know about Samson?)
2. The book 'The Power of Positive Thinking' (published in 1952) promoted the idea that if you think positively, "*you do not need to be defeated by anything, that you can have peace of mind, improved health, and a never-ceasing flow of energy.*" (page xi). Some people think of 'faith' like that. They think that if you 'have faith' you cannot be defeated. What do verses 35-38 say about that view of faith?
3. In light of these examples, finish this sentence:
*In this life, people who trust God might find that God does...
but might also find that life is....*
4. So, is God untrustworthy? Look at the resolution in verses 39-40. What might be the "something better" that we and the Old Testament heroes will both receive together?

Prayer: Pray for the persecuted Christians in our world and church. Thank God that although faith does not guarantee an easy life in this lifetime, our trust in him will not be disappointed. Ask for God to help you and our church family to persevere in faith so we will receive his commendation eternally.

WHAT FAITH DOES

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 6: HEBREWS 12:1-3

The author of Hebrews is serious about us crossing the finish line well as Christians – and so he gives these crucial pre-race instructions. These verses are so rich and valuable we will spend a whole week on just these three verses. You might even try to memorise them by the end of the week.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

- 1. The Christian life is likened to a race. Based on the instructions in verse 1, what can you learn about the Christian life?
- 2. To run more easily, what are the two categories of things to get rid of according to verse 1?

Anything that...	1.	2.
Think of an example:		
How this makes the race harder?		

- 3. In light of these two categories, finish this sentence: “Wisely living the Christian life means more just than avoiding sin. It also means...”
- 4. What in your life is not sinful but might be making the race harder?

Prayer: Ask for clarity about what really matters in life and a willingness to let go of anything which is not helping you to serve your Lord. Ask for help to run with endurance.

RUN THE RACE

DAY 2

Read Hebrews 11:39-12:3

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Habakkuk 1-3; Revelation 6-19:10

1. Who is the 'cloud of witnesses'? (Note the word "therefore")

2. Hebrews has taught us a lot about how to read the Old Testament as Christians. (For example we have seen how the sacrificial system points to Jesus.) Looking at verse 1, what else can the Old Testament provide us as Christians?

3. *"It is not so much they who look at us as we who look to them – for encouragement"* (F.F Bruce). Think of some Old Testament examples of people who were far from perfect yet trusted God and faithfully obeyed him, often in costly ways.
 - a. What does their 'witness' teach you?

 - b. If they were on the sidelines of your life, what might they say to encourage you to keep trusting and obeying God?

4. Who else's example encourages you to keep going? Who is watching your example?

Prayer: Thank God for the lessons and examples of faith in the Old Testament. Ask for help to follow their example as you run the race of the Christian life by faith.

WEEK 6: HEBREWS 12:1-3

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

Thankfully, the daunting race is not all we see before us.

1. What are we told to do to Jesus?
2. What does Jesus do for our faith, according to verse 2? What does it mean?
3. Focusing our eyes on the right person is key to the Christian life. Let's apply this deeply:
 - a. When you are discouraged, tempted, have sinned, or feel like giving up: where do you tend to look?
 - b. What would it look like to turn your attention to Jesus in those moments?
 - c. What have you found helps you to keep your Lord in mind always?
 - d. Can you think of any other tools, habits, practices, or changes you could make to help you not to take your eyes off your saviour? This might be a question to ask some other Christian friends and swap ideas.

For example: you could set aside some time to read back over Hebrews and pick out key verses to memorise or write in visible places, such as your car speedometer or bathroom mirror.

Prayer: Spend some time praising Jesus in prayer for the things you know about him and have learned from Hebrews. Ask God to help you keep your eyes on him at all times.

RUN THE RACE

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

We have one who has run the path before us, the ultimate example of enduring in trusting and obeying God.

1. What can you learn from Jesus' example in verses 2-3?
2. To dig deeper:
 - a. To 'scorn' or 'despise' means to treat something as small, or of no significance. What weight did Jesus give the humiliation of the cross?
 - b. What was the role of joy? What do you think that means? (You might find these verses helpful: Hebrews 2:10, 1 Peter 1:11, Luke 24:26.)
3. How does Jesus' joy in saving you and glorifying his name motivate you to live for him today?
4. What joy is set before you, if you endure to the end?

Prayer: Thank God for Jesus' example of faithful endurance. Ask that, like Jesus, we might view any shame or suffering for his name as a small thing compared with the joy awaiting us.

WEEK 6: HEBREWS 12:1-3

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. Verse 1 taught us that to keep going as Christians, it really helps to untangle ourselves from the trip hazards of our sin. Today we will arm ourselves in that fight with some truths from Hebrews that we've rushed past in previous weeks. As they say, it helps to know thy enemy.

Verse/s	What it teaches me about sin	How remembering this would help me resist temptation
Hebrews 3:13		
Hebrews 11:25		
Hebrews 12:1		
Hebrews 4:15		
Hebrews 1:3 or 9:28 or 10:17-18		

Prayer: Pray for your battle against sin in light of these truths.

RUN THE RACE

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 7: HEBREWS 12:4-17

The theme of endurance continues with another analogy. To help us keep going as Christians, even in hardships, Hebrews has warned of punishments, wooed with promises, and warmed our hearts with teaching about Jesus. Now the letter adds an explanation of one reason for hard things, so that we can embrace them as an expression of God's love.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 12:3-7

1. What hardships do they seem to be facing and what danger are they in? (Verse 3-4)
2. Proverbs 3:11-12 is used as a "word of encouragement" (see verse 5). The take-home message is summarised in verses 7 and 10. What is it?
3. What details of the quote from Proverbs make it an encouraging word?
4. Use what you have seen today to finish these sentences:
 - a. In suffering it can feel like God has abandoned me, but in fact...
 - b. Suffering can feel frustrating and pointless, but...

Prayer: Spend some time praying about your own hardships. It is not wrong to pray for them to be over! But also ask God to help you not lose heart in them, and ask him to use them for your good to make you holy.

ENDURE HARDSHIP AS DISCIPLINE

DAY 2

Read Hebrews 12:3-7

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Zephaniah 1-3; Revelation 19:11-22:21

An earthly father's discipline is used as an analogy of our heavenly Father's even better discipline. Let's look more closely at both.

1. What points are made about an earthly father's discipline?
2. In what ways does the author say God's discipline is even better?
3. What results from God's discipline? (Verses 10 and 11)
4. What should be our response to God's discipline?

Prayer: Thank God for his loving, purposeful work through all circumstances, even hardships, to train us to be more like Jesus. Tell him you submit to his work in your life and ask for patience to welcome and learn from his discipline.

Note: The word "discipline" (paideia) means 'training', a positive act achieved through things like teaching, correction, and punishment.

- The word paideia is used in Ephesians 6:4 and 2 Timothy 3:16, showing the goal of training and the place of teaching.
- Discipline also includes correction: notice in Hebrews 12:5 that the word discipline is paralleled by the word "rebuke" (See also Revelation 3:19).
- Discipline also includes punishment: notice in Hebrews 12:6 that the word discipline is paralleled by the word "chastens", which means to punish. (e.g., the same word, in a more extreme context, is used in John 19:1, Luke 23:16. Also compare Proverbs 26:3 to Proverbs 23:13-14.)
- Of course, the Bible never tolerates abuse of any kind, and always promotes tender love, compassion, care, patience, grace, and wisdom. Much more could be said about this complex topic!

WEEK 7: HEBREWS 12:4-17

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 12:7-13

1. Job's friends mistakenly thought Job's suffering was God's punishment or correction (Job 5:17). But that wasn't the reason (Job 2:3-6). Is Hebrews making the same mistake in these verses? What is different?
2. What do verses 12-13 say we should therefore do? (The images come from Isaiah 35:3-10 and Proverbs 4:26.)
3. Give some specific examples of what it might look or feel like for you to live out verses 12-13 in your life.
 - a. Could there be a community element to verse 13? Who are the at-risk members of our community, and how might your actions impact them?
 - b. Visualise for a moment a terrible hypothetical future some decades from now in which you have tragically drifted away from Jesus. Think about what you know about yourself now – your particular tendencies and temptations. How do you think you got to that point? What can or should you do in the present to avoid that terrible future?

Prayer: Ask God to renew your spiritual zeal when you feel discouraged, weary, or burdened. Ask for help to hope in the Lord and take heart in his coming salvation. Ask him to help you choose the straight path of living his way so that you will avoid the trip hazards of sin.

ENDURE HARDSHIP AS DISCIPLINE

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 12:14-17

1. In verse 14, what two things are we to strive for?

2. According to verses 14-15, if we didn't strive for these things, what would happen:
 - a. To us?

 - b. To the Christian community?

3. How do you think these instructions are related to each other? And how are they related to the goal of the book of Hebrews (to make sure we hold fast to Jesus)?

4. Are you making "every" effort to do these things? Are there any sins to repent of, or efforts you are neglecting?

Prayer: Spend time confessing your sins to God, repenting, and asking for growth in holiness in the specific areas that came to mind. Thank him for the wonderful hope we have for the future: that we will "see the Lord".

WEEK 7: HEBREWS 12:4-17

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 12:14-17

1. What can we learn from Esau in these verses?
2. The phrase, "he could not change what he had done" (NIV) can be translated, "he found no chance to repent" (ESV). Imagine writing to a Christian friend you're concerned about. They don't seem to be fighting a certain sin in their life. They say they will repent "one day". What would you want to write to them, in light of these verses?
3. Are verses 15 and 16 calling us to beware of sin in our own lives, or in the lives of others in our church?
4. Based on your answer to question 3, what actions might be involved in living out these instructions?

Prayer: Spend some time praying for our church community. Bring to God anyone you are concerned about. Ask our saviour king to ensure they do not walk away from his grace, and ask for wisdom in how you might best help them to continue to walk with Jesus.

ENDURE HARDSHIP AS DISCIPLINE

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 8: HEBREWS 12:18-29

As we near the end of the letter, the writer crescendos in a powerful appeal. How will the author make sure his message lands for us, his readers?

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

When we try to understand the Bible, a very helpful step is figuring out the author's goal. In this passage, the two instructions (verse 25 and verse 28) are clues.

1. What do you think the author is trying to do to you, the reader, through this passage?

2. What reasons are given in verses 25 and 29?

3. How should these verses affect your view of:
 - a. Worship

 - b. God

 - c. Life

Prayer: Ask God to help you serve him with appropriate reverence and awe, and so always heed his word.

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

DAY 2

Read Hebrews 12:18-24

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Haggai 1-2; John 1-12

Two mountains are contrasted. Today we will focus on verses 18-21, which refer to the events at Mount Sinai when the Old Covenant and Ten Commandments were given (Exodus 19:9-25 and 20:18-21).

1. Put yourself in the shoes of an Israelite there that day and re-read verses 18-21. How does it feel?
2. What message does it send about:
 - a. God
 - b. Humans
 - c. Approaching God under the Old Covenant
3. Compare this message with your experience of relating to God today in the New Covenant. What is different about the way you can relate to God?
4. What spiritual dangers might follow for a Christian today who forgets the lessons of Exodus 19:9-25?

Prayer: Praise God for his immense majesty, perfect holiness, boundless power, untainted goodness and ferocious purity. As you thank him for the immeasurable privilege of being able to approach him with confidence because of Jesus' sacrifice, ask God to protect you from presumption, apathy, laziness, complacency, or arrogance.

WEEK 8: HEBREWS 12:18-29

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 12:18-24

Yesterday, we saw the glory and the limitations of the Old Covenant. Verses 22-24 contrast that with the far greater glory of the New Covenant. We will focus on these verses today.

1. What have we stumbled upon by becoming Christians?

What we've come to	What you think it means, or details that stand out

2. How can it be that we are able to 'come' to these things, when the message of the Old Covenant was 'stand back'? God has not changed in his holiness, and humans are no less sinners. Does anything in verses 22-24 indicate what has made the difference?

3. Compare these New Covenant blessings with the Old Covenant glory and limitations in verses 18-21. What would the original readers be losing if they turned from Jesus back to Judaism?

4. Which of these blessings are you most glad to have received from God?

Prayer: Thank God for each of these blessings and ask that you will grow in appreciation of what they mean.

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 12:18-24

1. List or underline anything we 'have come to' that relates to the community of God's people. (There might be more in verse 22 than at first glance.)

2. How important does the community of God's people seem to the writer (and to God)?

3. Do verses 22-23 refer to:
 - a. A spiritual gathering around Jesus that we've joined in the heavenly realms, or
 - b. The physical gathering around Jesus that we attend each Sunday?...and how might we describe the relationship between these two gatherings?

4. Why does our Heavenly Father care so much about bringing his people, angels, his Son and himself together? What difference does this make to your own affections and habits towards church?

Prayer: Thank God for the privilege of being brought into his community and right now gathered in worship around Jesus in the heavenly realms. Ask that our earthly physical gatherings would be appropriate expressions of that spiritual reality while we wait to be gathered around him even more fully in heaven.

WEEK 8: HEBREWS 12:18-29

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

1. What do you think verses 26-27 are saying will happen in the future?
2. What cannot be shaken?
3. So, what does it make sense to pursue and hold onto in life?
4. Consider the purpose of the book (e.g. see any of these: Hebrews 2:1, 3:12, 4:1, 4:14-16, 10:22-23). How does this section (verses 18-29) drive home the purpose of the book?

Prayer: Praise God for giving you a kingdom which you did not deserve and could not earn, and which will never be destroyed. Ask for God to sustain your faith and help you to live before him in a way that he finds acceptable, with reverence and awe.

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 9: HEBREWS 13:1-8

The crescendo of last week's final appeal now rolls into specific practical applications as we live out the author's call to live holy lives of love (12:14) as acceptable worship of a holy God (12:28). Because we want to be doers of the word, this week we will spend a day on each instruction considering what it means and how to apply it.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 13:1-3

We are focussing on verses 1-2 today, which refer to Abraham's hospitality in Genesis 18.

1. What is God's word calling you to do in verses 1-2? As a way to meditate on these words, try to put the instructions into your own words.
2. What reasons are given?
3. 'Hospitality' in the Bible is not a type of job ('I work in hospitality') nor about having a lovely clean house. What do you think it is? When has another person's hospitality met your needs or refreshed your spirits?
4. Some questions to help you apply these two verses to your life:
 - a. In what ways, or areas of your life can you be encouraged that you are already doing what God wants – by his grace?
 - b. What changes in your head (thinking), heart (attitudes or desires), or hands (actions) could, or should you make to better live out these verses?
 - c. Can you think of any people who do these things well? What in their example would you like to bring into your life?

Prayer: Thank God for his hospitality to us: welcoming us into his family, meeting our needs, refreshing our soul, and pouring love into our lives. Ask that we will overflow in love for others, especially the family of God.

HOLY LOVE

DAY 2

Read Hebrews 13:1-3

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Zechariah 1-14; John 13-17

We are focusing on verse 3 today. Then, and until this very day, Christians have been thrown in prison, mistreated, and killed for following Jesus (as we saw in Hebrews 10:32-35).

1. What is God's word calling you to do in verse 3?
2. Do you know anyone suffering for their faith? What might it look like for you to "remember" them?
3. Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world. What could you do to "remember" our brothers and sisters around the world who are in prison or severely mistreated? (You may find some ideas on the websites of organisations like Open Doors or the Voice of the Martyrs.)
4. How does it honour Jesus to love his people (Matthew 25:35-40)?

Prayer: Pray for those suffering for their faith: not just for their persecution to end, but for strength to continue to trust Jesus, obey him, and proclaim him even under pressure. Pray this also for the people in our church as cultural pressures increase. Ask the Lord to come soon.

WEEK 9: HEBREWS 13:1-8

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 13:4-6

We are focusing more on verse 4 today.

1. Who are these commands directed to? And what are they told to do?
2. What reasons are given?
3. Is there anything you need to repent of, confess, or change to keep the marriage bed pure, whether yours or others?
4. Sexual sin often brings guilt and shame. Read Hebrews 10:19-22 – how can these verses help us deal with these feelings?

Prayer: You could use Psalm 51 to confess your sin to God. Thank him for the forgiveness already given to all who trust Jesus and truly repent. Pray for all the marriages in church: ask that marriage will be honoured, that we will be holy in our decisions. Ask also for comfort and peace for those suffering the pain of broken relationships, lost loved ones, or loneliness.

HOLY LOVE

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 13:4-6

We are focusing on verses 5-6 today.

1. How should we feel and not feel toward money and possessions?
2. Search yourself. What is it about money or possessions that tempts you to love them or lack contentment?
3. Look at the two quotes. How do they help you with those feelings, fears, and temptations?
4. Some questions to help apply these verses:
 - a. Can you thank God for growing you in this area? What differences are there in this area of your life over the past few years or since you became a Christian?
 - b. What habits (of doing or thinking) might help a person grow in contentment?
 - c. What does your bank statement show about your heart? What changes in attitude or action might be needed?
 - d. What is attractive about the life described in verse 5?

Prayer: Thank God for being our security and joy, our provider and hope. Ask him to help you trust him and be thankful for his good gifts. Ask for contentment and freedom from the trap of loving money.

WEEK 9: HEBREWS 13:1-8

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 13:7-8

1. What things are we to do with those who taught us about God?
2. List two or three people who have had the biggest positive impact on your relationship with God, particularly those who have taught you God's word. For each, or just one:
 - a. What different 'outcomes' came from their way of life? In your life, their life, and others?
 - b. What do you find encouraging about thinking about this?
 - c. What lessons from them would you like to apply to your own life, and what might that look like in practice?
3. What do we learn about Jesus, and why is that a comfort?

Prayer: Praise God for the confidence of knowing an unchanging saviour and Lord. Thank him for the people he has used to grow your faith, and ask that you might be able to imitate their faith.

HOLY LOVE

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 10: HEBREWS 13:7-25

We have arrived at the conclusion of these thirteen wonderful chapters – quite brief, in the author’s opinion (13:22). We have seen the superior ‘once for all’ sacrifice that Jesus offered, which saves us completely and enables us to draw near to the Father. No more sacrifices are necessary. There is a surprising twist, however! Although no more sacrifices are needed, we are still able to offer sacrifices that please God.

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 13:8-14

1. What danger are we warned about in verse 9?
2. What can you guess about the errors they might have been in danger of from verses 9-10?
3. What are some of the “truths” taught to us today that we might be tempted to be carried away by:
 - a. In the world?
 - b. From people claiming to be Christian teachers?
4. How does remembering the truth about Jesus (who is the same “yesterday, today and forever”) protect us from “being carried away by all kinds of strange teachings”?

Prayer: Thank God for speaking to us by His Son so we can know the truth about Him and so be saved. Ask that our hearts will be strengthened by his grace through the truth so we will never be led astray by false teaching.

OUR PLEASING SACRIFICES

DAY 2

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Malachi 1-4; John 18-21

Read Hebrews 13:8-14

1. What does the author of Hebrews want us to know about Jesus in these verses?
 - a. Read Leviticus 16:27. What connection is the writer of Hebrews making to Jesus?
2. Hebrews 13:13-14 apply this to us. What is the application and what do you think it means?
3. What aspects of following Jesus bring disgrace today?
4. Are there any ways you are shying away from standing with Jesus because of the cost? What truths in these verses could help you to boldly stand with him?

Prayer: Ask for help to follow Jesus and his teachings even if it brings disgrace in the eyes of the world. Thank him for the hope we have of a city to come. Ask that you will remember that this is not your home when you face isolation or ridicule for Jesus.

WEEK 10: HEBREWS 13:7-25

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 13:15-16

1. According to these verses, is it possible for us to bring pleasure to God?
2. What kind of 'sacrifices' make him smile?
3. How, when, and why should we praise God?
4. To praise means to put into words the reasons you like something (approval, appreciation, gratitude, adoration). How can you grow in praising God in your prayers, conversations, and singing?

Prayer: Spend time praising God. A psalm like Psalm 103 or Psalm 63 might give you words you can use to praise God.

OUR PLEASING SACRIFICES

DAY 4

Read Hebrews 13:17-19

1. Circle all the instructions the writer of Hebrews gives to us.
2. What are the reasons given for these instructions?
3. Australians are famous for our low respect for authority figures. What dangers might this pose for Australians as we relate to leaders in God's church? What would a Biblical approach to our leaders look like in our church?
4. Did you know that church leaders will have to "give an account" for you to God? What do you think this means? How would this knowledge affect the way you receive their attempts to encourage or even correct you?

Prayer: Ask God to help us be people who have confidence in our church leaders and submit to their authority, so that we are a joy to pastor. Pray also for our church leaders, that they would continue to be people who lead us well.

WEEK 10: HEBREWS 13:7-25

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 13:20-25

1. The author finishes by praying for his readers. What does he ask God for?
2. Looking at the prayer, what does it teach you about God, Jesus, and how we do his will?
3. Hebrews has encouraged us to hold fast to Jesus. Looking at what the author prays, what does he think is the key to us doing that?
4. Compare this prayer with the prayers you naturally pray for yourself and others. Is there anything you could add from this prayer to enrich your prayer life?

Prayer: Pray verses 20-21 as your own prayer to God:

God of peace, through the blood of the eternal covenant you brought the Lord Jesus back from the dead – the great shepherd of your sheep.

Please equip me and our church with everything good for doing your will.

Please work in us what pleases you, through Jesus Christ.

To him be the glory forever and ever.

Amen

OUR PLEASING SACRIFICES

BONUS:

You might want to set aside some time to reflect on this term in the book of Hebrews, or the letter as a whole.

1. What has Hebrews taught you about Jesus as:
 - a. God?
 - b. King?
 - c. Human?
 - d. Greater than angels and Moses?
 - e. Priest?
2. How has Hebrews encouraged you to live differently?
3. How have you seen change over the term:
 - a. In your own life?
 - b. In the lives of those around you?

Prayer: Thank God for this wonderful letter. Praise him for all that it has taught us and how it has challenged us. Thank him for the ways it has changed our lives.

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

