

Hebrews 10:24-25; Colossians 3:12-17

January 14, 2024

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

CONNECTION

- **What types of animals naturally live in groups or packs? What are some of the reasons or advantages for doing this?**
- **Have you ever gone through a season of life where you did not or could not attend church regularly? What was that experience like? What did you miss the most?**

OBSERVATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 10:24-25.

- **How does this group encourage you to obey God and help you love others? How does our group keep you from straying into sin?**
- **Is there anything we can change in our group to help us more effectively stir another up to love and good works?**

The author of Hebrews instructed believers to stimulate each other in their time together: "And let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works" (v. 24). A mug of hot cocoa can be delicious, but not until you stir up the powder at the bottom. Similarly, a Christian is to be a blessing to the people in his or her life, but over time, our zeal for loving and serving others tends to die down, like cocoa powder settling at the bottom of a mug.

When we gather with other believers, we are inspired to serve God, as we hear about what others are doing for Him. We are encouraged by stories of how God is helping other people in their lives. We come up with new ideas of how to reach our friends and neighbors with the gospel when we hear what other Christians are doing. Gathering with other believers also helps us get serious about the sin in our lives. We lovingly confront each other and remind each other of the disastrous consequences of sin. Like freshening up a mug of hot cocoa by stirring up the chocolate at the bottom, we leave our gathering ready to turn from sin and obey God.

- **What can happen to a Christian when he or she does not come regularly to church?**

Like a sheep who wanders from the fold, believers who do not stay closely connected to other Christians will eventually suffer harm. What's the solution? Regularly attend church and small group meetings. Like the early church, who "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42), make it a priority to be with other believers every week. There is strength in numbers. Staying close to the flock is the best way to stay close to the Shepherd.

- **What are some specific ways you have experienced blessing by being in close proximity with our church family?**
- **What "Day" is referred to in verse 25? How can being consistently reminded about this day help is in our connection with one another?**

Finally, the writer of Hebrews instructed believers to encourage each other when they meet: "encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (v. 25b). The Greek word translated "encouraging" in this verse includes the actions of urging, correcting, and comforting. Like brothers and sisters who truly love each other, we should urge each other to do the right thing, confront sin when someone is in the wrong, and speak words of comfort when someone is hurting. Like a family, we need to stick by each other's side through thick and thin.

Jesus told His disciples, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3), but He also said, "concerning that day and hour no one knows" (Matt. 24:36). When He returns, we will be held accountable for the work we have done for Him in this life (Matt. 25:19-30; 1 Cor. 3:13-15). Almost two thousand years have passed since Jesus left (Acts 1:9-11). That means we are two millennia closer to the return of Christ than anyone in the early church! We don't know when Jesus will return, but we do know that "the Day" is drawing nearer and nearer.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-17.

- **What are some instructions given to the church regarding the believers' connection and fellowship with each other?**
- **In verses 15-16, what two aspects of Christ should be paramount in our connection with each other?**
- **What roll does worship play in our discipling of each other?**

In verse 16, Paul makes it clear that one of the primary ways we can teach and encourage one another is through singing together. When we sing corporately, we are not only giving praise to God, but we are strengthening the faith of the believers around us. Worshipping together is one of the greatest ways for believers to find connections.

RESPONSE

- **What are some reasons Christians stop coming to church?**
- **How will living in the ways we've discussed today inside the church give credibility when sharing the gospel with those outside the church?**

COMMENTARY

Hebrews 10:24-25

Heb. 10:24 The third exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to **spur one another on toward love and good deeds**. As

Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only.

We can spur people toward either good or bad works. Hebrews calls us to lead others to a practical expression of love and an attractive display of unselfish deeds.

The three important virtues of faith, hope, and love are mentioned in three consecutive verses (see 1 Cor. 13:13). Faith provides assurance. Hope promises an incentive to obedience. Love provides a foundation for prodding believers to godly living.

Heb. 10:25 To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must **meet together**. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works.

Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures. Regular fellowship with believers is an essential ingredient in Christian growth. The readers of Hebrews knew that the Day of Christ's return was drawing near. The closeness of this day compelled them to stimulate one another in an outburst of energy and concern.

Persecution may have led some believers to drop out of the fellowship. The remedy they needed was to begin meeting again. The verses following in 26-31 showed the final outcome of neglecting to meet with other believers. Such careless living could produce a contempt for Jesus and a renunciation of Christianity.