

Faith that Endures, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 8: Encouraging One Another to Endure

Hebrews 10:23-25

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Set the scene before you touch the commands, because this passage is almost always taught without it and it is unrecognizable when you do. Hebrews was written to Christians who were worn out. They had believed, and it had cost them: public abuse, the plundering of their property, prison for some of their friends (Hebrews 10:32-34). They had endured all of it, and the pressure had not lifted, and now some of them were quietly edging back toward the old life. The writer has spent nine chapters proving that Jesus is better than everything they are tempted to return to. Verse 23 is where the argument turns into instruction. Help your class feel that these are not general exhortations. They are what the Holy Spirit told exhausted people to do.

The heart of the lesson is the shape of the answer, and it will surprise your class if you let it. God's remedy for tired faith is not "try harder," and it is not "believe more sincerely." Three commands follow, and two of them are about other people: hold fast, stir up one another, do not neglect meeting together but encourage one another. The endurance of the individual Christian is placed, by God, substantially in the hands of the people around him. That is a striking thing to say to a culture that treats faith as a private arrangement, and it is why this lesson belongs in a series about faith that endures rather than faith that begins.

Two boundaries need a steady hand. First, verse 23 says "he who promised is faithful," and someone will hear eternal security in it. Read what surrounds it. The command is hold fast, which is meaningless if letting go is impossible, and three verses later comes the most severe warning in the letter (Hebrews 10:26-31). God's faithfulness is never in question; ours is the whole issue. Second, be careful with verse 25 in both directions. Neglecting the assembly is real disobedience and it is genuinely dangerous, and yet attendance has never saved anyone, and the class should not leave thinking that showing up is the point. The command is to encourage one another, and the assembly is where that becomes possible. Aim the hour at a class that leaves knowing whose endurance depends on them.

Question 1

Student Question:

In verse 23, the writer says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering." What is this confession, and what does it mean to hold it fast without wavering?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start by identifying the confession, because the class may assume it is a private feeling. It is not. The writer has used this word before: “let us hold fast our confession” of Jesus as the great high priest who has passed through the heavens (Hebrews 4:14), and he told them to consider “Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession” (Hebrews 3:1). The confession is Christ, publicly acknowledged. These people had said out loud, in front of neighbors who then made them pay for it, that Jesus is Lord. That is what they were being tempted to stop saying.

Then look at the verb, because it tells you the situation. Hold fast is what you do with something you are in danger of losing. You do not hold fast to something nobody is pulling at. The word assumes pressure, a grip, and a real possibility of the thing slipping. Ask the class what it implies about the Christian life that God’s word to tired believers is a word about gripping rather than resting.

Notice the object is “the confession of our hope.” Not our feelings, and not our certainty on a given morning. Hope in Scripture is not wishfulness; it is confident expectation grounded in what God has said. The writer has just called it “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:19). Help the class see the difference. An anchor does not stop the storm and does not make the boat feel steady. It keeps the boat from going where the water wants to take it.

Then take up “without wavering,” which is the honest part. The word does not mean without difficulty or without fear. These people had been afraid for years. It means without leaning, without tilting away, without the slow drift that ends somewhere else. That is exactly the danger the writer names in verse 25 with “as is the habit of some.” Wavering is rarely a decision. It is a lean that nobody corrects.

Bring it near without letting the class romanticize it. Ask them what they are being pulled at, specifically, this year. Then point out what the very next verses say about how a person holds fast, because the writer does not leave it as a private act of will. He immediately starts talking about other people. That is his answer, and it is the lesson.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The confession is Christ publicly acknowledged, the same confession named in Hebrews 3:1 and 4:14
- “Hold fast” assumes pressure and a real possibility of losing our grip
- Hope is confident expectation grounded in God’s word, not wishfulness (Hebrews 6:19)
- “Without wavering” means without leaning or drifting, not without fear or difficulty
- Wavering is usually a lean nobody corrects rather than a decision
- The writer’s answer to how one holds fast is found in the verses that follow: other people

Discussion Prompts

- What is pulling at your grip this year, specifically?
- Why does God’s word to tired Christians speak of gripping rather than resting?

- What is the difference between wavering and simply being afraid?

Question 2

Student Question:

Verse 23 grounds that command in a reason: “for he who promised is faithful.” Why does the writer point to God’s faithfulness rather than to our own determination as the basis for endurance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let the class notice where the confidence is placed, because it is not where we would put it. Having told them to hold fast without wavering, the writer does not say “for you are strong” or “for you have come this far.” He says, “for he who promised is faithful.” The grip is ours; the reason to keep gripping is entirely His. Ask the class what happens to a resolution that rests on our own reliability, and let them answer from experience.

Then let the class see what God’s faithfulness actually secures. It means the promise will not fail, the reward is real, and the One we are holding onto will not move. Paul says the same to Timothy in a prison cell: “if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself” (2 Timothy 2:13). This is why endurance is reasonable rather than heroic. We are not gambling. We are holding onto something that is not going anywhere.

Now guard the boundary carefully, because this phrase is regularly conscripted for eternal security. Someone will reason that if God is faithful, then our arrival is guaranteed regardless. Read the context and the argument collapses. Why command a man to hold fast if he cannot let go? And look at what stands three verses later: “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26). This same letter warns brothers against “an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God,” and says we share in Christ “if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:12-14). The whole book is a warning against the very thing “once saved, always saved” says cannot happen.

So put the two together for the class, because they are not in tension. God’s faithfulness is never the variable. Ours is. He will keep every promise He made, and He never promised to hold us against our will. That is not a frightening doctrine; it is a dignifying one. He treats us as people who can walk away, which is why He keeps sending us people to make sure we do not.

Bring it home. Ask the class where their assurance actually rests today. If it rests on how they are doing, this verse invites them to move it. If it rests on the idea that nothing they do could matter now, verse 26 is standing right there. The steady place is between those two, and it is a Person.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The confidence rests on God's faithfulness, not on our strength or track record (Hebrews 10:23)
- God remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13)
- The command to hold fast is meaningless if letting go is impossible
- Against "once saved, always saved": this same letter warns of falling away and of deliberate sin (Hebrews 10:26; 3:12-14)
- God's faithfulness is never the variable; ours is
- He never promised to hold anyone against his will, which is why He supplies us to one another

Discussion Prompts

- Where does your assurance actually rest today, honestly?
- How would you answer a friend who says God's faithfulness guarantees his arrival no matter what?
- Why is endurance reasonable rather than heroic, if the promise-keeper is faithful?

Question 3

Student Question:

In verse 24, the writer says to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." What does the word "consider" suggest about how deliberate encouragement must be?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Fasten the class on the verb, because the whole lesson turns on it. "Let us consider how to stir up one another." The word means to fix the mind on something, to study it, to give it sustained attention. It is the same word used of considering Jesus in Hebrews 3:1 and of the birds in Luke 12:24, and it never means a passing thought. The writer is asking for the kind of attention we normally reserve for problems we intend to solve.

Then notice what is being considered: not one another, but how to stir up one another. The object of the thinking is a strategy for a specific person. That means encouragement in this passage is not a temperament, not a mood, and not a spontaneous kindness that happens when we feel warm. It is planned. Ask the class the uncomfortable version: when did you last actually think about how to help a particular person keep going? Most of us have never once done what this verse commands.

Draw out why it has to be considered. Because people are not interchangeable, and what strengthens one man would embarrass another. One person needs to be told the truth plainly; another has been told the truth plainly by everyone and needs someone to sit with him. One needs a task; one needs rest. You cannot know which without paying attention, and paying attention is what "consider" means. Generic encouragement is cheap precisely because it costs no thought.

Point out what this assumes about the church, because it is significant. You cannot consider how to stir up someone you do not know. The command presupposes a congregation where people are close enough to notice, which is exactly why the very next verse talks about not neglecting to meet together. The three commands of this passage are not a list; they are a chain. Considering requires knowing, knowing requires presence, and presence is what verse 25 protects.

Bring it home concretely, and do not let the class leave with a resolution to be more encouraging in general. Ask each person to name one specific individual and one specific thing. That is what the verb requires. A congregation in which twenty people did that this week would be transformed by Sunday.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “Consider” means sustained, fixed attention, the same word used of considering Jesus (Hebrews 3:1)
- The object of the thinking is how to stir up a particular person, not merely the person
- Encouragement here is planned, not a temperament or a spontaneous mood
- People are not interchangeable; what strengthens one would wound another
- Generic encouragement is cheap because it costs no thought
- The commands form a chain: considering requires knowing, and knowing requires presence (Hebrews 10:25)

Discussion Prompts

- When did you last actually think about how to help a specific person keep going?
- Name one person and one specific thing. What would it take to do it this week?
- Why can you not obey this verse toward someone you do not know?

Question 4

Student Question:

The phrase “stir up” is a strong one, carrying the idea of provoking or spurring someone. What does it mean to provoke another Christian toward love and good works, and how is that different from simply being nice to them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Give the class the word, because it will change how they read the verse. The Greek is *paroxysmos*, from which we get *paroxysm*. It means a sharpening, a provoking, a stirring that has an edge on it. Luke uses the same word for the “sharp disagreement” between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:39). It is not a gentle word. The Holy Spirit chose a word for friction and aimed it at love and good works.

Let the class sit with how odd that is. We are told to provoke each other, and the only thing that makes it holy is the direction. Provoking someone to anger is sin (Ephesians 6:4). Provoking someone to love is a command. The energy is the same; the aim is everything. Ask the class what it says about our congregations that we are so much better at the first than the second.

Now draw the contrast the question asks for, and be honest about it. Being nice avoids friction; provoking accepts it. Being nice tells a man what he wants to hear; provoking tells him what will move him. Proverbs says “iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17), and sharpening is not a comfortable process for either blade. Niceness is what we offer people we are not willing to be inconvenienced by.

Then guard it, because the class contains someone who will hear permission to be harsh. This is provoking to love and good works, not provoking to shame, guilt, or compliance. Paul says speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and the man who enjoys the sharpening has misunderstood the assignment. The test is simple and worth giving the class: does the person end up more in love with Christ, or just more aware of your opinion?

Bring it home with the practical shape of it. Provoking to love and good works usually looks like asking a real question and waiting, naming something good you actually saw, refusing to accept an evasion from someone you love, or simply doing the good work in front of them until it becomes contagious. Most of us have been provoked toward Christ by someone, and almost never by a compliment.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Paroxysmos means a sharpening or provoking with an edge; the same word is used of sharp disagreement (Acts 15:39)
- The energy is the same as provoking to anger; the aim is what makes it holy (Ephesians 6:4)
- Being nice avoids friction; provoking accepts it for the other person's good
- Iron sharpens iron, and sharpening is uncomfortable for both (Proverbs 27:17)
- This is provoking to love and good works, never to shame, guilt, or compliance
- Truth is to be spoken in love; a man who enjoys sharpening has misread the command (Ephesians 4:15)

Discussion Prompts

- Why are we so much better at provoking one another to anger than to love?
- Who has provoked you toward Christ, and what did they actually do?
- What is the difference between being nice to someone and being good to them?

Question 5

Student Question:

Verse 25 warns against “neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some.” Why does the writer connect the assembly so directly to endurance?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Notice first that this is not a separate topic. Verse 25 is grammatically attached to verse 24; the not-neglecting hangs on the considering. The writer has just commanded them to think hard about how to spur one another on, and now he protects the only setting in which that is possible. The assembly is not being defended as an institution. It is being defended as the place where the previous command can actually be obeyed.

So answer the question the writer is really answering. Why does meeting together matter for endurance? Because you cannot stir up someone you never see. Encouragement in this passage is personal, considered, and aimed, and none of that happens at a distance. Help the class see that a Christian who withdraws has not merely broken a rule; he has removed himself from the mechanism God designed for keeping him. He is not being punished by the drift. He is unprotected in it.

Now hold two things together carefully, because your class needs both and will tend to drop one. Neglecting the assembly is genuine disobedience, and the word “neglecting” is a word for abandoning or leaving behind, which is serious. And yet attendance has never saved anyone, and the class must not leave thinking that the point is showing up. A man can be in the building every week and obey nothing in this passage. The command is to encourage one another, and meeting together is what makes it possible. Presence is the precondition, not the obedience.

Be fair to the honest objection, because someone will raise it. People say the assembly feels like an obligation, or that they were hurt, or that they can worship anywhere. Do not argue with the pain and do not dismiss it. But notice what this text assumes: these Christians were meeting in danger, with people who had been imprisoned, at real cost, and the writer still told them not to stop. He does not present the assembly as a service that satisfies. He presents it as the place where the people who need you can reach you.

Then turn it, because the passage does. Do not leave the class asking only “am I here?” Ask them who is not here, and who has quietly become a name we no longer expect. The command is not merely to attend. It is to encourage, and someone in your congregation is currently drifting because the only person positioned to notice has stopped looking.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Verse 25 hangs on verse 24; the assembly is protected as the setting where stirring up becomes possible
- You cannot consider how to stir up someone you never see
- Neglecting the assembly is real disobedience; the word means abandoning or leaving behind
- Attendance has never saved anyone; presence is the precondition, not the obedience

- A man can be present every week and obey nothing in this passage
- The withdrawn Christian is not punished by his drift; he is unprotected in it
- The passage asks not only whether I am here, but who is not

Discussion Prompts

- Who is not here, and who has quietly become a name we no longer expect?
- How would you answer a friend, kindly, who says he can worship God anywhere?
- If attendance does not save, why does neglecting the assembly matter so much?

Question 6

Student Question:

What does the phrase “as is the habit of some” reveal about the way people drift away, and why is drifting so much more common than a deliberate decision to quit?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Point at how gentle and how devastating the phrase is. “As is the habit of some.” Not the apostasy of some, not the rebellion of some. The habit. The writer is describing people who did not decide anything. A pattern formed, and the pattern took them somewhere they never chose to go. Ask the class whether that sounds like the way people actually leave, because it is, and everyone in the room has watched it.

Then draw out why drifting is the normal mode of loss. Nobody announces it. There is no moment to point to, no argument that was lost, no crisis of faith. There is a Sunday missed for a good reason, and then one missed for a smaller reason, and then a stretch where nobody calls, and then the awkwardness of coming back becomes its own obstacle. The writer of Hebrews named this danger at the very start of the letter: “we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Hebrews 2:1). His word there is a nautical one, a boat slipping past its mooring. Boats do not decide to drift. They drift because nothing is holding them.

Now let the class see what makes this so dangerous. A decision can be argued with. A habit cannot, because nobody knows it is happening, including the person it is happening to. That is why this passage puts the remedy in other people’s hands. You cannot notice your own drift; that is what drift means. Somebody else has to notice, and they have to be close enough and attentive enough to do it early.

Then keep the class from contempt, because this phrase invites it and the writer does not take that tone. “Some” were people they knew, and Hebrews 10:32-34 tells us what those people had already survived: public abuse, imprisonment of friends, the plundering of their property. These were not casual believers. They were tired ones. The people who drift are rarely the least

committed. They are often the most exhausted, and the difference between them and us is usually only that someone kept showing up for us.

Bring it home in the direction the passage aims. Ask the class to think of one person whose habit has changed in the last year. Not to judge them, but because this text says a habit is exactly the thing that needs interrupting, and it needs interrupting by a person, and it needs interrupting before the habit finishes its work.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “The habit of some” describes people who never decided; a pattern took them where they did not choose to go
- Drift is the normal mode of loss: silent, gradual, with no moment to point to
- Hebrews warned of drifting from the start, using the picture of a boat slipping its mooring (Hebrews 2:1)
- A decision can be argued with; a habit cannot, because no one notices it, including the drifter
- You cannot notice your own drift; that is what drift means, which is why the remedy is other people
- Those who drift are often the most exhausted rather than the least committed (Hebrews 10:32-34)

Discussion Prompts

- Whose habit has changed in the last year? Who noticed?
- Why can a person never see his own drift?
- Have you ever drifted and been brought back? What brought you?

Question 7

Student Question:

The command is not merely to attend but to be “encouraging one another.” What does biblical encouragement actually look like, and how is it more than compliments or general friendliness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Give the class the word, because our English has weakened it badly. The Greek is *parakaleo*, to call alongside. It is the verb behind the noun Jesus used of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Helper called alongside us (John 14:16). Encouragement in Scripture is not cheerfulness applied to someone. It is coming alongside a person and putting courage into them, which is what the English word actually says if you look at it. En-courage. It is the transfer of nerve.

Then contrast it with what we usually mean. A compliment is about the past and about the speaker’s opinion. Encouragement in this sense is about the future and about the hearer’s

ability to face it. Friendliness keeps a comfortable distance; parakaleo closes it. You can be complimented by a stranger. You can only be encouraged by someone who came near enough to know what you were carrying.

Now show the class what it looks like in practice, because they will otherwise leave with a warm feeling and no action. Hebrews itself models it. It reminds people what Christ has done. It tells them what they have already endured, so they can see they are not weak (Hebrews 10:32-34). It warns them plainly about the danger. It points them to the finish. That is the range: remembering, reminding, warning, promising. Notice that a warning can be encouragement, which is not how we usually use the word. Telling a drifting man the truth is putting courage into him, if you do it alongside him rather than at him.

Then let the class feel the timing, because Hebrews 3:13 is the companion verse and it is urgent: “exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Every day. And notice the reason: hardening. Sin is deceitful, which means the person being hardened cannot feel it happening, exactly like the drift of the previous question. Daily encouragement is not enthusiasm; it is maintenance against a process that is invisible from the inside.

Bring it home concretely. Ask the class what someone actually said to them at a moment when they nearly stopped. It is almost never a compliment. It is usually someone who knew, who came near, and who said one true thing. That is the assignment, and it is available to everyone in the room.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Parakaleo means to call alongside; it is the verb behind the Spirit’s title as Helper (John 14:16)
- Encouragement is the transfer of courage, not cheerfulness applied from a distance
- A compliment concerns the past and the speaker; encouragement concerns the future and the hearer
- Hebrews models the range: remembering, reminding, warning, and promising (Hebrews 10:32-34)
- A plain warning can be genuine encouragement if given alongside a person rather than at him
- It is to be done daily, because sin’s hardening is invisible from the inside (Hebrews 3:13)

Discussion Prompts

- What did someone say to you at a moment when you nearly stopped?
- How can a warning be encouragement? When has that been true for you?
- Why can only someone who came near actually encourage you?

Question 8

Student Question:

The writer adds, “and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” What is the Day, and why should its approach make us more urgent about encouraging one another rather than less?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Identify the Day plainly, because the class deserves clarity. “The Day” is the day of the Lord, the return of Christ and the judgment that comes with it. Scripture speaks of it constantly and always as certain and always as a summons: the day when He is revealed, when the dead are raised, when each of us gives an account (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Peter 3:10). The writer assumes his readers know what he means and assumes they can see it coming.

Then set the boundary the class needs, and set it kindly but plainly. This is not a text about an earthly kingdom or a thousand-year reign to be set up when Christ returns. The New Testament knows one return, one resurrection of the just and the unjust, and one judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Christ is reigning now, at the right hand of God, and He will deliver the kingdom to the Father at the end (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). Do not let the class turn the Day into a timeline to be calculated. Jesus said no one knows the day or hour (Matthew 24:36), and every attempt to date it has been both wrong and a distraction from the thing this verse actually commands.

Now answer the question, because it is the interesting part. Why should the approach of the Day increase our encouraging? You would think the opposite. If time is short, why spend it on each other? Because the Day is exactly what we are trying to help each other reach. Endurance has a finish line, and the closer the finish, the more people fall. Anyone who has watched a long race knows the last stretch is where runners stop, and it is where they most need someone on the rail.

Then press the urgency the phrase creates. “All the more” means this is not a fixed obligation but an increasing one. And notice how it reframes time. If the Day is coming, then the person next to you has a limited number of Sundays in which to be reached, and so do you. That should make us less casual about the person who has quietly stopped coming, not more resigned about them.

Bring it home without manipulation. Ask the class the plain question. If Christ returned this year, is there someone you would wish you had gone after? The passage does not ask us to be alarmed. It asks us to be urgent, and those are different things.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Day is the return of Christ and the judgment, certain and expected (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Peter 3:10)
- Against premillennialism: Scripture knows one return, one resurrection of just and unjust, one judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15)

- Christ reigns now and will deliver the kingdom to the Father at the end (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)
- No one knows the day or hour; date-setting is both wrong and a distraction (Matthew 24:36)
- The Day increases our duty to encourage because it is the finish we are helping each other reach
- “All the more” makes this an increasing obligation, not a fixed one
- Urgency is not alarm; the passage asks for the first

Discussion Prompts

- If Christ returned this year, is there someone you would wish you had gone after?
- Why would the nearness of the end make us more attentive to each other rather than less?
- What is the difference between being urgent and being alarmed?

Question 9

Student Question:

How does this passage challenge the idea that a person's faith is a private matter between himself and God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let the class do the arithmetic first. Three commands sit in these verses. Hold fast. Stir up one another. Do not neglect meeting together, but encourage one another. Two of the three are impossible alone, and the first one is what the other two exist to protect. God's stated method for keeping a Christian from wavering is other Christians. A believer who takes his faith private has not simplified it; he has removed the apparatus God gave him for surviving.

Then be precise, because this is where the point is easily overstated into something false, and your class deserves the distinction. Nobody is saved by a congregation, and no one's standing before God is granted by belonging to a group. The Lord adds the saved to the body of Christ when they obey the gospel (Acts 2:47), and that body is made up of individual saved people, not of congregations. Salvation is personal. What this passage denies is not that faith is personal. It denies that faith is private, and those are entirely different claims. Each of us will stand before God alone, which is exactly why we cannot walk there alone.

Now show the class why the private version fails on its own terms. Verse 24 requires someone to consider how to stir you up. Verse 25 requires someone to encourage you. Hebrews 3:13 requires someone to exhort you today, because you cannot see your own hardening. Every one of those is something done to you by someone else. The private Christian has not chosen an alternative route to the same destination. He has opted out of the means and kept the goal.

Be gentle with the objection, because the people who hold it usually have a reason. Some were hurt by a congregation. Some have found the assembly dry. Some are simply tired, which is

precisely the condition of the original readers. Do not dismiss it. But do point out what Hebrews assumes: these were people whose property had been seized and whose friends were in prison, and the writer told them the answer was more of each other, not less. He was not describing a church that was easy to attend.

Bring it home in both directions, because both are in the room. To the person who has gone quiet, ask what he is trying to survive alone that was never meant to be survived that way. And to everyone else, ask the question the passage actually presses: whose endurance currently depends on encouragement that only you are positioned to give? Someone is drifting, and the text says the remedy is a person.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Two of the three commands are impossible alone, and they exist to protect the first
- God's stated method for keeping a Christian from wavering is other Christians
- Salvation is personal but not private; no congregation grants standing before God
- The Lord adds the saved to the body when they obey the gospel (Acts 2:47)
- The body is composed of individual saved people, not of congregations
- We each stand before God alone, which is why we cannot walk there alone
- The private Christian opts out of the means while keeping the goal (Hebrews 3:13)

Discussion Prompts

- What are you trying to survive alone that was never meant to be survived alone?
- Whose endurance currently depends on encouragement only you can give?
- What is the difference between faith being personal and faith being private?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking at Hebrews 10:23–25 as a whole, what does this passage teach about the part other Christians play in helping a believer endure to the end?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Have the class assemble it, because the structure is the argument. Hold fast, because God is faithful. Consider how to stir up one another. Do not neglect meeting together, but encourage one another, all the more as the Day approaches. Notice the movement: from what God has done, to what we owe each other, to the finish. The endurance of the individual is placed deliberately in the middle of a community and pointed at a Day. That is God's design, and it is not a concession to weakness. It is the plan.

Then say the thing the passage is actually claiming, and let it land, because it is startling. Your endurance is partly other people's responsibility, and other people's endurance is partly yours.

We are used to hearing that we should encourage one another as a nice addition to the Christian life. Hebrews puts it as the mechanism of survival, sitting between a command to hold fast and the most severe warning in the letter. God did not give tired Christians a technique. He gave them each other.

Keep the class from a sentimental reading, though, because the surrounding verses will not allow it. Immediately after this comes Hebrews 10:26-31, on deliberate sin and the fearful expectation of judgment. Immediately before it comes the confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. This encouragement is not warmth for its own sake. It is what people do who understand both what it cost to bring them in and what it would mean to walk away.

Draw out the reciprocity, because it protects the class from a passive reading. Nobody in this passage is only a recipient. The same person who needs stirring up is commanded to consider how to stir up someone else, and that is usually the cure for both. The tired Christian who starts paying attention to another tired Christian generally finds his own grip tightening. That is not a trick; it is how a body works.

End with the mirror, and let both questions sit. First: who has been doing this for you, and have you ever told them? And second, the one this lesson has been aiming at from verse 24: name the person. Not a category, a person. Then name the thing you will actually do. The writer said to consider how, and considering was never meant to end when the class does.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The structure moves from God's faithfulness, to mutual responsibility, to the coming Day
- Placing endurance inside a community is God's design, not a concession to weakness
- Your endurance is partly others' responsibility, and theirs is partly yours
- This is the mechanism of survival, not a pleasant addition to the Christian life
- The surrounding verses forbid a sentimental reading (Hebrews 10:19-22, 26-31)
- No one is only a recipient; the one who needs stirring is commanded to stir others
- The tired Christian who attends to another often finds his own grip tightening

Discussion Prompts

- Who has done this for you? Have you ever told them?
- Name the person, not a category. Now name what you will actually do.
- Why does attending to someone else's endurance so often strengthen your own?