

of Following Jesus

772
were walking along the road, a
to him. "I will follow you
you go." "Foxes have holes, and
air have nests, but the Son of
place to lay his head." "Follow me."

773
who rejects you rejects me; but he who re-
jects me rejects him who sent me."
The seventy-two returned with joy and
said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us
in your name."
He replied, "I saw Satan fall like light-
ning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you au-
thority to trample on snakes and scorpions
and to overcome all the power of the ene-
my. Nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do

2017 STARTER KIT **WEEK 9** ALL PRIESTS UNDER JESUS

FOR YOUR YOUTH GROUP OR SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

was about to go. ²He told them,
rest is plentiful, but the workers
lack the Lord of the harvest, there-
fore send out workers into his harvest.
I am sending you out like lambs
among wolves. ³Do not take a purse or bag
and do not greet anyone on the

way. When you enter a house, first say,
"Peace be to this house." ⁴If a man of peace is
there, peace will rest on him; if not, it
will not. ⁵Stay in that house, eat-
ing and drinking whatever they give you,
for the worker deserves his wages. Do not
move from house to house.

When you enter a town and are wel-
comed, say, "What is set before you?" Heal the
sick there and tell them, "The king-
dom of God is near you." ¹⁰But when you
enter a town and are not welcomed, go into
the streets and say, "Even the dust of your
feet sticks to our feet because you will not
receive us. Yet be sure of this: The king-
dom of God is near." ¹²I tell you, it will be
more bearable on that day for Sodom than
for you.

Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you,
Betsaida. For if the miracles that were
performed in you had been performed in
Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented
and been sitting in sackcloth and ashes.
But because you did not repent, you will
be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon
on the day of judgment than for you. ¹⁵And
you, Caesarea Phila, will you be lifted up to the
heavens? No, you will go down to the depths.
Who listens to you listens to me; he

who rejects you rejects me; but he who re-
jects me rejects him who sent me."
The seventy-two returned with joy and
said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us
in your name."
He replied, "I saw Satan fall like light-
ning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you au-
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and to overcome all the power of the ene-
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The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²¹On one occasion an expert in the law
stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he
asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal
life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he re-
plied. "How do you read it?"

He answered: "Love the Lord your
God with all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your strength and with all
your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as
yourself."

"You have answered correctly," Jesus
replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he
asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going
down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he
fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped
him of his clothes, beat him and went away,
leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened
to be going down the same road, and when
he saw the man, he passed by on the other
side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to
the place and saw him, passed by on the
other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he trav-
eled, came where the man was; and when
he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went
on and bandaged his wounds, pouring
oil and wine. Then he put the man on his
own donkey, took him to an inn and took

HERE IS WHAT WE PROVIDE IN EACH SESSION:

1. A brief reading on the topic. This can be read, but of course should be shared instead in the leader's own words, adding or subtracting details that fit your group. Usually, there are Bible readings and questions worked into the text.
2. A short devotion that brings home the principles of the topic of the week. This is intended to be shared with the whole group.
3. An activity suggestion. These are simple, requiring few, if any, materials, but we all learn and retain better if we do something physical with what we've heard and seen.
4. A short skit. If you have time to rehearse and learn, these can be done on different weeks, or even for other meetings such as church services. But they can also be and done in impromptu fashion, each person reading his/her part expressively. Always allow time to discuss people's reactions after skits.
5. Very important: Each week's starter kit includes a page called "7 Days of Soul Food." Print these out and give copies to each person, or give each person the link if they have online access. These are personal applications that will carry the devotion through the whole week. It is highly recommended that each person begin some sort of prayer journal and use it all year. We general think of journals as being full of writing, but if you don't like to write, you can draw, doodle, paste in pictures that bring the lessons of the week to mind — anything that helps you draw closer to God.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Hebrews is like a treasure chest full and overflowing with things that are both exciting and sometimes hard to understand. It would be a wonderful idea to read and study the whole book. This Bible study will focus mostly on chapters 9 and 10, which explain most fully Jesus' ministry as our heavenly High Priest.

We will also finish with a look at 1 Peter 2:5, in which the Apostle Peter says that we are *all* priests under Jesus. What might that mean?

FIRST: PRAYER

Always begin with prayer. Ask God to bless your study and discussion, and to help you to understand what it means that Jesus lives and ministers as your High Priest, and that you are a part of the priesthood of all believers.

PREPARATION

To understand Jesus' high priestly ministry in heaven, we must first understand the general outline of the earthly priesthood set up by God when the Israelites left Egypt after their long captivity there.

Up to that time, there was no official priesthood. The head of a family or clan was the one who led the family in worshiping the one true God. But now God wanted the people to have a more visible and symbolic system of worship. Since the time of Adam and Eve, they had known that a messiah was coming, and that a perfect lamb represented that messiah. Now sacrifices would be offered daily at a tabernacle made to represent heaven (for instance, angels were embroidered into the inner curtains to represent the angels in God's throne room—see Exodus 36:8).

God chose one tribe—the tribe of Levi to produce all the priests as well as other temple workers, and they sacrificed for the people evening and morning, plus extra times on high holy days. This continued until the day Jesus was sacrificed on the cross. Matt. 27:51 tells us that at the time He died, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. The sacrificial system set in place to point the people to the true Lamb of God was over.

However, a strange thing happened when Jesus went back to heaven. He had been the sacrificial Lamb, which could truly take away sin, unlike the earthly lambs. But now, Jesus wasn't just the sacrifice—He became the High Priest!

That is what we will study in this lesson.

DEVOTIONAL

READING ONE

Before going to chapters 8 and 9, let's look at a few passages from earlier in the book of Hebrews which talk about Jesus as both sacrifice and High Priest.

Here is one over-arching question to take with you through this whole study, and discuss at the end: Have you ever thought of Jesus Himself as having been reformed? Obviously He never went from bad to good! But was His life changed? How? How many times? Why? Don't stop to discuss this now. Keep it in mind as you study, then it will be repeated at the end, and you can share the insights you may have had.

Note: If your group is too large to allow all to have a chance to share, divide into smaller groups here.

Let different people read the following passages, stopping to discuss each.

Hebrews 2:17-18

1. What do you find reassuring about this passage?
2. Do you have questions about it?

Heb. 4:14-16

1. This is one of the most beautiful and treasured passages in the Bible. Why do you think that is?
2. How do we "hold fast our confession"?
3. When you have sinned, have you been aware of Jesus leaning close, sympathizing with your weaknesses? Why or why not? Is there something you can do to help remind yourself (and each other) of that understanding and love?
4. What does it mean to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace"?
5. Share a time when you did this, and what happened.

Heb. 6:19

1. What do you think it means to "enter within the veil"?
2. How is this an anchor for our souls?

Heb. 7:14

1. This is an interesting note—Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi, so how could He become an eternal High Priest? *Hint: Take a look at verse 16.*

Heb. 7:26-28

1. Why is Jesus the best and most perfect high priest?
2. Make a list of the attributes this passage describes.

READING TWO

1. **Chapter 8** begins to concentrate more closely on Jesus as High Priest.
2. **Verses 1 and 2** give the “main point” of the whole book so far. What is it?
3. The rest of this chapter, which (like all of Hebrews) quotes a great deal from the Old Testament, the only Bible they had at the time, speaks mainly of the fact that besides a new High Priest, we also now had a New Covenant. Let different people read the following passages. Together, let the group come up with a definition of the New Covenant formed here.
4. **Verse 6**
 - Why is Jesus’ ministry “more excellent?”
 - What does this verse give as the reason the New Covenant is better?

5. Verses 8-11

What Old Testament passages are quoted here? (*Someone should have cross references which show this; if not, the answer is Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Isaiah 54:13. If you have time, you might let people look those up and read them, comparing them with the version given in Hebrews.*)

6. What are some things that are different about this New Covenant?
7. Have each person share his or her favorite verse in this passage, and why.

Important point: Is it really *new*, or was it God’s plan all along, from the foundation of the world, to have His children following Him *from their hearts*?

READING THREE

Now we come to *Hebrews 9*, the centerpiece of the Bible's teaching about Jesus' ministry in heaven.

1. First, in *verses 1-5* (people can silently scan this), the writer describes the earthly tabernacle and its services.
2. In *verses 6-7*, the writer points out that priests entered the Holy Place daily, but only went into the Most Holy Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement.
3. *Verses 8-10* show that the earthly tabernacle services were just shadows; that the rituals had no power to "make the worshiper perfect in conscience" (v. 9). Now read together and discuss the following passages:
4. *Verses 11-12*. If Jesus lived as a physical man on this physical earth, what do you think this passage means when it says he "entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation"?
 - What is the wonderful promise in verse 12?
 - Can you think of any Bible promise that is greater than this one?
5. *Verse 14*
 - Here is something startling. This verse does not say our conscience is cleansed from sin (though of course it is) but cleansed from "dead works"! What do you think that means?
 - What are the ways that you can serve the living God?
6. *Verses 15 through 22* explain that, like our legal wills, death has to happen before covenants of this kind take place.

Remember—in this case, the death should have been ours!

But Jesus died instead, and we are the benefactors of His will—receivers of eternal life!
7. *Verses 27-28*. How does this make you feel?

THE CONCLUSION

Note: If you divided into smaller groups, bring everyone back together.

Take some time to share the main insights from the smaller groups. Then read the following passage together:

1. *Hebrews 13:15*

2. What is a sacrifice of praise?
3. Share some times when choosing to praise might be a sacrificial act.
4. Let's conclude by reading **1 Peter 2:4-10**. Here, the imagery changes. Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb, then He was the High Priest, now He is the temple itself—its foundation stone.
 - What do you think it means to be “living stones”?
 - How many descriptions does Peter give for believers?
 - What does it mean to be a holy priesthood?
5. Now let's consider this. We no longer need a High Priest to stand between us and God, Jesus is our mediator, our High Priest. But we are also priests, we are responsible, to a large extent, for our own spiritual health. We present ourselves before God each day.
6. Finish by discussing what it does and does not mean to be priests, all of us together, under the High Priesthood of Jesus Himself.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

1. Use stones to build an altar outside (or some kind of building blocks inside). Let each person write down sins and other things he or she would like to have deleted from their lives and lay them on the altar. If you are outside, you can burn these papers on your stone altar. If you are inside, be sure each person folds or wads up the paper so others do not see.
2. Now divide into pairs and have each person give a priestly prayer for the other, asking God's forgiveness and cleansing for the person's sins and praying a blessing upon their lives.
3. Finish by singing a praise song together as a "sacrifice of praise."

CLOSING PRAYER

1. Praise God for sending Jesus to become our Sacrifice, our High Priest, and the Temple in which we live.
2. Be specific in asking Him to bless each person with wisdom in following, and acting as a royal priest for Jesus.

SEVEN DAYS OF SOUL FOOD

SEVEN DAYS' WORTH OF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY ONE: The book of Hebrews contains 13 chapters. If you read two chapters a day, you can read the whole book this week during your personal devotions. If you only want to concentrate on the teaching about the universal priesthood, read chapters 8 and 9 again. In what ways do these chapters resonate with your life right now? Each day choose one verse to pray over and claim.

DAY TWO: *Heart.* Look through the chapters again, finding the verses that you think particularly speak to the heart and emotion of human beings. Prayerfully connect with these emotional themes and consider how God wants to work in your heart this week.

DAY THREE: *Mind.* Look through the passages a third time, finding the verses that appeal to your mind, the logical, thinking part of you. Do you perhaps have questions about the historic context or the original language of some of the words? You can look these up in concordances, commentaries, or online. How does God want to work in your mind this week?

DAY FOUR: *Strength/body.* Look through the chapters a fourth time, finding the verses that speak of the body, its actions, or perhaps its treatment. Are there ways you can use your body as a priest for God this week?

DAY FIVE: *Soul/spirit.* Soul or spirit, of course, is not a part of you. It's your whole self. But it's your whole self with a spiritual twist. It's your whole self, choosing to be godly. Look through the book a fifth time, finding the verses that appeal to your spirit, that encourage your faith and trust and make you want to be a true priest for God. Can you find a promise or promises that will help you do this?

DAY SIX: As you think about your family, community, and church, how do you see the priesthood of all believers in action? Are there people who have sacrificed for you? Are there people you can sacrifice for, or pray for?

DAY SEVEN: You could create a small altar for your room. It could be a table or shelf with your Bible, perhaps a picture of Jesus, or of heaven, or of the tabernacle. You could have flowers there to remind you of God's creation, and lists of names of people you are praying for, or anything you can think of that will remind you that you are a child of God and have wonderful things to share with those you meet.