

# THE LOOKOUT

NOVEMBER 2021

**Unit: HEBREWS (Part 3)**  
**Theme: FAITH**

**Overview:** If Jesus is superior to everyone and everything (September lessons), and if he is the ultimate high priest who can connect us to God (October lessons), then our best response is to place all our faith in him. *Faith*, Bible writers testify, is appropriating God’s grace for our lives. During this unit, students will learn how to hold firm in their faith, grow up in faith, persevere in faith, and be known among the faithful.

HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 15, 2021

LESSON AIM: **Beware of drifting away from the faith.**

LESSON TEXT: Hebrews 3:1-11

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Hebrews 12:14, 12:18-19; Proverbs 4:23-27; John 8:1

STUDY

HOLD FIRM TO THE END  
BY MARK SCOTT

In 1957, Henry Dreyfus advised his boss, something about the way he was working. He was a top executive at General Electric. He had been with the company for 25 years. He was a top executive at General Electric. He had been with the company for 25 years. He was a top executive at General Electric. He had been with the company for 25 years.

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.

APPLICATION

STICK WITH IT  
BY DAVID FAUST

STUDY

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. PECK

1. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
2. What challenges do you face in this passage?
3. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
4. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
5. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
6. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
7. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
8. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
9. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?
10. How do you think you will respond to the message of this passage?

Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 21, 2021

**LESSON AIM:** **Be careful not to “shrink back” in your faith but to persevere.**

**UNIT:** Hebrews (Part 3)

**THEME:** Faith

**LESSON TEXT:** Hebrews 10:19-39

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Isaiah 55:6-7; 1 Timothy 6:11-16

## PERSEVERE IN FAITH

BY MARK SCOTT

On July 30, 2020, NASA launched a land rover to Mars. They rightly named it *Perseverance*. After all, it was a long journey. *Perseverance* always takes “the long cut,” and sometimes that journey is hard. That is why *perseverance* is defined as “doing something despite difficulty.” People of faith know it is always too soon to quit.

After spending significant time and space describing why the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant—particularly how the New Covenant works (Hebrews 8:1–10:18), the writer gives what some call the fourth major exhortation of the Epistle. It is clearly a call to never give up.

**The Impetus for Perseverance***Hebrews 10:19-25*

In this paragraph the writer reviews the basis for perseverance and announces the “superior realities” of the New Covenant that make perseverance possible. *Confidence* (boldness) to enter salvation is not based on anything we have done, but on what Christ has done through his blood. Verse 20 functions as an appositional phrase (i.e., it further describes what is meant by Jesus entering the *Most Holy Place*). The *curtain* (veil) in the New Covenant is not a literal veil in the temple (cf. Mark 15:38). It stands for access to God and is described as a *new and living way*. This is something for which to give thanks this week.

Based on God’s activity in Christ, we enter the “let us” patch of Hebrews. Three imperatives come out of this impetus. Believers are commanded to draw near to God, hold unwaveringly to hope, and consider how to spur on one another in love and good deeds. Drawing near is possible due to the salvific work of Christ which is embraced through having our hearts cleansed in baptism (i.e., *having bodies washed with pure water*). Holding unwaveringly to hope is possible through our confession of faith and God’s faithfulness. Considering how to spur (poke or prod) others on *toward love and good deeds* is possible because we have the motivation of the *Day* (judgment) *approaching*. And the best way to spur others on is not to neglect the church assembly.

**A Caution Against Not Persevering***Hebrews 10:26-31*

This paragraph contains one of the sharpest rebukes in the Epistle. Not to grow is to regress. Not to persevere is something on the order of high treason. Deliberate sin after receiving knowledge of the truth negates the power of the cross. The only thing that remains then is judgment from God that his enemies will receive.

The writer uses the common “how much more” argument. If the people in Moses’ day did not persevere and therefore received God’s judgment (based on the typical two or three witness protocol), *how much more* will people who have embraced Christ and turned back be judged. They essentially have *trampled the Son of God underfoot*. It is as if they have crucified Jesus again. They have regarded the blood of Christ as something common, and they have *insulted the Spirit of grace* (i.e., taken undue advantage of grace and presumed on God; cf. Romans 2:4). Judgment should be left in God’s hands, and believers should be careful of falling into these forms of ungodliness.

**A Challenge to Persevering***Hebrews 10:32-35*

There are many challenges to persevering, but this paragraph focuses on the external challenge of persecution. These Hebrew Christians had endured much. If they turned back (spoken of as “throwing away their confidence”) it would negate why they had endured persecution in the past.

This *suffering* showed up in four ways. They were verbally insulted (reviled or upbraided). They were “persecuted” (pressed down). They were put in prison (cf. Hebrews 13:3). Finally, they had their property confiscated (seized with force). This last challenge could be laughed at by the believers. They understood that all property belonged to God anyway and that they had *lasting possessions* in heaven. They might have items taken in this world but they would be *richly rewarded* in the next world (cf. Mark 10:29-31).

**The Promise to Those Who Persevered***Hebrews 10:36-39*

The promise was already more than hinted at in the previous paragraph. In these verses the believers’ vindication and reward were undergirded by Old Testament texts. To persevere (faithfully “remain under”) by habitually doing the will of God guaranteed receiving God’s promises.

The writer used a cluster of Old Testament passages (i.e., he used lines from them to frame up his argument but did not quote them exactly). They were Isaiah 26:21; Haggai 2:6; and Habakkuk 2:3-4. The argument: God’s judgment will come, God’s people must walk by faith (illustrated in the following chapter), and God delights in people who hang in there. “Shrinking back” is to draw back or defect. It is the opposite of perseverance. It is apostasy. ■

## APPLICATION

### THREE CRUCIAL COMMITMENTS

BY DAVID FAUST

The book of Hebrews contains 13 chapters, and the word *better* appears 13 times in the most literal translations of the book. Christ is better than the angels. He's greater than Old Testament heroes like Moses and Joshua. He offers more satisfying rest, better promises, and greater empathy. He brings a new and better covenant. When we are discouraged and feel like giving up, the book of Hebrews urges us to take the better way and persevere.

To be fair, there are times when it's OK to quit. Dr. Henry Cloud's book *Necessary Endings* explains that we shouldn't feel guilty for setting boundaries or leaving a job that's not the right fit. But Hebrews 10 confronts us with three crucial commitments we should never give up. The author highlights these points by repeating the phrase "let us."

#### Don't Give Up on God

Hebrews 10:22 says, "Let us draw near to God." Moses drew near to God on Mount Sinai, but the rest of the people were told not to approach the mountain or even to touch it, on penalty of death (see Exodus 19:12). The message then wasn't "draw near to God." It was "keep your distance."

On Mount Calvary, though, God opened his arms and invited us into his presence. "We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). Why push God away when he has gone to such great lengths to pull you close?

#### Don't Give Up Hope

The phrase "let us" appears again in Hebrews 10:23, which says, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope that we profess, for he who promised is faithful." In stormy times, hope is "an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (Hebrews 6:19). Our hope is grounded in the rock-solid words of Jesus, who promised that if we believe in him, we will live even though we die

(John 11:25). Our hope is further guaranteed by Jesus' resurrection, for God's power at work in us "is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead" (Ephesians 1:19-20).

The older I get, the more I think about and talk about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I can barely contain my excitement about the greatest comeback in the history of the world! Simon Peter never lost his enthusiasm about it. He wrote, "In his great mercy [God] has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

#### Don't Give Up on the Church

The phrase "let us" appears again in Hebrews 10:24, which says, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." The word translated "spur" literally meant to "needle" or "provoke." Like cowboys who spur their horses to go faster, Christians should motivate each other to love and serve well.

Are you growing weary in well-doing? Have your spurs worn down and lost their edge? Have you been around long enough to recognize the church's many flaws and shortcomings? The body of Christ is comprised of imperfect people who serve a perfect Lord. Can you see past the blemishes on Jesus' bride and glimpse the glory of what she can be and will be?

"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" (Hebrews 6:10). Don't give up!

**Personal Challenge:** In your walk with the Lord, where are you right now on a scale of 1 ("exhausted and empty") to 10 ("full of faith and zeal")? Ask God to refresh your faith, rekindle your spiritual fervor, and help you persevere. ■

# DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. How specifically did you step up in your faith or forward toward leading others last week?
2. Over the past week, how did God provide you with the faith and/or patience you needed?

Ask two people to read aloud **Hebrews 10:19-39** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to provide a summary of the passage.

3. How does this passage as a whole encourage you to persevere in your faith?
4. Let's dig deeper:
  - Why can we have confidence (boldness) to come into God's presence?
  - What reasons do you see in this passage to persevere in your faith?
  - How can we as a community of Christ followers be involved in helping one another to keep going?
  - How does baptism provide us with assurance and perseverance?
  - Several sentences begin with the words "Let us" (in the *New International Version*). What do these imperative statements encourage us to do as we persevere in our faith?
  - What warnings are given to believers for persevering in our faith?
  - What challenges and encouragements are given to help us keep going?
  - How can remembering times of suffering and persecution help us to persevere in our faith?
  - How can maintaining a Christian worldview help us to persevere in the face of difficult circumstances? (See especially vv. 32-39.)
  - What promises are given to those who believe and keep going in their faith?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. Choose one of the following three imperatives from this passage that you will focus on obeying this week?
  - Draw near to God
  - Hold unswervingly to the hope you profess
  - Spur on others toward love and good deeds, encouraging them

What specific actions will you take this week to obey this message to you from God's Word?
8. How might persevering in your faith provide opportunities for you to share the gospel (vv. 19-20) with others?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. This week, as you reflect on the promises and encouragements (and even the warnings) from this passage, for what will you give God thanks?

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Hebrews 11:1-6, 30-40; 12:1-3** as we continue studying faith in the book of Hebrews. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■