

DISCUSS

In this session, Derwin shifted the false perspective of God many of us hold onto. We often think of God as an iron-fisted king who wants to punish us when we fall short of perfection.

In what ways do you tend to hide or avoid God when you sin?

What do you think God sees and feels when he looks at you?

Note: To dig more deeply into Hebrews 4:12–13, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

In Hebrews, we see a very different image of God than many of us have in our heads. Read Hebrews 4:14–16.

Note: If you would like to learn more about God’s promised rest in Hebrews 4:1–12, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.

In the video, Derwin told us about Jesus, our High Priest. He is not in heaven tallying our faults and failures, disappointed that we keep messing up. Rather, he became a human like us and experienced the trouble, trials, and temptations we struggle with every day. But, for many of us, we don’t think of God as someone who gets our struggles. **Do you think God cares about your problems? Why or why not?**

Often, we are certain that what we deal with is unique. We are silently sure that no one in our friend groups, churches, or families could understand our troubles or the constant pull toward our secret sins. **Are there any temptations or circumstances in your life you think no one will understand?**

What makes you feel that you are alone in your circumstance?

Jesus may not have had social media, but he did live thirty-three years as a human, struggling with ordinary temptations and extraordinary circumstances. In his life, he was mocked (Luke 22:63), was publicly shamed (Mark 14:65), was betrayed by a friend (Mat. 26:56), was misunderstood by his family (Mark 3:21), was homeless

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(Mat. 8:20), was gossiped about (John 8:52), dealt with the death of loved ones (John 11:1–45), and physically suffered (John 19:1–3). Satan came to Jesus when he was at his weakest moment offering him acclaim, praise, wealth, and power (Luke 4:1–13)—things we are often tempted to chase after on social media, in our relationships, and in our careers. And yet, he did not sin. **In what ways can you relate to the troubles in Jesus’s life?**

Our circumstances can make us feel weak. Our failures can make us feel ashamed. Those times can drive us into isolation and hiding. But, when we are weak, we also become very aware of our need for help. **What help or support did you want when you felt weak or ashamed?**

What can keep you from asking for help from other people? From God?

In the video, Derwin said we can often act like his finicky cat, Mr. Boots, toward God. If we are unsure if we can trust him, we will keep a safe distance regardless of our need for him. **What can make it difficult for you to trust God?**

What questions do you feel you need to be answered before you trust God?

Whether we trust him or not, God is and has been lovingly providing for us. But he doesn’t want us to keep him at arm’s length. Read Hebrews 4:16 again.

What does it look like to “approach the throne” of Jesus?

Jesus knows we are weak, sympathizes with us in our struggles, and wants us to come to him when we need help. **According to Hebrews 4:16, what kind of help will we find at his throne?**

In what ways are grace and mercy exactly what we need when we sin?

Because we have a compassionate and great High Priest, verse 14 says we should “hold fast to our confession.”

What do you think it means to “hold fast to our confession”?

When life gets tough or we find ourselves in the same sin pattern again, we may want to avoid God or even give up

on following Jesus. **What about failure and hardship makes us want to give up on God?**

If Jesus is compassionate, if he is eager to give us grace and mercy whenever we need it, then there is no situation he cannot or will not help us through. **Where in your life do you need grace and mercy today?**

Feelings of shame and guilt can keep us from running to Jesus when we need his help. Setting up reminders like Scripture written on sticky notes or memorizing verses can be a great way to recall truth in our times of need. **What could you do to remind yourself of Jesus's goodness and truth when guilt and shame tell you to stay away from him?**

LAST WORD

Following Jesus does not guarantee us a life of ease and sinlessness. We will be tempted and have seasons of difficulty, but we have a good savior who understands what we are going through. He is eager and able to help us whenever we need it.

No matter what you are going through, you can trust Jesus. Instead of hiding from him, rush to him with your problems, your frustrations, anxieties, and failures. He is ready to offer you both grace and mercy. Is that not exactly what we need when we want to give up?

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When we think of our sin, we feel the piercing sting of conviction. But God wounds us to bring us greater healing. He wants us to come to him for the grace and mercy we desperately need to overcome our sin. Spend a few minutes in prayer, examining your motivations and desires. Where needed, repent, and find the grace and mercy Jesus is so eager to give you.

3. Our Promised Rest

If you were to read Hebrews 4 without context, you would probably be pretty confused. Who came short of entering God’s rest? What is God’s rest? And what does all of this have to do with Jesus being our High Priest?

Let’s start by going back to the end of Hebrews 3 to learn who we are talking about. Read Hebrews 3:16–19.

The author is comparing Christians who are struggling to hold onto their faith with the Israelites who rejected the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 1:19–45. When God’s people came to the border of the Promised Land, they saw that it was inhabited by giants. Instead of trusting God through their trials, they blamed him for the trouble saying, “The Lord brought us out of the land of Egypt to hand us over to the Amorites in order to destroy us because he hates us” (Deut. 1:27).

What situations in your own life, if any, have made you feel like God is disregarding you?

In what ways has feeling ignored by God altered your view of God’s goodness?

The Israelites looked into the Promised Land and only saw problems. They rejected God’s plan because they felt like God didn’t care about them. As a result of their unbelief, God caused the Israelites to wander in the desert for forty years. All of those who grumbled against God did not live to see the Promised Land. Now, let’s go back to Hebrews 4 to learn what this story has to do with us today. Read Hebrews 4:1–11.

The recipients of Hebrews were struggling to trust God through their trouble, much like the Israelites who feared the Amorites in the Promised Land. Like the Israelites, God has announced rescue from bondage and given us rest (4:1–2) and he has a greater Sabbath rest waiting for us in eternity, where we will no longer have to endure

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