Study Guide

| Sossion 3: Approach the Throne | |
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| Session 3: Approach the Throne | |
| SESSION GOALS | |
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| Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do. | |
| do. | |
| Main Idea Whenever we need grace or mercy, our first instinct | |
| should be to go to Jesus, our good High Priest. | |
| Head Change To know that Cod wants to have a personal relationship | |
| To know that God wants to have a personal relationship with you. | |
| Heart Charge | |
| Heart Change To feel comforted by Jesus when you feel weak. | |
| Life Change To eagerly turn to Jesus for grace and mercy whenever you need it. | |
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| OPEN | |
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| When was a funny time you messed up or got in trouble as a kid? | |
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| We all have stories of when we messed up that we can look back on and laugh at. But we were rarely laughing | |
| when those situations happened. We instinctually want to | |
| hide our mistakes, go unnoticed by authority, and hope that we can get away with our mistakes. | |
| Our instinctual recoil affects our relationship with God: | |
| when we sin, the last person we want to talk to or think about is God. But we don't serve an angry father, a tyrannical king, or a judgmental priest. Jesus is our compassionate High Priest who wants, more than | |
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| anything, for us to run to him. | |
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| READ | |
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| Hebrews 4:14–16 | |
| Note: If you would like to read through the entire book of Hebrews, you can find a reading plan in the Go Deeper Section 1 at the end of each session of this study. | |
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| WATCH | |
| Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Derwin Gray's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions. | |
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| Why is it important that Jesus is a compassionate high priest? | |
| How does God view us when we sin? | |
| What does it mean to "approach the throne of grace and mercy"? | |
| mercy . | |
| Session 3: Approach the Throne (16 minutes). | |
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DISCUSS

| In this session, Derwin shifted the false perspective of God many of us hold onto. We often think of God as an | |
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| 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? | |
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| 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 fullicly shariled (Mat. 26:56), was full shariled (Mat. 26:56), was | |

| (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? | |
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| 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?

GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

- 1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
- 2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of the book of Acts.

1. Hebrews Reading Plan: Week 3

Hebrews is a long book, and we won't be able to study every verse of it during these sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of the book so that you can dig more deeply into God's Word. This plan keeps pace with Derwin's teaching, so some weeks will have more reading than others. Feel free to complete the daily readings at a pace that makes the most sense to you and your group.

Week 1: Hebrews 1:1-3

Week 2: Hebrews 1:4-3:19

Week 3: Hebrews 4

Week 4: Hebrews 5-6

Week 5: Hebrews 7-9

Week 6: Hebrews 10

Week 7: Hebrews 11–12

Week 8: Hebrews 13

This reading guide will help you dig more deeply into Hebrews 4, looking at our need to be obedient to Jesus. When we fail to be obedient, as we all do, we have a merciful priest willing and able to give us grace and mercy when we need it.

Day 1: Israel's Disobedience (Psalm 95)

Day 2: The Promise of God's Rest (Hebrews 4:1–7)

Day 3: The Living and Active Word (Hebrews 4:8–13)

Day 4: Our Compassionate High Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16)

Day 5: Jesus, Our High Priest (Hebrews 4:1–16)

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| 2. Sharper Than Any Double-Edged Sword In the middle of encouraging us to obey God, Hebrews 4 takes an odd turn. Instead of encouraging us to be polite church attenders, the author of Hebrews makes a medical analogy, pointing us to the deeper life change God wants us to experience. Read Hebrews 4:11–13. | |
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| What is the unusual reason in verse 12 that we should make every effort to obey God? | |
| It may be confusing to think of the Word of God as a sword, but we all know what it means to be affected by words. In anger, we can use our words like weapons to hurt others. Conversely, encouragement and kind words can be used to heal and build a person up. God's Word is like a surgeon's scalpel, which temporarily wounds its patient to create greater healing. | |
| Has reading the Bible ever pointed out your faults? In what ways has the Word of God convicted you of your sin? | |
| We can put a lot of effort into the way we present ourselves to the world. But appearances are often deceiving. We can look like we have it all together—a perfect family, perfect home, perfect Christian life—while remaining a complete mess beneath the surface. God loves us enough to look beyond our appearances. He sees our motivations, what causes us to tick at our deepest level, and he is not afraid to point out the sinfulness in our innermost being. | |
| What do you want people to think about you? What do you want them to say about you? | |
| What are you afraid people will see or learn about you? | |
| God's word is sharp and no one can hide from him. He sees everything we have tried to hide and will lovingly wound us to cut out the rot of sin in our lives. Hebrews 4 encourages us to obey God, even in our desires and thoughts. Do you think it is possible to make our thoughts and feelings obey God? What makes controlling our desires such a difficult task? | |
| Most of this session focused on Hebrews 4:14–16. Reread | |

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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. | |
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| 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 right (4:1-2) and he has a greater Sabbath rest waiting for us in eternity, where we will no longer have to endure | |

2/22/22, 9:55 AM Reader troubles and trials. But there will be troubles and "Amorites" in our lives that may make us doubt the promises of God. What present or future troubles or problems are your "Amorites"? What do you feel like you will need from God to face these troubles? What God is asking of us today is that we trust him in our troubles, enduring in faith through every circumstance. God is asking us to trust him with our words, actions, and our desires. That is a deep trust that requires us to fully turn our lives over to God. What hopes or dreams are you afraid God might take from you? What makes you nervous about trusting God with everything you have, even your hopes for your future? This session focused on the final verses of Hebrews, which are good news for anyone struggling to trust God. Even when we fall short, we can trust Jesus who is abundant in forgiveness. God commands us to trust him with everything and gives us grace and mercy when we fail.

Our troubles are temporary, and God will not abandon us as we walk toward his promised rest. Take some time to pray, expressing your concerns to God. He is big enough to handle our fear and our worries. But, instead of rejecting him like the Israelites, wrestle through what it would look like to trust God and his plans, even when your way seems unsure.