

Study Guide

Session 2: Jesus Is Better

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea

We should turn to Jesus when we sin because he is loving, sympathetic, and merciful.

Head Change

To know that Jesus was like us in every way—though without sin—so that he could sympathize with our weaknesses.

Heart Change

To feel valued by God, who loves us so deeply that he sent his son to save us.

Life Change

To turn to God and repent of our sins because he is eager and able to forgive us.

OPEN

What is a life-hack or productivity tip that has made your life easier?

We are wired to look for easy roads. When life gets tough, we put our ingenuity to work and try to find ways to make it less challenging. Finding easy paths can help us in everyday life, but it can seriously hurt us in our spiritual lives.

Following Jesus may not always be the easiest path, but his way is always the best way. In this session, Derwin Gray will show us the depth of God’s love for us, the breadth of what he has done for us, and how we can reject the easy roads and choose those that are best.

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READ

Hebrews 2:5–18

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.

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.

In what ways does God show us that he cares for us more than he cares about angels?

Why is it important that Jesus was human, like us in every way?

What is the right response to God’s care for us?

Session 2: Jesus Is Better (12 minutes).

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DISCUSS

In the first century, some Christians were tempted to worship angels. In their minds, no human savior could be as great as a powerful spiritual being. We might not feel that same temptation today, but many of us are tempted to see Jesus as a secondary solution to our problems. In this session, we will examine why Jesus is a greater savior than anything this world can offer.

Note: If you would like to learn more about why Hebrews talks about angels and dig into the first of the Five Warnings of Hebrews, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

What areas of your life do you wish God would fix?

In what ways do you want or expect God to solve those problems?

How might your view of God change if he did not “fix” those areas of your life in the ways that you want him to?

When we are in trouble or struggling—much like the recipients of the book of Hebrews—we are often tempted to turn away from God and look to idols for help. An idol isn’t necessarily a statue that we burn incense to and say prayers in front of. Our work, money, status, or even children can become idols for us—anything that takes the place of God as the most important thing in our lives.

Think of what Derwin said at the end of the video, “Good things become bad things when they become god things.” **What good things are you tempted to treat as “god things”?**

Derwin summed up the dangers of idols well when he said, “The way of the cross is always better than the chaos and dysfunction of idolatry.” **In what ways have idols brought you down roads of chaos and dysfunction in your own life?**

We turn to idols when we feel like God isn’t coming or won’t come through for us. But sin takes its toll, which is often more than we want to pay. God, on the other hand, has already done more than we could dream of in Jesus

and gives the results of his work to us. Read Hebrews 2:5–10.

We have very little in common with God. We were made even lower than angels. And yet, Jesus overcame that chasm of differences to be with us. He even suffered death for us. Jesus overcame every obstacle and inconvenience to be with us.

What inconveniences are you willing to endure for a stranger? A friend? Your dearest loved one?

Jesus came for us while we were still God’s enemies. God loves you despite your sin. **In what ways is God’s overcoming love good news for those of us who feel unloved, unwanted, or unnoticed?**

Read Hebrews 2:10–13.

When we turn to idols, we are met with shame and guilt. As we hide our sins, we isolate ourselves from others. **Why do we prefer to hide sin rather than exposing it?**

In what ways can secrecy and isolation give us more opportunity to live with our sins and addictions?

In verses 11–13, we learn that Jesus is not ashamed of us. He would publicly announce that you are not just his friend but his brother or sister. **In what ways do you expect Jesus to be ashamed of you?**

If Jesus is not ashamed of your life before you met him, you should not live in the shame of your past. **What could it look like to live as a fully forgiven child of God?**

Read Hebrews 2:14–18.

Note: If you would like to dig into the sections of Hebrews that this session did not have time to cover, go to **Go Deeper Sections 3 and 4** at the end of this study. Section 3 will cover the ways Jesus is a greater servant than Moses and Section 4 will examine the second of the Five Warnings of Hebrews.

According to these verses, what are the reasons God came to us, fully human?

It can sometimes feel like God doesn’t notice us or that he is so far away that he cannot really know what we are

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going through. But that is not true. Jesus was tempted by sin. He had hard days. He has experienced loneliness, betrayal, mockery, disregard, and injustice. Therefore, he sympathizes with us when we are struggling. **In what areas of your life does it seem like God isn't listening or helping?**

What could it look like to pray (or even cry out) to a God who sympathizes with you?

What might change in your confession and repentance, knowing that God sympathizes with being tempted?

Idols only know how to take from us, but Jesus gives us more than we could ever hope or imagine. To end this session, think of the idols that tempt you, what you hope they will bring to your life, and how you can leave them behind as you seek to follow Jesus more faithfully. **What sorts of idols are you most tempted by?**

What "gifts" or comforts do these idols tempt you with?

What are some ways you could remind yourself that Jesus is better than idols when you are tempted (ex: specific Scriptures, prayers, habits of gratitude, etc.)?

What would it take to turn away from persistent idols and walk in the forgiveness Jesus offers to you?

LAST WORD

Idols do not sympathize with us. They only demand that we do better, look more put together, work harder, and suck up the pain when we fail. Jesus is a better savior than any idol, even when we have to wait on his timing, because he gives us forgiveness, grace, mercy in our failings, and he is not ashamed of us.

When we feel weak, tempted, or even that God is not coming through for us as we might like, we can always turn to the one who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses.

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 Hebrews.

1. Hebrews Reading Plan: Week 2

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

Session 2 focuses on God's concern for humanity and what he has done for us through Jesus. The reading plan this week will help you put this passage into its broader context, looking at the ways Jesus is a better messenger than angels, a better servant than Moses, and how we should respond to our great savior.

Day 1: Jesus Is Superior to Angels (Hebrews 1:4–14)

Day 2: The First Warning: Drifting Away (Hebrews 2:1–5)

Day 3: Jesus's Concern for Us (Hebrews 2:6–18)

Day 4: Jesus Is Superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1–6)

Day 5: Listening and Doing (Hebrews 3:7–19)

2. The First Warning of Hebrews: Drifting Away from Jesus

Hebrews is densely packed with rich theology and Old Testament customs that can, at times, feel disconnected from our everyday lives. But the author of Hebrews never forgets that he is writing to people struggling with their faith, and, like a kind friend, he helps his readers apply their theology to their current situation.

Throughout the book of Hebrews, we find five pastoral warnings, each of which helps us just as it helped the original audience of this letter.

The first of these warnings is in Hebrews 2:1–4. Read Hebrews 1:1–14 to understand the context of the first warning.

The covenant of law was delivered by angels, powerful spiritual beings that God uses as his messengers. The covenant of grace was delivered by Jesus who, though he was the Son of God, looked just like you and me. First-century Hebrews felt they had to choose: who was the better messenger—angels or Jesus?

According to verses 1:1–3, what kind of prophet or messenger is Jesus?

According to verses 1:7, 13–14, what is the role of angels?

In what ways is Jesus a better messenger than angels?

Read Hebrews 2:1–4.

Verse 2 reminds us that the Law demanded complete obedience. Because Jesus is greater than angels, his followers should be as obedient and attentive to him as they were the Law. We may not struggle with abandoning Jesus for angels, but we do feel the temptation to drift away from Jesus, just like our first-century brothers and sisters.

It is very easy to listen to voices other than Jesus to find truth. Sometimes it is as easy as paying more attention to social media than to Jesus. **What are some voices that compete with Jesus for our attention?**

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In what ways do these voices contradict Jesus or lead us to drift away from him?

What would it look like for you to pay closer attention to Jesus in your own life?

3. Jesus Is Greater than Moses

For the ancient Hebrews, Moses was a spiritual superhero. He led God’s people out of slavery, through the Red Sea, across deserts, and into the promised land. On top of all that, Moses was God’s chosen messenger of the covenant of law to the people of Israel.

In the same way, Jesus was God’s chosen messenger of the covenant of grace to all of humanity. So, which human messenger and covenant is greater, Moses and the Law or Jesus and grace? For the Hebrew Christian, this was much more than a philosophical question. They felt the pressure to choose between a spiritual hero and the crucified savior.

Read Hebrews 3:1–11.

The author of Hebrews describes Jesus and Moses as servants in God’s house, but they served God in very different ways. **According to verses 5–6, in what ways were Jesus and Moses different in their service to God?**

In what ways are these roles differ from one another?

Jesus is greater than Moses in the same way that a son is greater than a servant in their house. But verse 2 points out that both men were faithful to God. Moses may not be equal to Jesus, but he should still be honored for his faithfulness. **Who are your spiritual heroes? What does it look like to honor them while focusing on Jesus?**

We are a part of God’s house if we believe in Jesus; therefore, we are also called to be faithful like Moses and Jesus.

What could it look like for you to live as a faithful servant in God’s house?

4. The Second Warning of Hebrews: An Unbelieving

Heart MEDIA

Hebrew Christians were being pressured to abandon Jesus and return to the covenant of Law, the rituals offerings and festivals, and the sacrifices of the temple. To them, that former way of life seemed established and safe. Following Jesus was new and very often unsure, something many of us can relate to today.

But if the Hebrew Christians abandoned Jesus, they would not only be leaving God’s chosen messenger and greater servant but God himself. We do the same when we turn from Jesus. Every time we willfully sin, we reject Jesus and turn toward our former way of life. Read Hebrews 3:7–19.

Sin is ultimately a question of belief. Sin can be appealing and at times seem better than what God offers to us.

What circumstances make it more difficult for you to follow Jesus?

In what areas of your life does sin seem to be most appealing?

Sin not only turns us from God but can also harden our hearts, convincing us that it is neither wrong nor hurtful to turn from God. **What is the antidote to sin’s deception in verse 13?**

Christian community may seem like a strange way to combat sin, but sin always drives us into isolation. When we meet with one another for accountability, we can identify the lies of sin and encourage one another into a deeper relationship with Christ. **What benefits have you seen in your own life from spending time with God’s people?**

For other Christians to help you combat the lies and hardening of sin, they have to know what sins you are drawn to and what lies you are tempted to believe. **What would it look like to talk about your temptations and struggles with other Christians?**

What makes you nervous about opening up to other Christians? In what ways could these apprehensions be keeping you in isolation and from the community God wants you to have?

We may not be concerned about Moses or angels, but, like the ancient church, we do struggle with sin and trusting Jesus. **What can you do to remind yourself of**

God's goodness, even when sin is appealing and looks to be the better way for you to go?
