

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:19-25 – Encouraging One Another

June 28, 2009

I. **Hebrews 10:19-25** . . . Therefore, brethren, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, [21] **and since** we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] **let us** draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] **Let us** hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; [24] and **let us** consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, [25] not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

II. **Review** – Let Us Draw Near and Hold Fast

A. It is important to remember that this section with its three “**Let Us**” statements begins and even hinges on the two “**since**” statements.

1. **Since** we have confidence to enter the holy place – by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, and **since** we have a great priest over the house of God.

a. **Since** (*because*) we are convinced we can come into the presence of God and live – in fact, that we can come into God’s presence because He wants us to come in

b. And **since** (*because*) Christ is always present to represent us before God if and when we need it . . .

2. Because these are true, let us do what God says next:

a. **Let us draw near** to God with a humble attitude, a pure heart, and a clean life. Let us never let thoughts of God get too far from us – recalling them to mind whenever possible. Let us talk with God often – as we would a best friend or lover. Or as the young people would say, let’s hang out with God.

b. **Let us hold fast** – cling to living what we publicly claim to believe. In other words, if we claim to be a born again Christians, let us hold on to those ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and behaving that affirm our claim.

c. **Let us consider** how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. This is what I want to talk about today.

B. Prayer

III. **Hebrews 10:24-25** . . . and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, [25] not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

A. To help us put **verse 24** into a meaningful context, I want to liken the Christian life to the Tour De France. The 2009 Tour de France will begin on Saturday July 4th and end on Sunday July 26th. It will be made up of 21 stages and will cover a total distance of 3,500 kilometres – or 2,174.8 miles. The 21 stages will include 10 flat stages, 7 mountain stages, 1 medium mountain stage, 2 individual time-trial stages, and 1 team time-trial stage.

1. As you can tell, the Tour De France is nothing like a one hundred yard dash, or even a one mile run. Indeed, it is not even like a 21 mile marathon that is run in one day. This race is a twenty-two day race that is just 287 miles short of the distance between Los Angeles and New York City (2462 miles).
2. As is obvious to all of us, the Tour De France – though watched by millions – is not a spectator sport. To have any chance of winning even one stage of this race the participants must go through serious, year-long physical and mental training, they must believe they can push their body and mind hard enough to win, they must have the depth of determination and perseverance required to be a winner, they must be self-disciplined, they must say “no” to anything that might hinder them from achieving their goal – not just during the race but also for the year of training before the race, they must be willing to endure exhaustion and pain without letting either become an obstacle to victory, they must guard against any loss of focus lest it result in unpreparedness or a fall along the way, they must be ready to handle the challenges of the differing terrains, and they must value winning enough to put in all this time and effort.
3. But there is something more to consider when it comes to winning the Tour De France. The Tour De France is not an individual sport, it is a team sport. All those who win the Tour, or even just one stage of the tour, are part of a team.

B. And so it is with us. The Christian life is like a long-distance race over years of time, with many differing terrains, obstacles, and challenges.

1. Just as winning the Tour De France is not easy, so coming in a winner at the end of the Christian life is not easy.

2. Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength in the face of so many temptations to do otherwise is not easy.
 3. And loving others as ourselves, day in and day out, is not easy.
 4. But here is the truth that God is asking us to see today. Winning is made easier and very attainable when we run this race as a team. And so it is for this reason that God uses team language when He says, Let **us** consider how to stimulate **one another**.
- C. In saying, “Let **us** consider how to stimulate **one another**” why does God use the word “**consider**?”
1. Because the “**how to**” here is not always obvious or easily discerned. And why is that? Because the church is made up of people – people with differing personalities, differing levels of spiritual maturity, differing levels of mental maturity, differing understandings of God’s word, differing home and work situations, and other differences such as these. In other words, one size does not fit all. One answer does not remove all the questions. One approach does not get through to all the people.
 2. And so God asks us to **consider** – to give concentrated thought to how we can help each other love and do good as we ought.
 3. Therefore, as a team we will do as God asks here when we look for the those ways that we can use to encourage every team member to continue growing in love and in doing good deeds.
- D. Once we have put the work into **considering** how to help each other, then God asks us to **stimulate** each other. Knowing how is not enough. The purpose of considering how is to move us to the next step of inciting or provoking each other to action. And that is what stimulate means – to incite or provoke each other to something – and in this case it is to the activities of love and good deeds.
1. The idea here is two-fold. First, we are to stir up, to motivate, to encourage each other to love God, to love others as ourselves, and to be committed to doing good deeds as our normal way of life.
 2. Second, we are to help each other discover what each has to do to grow from where they are to greater and greater spiritual maturity, faith, love, and doing good to all.
- E. I suspect we all know that loving God supremely and doing good to others does not happen spontaneously. In fact, if anything, selfishness and rebellion against God seems to be spontaneous. Yet God calls us to

develop, to nurture, to encourage, and even to incite love and good deeds within each other – and that includes every member of the team or fellowship.

1. Surely, the work of nurturing, encouraging and inciting love and good deeds is a high and noble work. And just as surely, love and good deeds are the highest, most demanding, most self-sacrificing manifestations of the Christian life. Neither comes easily to any Christian – as far as I know.
 - a. In fact, for each of us to love God above all else and our neighbor as ourselves requires daily training, commitment, perseverance, help, nurturing, encouragement, and an overall team effort like that required to win the Tour De France.
 - b. And in the same way, doing good to all, all the time, is no less a challenge and requires no less effort than loving God and others as we ought.

2. And here I want to draw our attention back to the Tour De France, for as with the Tour so it is in the Christian life. If we are to run the race with the full intent of winning, we must do violence to ourselves.
 - a. We must push ourselves beyond the boundaries we would naturally want to go.
 - b. We must demand of ourselves more than we would naturally want to give.
 - c. We must die to any number of things we would naturally want to enjoy or possess or secretly entertain.
 - d. And we must come alive to things we would naturally avoid.

- F. It seems clear to me – and I hope to you – that most of us need a team effort to get into and remain in winning shape. We need a team effort at stimulating one another to love and good deeds. So let me give you some examples of how this team effort should look. It should include:
 1. teaching,
 2. exhorting,
 3. searching the scriptures together,
 4. discussing Sunday's teaching and even helping those who missed a point or didn't understand to understand,
 5. examining specific situations in order to find more options and ways to apply God's word,

6. brain-storming ways to love others – especially those who are difficult to get along with,
7. looking for ways to do good in situations where it is hard to figuring out what to do,
8. sharing the things (i.e., thoughts, scriptures, prayers, daily practices, etc.) that have worked well in promoting godliness in your life,
9. holding each other accountable to God and God’s word,
10. confronting when necessary,
11. giving words of encouragement or cheering someone on who is in a difficult moment or feels like giving up,
12. praying with and for each other,
13. and hanging around those who are more mature or better prepared in order to learn from them.

G. Of all the races you may enter or engage in during your life-time, this is the most important one. And as I have already said, it is not for a day or for a week or for a month. It begins when you are born again and continues to the end of your days here on the earth. And so God says . . . **Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some.**

1. This exhortation is for the good of us, individually, and for the good of us as a team.
 - a. Imagine what would happen to the likelihood of a Tour De France team winning if some of its team members cut practice here and there in order to enjoy other, lessor things?
 - b. Imagine what would happen to the team dynamics if one or two team members did not show up on a particular race day because of feeling tired or wanting to watch a football game or because something else more important came up?
2. As for a team in the Tour De France, so it is for us as a Church.
 - a. It not only hurts us individually, but as a church when upon going our separate ways some of us neglect our training and get involved in activities that work against our ability to help the team win.
 - b. It not only hurts us, but the entire church when some of us come prepared to teach, yet do not practice what we teach, or are resistant to being taught.
 - c. And it not only hurts us, it hurts the entire church when some of us act more like spectators than running partners.

3. And for those who may misunderstand the point I am making here, I am not saying God is telling us we can never miss planned gatherings such as Sunday church or prayer meetings or Bible studies. What I am saying is that God is telling us gathering together is vital for the well-being of the team. It is for the benefit of us all and should be treated that way.
- H. The final statement in this passage of Hebrews says [**verse 25**] . . . not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; **and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**
1. God not only presses the point of gathering together in order to build each other up, He says it will become increasingly vital to the health of the individual Christian and to the health of the church as the return of Christ draws near.
 2. Why? Let me give you two reasons:
 - a. First, the closer we get to the return of Christ the worse the world will be in terms of rebellion against God, sin, evil, hatred, broken relationships, selfishness, tolerance of evil, calling evil good, disinterest in God and the things of God, etc.,.
 - b. Second, we read in **I John 3:2-3** . . . Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. [3] And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

IV. Conclusion:

- A. The primary point God is wanting to make today is that the best way for us to become what Jesus saved us to be and for the church to become what Jesus created it to be is for us to work together as a team.
- B. And to this I add that we work best as a team, when we want to win and when we live to win and when we prepare to win – individually and as a team.
- C. And when we come together, we come prepared to stimulate one another and we come hungry and ready to be stimulated.