

# Hebrews

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Hebrews 10:32-39 – Practical Lessons – Part II

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August 2, 2009

I. **Hebrews 10:32-39** . . . But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, [33] partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. [34] For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. [35] Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. [36] For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. [37] For yet in a very little while, he who is coming will come, and will not delay. [38] But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. [39] But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

## II. Quick Review:

- A. Remember the good in your life and use it to build more godliness.
- B. Remember that the decision to repent and put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the power, practice and penalty of sin is a very serious decision – for it is a decision that is very costly to your self-life.
- C. Remember joy is as different from happiness as day is from night.
- D. Remember that we are God's people and our home is not here, but there! We are never citizens here, only sojourner's.

## III. Prayer

## IV. Practical Lessons

- A. **Hebrews 10:35** . . . Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward
  - 1. This refers back to the confidence we have to come into the presence of God – knowing that He wants us to come in and knowing that, because of Jesus, we can come into His presence and not just live, we can come into His presence and fellowship with Him and He will fellowship with us.
    - a. I realize God is omnipresent – which means He is present everywhere regardless of our awareness of His presence. But because we have to want to engage His presence and because

we can only engage His presence in a way that is acceptable to Him, we speak of coming into His presence as if He were somewhere we needed to go in order to be with Him. In reality, that is not the case. But language constrains us so that it sounds as if it were the case.

- b. None-the-less, it is wise to set aside time each day or several days per week (a consistent schedule if possible) to come into the presence of God and fellowship and commune with Him – reviewing His word, contemplating His will, sharing our thoughts about Him with Him, asking for what we feel is needed in order to be more like Christ than we are, nurturing our love for Him, encouraging our awe of Him, and learning to be humble before Him and toward Him.
2. When we are in that Holy Place, God is as close to us as we are to ourselves.
  - a. When we are in that Holy Place, we are facing God and He is facing us – eyes to eyes – which means we are intent on communing with Him and He is intent on communing with us.
  - b. When we are in that place – having entered with confidence – we know that we are in that practical condition whereby we are in good standing with God – and if we are not in that condition, our first actions upon entering that Holy Place is to confess our sin, repent, and make things right with God so that we are once again in good standing with Him – practically speaking.
  - c. When we are in that Holy Place we are nurturing a sincere love for God, a humble reverence toward God, a recognition of our own nothingness in comparison to God, and a growing desire to live for and honor God.
  - d. When we are in that Holy Place, we are nurturing and reinforcing and even building all that is necessary to go out into our home life, work life, and the world and remain faithful to God in all we say and do.
3. Returning to the specific words in verse 35, I ask you, **what does it mean to throw away our confidence?**
  - a. To throw away our confidence is to think or begin acting – even without clearly thinking about it – as if time spent with God in this way is unimportant or of little value or even worthless.

- b. Of course, few thoughtfully and deliberately make the choice to quit coming into God's presence in this way. The average Christian knows spending time with God like this is important and something every Christian should do.
  - c. However, too many of us slowly slide or gently fall or slip away from spending a meaningful amount of quality time with God each day, or at least three to four days a week.
  - d. What happens? We allow other things to enter in and captivate our time so that we no longer have time for fellowship with God. Of course, after a while of being away, many of us no longer feel confident about coming into His presence and spending time with Him. And so it happens that we have thrown away our confidence.
- 4. **How do we throw away our confidence?** A true Christian rarely throws away his confidence all at once. For the vast majority of us – say 95+% of us – we creep away or move away at a snails pace by allowing other things (*good or bad, godly or ungodly*) to take precedence so that we give more and more time to these other things and less and less time going to God in that Holy Place. Consider these four ways in which we throw away our confidence.
  - a. (1) Deliberately turning our backs on Him in order to participate in known sin. When we do this, we make hard to want to come into that Holy Place for a time of communion with Him. And even if we do come in, **unless we fully deal with our sin**, the time spent with Him in that Holy Place will be shallow and generally leave us in an immature or lesser state of spiritual maturity.
  - b. (2) Allowing known sin – and that includes what many would label as minor sin – to remain a repeated part of our thoughts, words, and/or deeds. To live with the practice of known sin as if we are a Christian in good standing with God, we must harden our hearts to God, to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, and to the living influence of God's Word.
    - (1) And we cannot harden our hearts in any way without seriously impacting our relationship with God.
    - (2) So we may daily come into God's presence for scripture study and prayer while continuing in the practice of known sin, but such time spent with God is hypocritical and shallow and hardly endearing to God. Why? Because we are telling Him by coming into His presence that we

want to draw near to Him – but not near enough to put an end to that sin that we are hanging on to.

- c. (3) Allowing other activities to take over so that we lack sufficient time to spend a meaningful amount of quality time with Him on a regular basis. When we do this, we are not only telling God earthly things are more important than time spent with Him, we are nurturing a mindset believes it reasonable or at least defensible to push God to the back of our to-do list.
  - d. (4) Thinking theological or biblical knowledge of God is the most important thing – even more important than knowing Him personally and intimately.
    - (1) When we do this, we will devote our time to study and very likely, a good amount of prayer.
    - (2) But our interaction with God will be on a “facts and figures” level instead of an intimate, heart-to-heart, love compelled, get to know Him personally level that includes an intellectual understanding of the Bible and theology.
    - (3) My point here is that majoring on the intellectual side of knowing God provides very little incentive to move further and get to know Him intimately. And this is the fourth way we throw away our confidence.
5. The **reward of confidence** as implied from this portion of scripture is a strengthened endurance – the kind of perseverance that is necessary to pass through temptations, trials, and testings without moving away from God, choosing a sinful solution, seeking worldly comfort, or falling away from the faith.

- B. **Hebrews 10:36 . . . For you have need of endurance** so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.
- 1. It says back in **verse 32** that the first readers of this letter had exhibited a commendable endurance in the face of persecution. So why does God now say they have need of endurance?
  - 2. Before answering that question, let me ask two more.
    - a. What is the endurance for? For doing the will of God.
    - b. How long are we to do the will of God – humanly speaking? Until the last breath we take in this world.
  - 3. Therefore, it is not the endurance we have had, but the endurance we do have that makes all the difference for us Christians in continuing to live Christianly in this world until death. This is why we need endurance in spite of having had endurance.

4. **Why do we need endurance?** The Christian life is a **hard** life and we not only need that confidence which will drive us into God's presence on a regular basis, we need endurance (*the power to withstand hardship and stress*) to press on in doing the will of God when our flesh is screaming for something other than God's will; when the world is pressing us to forsake God's will for what appears to them to be a much better way; and when circumstances press us and pound us so that we are tempted to think only in terms of relief.
- a. Does anyone need endurance for those tasks or activities that are easy or temporary or so pleasurable that people line up to do them? Of course not!
  - b. Endurance is needed for those tasks and activities that are hard, intense, repetitive, ongoing as if never ending, and something hardly anyone is lining up to do because it naturally repulsive or distasteful or too demanding or in some other significant way objectionable to our nature.
  - c. Getting saved – as we are prone to call the entrance into the Christian life – can seem easy. All we must do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – that is, all we must do is repent of our sin and put our faith in Jesus to be the paid up sacrifice for our sin so that after death in this world we will be received into God's glorious home to live with Him forever. So yes, getting saved can seem rather easy.
  - d. But what about living the Christ-like life - day in and day out? What about staying on the narrow path when the broad path is so inviting?
    - (1) Church history and my own experience tell me this is hard!
    - (2) The Christian life is just as hard as it was for Israel in taking the Promised Land by having to daily drive out more and more of it's inhabitants.
    - (3) And the will of God is hard – consider Jesus, the first readers of Hebrews and those mentioned in Hebrews 11.
5. If you find it easy to live the Christian life – you either know something the rest of us don't but should, or it may be you are not living the Christ-like life. We humans are very susceptible to ease of life, taking the shortcut, and getting out of work – as proven by the devil's temptations of Jesus in the wilderness.

- a. Living up to certain requirements of God's Law (mostly those which can easily be demonstrated outwardly) is easier than living the Christ-like life in your thoughts, desires, words, and behavior.
  - b. Living according to the teachings that God is here for us, that His love is unconditional – *which is generally understood to mean that God accepts us just like He accepts the most godly among us even when we allow sin to remain an accepted part of our lives* – and that His primary concern is making our lives easier and better from a worldly perspective is easier than living the Christ-like life that calls us to deny self and take up our cross in order to follow Jesus.
  - c. Living a religious life of church attendance, some bible study, developing some good character qualities and at least looking like a Christian when with other Christians is easier than living the Christ-like life in the home.
  - d. Living the rest of your Christian life at entry level Christianity as if you were a new believer forever is easier than living the Christ-like life where you continue die to self, put off whatever is left of your old nature, take on the new nature, put away all practice of known sin, continue growing to spiritual maturity, do God's will as it is done in heaven, and live each day for Christ.
6. What is my point? The Christian life – the one given to us by God – is a hard life. The bible speaks of it as a soldiers life, a boxers life, a long-distance runners life, a slaves life, a persecuted life, and a martyrs life. To continue doing the will of God throughout a life like this requires endurance.
- a. You may have had endurance, and that is commendable!
  - b. But past endurance is of no value today. We need endurance for each day – starting with today.
7. One more point about endurance. Sometimes we focus too much on perfection – living sinlessly in this life. Such a focus often leads to discouragement or a sense of hopelessness that we'll never attain such exalted heights in this life. We are wiser to focus on endurance and perseverance in our pursuit of perfection (sinlessness in this life). Why? Because the scripture tells us that it is endurance and perseverance that leads us to perfection (James 1:2-4).

## V. Conclusion

- A. Remember the good in your life and use it to build more godliness.
- B. Remember that the decision to repent and put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the power, practice and penalty of sin is a very serious decision – for it is a decision that is very costly to your self-life.
- C. Remember joy is as different from happiness as day is from night.
- D. Remember that we are God's people and our home is not here, but there! We are never citizens here, only sojourner's.
- E. Don't waste or throw away your confidence for coming into the presence of God on a regular and intimate basis.
- F. Remember how much you need endurance for each and every day!