

Hebrews Lesson 14 Article

10:22. We can now approach God and have the mercy and grace of our High Priest standing over us. This blessing brings us many privileges. The next three verses contain three exhortations.

The first exhortation is for believers to draw near to God in an expression of personal devotion. Four conditions for approaching God are given.

First, we are to come **with a sincere heart**. This calls for genuine devotion rather than hypocrisy. Second, we are to come **in full assurance of faith**. This demands a bold confidence that God has provided full access to his presence through Christ alone. Third, we are to have our **hearts sprinkled ... from a guilty conscience**. This demands constant confession of our sins and openness to God. Finally we are to have our **bodies washed with pure water**. This may be a reference to baptism as an outward commitment to Christ, or it might be symbolic as is the previous reference to hearts sprinkled with blood. If it is symbolic, the hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience would picture our salvation, and our bodies washed would symbolize a righteous lifestyle. In this new state of purity made possible by Jesus, believers can come boldly to God and claim his grace and mercy.

10:23. The second exhortation appeals to us to maintain spiritual consistency. We are urged to hold firmly to **the hope** we profess. This hope offers glory which beamed more brightly than the glories of the old order. **Unswervingly** denotes an object which stands absolutely straight, not departing from the perpendicular. We are to lay hold of Christ and never let go, even in the slightest. No persecution, real or feared, was to lessen the ardor of these believers for Christ.

Is it really possible to live unswervingly? If holding on to the promises depended on personal commitment, we would all be in trouble. God is faithful to provide strength and stamina for endurance. His faithful character is beyond all doubt. In his strength we hold on unswervingly. We will read heroic examples of spiritual steadfastness in chapter 11.

10:24. The third exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to **consider** demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to **spur one another on toward love and good deeds**. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only.

We can **spur** people toward either good or bad works. Hebrews calls us to lead others to a practical expression of love and an attractive display of unselfish deeds.

The three important virtues of faith, hope, and love are mentioned in three consecutive verses (see 1 Cor. 13:13). Faith provides assurance. Hope promises an incentive to obedience. Love provides a foundation for prodding believers to godly living¹

If worship were the only reason we are commanded to meet, then those who claim they can worship at home would have a strong argument. But worship is not the sole reason we are commanded to meet together. Nor is it so that we can be taught the Word. We can turn on our radios and televisions and hear good Bible teaching. On the surface, it would seem that anything we can do at church, we can do just as well at home, alone. So why are we commanded to meet? Why go to church? *The writer of Hebrews says it is to safeguard against drifting.*

Forces around us work to blow us off course. Sheer individual commitment is not enough to keep us in line. At times we feel as if our faith makes no difference. We see no fruit in our lives and we don't seem to be making any difference in anyone else's life, either. During those times, we feel tempted to pull up anchor and drift. After all, isn't everybody else? Then we drag ourselves to church and discover that we are not alone. We hear others testify how God came through for them in a tight spot. Someone else describes the pain suffered when he left the faith. A new believer tells her story and rejoices in God's grace. And then something begins to happen inside us. We are spurred on to faithfulness! The accountability and encouragement found in church anchor us against the tides that work to sweep us away. To neglect the regular assembly of fellow Christians is to miss out on this essential element in the development of our faith.²

¹ Lea, T. D. (1999). *Vol. 10: Hebrews, James*. Holman New Testament Commentary (186–187). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Heb 10:24–25). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.