

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Dig Deeper Study Tools

- Author's Purpose
- Context
- Structure
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- "Who am I"
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Hebrews—Jesus Is Superior

STUDY 1 (For Sermon on 03 August 2025)

Hebrews 9:15–28 **Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant**

STUDY 2 (For Sermon on 31 August 2025)

Hebrews 10:26–34 **Hold Fast, the Day Is Approaching**

Background

- Hebrews' author is unknown, likely a second-generation leader after the apostles (2:3)
- Recipients were not mentioned. They were likely Jewish, persecuted and discriminated against for their faith (10:32–34)
- Returning to Judaism, a legal religion in Rome, would spare them from persecution.
- Hence its warnings **not to fall away** (2:1–4; 3:12–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:26–39; 12:25–29)
- Instead, it's a call to **hold fast** to their faith in Jesus (3:6, 14; 4:14; 6:18; 10:23).
- It's likely a sermon in written form, described as a “word of exhortation” in 13:22. “Exhort” appears four times (3:13; 10:25; 13:19, 22) and “exhortation” three times (6:18; 12:5; 13:22)
- It was possibly written before the temple's destruction in AD 70. 12:4 could suggest a date before Nero martyred the Christians after Rome's great fire.
- It is laden with OT thoughts: “Thirty-five quotations from a Greek translation of the Old Testament and thirty-four allusions work to support the development of Hebrews' argument. In addition, the writer offers nineteen summaries of Old Testament material, and thirteen times he mentions an Old Testament name or topic, often without reference to a specific context.”¹
- To help the readers step back and see God's sovereign hand amid their sufferings.

Message

- Hebrews is also a “word of exhortation” because God is a speaking God.
- His voice is “living and active” (4:12).
- Today if we hear His voice, we must pay heed (3:15).
- As long as it is called ‘today’, we must “exhort one another” (3:13)
- To listen to God's voice in His Son is to read OT in light of its fulfilment in Jesus Christ (1:1–2).
- Otherwise, to revert to OT sacrifices and rituals would deny Christ.
- Given the temptation to return to Judaism, the writer reminds his persecuted readers of the faith of OT saints, their leaders, and the pattern in Jesus' life—suffering comes before glory.
- Its already-not-yet end-time perspective implies the reward promised, the heavenly city, still awaits the believers.
- The theological truths in Hebrews thus serve as the foundation to exhort believers not to fall away.
- The greatness of Christ and His work makes falling away foolish.
- ***Its call is to hold fast to Christ, the superior mediator of a better covenant.***

¹ Guthrie, George H.. Hebrews (The NIV Application Commentary Book 15. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

Broad Outline Aligned to the Sermon Series:

Hold Fast to Jesus, the Superior Mediator of a Better Covenant with:

A Better Revelation

- 6 Apr Hold Fast, Jesus Is God's Final Word (1:1–4)
- 27 Apr Hold Fast, Jesus Is Superior to Angels (1:5–14)
- 4 May Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Incarnate Son (2:1–18)
- 11 May Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Builder of God's House (3:1–6)

A Better Rest

- 25 May Hold Fast, Believe and Enter His rest (3:7–19)
- 1 Jun Don't Doubt, Enter His Rest (4:1–13)

A Better Representative

- 8 Jun Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Perfect High Priest (4:14–5:10)
- 15 Jun Hold Fast, Mature in Jesus (5:11–6:3)
- 22 Jun Hold Fast, Don't Fall Away (6:4–12)
- 29 Jun Hold Fast, God is Unchangeable (6:13–20)
- 6 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Eternal High Priest (7:1–28)
- 20 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Inaugurator of the New Covenant (8:1–13)
- 27 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Anticipation of the Old Covenant (9:1–14)
- 3 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant (9:15–28)
- 10 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Perfect Sacrifice (10:1–18)
- 24 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is Faithful (10:19–25)
- 31 Aug Hold Fast, the Day Is Approaching (10:26–34)

A Better Reward

- 7 Sep Hold Fast, God Will Reward (10:35–39)
- 14 Sep Hold Fast, Live by Faith (11:1–7)
- 21 Sep Hold Fast, Learn from Abraham (11:8–19)
- 28 Sep Hold Fast, Conquer by Faith (11:20–40)
- 5 Oct Hold Fast, Look to Jesus (12:1–4)
- 12 Oct Hold Fast, Grow through God's Discipline (12:5–11)
- 19 Oct Hold Fast, Pursue Peace and Holiness (12:12–17)
- 26 Oct Hold Fast, Come in Awe (12:18–29)

A Better Rededication

- 2 Nov Hold Fast, Continue in Love (13:1–8)
- 9 Nov Hold Fast, Offer Up Your Lives (13:9–16)
- 23 Nov Hold Fast, Uphold the Gospel Work (13:17–25)

How to Read the Book of Hebrews in its Old Testament Context

A. Look for Promises Fulfilled in Jesus.

1. Jesus as the true Son of David—He is the Messiah, the kingdom OT promised is realised in Him. (1:2 // Ps 2:8, 1:5 // Ps 2:7, 2 Sam 7:14.)
2. Ps 110: 1, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.” fulfilled in Jesus Christ (See 1:2, 13; 8:1; 10:12–13; 12:2).
3. Jesus as the Great High Priest “sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (8:1; See Ps 110:4, “. . . ‘Forever, You are a priest like Melchizedek.’”)
4. Jesus as the Greater Moses and Joshua
 - a. Covenant Fulfilment of Jer 31:31-34 in 8:8-12, 10:15-18; Jesus as the Greater Moses
 - b. Land-Rest Fulfilment of Gen 12:1-3 in 3:12-4:13, Jesus as the Greater Joshua

B. Look for OT Events, Institutions, and Persons (Typology) Anticipating Jesus and Heavenly/Eternal Realities.

1. The fulfilment is always greater than the type
2. In OT, God spoke through Israel His Son (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9). Now, God has spoken finally and definitively in His Greater Son (1:1-2)
3. Jesus is pre-eminently the better king, priest, and prophet, bringing a better sacrifice, covenant, rest, and promise.
4. Warnings of earthly penalties for disobeying OT Laws anticipate eternal judgment for rejecting eternal salvation in Jesus (2:2-3)
5. Earthly priests and the tabernacle are copies of the heavenly ones (8:5, 9:11).
6. The blood of bulls and goats anticipates Christ’s sacrifice through the eternal Spirit (9:12-14, 23-24).
7. Believers are earthly exiles, looking to a heavenly home (11:13-16)

C. Look for End-Time Perspective—Already but Not Yet

1. “We do not yet see everything subjected to” Jesus (2:8)
2. The present heavens will perish and be rolled up like a cloak (1:11–12).
3. The created things, the present heavens and earth, will be shaken and removed, and only God’s kingdom will remain (12:26–28).
4. Jesus will appear a second time for those awaiting salvation (9:8)
5. Believers are perfected in holiness for all time by Christ’s one offering (10:14)
 - a. Yet, for now, they must persevere in faith amid suffering (10:39-11:40).
 - b. They must pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord (12:4)
 - c. They’re members of the heavenly assembly (12:22-33)
 - d. They seek the city to come (13:14).

03 August 2025

Study 1: Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant

Hebrews 9:15–28

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

¹⁵ For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

¹⁶ In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, ¹⁷ because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. ¹⁸ This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. ¹⁹ When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰ He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” ²¹ In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²² In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

²³ It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

(NIV 2011)

Notes and Questions

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 1

Recap: Hebrews 1 begins with God's son as His final word. The Son is the creator and sustainer of the universe, the eternal kingly priest in the order of Melchizedek. After making purification for sin, He sat down at God's right hand to reign.

As God's true prophet, priest, and king, Jesus is superior to all the past offices and institutions in the Old Covenant. His Divine Sonship, Eternal Priesthood (anticipated by Melchizedek's priesthood), and perfect sacrifice of Himself guarantee eternal salvation for those who believe in Him. So, Hebrews warns its readers against hardened hearts that fail to heed the Holy Spirit's voice spoken in God's written word. Failing to hold fast, thus falling away from this great salvation in Christ, is a sure path to damnation.

Immediate Context of Hebrews 9:15-28

A Summary of Hebrews 9:1-14

Hebrews 9 begins with a description of the Tabernacle erected by Moses in Exodus 25-40. The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the innermost sanctuary, where the ark was, signified God's holy presence. The Priest had to enter this innermost sanctuary once a year, on the day of Atonement, to sprinkle blood on its altar. Heb. 9:8 says that this was the Holy Spirit pointing God's people beyond the external regulations to the new order when Christ will come as our true High Priest. Christ entered heaven not with animal sacrifices but His blood. Greater than these animal sacrifices, His blood alone can cleanse us from sin and grant us eternal life that we may serve Him.

Read Hebrews 9:15-28

Old Testament Scriptural citations and allusions in Hebrews 9:15-28

vv. 15-28	Old Testament Text cited or alluded to
vv.18-20	Exod. 24:7-8 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."
v. 25. See also vv.12-13	Lev 16:29-30, 34 (<i>The Day of Atonement</i>) "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month, you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you—because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will be clean from all your sins. . . ." "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites." And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.
v.21	Sprinkled blood on the altar (Lev 8:19), on the priestly garments (Ex 29:21), tent of meeting (Num 19:4), and tabernacle's veil (Lev 4:6).

OBSERVATION



What do you notice as you read this passage?
(The answers for this *observation segment* are usually straightforward, drawn directly from what you can see in the text given.)

1. According to V.15, what is the purpose of the new covenant in Christ?
2. What did Christ die for? See vv. 14-15, 16-17, 22.

Comments

V.15 begins with, “Therefore” or “For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant.” This invites us to look back to what comes before, where vv.9-10, and 13-14 explain the need for a new covenant in Christ as the old covenant was inadequate. The OT annual sacrifices cannot take away sin, only the blood of Christ through His once-for-all sacrificial death can.

The passage concludes again with Christ as the once for all sacrifice to take away sin, who will return to bring salvation to His people in v.28.

Note how v.28 is set in contrast with v.27, which presents the universal consequences of sin for all people. V.28 then points to Christ as our true Savior.

Together, this introduction and conclusion frame the entire message in this text giving us the clue to its key message.

3. How is Christ's sacrifice superior to the Old Covenant's sacrifices offered by Israel's high priests on the Day of Atonement? (vv.23-36)

Reflections for
Digging Deeper
(optional readings):

While v.15 and 22 explain Jesus' death as a ransom, a payment for sin, v.16-17 provides another angle to understand the necessity of Christ's death.

4. What awaits all who have died? (See v.27)

Why is Christ's death needed for the new covenant to take effect, like how a will takes effect only after the death of the one who made it?

5. Given the effectiveness of Christ's once-for-all atoning sacrifice for sin, what is the purpose of His coming again? (See v.28)

One way the necessity of Christ's death is explained in places like Rom 6:4-5, 23; 2 Cor 5:14-15, revolves around death as a penalty of sin, with its defeat and abolishment accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection. Christ's victory over sin and death becomes ours through our union with Him. Our new status in Christ transforms our old nature in bondage to sin and death into a new creation with new life in Christ. ***The predominant truth emphasized here is***

INTERPRETATION



What is the meaning and significance of your observations?

(This segment requires you to reflect on what you have observed in the earlier segment)

6. What is the purpose of the Old Testament Tabernacle and its sacrificial system if they could not remove sins as indicated by its repeated annual sacrifices and the need for Christ's death in v.15?

7. God has decreed that sin leads to death and obedience leads to life (Heb 9:14, Rom 6:23). How will this truth take on its full effect at Christ's return? (See vv. 27-28)

new life through our new union with Christ in His death and resurrection.

The pastoral implication for believer is that we therefore have died to sin so that we may now and forever live for Christ. This seems to be the argument in Heb 9:14-15.

However, Hebrews 9:16-18 provides another complementary angle of understanding the necessity of Christ's death. The illustration here is a written will taking effect only upon the death of the author of the will. The will parallels our new covenant in Christ.

Life is in the blood (Lev 17:11,14). The shedding of blood is repeatedly spoken of in this chapter because it implies and parallels death.

In earthly terms, death is needed for the transfer of properties and all that belonged to the first owner.

In spiritual terms, at death, Jesus gave everything He had in His earthly life to



BIG IDEA

What is the main message of the passage?
(Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas)



APPLICATION

Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?
(Considering the big idea and the Holy Spirit's intent helps us make applications faithful to the text.)

10. How has the necessity of Christ's death helped you appreciate Christ as our New Covenant mediator?

us. He transferred all His spiritual credits into our accounts. It's a divine exchange.

2 Cor 8:9 says, that though He was rich, He became poor, so that by His poverty, we may become rich.

And 1 Cor 1:30 says, that Christ became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Jesus, through His death, took our place, so that we can have what belongs to Him. His righteous and sinless life of obedience is now credited to us, that we may now live for Him.

In the Old Covenant, the High Priests and animal sacrifices had nothing of true spiritual value to transfer to our accounts. They were a mere shadow, pointing to Jesus, our true High Priest, the Saviour who was to come.

In the New Covenant, we live on the merits of Christ and enjoy them as ours. Through

11. What does it mean for you when v.27 says all people have only one life to live, and after death comes judgment?

Christ's death, we're given real inheritance, present and future, belonging to Christ.

His death is His means to transfer all that He has to us. ***The predominant aspect here is the legally binding nature of this will and its accompanying inheritance, sealed and made effective by Christ's death.***

12. How does Christ's final return to save forever those who are waiting for Him in v.28 bring you hope?

The necessity of Christ's death as a ***ransom price*** for sin ***and a seal*** of the covenant was anticipated by the sprinkled blood of animals killed for the OT sacrificial system.

The pastoral implication in this way of understanding Christ's death opens us to a further aspect of God's love for us. It *shows Christ's determination and earnest desire to give all that He has to us, so that He may bring many sons into glory, sons who will be made into His likeness.*

This helps us to appreciate His love for us, in His will,

decreed to bless us. It also underscores the certainty and unchangeable nature of this will, sealed by Christ's shed blood.

The preciousness, goodness, and certainty of this will give us great assurances and reasons to hold fast our confession in Christ. This should cause us to wait with great anticipation for the complete fulfilment of this will, the receiving of our *inheritance* at Christ's return.

GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS

- Close the time by singing a hymn together to thank God for the assurance of our salvation in Christ. A suggested hymn is "In Christ Alone"
- Recite v.27-28 and memorise the 2 verses together as a group.

31 August 2025

Study 2: Hold Fast, the Day Is Approaching

Hebrews 10:26-34

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

²⁶ If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," ^q and again, "The Lord will judge his people." ^r ³¹ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.

³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴ You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

(NIV 2011)

Notes and Questions

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 2 (With Application for Mission Sunday)

Immediate Context:

A Summary of Hebrews 10:1-18

Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Perfect Sacrifice

The yearly sacrifices of the Old Testament system cannot effectively remove sin, reminding us of our inability to save ourselves. Hence, Christ came into the world to do God's will, by fulfilling Scripture, through His perfect obedience in His sacrificial death to redeem us from sin. Having completed His once-for-all atoning work, He sat down at God's right hand, and inaugurated the new covenant prophesied in Jer. 31:31-34. However, instead of God the Father speaking as in Heb 8:8-12, the new covenant promises that God will write His laws in our hearts and fully forgive all our sins are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Jesus, being the perfect sacrifice, has removed the need for other sin-offerings.

A Summary of Hebrews 10:19-25

Hold Fast, Jesus Is Faithful

The perfect atoning work of Christ, our great high priest, having sprinkled and cleansed us from all sins, gives us full assurance to enter God's presence. To remain faithful, we must hold fast this confession of our hope, and stir one another to love and good deeds, through our regular assembly, especially given the approaching Day of the Lord.

Read Hebrews 10:26-34

Old Testament Scriptures cited/alluded to in this text

vv. 26-34	Old Testament Text cited or alluded to
v.28	Deut 17:6. On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness
v.30	Deut 32:41 When I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me.
v.30b	Ps 50:4 He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people:

OBSERVATION



What do you notice as you read this passage?
(The answers for this *observation* segment are usually straightforward, drawn directly from what you can see in the text given.)

1. Look back to vv.19-25 and compare them with vv.26-29. List the two contrasting ways of responding to the Gospel among those who attended the church.

List the positive responses in vv.19-25	List the negative responses in vv.26-29
v.19-21 Enter God's presence confidently through the new way open for us by Christ, our High Priest	v.26.
v.22. Draw near with full assurance, with heart and conscience cleansed by Christ.	v.29.
v. 23.	v.28. Setting aside the Gospel like those who set aside the law of Moses in the OT.
v. 24.	v.28-29. Rejected the counsel, warnings, and testimonies of other believers concerning their sins, thereby insulting the Spirit of grace.
V. 25. Habitually assemble as God's people, looking forward to the day of Christ's return	v.27. Became God's enemies, awaiting a judgment of raging fire.

Comments

Note that the citation in v.30, "The Lord will judge his people" taken from Ps 50:4 is given in the context of God summoning His covenant people Israel on the Day of Judgment to testify against them.

In this Psalm, God wasn't looking for animal sacrifices and physical offerings. He wanted Israel's thanksgiving, and their faithfulness, and be regarded as their God (Ps 50:7, 14).

He will hear the prayers of the righteous and deliver them. But to the wicked, He said they had no right to recite His law (Ps 50:15-16). In contrast, the Psalm concludes with v.23, that to the blameless, God will show them His salvation.

With the example of Jesus coming into the world to do God's will in Heb 10:5-9, this Psalm provides the Old Testament context for the calling God's people to obedience in today's text.

Today's text shows us how living in deliberate sin while claiming to be

2. What makes the deliberate sin of rejecting the Gospel so grievous? (vv. 28-31)
3. What happened to first readers in their earlier days? (vv. 32-34)
4. What motivated their loving and courageous responses in vv. 32 to 34?

God's covenant people is greatly repugnant to God.

Taken together with Heb 10:19-25, this text shows us the necessity of living a life worthy of the Gospel. This life of loving and obeying Christ is nourished and supported by our abiding relationship to Christ through His body, the church, through our regular assembly and reminder of His loving sacrifice and promises in His preached word.

As we prepare for Mission Sunday on 17 August, the inescapable reality of God's coming judgement should also be a call for us to faithfully proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved and pray for them. For without the atoning sacrifice of Christ's blood to cover them, it will be a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God on Judgment Day (v.31). It will be unbearable for sinners to face the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to live and die for them, yet they had rejected Him. The consequences will be eternal.

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(This segment requires you to reflect on what you have observed in the earlier segment)

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APPLICATION



Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?

(Considering the big idea and the Holy Spirit's intent helps us make applications faithful to the text.)

9. What practical steps can you take to show your gratitude and renew your commitment to love Christ and His church, given His unparalleled atoning sacrifice for your sins?

Applications for 17 Aug Mission Sunday

10. Given the approaching Day of Christ's return, and the severe consequences for those who reject the Gospel, what does faithfulness to the mission of Christ for His church look like for you?

11. What will it cost you to share the Gospel with those around you? How are you willing or unwilling to pay the price needed for your life to bear fruit for the Gospel?

GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS

You may do the following as a DG:

1. Pray as a group to rededicate those among you who have openly shared that they want to recommit their lives to Christ.
2. Given Christ's soon return, consider how you may encourage one another in your group to serve in greater capacity.
3. Pray for one another to have the courage to share Christ with loved ones who have yet to know Him.
4. Consider how your group may support a believer, a missionary, or a mission work you know that needs help.