

Daily Bible Study Questions & Answers for the Week of February 24, 2025

We're continuing our new "Questions & Answers" format for now. But, remember, when you come upon a question, **take your time and ponder your answer** (before reading mine).

Then put your answers into your computer or notebook before reading my answers.

Monday - Read Hebrews 11:32-40

How well do you know the lives of Gideon, Samson, Jephthah and David? Before going on in today's study, find out which one of these four was an adulterer, which one was a fornicator, which one was a coward (initially) and which one was the son of a prostitute. (Go ahead. I'll wait for you . . .)

What does it say to you that God used these four imperfect people to accomplish great things for him? To me, it says that God can use any of us to accomplish great things for him – even you and me!

But why did the author write, **“yet none of them received what had been promised” (v. 39)?** What does that mean? To me, the author had the promise of heaven in mind and the fact that none of these great saints went to heaven when they died. Why not? Because they were too sinful? No. I mean, only one unforgiven sin will keep us out of heaven. (See Hebrews 12:14.) The people who lived before Jesus weren't “too” sinful. But they were sinful. And not until Jesus came did God provide a way for our sins to be forgiven. This is what the author had in mind when he wrote, **“God had planned something better for us [everyone who had the chance to believe in Jesus] so that only together with us would they [those who lived before Jesus lived] be made perfect [in heaven]” (v. 40).**

Prayer For Today – Pray for someone you know who has no idea that Jesus died in their place on the cross, so that even THEY can **“be made perfect”** in heaven too. Pray for them to want to know more.

Tuesday - Read Hebrews 12:1-3 (note the **“Therefore”** in v. 1)

This is now our second **“therefore”** in Hebrews. Back in 10:19 the author brought his argument to an apex by pointing out that his readers (and you and I!) can now **“draw near to God with a sincere heart”**. What was the point of this second **“therefore”**, here in 12:1? (What is the “therefore” there for?) His point was to use the stories of the Old Testament saints as our inspiration to **“run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (v. 1)**. What **“race”** did he mean? Our lives, difficult as they may be from time to time. The author is telling us, “Don't quit living the life that God has marked out for you, no matter how difficult sickness, or tragedies or others may make it. Keep running, like Abel, Noah, Abraham and all of the other imperfect ‘saints’ did!” But do you see the huge advantage we have that they didn't? (It's in verse 2.) You and I have Jesus as our role model! He showed us how to endure even our crosses with dignity and purpose. What “cross” do you have to bear this week? May the OT saints and the example of Jesus inspire you to bear it well, with faith in tomorrow. If that isn't coming easy for you, maybe you need to take the author's advice in verse 3 and **“consider him”** (Jesus) a little more this week. Do you agree?

Prayer For Today – Pray that God would show you something about Jesus today that will inspire you to bear whatever “cross” life has put before you, with perseverance and trust in God.

Wednesday - Read Hebrews 12:4-6

Some former Christians say, “I did not persevere in the faith [as yesterday's lesson encouraged us to do] because the temptations that I gave in to were too powerful for me to avoid.” The author challenges that thinking in today's reading by reminding us that we haven't resisted our temptations yet **“to the point of shedding your blood” (v. 4)**. What did he mean by that? Did the author know of someone who did resist temptation to the point of shedding their blood? Do you? **Read Luke 22:39-44.**

Who did the author know of who shed blood while resisting temptation? Jesus, right? So, what's the point? It's this: can we really say that we have resisted our temptations to the point where the stress it caused us made drops of blood come from our pores, as Jesus did? No. We are without excuse.

Prayer For Today – Pray for God's grace (power) to be given to resist your temptations this week.

Thursday - Read Hebrews 12:7-13

In today's verses, the author continues yesterday's theme of resisting temptation to sin by giving us a different way of looking at temptations – seeing them as difficult experiences which God allows us to go through in order to **“discipline”** us, as a father disciplines his children. But how is temptation a way that God **“disciplines”** us? What do you think? I think it's a way that God shows us the limits of what one of his followers can do, say and think. Limiting our options is a way that every loving parent disciplines their children, and God is no different. By the way, there is comfort in realizing that God will never allow us to experience any temptation that he knows we can't resist. **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.**

Prayer For Today – Pray (and this may be difficult) by thanking God for the limits he puts on you.

Friday - Read Hebrews 12:14-17

These are astounding verses! Can you locate (at least) three major teachings in this paragraph? Here's what I see. First, we CAN become **“holy”** (14a) (**“Holy”** means to be separated from sin and dedicated to God's purposes.) Second, heaven is only for those who are holy (14b). Third, the grace of God can be missed (15a)! How? By not using the *means* of grace. Fourth, bitterness can grow in us like a root (15b). Fifth, even though God is love, God rejects people who reject his ways (17a). So much here!

Prayer For Today – Pray by asking God to show you anyone toward whom you have bitter feelings.

Saturday - Read Hebrews 12:18-24

How does the author contrast what Mount Sinai means spiritually (vv. 18-21) with what the heavenly Mount Zion means spiritually (vv. 22-24)? I'll give you time and space to study this . . .

I believe the author was trying to move his reader's thoughts **FROM** their old, original, Jewish covenant relationship with God ratified on Mount Sinai (filled with laws and with no way to have sins removed; with a God who is unapproachable) **TO** their new covenant relationship with God, made possible because of Jesus, which will be fulfilled and ratified in heaven when God welcomes the holy with open arms. He concludes this section by contrasting (additionally) the blood of Abel (Genesis 4) with the blood of Jesus. After you **read Genesis 4:1-12**, can you identify how Jesus' blood is **“better”** than the blood of Abel? To me, it has to do with the result. The result of Abel's blood (his death) was God's wrath on Cain, his murderer. But the result of Jesus' blood (his death on the cross) was God's mercy on sinners.

Prayer For Today – Pray a prayer of gratitude that (for some reason) your life entered the stream of human history AFTER Jesus came, making it possible for your sins to be forgiven and to have the very real hope of heaven ever laying before you.

Sunday - Read Hebrews 12:25-29

Who is **“him who speaks”** in verse 25? It's God, right? What does it tell you that you and I can **“refuse him who speaks”**? It tells us that God, in his wisdom, has given each of us a *free will* to either accept him or refuse him. Isn't that amazing? Never let any good-intentioned Christian convince you that you do not have free will to follow God and God's ways or to reject God and God's ways. Just as Joshua told Israel, **“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15)**, the choice is ours today and always has been. And don't you love how this chapter ends, referring to worshipping God with **“reverence and awe”**? Yes, God desires us to be with him. Yes, God loves us. Yes, God allows us to know him intimately. But God is not our best friend. He's not our golf buddy. He is the Creator of the Universe. He is the Knower of all that has ever been, is and will be knowable. He is Holy. And he alone is worthy of our reverent and awe-filled worship. Do you worship God in this way, when you come to his sanctuary and sings our songs of praise, pray our prayers to him and open his Holy Word? Or is worship more like a social gathering for you, a time to slouch in your pew and “chill” with your God-bro?

Prayer For Today – Pray by asking God what changes he would like you to make to show that you will be worshipping him each Sunday with reverence and awe.