

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: Hebrews 10:19-25

Gospel Focus: Romans 15:5-7

Student Takeaways:

- Students will understand that they have great capacity to encourage one another to live as Christ-followers in their daily lives.
- Students will understand the importance of unity as it pertains to living as Christ-followers at school, and in their worlds.
- Students will consider how they might encourage each other to be unified, and to strive to live Christ-centered lives.



Overview

We're better together. The two New Testament passages we're going to look at today admonish us to build one another up and encourage fellow believers. This selfless, unified approach to the Christian life flows out of a response to what Christ has done for and in us. During the lesson, students will think about practical ways they can encourage one another to be unified in their pursuit of living for Christ.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 48 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 48, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

Hebrews

Author: Originally this letter to the Hebrews was entitled "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews." However, since the Reformation it's been widely recognized that Paul was probably not the writer. There's simply not enough

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

textual or historical evidence to prove his authorship. Early historians suggested the author is perhaps Barnabas or Apollos, though there is no way to know for sure.

Time frame: Hebrews was almost certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD since the author does not mention or give any hint to this catastrophic happening.

Purpose: Hebrews was written to address Jewish converts to Christianity and challenge them to hold fast to their newfound faith. Many of them were resorting back to old traditions and some were even considering merging with certain Jewish sects. Because of increased persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, many of them were tempted to resort back to old rites and rituals purely to avoid the pain. The challenge from this Hebrew Christian writer to Hebrew converts was to hold fast to their Christian faith and not to slip back to their Hebrew roots.

Romans

Author: Paul is the author of Romans.

Time frame: Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.

Purpose: Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** Students will realize the power they have to influence others when they strive to live Christ-centered lives in a spirit of unity with other Christ-followers.
- **Set-Up:** Have 5-10 hardback books ready for an object lesson. Be prepared to get two primary volunteers as well as 2-4 secondary volunteers to be used as "spotters."

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

FIRST, ask students to briefly share some of the most challenging physical feats they have attempted. Allow for discussion before letting the students know that a couple of them will have their strength challenged today.

THEN, get your first volunteer to stand up front and center. Hand the volunteer a hardback book. Then ask the volunteer to hold the book above his/her head with open palms. Make sure the 2-4 volunteer “spotters” stand a few feet away to keep falling books from hitting body parts. (IMPORTANT: Don’t let the spotters help the book holder this time!)

After a minute or so, add another book . . . then another book . . . then another until eventually the stack collapses due to tired arms or loss of balance. After the book avalanche discuss these questions:

- **What made this challenge difficult?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **How can the challenge relate to your life?**
 - o Answers will vary.

NEXT, take the object lesson to the next level. Have your second primary volunteer stand up front and center. Begin the challenge the same way as you did before—except this time inform the spotters that they can step in to steady the book stack when it is on the brink of collapse. Obviously, 3-5 people can hold the entire stack up steadily for a much longer time than just one person! Remind the spotters that they can actually help the book holder when he/she begins to struggle this time around. After your volunteers have held the books long enough to get the point across, discuss these questions:

- **What changed this time around?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **Which way of holding the books up worked best and why?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, explain to students the reality of strength in numbers. Point out that trying to tackle life alone is always more difficult than with others. Use the questions to get students thinking:

- **Who are some of your biggest encouragers in everyday life? What makes them so uplifting?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What factors within a person’s close friend group either help or hurt a person’s decision making?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What are some positives about having a close friend group made up of Christ-followers?**
 - o Answers will vary.

FINALLY, explain to the students that God offers very practical wisdom throughout the Bible. Today’s passage is a prime example. Say something like:

- **At this stop on our year-long journey through the big-picture story of the Bible we’ll take a look at some of the most practical advice the Bible has to offer on keeping yourself on God’s path. We’ll be challenged to be influencers for Christ while allowing a unified group of like-minded people to help us stay on track and encouraged—all through the power of God.**

Transition to The Story.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

The Story

- **Goal:** Students will understand that they have great capacity to encourage one another to live as Christ-followers in their daily lives.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may want to use a dry erase board too.

FIRST, explain that today's lesson is about Christ's power in individuals and unified groups of His followers. Let students know the passage is in Hebrews. Then, use the "Connect the Dots" section to get everyone on the same page.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **Hebrews was written less than a century after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in a time of intense persecution.**
- **Through recollections of many heroes of the faith, Hebrews vividly reminds Christ-followers to keep the faith and keep encouraging others even when it is dangerous to do so.**
- **Hebrews challenges Christ-followers to cling to God's power as a unified group even when the persecution is intense.**
- **The words found in Hebrews paint one of the most spectacular portraits of Jesus Christ found anywhere in scripture.**

Ask students locate Hebrews 10 in their Bibles. While students are looking for this passage, use the Bible Background to go into greater detail about Hebrews and the context of the book. Read or have a student read Hebrews 10:19-23. Use some questions like these to dig into the passage:

- **From examining verses 19-22, what did Jesus' death do for His followers?**
 - o Answer: He opened the door for believers to draw near to God by the blood of Jesus.
- **From verse 23, what are some practical ways a person can hold on to hope in Christ daily?**
 - o Answers will vary. We can spend time with God. We can set our minds and hearts on Him. We can learn to trust Him over the things of this world.
- **Also looking at the trustworthiness of God in verse 23, what are some factors that could cause a person to have "trust issues" with God?**
 - o Answers will vary. Students who have experienced a death of a loved one, relationship trauma, economic struggles, bullying, or other painful situations may struggle more than other students with trusting even Jesus Christ to be reliable in their lives.

NEXT, read or have a student read Hebrews 10:24-25. Ask something like:

- **In verse 24, God challenges us to think of ways to motivate one another to action in showing love to others. Who or what have you seen or heard that motivates you to action in your faith?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **Also from verse 24, how can you motivate those sitting around you right now to put Christ's love into action?**
 - o Answers will vary.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

- **In verse 25 we are challenged to stay consistent in meeting with other Christ-followers. What are some things getting in the way of that for you and your peers?**
 - Answers will vary. More often than not students are so absorbed with sports, other school groups, and even academics that they leave little room for God in their lives.

Emphasize the sacrifice Christ made for everyone and how that should be motivation in itself to live life for Him instead of oneself. Make sure the concept of faithfulness to church is emphasized. God established the church to provide a place for Christ-followers to be encouraged and spurred on in their faith. To help drive this truth home, ask these questions:

- **What are some of the benefits of being at church and youth group meetings consistently?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Is it easier to live out the Christian life when you regularly meet with fellow believers? Why?**
 - Answer: The answer should be “yes.” When we meet together, we’re able to encourage and lift-up one another. We’re able bear one another burdens.

If students don’t have any questions, transition into The Thread and look to see where you can trace the connection of the Gospel to the big-picture narrative of Scripture.

The Thread

FIRST, have students find Romans 15. If you want, reference the Bible Background to give students an overview of the book of Romans. Before you read the passage, ask something like:

- **Have you ever witnessed or experienced a time when fellow believers were unified in living out their faith? What does that look like? What kind of impact did it have?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Do you think there is unity among the believers at your school? What about here at church? Explain.**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are some common obstacles to unity among students?**

THEN, read or have as student read Romans 15:5-7. Ask something like:

- **What is the goal or purpose of Christian unity?**
 - Answer: To glorify God and bring Him praise.
- **What is the only true source of this type of unity?**
 - Answer: It comes from God.
- **In verse 7 we are challenged to accept others like Christ accepted us. How does Christ accept you?**
 - Answer: Just as you are. Jesus accepts anyone who believes in Him. When a person becomes a Christ-follower there is a change. Sin is exposed and forgiven. Encouragement from other Christ-followers is needed. Not everyone likes the same music, food, clothing, or even Bible translation. The key to unity among believers is focusing on how Christ’s sacrifice brings us all together.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

- **Why is Christian unity so important? What is problem with disunity amongst believers?**
 - Answer: Unity reflects the nature of God, while disunity does the opposite.
- **How does Christ empower us to move past the obstacles to unity we experience?**
 - Answer: He levels the playing field. We are all just as desperate for a savior as the next person. We all need just as much grace. When we realize this, it helps us see that we have much more in common with others than we want to think.

FINALLY, transition into the application by saying something like:

- **You may feel isolated in your faith at school and other places. There is a way to overcome. You've seen the blueprint in this lesson. Realize the power that is available to you through encouragement from other Christian students. Harness the unity and encouragement God is guiding you to in the scriptures. Let God change your perspective.**

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** Students will consider how they might encourage each other to be unified, and to strive to live Christ-centered lives.
- **Set-Up:** 1) Have enough pens, blank paper, and plain envelopes for each student to get one of each.
2) Have a large stack of Post-It notes for the "Wall of Encouragement." Choose a wall in your meeting area that Post-It notes can be stuck on for this activity.

FIRST, begin by asking something like:

- **What are some practical ways you all can encourage each other to be more unified?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What are some ways you can push one another to live Christ-centered lives?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What is something you will commit to do this week to build someone up and encourage them in their walk with Christ?**
 - Answers will vary.

NEXT, look at the two activities below and choose to do one or both of them with your group. This will allow the lesson to end on a very tangible, hands-on note.

ACTIVITY #1

Give each student a pen, a blank sheet of paper, and a plain envelope. Challenge students to pause for a moment to ask God who might need a little extra encouragement. Once students have a person in mind, challenge them to spend the next few minutes writing a letter of encouragement to someone. Once the letter is complete, have them seal it inside the envelope.

Before moving on to the second activity, have students pray over the envelope and commit to deliver the envelope to the person it is for by whatever means necessary—as soon as possible.

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 4: The Gospel At Work Lesson 48: A Letter to the Hebrews

ACTIVITY #2

Divide the large stack of Post-It notes as evenly as you can among your students. Have them use their pens to make encouraging notes for a “Wall of Encouragement.” Here are some tips:

- **Spell out “W-A-L-L O-F E-N-C-O-U-R-A-G-E-M-E-N-T” with Post-It Notes and stick the letters on the wall you selected for this activity. Suggestions for the squares: Bible verses, positive phrases, uplifting art doodles, even specific words of affirmation to specific people. Let your students’ creativity take over!**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you’ve purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they’ll be working through Week 48 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week’s verse their best shot.**
- **If you’ll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you’ll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn’t work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.