



Open it

1. Who is an adult in your life other than your parents that you aren't afraid to be completely honest with? What gives you this confidence in that person?

Daily Devotions

Day 1

Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Hebrews 4:14–16

2. What office (or role) does this passage say Jesus fulfills?
3. Because of Jesus, what does the author of Hebrews tell us to do?
4. Why is Jesus able to sympathize with our weaknesses?
5. Because of Jesus, how are we to approach God?
6. What do we receive when we approach the throne of grace?

Day 2

Today's Theme: Jesus is Our High Priest

Read Hebrews 4:14

In the Old Testament, the Jewish people relied on the high priest to act as a mediator between them and God. Once a year, it was the high priest's job to enter the Holy of Holies (where God's presence was with His people) in the tabernacle or in the temple to offer a sacrifice that would cover his own sins and the sins of the whole nation of Israel. And only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies; if anyone else entered it they would die! It wasn't even guaranteed that the high priest wouldn't die. As a matter of fact, they would put bells on his robe so they could hear him moving around to let them know that he was still alive. They'd also tie a rope around him so that if he did die, they could drag him out. Can you believe that?! That's how serious it was to enter into the presence of God.

We don't have priests who offer sacrifices on our behalf today because Jesus is our High Priest! Unlike the high priests in the Old Testament who entered into the Holy of Holies, Jesus has gone further than that and has "passed through the heavens," or in other words has entered into the very presence of God in heaven! Unlike the high priests in the Old Testament who had to offer a sacrifice every year to cover their sins and the sins of the people, Jesus offered a once-and-for-all sacrifice—Himself—that has permanently covered your sins and mine because Jesus was perfect!

Now that gives me some confidence, knowing that my sins have been paid for once-for-all and my High Priest (or Mediator) has entered into heaven itself on my behalf.

7. How does Jesus' great sacrifice and great intercession in the presence of God give you confidence and strength to not give up your confession of faith and hope in Him?

8. The Jewish Christians to whom Hebrews was written were tempted to turn back to something tangible that they could "see and touch" in a sense. While we don't have the daily experience of a high priest in our context, what things might we be tempted to turn back to relying on?

Day 3

Today's Theme: Jesus Understands

Read Hebrews 4:15

A few years ago at Fall Camp, one of our competitions was to have representatives from each team hold a piece of firewood above their heads as long as they could. In the first few minutes everyone had their arms straight above their heads and were going strong. "This thing isn't even heavy!" one kid yelled. But after about 15 or 20 minutes, things changed. A couple kids had dropped their firewood and the two that remained barely had it lifted off the top of their heads. Their faces were grimacing, their arms shaking. Suddenly, this light piece of wood had become incredibly heavy.

You might be tempted at times to think that Jesus doesn't know what it's like to be you. He doesn't know your struggles. If he only lived one day in your shoes, maybe even He would be struggling with the same things you are.

C.S. Lewis once said,

It's a silly idea that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.... You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means— the only complete realist.

Our passage tells us that Jesus really does understand your struggles because He has experienced temptation and human weakness firsthand. So next time you're tempted to think Jesus couldn't understand, remember this: Jesus is the only one who has never put the piece of firewood down. He knows the burden; He knows your pain. Yet He has never given in.

9. The Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted to sin, but it also says that Jesus never sinned. What is the difference between temptation and sin? How can we be tempted and still not sin?

10. How does it encourage you to know that Jesus knows your pain and suffering? How does Jesus' sinlessness inspire and motivate you in your own battle against sin?

Day 4

Today's Theme: Jesus Offers Help

Read Hebrews 4:16

Remember those few students at Fall Camp a few years ago who held that firewood above their heads? None of them ever asked for help and none of them ever asked us to simply take the piece of wood away. They all hunkered in under their own strength and understanding and eventually they all dropped the firewood.

When it comes to our lives today, we try to do the same thing sometimes. We try to fight temptation and struggle all on our own. But we don't have to! We are invited to approach the throne of grace with confidence and there we will find all the help we need.

When we come to the throne of grace through prayer, we are told that we will receive mercy and grace. We use those words a lot around church; in many ways they are part of this "Christianese" language that we use. Surprisingly, though, many people don't really understand the difference between them or what they mean at all. So what exactly is it we are promised we will receive when we come to the throne of grace?

1. Mercy: Mercy is not getting what we do deserve. For example, if you punch someone in the hall at school, you deserve a detention or even a suspension for your action. But maybe your principal will show you mercy and not give you a consequence. So when we receive mercy, we receive forgiveness and pardon for the sins we have committed in the past.

2. Grace: Grace is getting something we do not deserve. For example, when you punched that kid in the hall at school, not only did you experience mercy by not being punished, but then that very kid you punched bought you lunch that day. That's grace. He gave you something you clearly didn't deserve because of your actions. So when we receive grace for a time of need, we receive God's help—His strength and support so that we might not fall prey to our temptations and sin.

God's mercy and grace are always available to us because of Jesus. We just don't always choose to receive them in our times of need.

11. How might our enemy (the devil) try to attack our confidence before the throne of grace? What things might the devil use to make us feel we don't have confidence before God?

12. How does God's mercy and grace offer us hope in approaching God?

13. We come to the throne of grace through prayer. How does prayer offer us help when we are tempted or struggling?