

Hebrews Chapter 4

Entering God's Rest

In this busy, fast-paced world we live in, we often forfeit the rest we need.

For many, daily rest is not a priority and many fail to see the worth of its investment. Sadly, this is the case for spiritual rest as well.

Our bodies can only go for so long without rest, before they break down. But with spiritual rest, we can keep refusing it over and over again, never realizing the consequences until it's too late.

Spiritual rest is always available and affordable to anyone, anywhere.

Instead of taking over the land, the Israelites let fear and unbelief overtake them. They hardened their hearts towards God's word. The writer of Hebrews is warning these believers, and us today, not to do the same.

Verses 1-3

This rest in Canaan was a foreshadowing or a picture of the spiritual rest we find in Christ when we give our lives to Him.

There are still going to be giants and obstacles we must face in this life. But, because of our faith in Christ, He will help us to overcome them.

Point #1. Entering God's rest requires a healthy fear.

We are to fear God—a reverence and respect for who He is and all that He is.

We are to have a healthy, holy fear for missing out on all that He wants for us and others, especially His rest.

When we truly recognize how awesome and amazing our God is and the rest He offers, we will tremble with fear at the thought of missing Him and His rest.

This fear should drive us to ensure that we and others don't miss out on it.

This is not a physical place of rest, but rather a spiritual peace.

Point #2. Entering God's rest requires faith.

Faith here means first hearing the word of God and second, believing it.

Entering His rest requires faith, taking Him at His word and preparing ourselves for the fulfillment of His promises.

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

Verses 3-6

We have no excuse for not entering God's rest, because it's been available since the completion of creation and continues still.

The author is quoting Psalm 95:11.

This rest is God's. He established and enjoys it.

Point #3. Entering God's rest requires obedience and surrender.

The Israelites failed to enter the Promise Land of Canaan, because they allowed fear to replace their faith.

Every time we allow fear to replace our faith, we will forfeit God's rest (His peace) and there will be consequences instead of blessings.

Verse 7

The writer quotes Psalm 95 again. He is making doubly sure these believers adhere to God's warning of not hardening their hearts to His voice.

Just as this warning was applicable in Moses' and David's day, so it was to these believers and us today.

Hardening our hearts is unbelief and disobedience. It will keep us from entering God's rest just as it did for the Israelites.

God speaks daily, we just have to pay attention to His voice. It doesn't always mean He is speaking something new or grand over us, it can be a simple reminder of who He is and His faithfulness.

Point #4. Entering God's rest requires a choice.

Today when He speaks, are we going to hear and respond in faith and obedience, or harden our hearts in unbelief and disobedience?

We can experience God's rest each time we hear His voice and respond in faith and obedience.

The more in tune our hearts are to God, the more familiar we become with His voice and the ways He speaks. And equally as true, the more hardened our hearts become, the harder it is to hear Him.

A clue to help us know if we have a hardened heart is when the peace of God is replaced with panic or pride.

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

Verses 8-10

The author is making a clear distinction between two kinds of God's rest—one temporal and the other true.

Joshua led the second generation of the Israelites into Canaan, the Promise Land. But, that rest was a temporal rest, not the true rest that Christ offers.

This true rest is not a physical rest, but rather a spiritual rest for our souls.

Just as Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, so is the availability of the true rest He offers. We can experience it today and for all of eternity.

Once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and savior, our eternal rest is secure. Just as God rested from his labor of creation, one day we will join Him in that rest as we rest from all our labors on this earth.

However, we can “today” miss out on true rest (His peace that surpasses all understanding) by our disobedience and a hardened heart, which God is warning us of in Psalm 95.

Verses 11-13

The author makes a command for these believers and us to do our best to enter into God's rest.

Point #5. Entering God's rest requires diligence.

Why be diligent when it comes to entering God's rest?

“This is not the struggle of doing good in order to obtain salvation, nor is it a mystical struggle to overcome selfishness. It refers to making every effort to appreciate and benefit from what God has already provided. Salvation is not to be taken for granted; to appropriate the gift God offers requires decision and commitment.”—NLT Study Bible

We must be serious about obeying God, since Christ took His obedience serious.

When Christ willingly decided to go to that cross, He completely gave His whole life upon it. There was no halfhearted devotion in Him towards us.

We need to be diligent to do our best, because we serve the Best. And we love Him because He first loved us.

Though Christ was perfect in His obedience, He knows we can't do this in our own strength.

How can we be diligent to enter this rest?

This is daily surrendering and allowing Him to work in and through us. We must be faithful to do our part and let Christ do the rest.

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

The author reveals the greatest tool we own that will allow Christ to work in us—the Word of God.

The Word of God is alive. It's not a dead history book or book of fables and fairy tales. It is the very breath of God and it saves lives.

The Word of God is active, meaning powerful.

The Word of God is sharp.

If we're serious about our obedience to God, then we will pay close attention to His Word, allowing Christ, our Master Surgeon, to cut us where it's needed. His intentions are not to harm us, but to reveal what's in us, remove it if necessary, and then heal us.

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

Homework Question

1. Why is spiritual rest just as, if not more, important as physical rest?
2. Just as many feel they can't afford the time or money to get the physical rest they need. What are some reasons many don't get the spiritual rest they need?
3. Why do you think many people don't see spiritual rest as an important investment?
4. Sleep deprivation can cause unhealthy side effects in one's mood, speech, energy level, and mental well-being. Look up the following verses. What do these truths reveal about the importance of spiritual rest? Just as lack of sleep can make us prone to sickness how can lack of spiritual rest make us prone to sin?
1 Peter 5:8:
Colossians 4:6:
1 Thessalonians 5:1:
Romans 12:11:
Romans 12:12:
Ephesians 4: 32:
5. Why does entering God's rest require a healthy fear of who God is and for all that He wants for us?

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

6. Why is faith not a religion, but a relationship with the one true living God?

7. In your own words why does entering God's rest require faith?

8. Why does allowing fear to replace our faith cause us to forfeit God's rest, and leave us with consequences rather than blessings?

9. Read Psalm 62: 1-2. What do these verses convey about resting in God? What practical ways can we apply this in our lives?

10. How does hearing God's voice relate to entering His rest?

11. What are some practical ways we can tune our hearts to God's?

12. Why does a hardened heart make it harder to hear God's voice?

13. When panic or pride seeps in, what are some practical ways we can rid ourselves of them and let the peace of God come in?

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com

14. In your own words why must we be diligent to enter God's rest?
15. Read 2 Peter 1: 1-11. What do these verse say about God's rest and the importance of being diligent to enter into it?
16. How does God's Word allow Christ to work in us?
17. One day, we will all have a final appointment with God, our Judge. Read 1 Corinthians 3: 11-15 and 2 Corinthians 5: 10. Knowing this future judgment is coming, how does this impact your life today?

Personal Questions

What keeps you from entering God's rest?

Do you feel you are getting enough spiritual rest? Why or why not?

What ways do you struggle with trusting God completely? Pray and seek God's help to remove any unbelief in your heart.

Do you struggle to hear God's voice? Why or why not?

When it comes to trials, are you more prone to panic or pride?

Do you resist or allow the word of God to work in your life, revealing the true condition of your heart?

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.integrisok.com