

CAN'T STOP
CAN I STOP

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vGroup Study



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Can't Stop Won't Stop: vGroup Study

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HEBREWS 5:11-6:12

The idea of permanence often seems foreign to us. Permanently belonging does not always fit our ideas of how things should be. We prize our individuality and the ability to choose who or what we belong to; and even if we don't have much of a say, we believe that things can change.

Permanence does not always have negative connotations though. Many of us will remember the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (2007). We might especially remember the line repeated by the crew of *The Flying Dutchman*, "Part of the ship, part of the crew." In the movie the crew of the ship were permanently attached to the vessel with the charge of ferrying those lost at sea to the afterlife. While we do not believe in fantasies like this, we easily recognize their role, when rightly carried out in the movie, as a good thing.

We as Christians do not believe in pirate ghost ships, no matter how entertaining the movies about them are. What we, as Christians, do believe is that we are permanently members of God's Kingdom once we join. As we dive in to Hebrews 5:11-6:12, we need to be willing to see past our own love for personal liberty and to see the freedom that we have in belonging to Christ.

- What about personal freedom is so appealing to us, especially in western culture?
- What are some other areas where we might value belonging over our desire to be independent?
- What freedom might there be in the knowledge that, no matter what happens, we permanently belong to God's Kingdom?

Hebrews 5:11-6:12 is one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. The text seems to suggest that believers falling away from the faith, or rejecting it outright, is possible. This idea is especially difficult for us to wrestle with since we affirm that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as their savior will remain saved until Jesus returns. A careful reading and study of this text will show us that we are safely standing on God's promise to preserve and keep us.¹

¹¹About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of

righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

¹Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And this we will do if God permits.

Hebrews 5:11-6:3

- Who is the author's audience in these verses? Who is he talking to?

- What is the charge that the author brings against his audience?

- What does the author want his audience to do? Where does he want them to be in their spiritual formation?

As we've seen before, the author of Hebrews is writing to Christians. These Christians, in particular, need to mature in their faith. However, their maturity is not necessarily based on what they know, but what they are doing with that knowledge. Their maturity is based on their obedience to Jesus.

⁴For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. ⁷For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

Hebrews 6:4-8

- Again, we need to focus our attention on the intended audience of this letter. Who is this message for?

- Pastor Dustin pointed out in his sermon on Sunday what the nature of the warnings in this passage are. What is the warning that the author intends for his audience?
- What are the truths that we need to hold on to when looking at this passage? (Hint: think back to Pastor Dustin's sermon and the key verses: [John 10:28-29](#); [Romans 8:38-39](#); [1 Peter 1:3-5](#))

These warnings were to be taken seriously. While we strongly affirm our eternal security in Jesus, we too need to take seriously these warnings. Our desire and goal should be to persevere in our faith until the end.

⁹Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. ¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. ¹¹And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Hebrews 6:9-12

- In these last four verses the author of Hebrews takes a more positive note. What is the author sure of in v. 9, and how does he reinforce that in v. 10?
- What does the author of Hebrews tell us that we can have in v. 11?
- According to v. 12, what is the purpose of our assurance?

We all want to belong, and we all crave the assurance that we are not precariously belonging. While the message of the Hebrews passage we just looked at is not quite so easy to chant as “Part of the ship, part of the crew,,” the message is that simple. Once we belong to God's Kingdom and are a part of his people, he will not let go of us.

- How does knowing that we are safe in the embrace of the Lord lead us to view our efforts in our Christian walk? How is our freedom in Christ experienced once we accept that we are safely within the Kingdom?
- Often Christians express anxiety about the status of their salvation. How does this passage, especially v. 9-12, address these anxieties we might experience? What comfort do you derive from the passage?
- What might it look like for you to not be sluggish? What are some areas that the confidence of the Lord's assurance can empower you to exercise your faith? Do you need to study more, do you need to serve more?

REFERENCES

¹ When it comes to what we believe, we are fairly explicit, "All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "The Baptist Faith and Message," <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>.