**Hebrews Hortatory Subjunctives OR Exhortations In Hebrews**

In order to zealously serve God, one requires constant exhortation or he or she will inevitably fall away from God. The book of Hebrews offers manifold exhortation, exhortation that I want to share with you today. These exhortations form the structure of the book and are found in a repeated phrase, grammatically referred to as a “hortatory subjunctive.” But don’t be intimidated by this jargon!

*“The [hortatory] subjunctive is commonly used to exhort or command oneself and one’s associates. This use of the subjunctive is used ‘to urge some one to unite with the speaker in a course of action upon which he has already decided.’ Since there is no first person imperative, the hortatory subjunctive is used to do roughly the same task. Thus this use of the subjunctive is an exhortation in the first person plural. The typical translation, rather than we should . . . is let us . . . ”* (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, p. 464).

My hope is that these five sets of exhortations from the book will help you kindle the flame of Christ in your hearts. To that end, let us begin.

**I. Exhortations To Be Steadfast**

A. Hebrews 4:14 – *“Let us hold fast our confession...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Christ has passed through the heavens. What this means is that He is the trailblazer to Heaven. If we abide in His tracks, we are assured of Heaven. He is the sole basis of our hope and the firstfruits of the resurrection.

b. As He withstood the jeering of the crowds and the rejection from His own, the scourging and the crucifixion, the emptying and humbling, so we must be steadfast. He steadfastness secured Heaven for Him. In the same way, Heaven is secured through our steadfastness.

2. Implementation:

a. What is required to be steadfast? Devotion. If we love the goal of our journey w/ every passion & fiber of our being, we will reach it.

b. So what can we do? Daily increase in your love of God. Get to know Him better. Spend time talking with Him. Build your relationship. Love Him in good times and in bad; in sickness and in health; for richer or poorer!

B. Hebrews 10:23 – *“Let us hold fast...without wavering...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Jesus actively serves in Heaven on our behalf. Every day He serves without fail. His intercession is never wavering; neither should our grip on our hope.

b. God is faithful and will walk with you in the peaks and valleys of life. His footprints are in the sand, even when ours are not.

2. Implementation:

a. Trust God enough to let go of your life. Let go of the trivialities. Let go of your grip on the world.

b. When you feel like wavering, surround yourself with godly influences (which should be around you anyways). As Aaron and Hur supported Moses when he grew weak with the scepter of God, allow them to bolster you!

**II. Exhortations To Become Stronger**

A. Hebrews 6:1-8 – *“Let us...go on to maturity...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. At first glance, it seems like the exhortation relates to leaving the elementary principles. In actuality, grammatically it relates to going on to maturity. So while we are told to press beyond the elementary principles, the exhortation truly is to develop spiritually. We must grow, grow, grow!

b. This list is quite perplexing isn’t it? Don’t we tend to think of these as the difficult issues? Here they are defined as elementary. If we haven’t moved past these (which doesn’t negate that we return to them from time to time to bone up on our studies!), then we deprive ourselves of development. I wonder how many of us are stuck here when we should be beyond them?

c. If we get stuck on the elementary things, it will inhibit our growth, as well as the growth of others, and it may even cause us to fall away. Note that this exhortation contextually sets the tone for verses 4-6.

2. Implementation:

a. We have to get beyond the milk. We have to sharpen our tools. We have to develop our tastes. We need to process more efficiently and more effectively in our Bible studies.

b. Consider starting a Bible study in a subject or book that you have been intimidated by for a while now. Consider the challenge of learning an original Bible language. Consider signing up for software that quizzes your Bible knowledge.

B. Hebrews 10:24 – *“Let us consider...one another”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. If we are honest, the focus of our attention tends to be on ourselves or in-home family members. How often have we said, “I want to do such and such for so and so...” only to be quickly distracted by our own pressing issues?

b. God commands us to carve out time for each other. After all, isn’t Christianity about denying self and serving? Stimulating others stimulates us. If you have ever gardened, you know the term “root-bound”. It means that a plant’s root system is completely and tightly bound around itself. What it needs to survive, especially when being transplanted is stimulation to the roots. They have to be forcibly ripped apart. This benefits the plant immensely. Even in non-root-bound plants, the stimulation of its roots will result in bloom production.

2. Implementation:

a. When you do think of helping someone, don’t procrastinate. As soon as you think of it, take action. Call or message them. Write that note right then and there.

b. Consider what your presence or absence at Bible studies or worship does to others. Your decision of course will affect you but it also affects others. What happens when you show up late? What sort of distraction are you introducing for your brothers and sisters? What sort of an impact are you having by your involvement or lack of involvement in worship? Take time to consider!

c. And not just that, but take action! Leave your house earlier! Wake up sooner! Tell the elders and deacons you want to do more and get more involved. Tell them you want to sharpen yourself and others. I assure you, there is much work to be done.

C. Hebrews 12:1 (#1) – *“Let us also lay aside...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. The reason should be patently obvious. Encumbrances slow us down. We are in a race, so those things that slows us down should be jettisoned.

b. Sin easily ensnares us. Who here would say that their battle against sin is an easy one? The benefit of doing this of course is that we can run fast. What does this mean in reality? It means more and greater opportunities to serve. It means better Scripture knowledge. It means a stronger and more dedicated prayer life. Who doesn’t want these?

2. Implementation:

a. Are there “pet” sins in your life? Things that your flesh on a leash that weighs down your spirit? Why do you keep them on a leash? Share your struggle with an accountability person. Finally take the time to purchase that accountability software you’ve seen advertised. Unplug your mind from social media.

b. Christ spoke of taking drastic measures to rid our lives of sin. Perhaps it is time for us to listen! Let’s get serious about cleaning out the closet!

**III. Exhortations To Worship**

A. Hebrews 12:28-29 (2x) – *“Let us be grateful...” “Let us offer...”*

1. The Reason(s)/Benefit(s):

a. Gratefulness is a necessary outgrowth of the realization of what God’s kingdom has to offer and what the promise of reconciliation with God means. It is odd that we are told to be grateful; it should be an automatic reflex. However, Satan distracts and allures with bits and bobbles that strip us of our spiritual desire to be restored.

b. Our sole purpose in life is to glorify God. We do this primarily in worship. If we are not glorifying God and worshipping, then we deprive ourselves of the reason for existence.

2. Implementation:

a. On the scale of gratefulness, how appreciative are you of the promise of God’s kingdom to His people. Do we take it for granted or do we actively devote our appreciation to God?

b. How cognizant are you of God’s identity as a consuming fire? These are areas that we all need development in. Take time to be grateful. Take time to glorify God thru your actions & worship.

B. Hebrews 13:15-16 – *“Let us continually offer up...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Jesus has opened the gateway to worship God. Are we walking through that gateway? If we are trying to worship God without an active relationship with Jesus, then our worship is in vain.

b. Our desire, or lack thereof, is a direct reflection of our relationship with Christ. If you do not find a certain thrill in your spirit as you worship, something is between you and Jesus. It needs to be taken away. Our fervent desire to worship here will result in our worship of God in Heaven!

2. Implementation:

a. As we draw near to God, we are prone to worship Him. So if we continually draw near, we will continually offer us a sacrifice of praise to God. Make it a point this year to draw near to God to worship. Don’t stand afar off & offer a lame duck in worship.

b. *Do not neglect doing good and sharing!* (v. 16)

**IV. Exhortations To Draw Near**

A. Hebrews 4:16//10:19-22 – *“Let us then with confidence draw near...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Through the blood of Jesus, we have confidence to approach God! Jesus inaugurated this path and instituted this relationship through His flesh.

b. We have a great high priest. Our insufficiencies are compensated for by the intercession and advocacy of Christ. As a result, we are not merely hopeful that God hears us, we know He hears us!

2. Implementation:

a. What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail? What would you share with God knowing that you had His ear?

b. We need to entrust ALL our anxieties to Him. We need to be confident that He will forgive when we err, deliver when we cry out, bless when we ask for a blessing. He hears brothers and sisters! Let us speak!

B. Hebrews 13:12-14 – *“Let us go to Him outside the camp...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Jesus, the Lord of the universe, went outside the camp. If God can humble Himself in that way, so can we.

b. No matter where we go, if God is there, there is no need to fear. Let us be like Peter, and walk out to Jesus, even when the physical terrors around us seem overwhelming.

2. Implementation:

a. The camp that we are leaving is akin to the world. In order to take up residence in the eternal city, we must abandon this temporal world. It cannot remain the seat of our affections.

b. This means we are to consider ourselves as dead to the world since it is passing and fleeting. We are to consider the past as sufficient to have spent our lives in lawlessness.

**V. Exhortations To Persevere**

A. Hebrews 4:1-3 – *“Let us fear...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. There are people who have come before us who did not enter the rest of God because their hearing was not united by faith.

b. If we allow our hearing to be united by faith, we do better and rightfully expect the reward of rest. If we choose not to, then we rightfully live in fear of judgment.

c. There should always be a special cognizance of the power of sin to keep us away from the rest of God. Maintain that so you do not fall away. Don’t fall short through a lack of faith!

2. Implementation:

a. The underlying premise of these verses is the same as Romans 10:17. Our hearing the Word of God should produce faith. Therefore, we need to govern our hearing and attune it to the Word of God. Not simply hear; we must listen & apply. Owning a bar of soap doesn’t do anyone any good if you don’t use it!

b. Moreover, the Word needs to quicken our spirits. It has the ability, and will, if we yield ourselves to God. So, yield!

B. Hebrews 4:11-13 – *“Let us therefore strive to enter that rest...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. There are many who have gone before us who thru disobedience were prohibited from entering the rest of God.

b. If we choose obedience, and strive to please God, we may rest from our labor.

2. Implementation:

a. Since all things are open and laid bare before the eyes of the Lord, we have one “with whom we have to do.” This means that our thoughts and actions should reflect our awareness of our own subservience and accountability to the Almighty.

b. This relates clearly to last year’s theme of making kingdom choices.

C. Hebrews 12:1-3 (#2) – *“Let us run with endurance...”*

1. The Reason/Benefit:

a. Unlike the other passages, positive examples are furnished here. We have a great cloud of witnesses who did run with endurance and did finish the race. They cheer us on!

b. Living in this world causes fatigue of the body and spirit by default. Our struggle then is to not allow the weight of the world to cripple us into inactivity or malfunction. We feel fainthearted at times, but we must not lose heart!

2. Implementation:

a. Through the study and analysis of the spiritually successful, we will learn tools that enable us to regenerate our hearts.

b. We need to recall that multitudes have been successful in the race. If they can, we can too! And not only that, but one of their chief tasks in Paradise is to incite and encourage us to finish strong!

Now you know all about Hebrew’s Hortatory Subjunctives! Now for the quiz! JK. I hope these five areas of exhortation in the book of Hebrews will spur you on in your walk with Christ. The book encourages all to be steadfast, become stronger, to worship, to draw near, and to persevere. May we allow these exhortations to kindle a strong flame in our spirit to love God fervently!