

How Can We Help One Another Find True Rest?

Hebrews 3:7-19

Hebrews, Day 12

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,

⁹ where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.’

¹¹ As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest.’”

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵ As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. – Hebrews 3:7-19, ESV

We need each other. The stereotypical American ideal of rugged individualism is a lie. The John Wayne lone cowboy hero who needs no one, relies on no one, serves no one and stays with no one is not any kind of ideal to admire or strive to imitate. Recent studies have indicated a loneliness epidemic in America. A survey of 20,000 Americans found the average American is significantly lonely. This loneliness has a significant effect on our health, too, triggering Type-2 Diabetes and other problems. (Link)

<https://www.ajc.com/news/health-med-fit-science/why-are-americans-lonely-massive-study-finds-nearly-half-feels-alone-young-adults-most-all/bbIKsU2Rr3qZI8WlukHfpK/>

While Americans are lonely, we are also longing for community. We are not nearly as self-reliant as we pretend to be. We take our cues about morality, lifestyle, priorities and values from those around us, those whom we admire and with whom we most closely identify. Why else are marketers so eager to target social media and bloggers?

This inter-dependence is nothing new, nor is it just an accident. God created us for community. He said, *“It is not good for man to be alone”* (Gen 2:18). This was the only time God declared something in His creation as “not good” before the Fall. God created a suitable companion for Adam and blessed them by commanding them to create more human life, to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth with people.

In Hebrews, we discover how important community and relationships are if we are to persevere in faith and enter God’s rest in Christ. We are given a stern warning against unbelief in 3:12: *“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.”* Then, in verse 13, we’re told how we can best guard against an “evil, unbelieving heart”: *“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*

Our hearts are prone to wander and prone to harden. Our sinful nature and the deceitful allurements of the world never stop lying to us and calling us away from the living God. Our sinful nature wants cheap substitutes for the real rest God offers in Christ, and the world is eager to offer them to us.

Sometimes when I come home, I am really hungry and Beth is cooking dinner, and I head over the fridge or the pantry to see what I can grab quickly. I know a delicious, satisfying meal is coming, but I will reach for junk – tortilla chips and salsa or a handful or almonds (or two), rather than wait for the satisfaction I know I need and I know is coming soon. I need Beth to remind me: Dinner will be ready soon!

We need each other. When the world is calling and our sinful nature is itching to wander, we need to call each other back to our Lord and His promises. We need to exhort one another: “Hold on! Rest is coming!” Praying for each other, encouraging each other, holding one another accountable, and living life together are vital keys to keeping our hearts tender to the Lord as we preserve in faith toward the eternal, soul-satisfying rest of God.