

Hebrews 6:9-12 “The God Who Sees Our Work and Love”**

Main Idea: In Hebrews 6:9-12 the writer of Hebrews motivates his readers to persevere by sharing two kinds of words. The passage shows us that there are two kinds of words we should use to bring vital motivation to the people God has placed in our care.

- I. The writer gives us words of encouragement (9-10).
 - A. He affirmed his confidence in his readers (9).
 1. He said he expected better things of them.
 2. He said he expected things that accompany salvation.
 - B. He affirmed his confidence in God (10).
 1. God is not unjust.
 2. God never misses our work and love.
 3. God will reward our work and love.
 - a. It must be done for His honor.
 - b. It must be done as an expression of servanthood.
- II. The writer gives us words of exhortation (11-12).
 - A. He calls for perseverance (11).
 1. It’s what Jesus did.
 2. It’s what each of us must do.
 3. It’s what makes our hope sure.
 - B. He calls for participation (12).
 1. We must not become passive.
 2. We must imitate godly role models.
 3. We must live, not for what we can see, but for what has been promised.

The Bottom Line: In light of Hebrews 6, two responses are in order.

1. Be encouraged today, for God sees what we are doing for Him.
2. Be a source of encouragement today, for God will not forget our work and love.

You might be surprised as we turn again to Hebrews 6. Today we’ll discover something unexpected in Hebrews 6. Yes, the writer’s words in Hebrews 6 are convicting, challenging, soul-searching, and even controversial as we saw last week. But his words are also encouraging and hope-giving, as we’ll see today. He moves from a strong warning in verses 4-8 to a heart-stirring affirmation in verses 9-12. And what produces this change in tone? This. We believe in *the God who sees our work and love*.

“*God is not unjust,*” says the writer in verse 10 (NIV). “*He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.*” Let’s read this wonderful verse in its fuller context, then ponder it carefully.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 6:9-12

One of the greatest challenges of living the Christian life is that it is so *daily*. So, you had your quiet time yesterday, that’s good. What about today? So, you stood up for Christ in the lunchroom yesterday, again, that’s wonderful. But today’s a new day with new opportunities to put Him first.

What keeps you doing what you know to be right when it gets hard, and especially when you don’t receive any positive feedback for your actions? My hunch is that most of us know what we ought to do, at least most of the time. But what we often lack is the *motivation* to do it.

I know I should send that card to my hurting friend, make that visit to the care facility, spend extra time praying for my kids, visit my neighbor who lost a parent, make that phone call to a brother I haven’t seen in church for a month, and so on. In those situations and in many others like them, let’s be honest. I don’t struggle to know what to do. What I need is the motivation to put the newspaper down and get to it! Can you relate?

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

If you can, you'll appreciate what the Lord has to say to us through the writer of Hebrews. Hebrews 6:9-12 is a motivational text. The writer of Hebrews is seeking to motivate his readers to persevere, to keep doing what they know to be right even though they may not feel like it. He motivates his readers, including us, in two ways, with two kinds of speech. First, words of encouragement (9-10). Second, words of exhortation (11-12).¹

I. The writer gives us words of encouragement (9-10).

Notice verses 9-10 (ESV), "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. ¹⁰ For 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."²

Notice that the writer encourages his readers by making two affirmations.

A. He affirmed his confidence in his readers (9). "Even though we speak like this, dear friends (NIV)." Stop there for a moment. The writer calls himself "we." We've discussed before that we don't know who wrote Hebrews. Now we learn that there may be more than one person involved, although Leon Morris says the "we" is a "plural of authorship and means 'I'."³ He does use the singular elsewhere, as in 13:22.

"Even though we speak *like this*," he says. Like what? How has he been speaking to them? Well, in 5:11 he told them he had "much more to say about" Christ and His eternal priesthood, but he couldn't say it because they couldn't handle it. "You are slow to learn," he told them in 5:11. And in 5:12, "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" That led to this charge in 6:1, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity."

Those are strong words, aren't they? Then came the warning in verses 4-6, "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."

That's pretty blunt language, for sure! Remember, the first readers of the book of Hebrews were Jewish Christians, and apparently, at least some of them were pondering leaving Christ and returning to their previous beliefs and practices in Judaism.

That's how he's been speaking, but his tone changes noticeably in verse 9. "Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, *beloved*." He calls them *agapetoi*, "dear friends" in the NIV, "beloved" in the ESV and KJV. This is the only place in Hebrews that the writer addresses his readers this way. It's as if he were saying, as Barclay puts it, "If I did not love you so much I would not speak with such severity."⁴ But now he puts the severity aside, and in verse 9 he communicates a couple of encouraging expectations.

1. *He said he expected better things of them.* In the NIV, "Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of *better things in your case*." The ESV says,

¹ As a side note, this passage shows us that we too ought to utilize the same two kinds of speech as we seek to motivate the people God has placed in our care.

² NIV '85 "Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

³ Leon Morris, p. 57.

⁴ Barclay, p. 60.

“we feel sure of better things.” “Better” is a favorite word for the writer. In 1:4 he says that Christ is “superior” to [‘better than’ in the KJV] the angels. In 7:19 he says we have a “better hope.” In 7:22 he says that Jesus established a “better covenant.” Here, after warning against falling away, he says he is confident of “better things” of his readers.

Parents and grandparents, we would do well to take heed to this example. Sometimes we need to say heavy things, don’t we? But we ought to speak words of encouragement whenever possible, especially *after* we’ve delivered the heavy admonishment.

Suppose you played baseball and your team was beat badly for the fifth game in a row. What kind of coach would you rather play for? Would it be: a) the coach who constantly cuts down his players, “You guys are losers. I can’t believe how badly you play!” or b) the coach who flatters his team, “You guys are excellent! I love coaching you!”? or c) the coach who addresses shoddy performance with firm confrontation, appropriate instruction, and a solid dose of, “We can do better than this! I know we can!”

Now for the writer of Hebrews, this isn’t the power of positive thinking. What are these “better things” of which he is confident? He tells us in the next phrase.

2. *He said he expected things that accompany salvation.* The ESV says, “things that belong to salvation.” Literally, the things which “hold on to” salvation.⁵ This raises the important question, “What are the things that accompany or belong to salvation”? We need not wonder for the writer has already mentioned several in Hebrews.

“Paying attention to what we’ve heard” does, according to 2:1. “Fixing our thoughts on Jesus” does, according to 3:1. “Holding on to the faith we profess” also accompanies salvation, according to 4:14. So does “approaching the throne of grace to find grace to help in our time of need,” according to 4:16. As does moving from milk to meat (5:13), training ourselves to distinguish good from evil (5:14), and moving on to maturity (6:1). And that’s just a sampling of the things that accompany salvation.

When we’ve experienced salvation, it shows. Saved people pay attention to the teaching of God’s Word. They think about Jesus a lot. They demonstrate a faith that’s real, and pray a lot, and are not content with spiritual immaturity but take steps to grow.

Allow me to state what may be obvious, but seems to be lost in the contemporary church. Salvation is more than a ticket out of hell. When you’ve got it, it’s accompanied by some things. When those things are missing, it’s evidence that salvation is missing. People who truly know Christ will exhibit the fruit of Christ’s salvation.

When the writer says he is confident of better things in the case of his readers, his confidence isn’t rooted in the inherent ability of his readers. Let me repeat that. His confidence is not *in his readers* per se. Rather, his confidence is rooted in the nature of their salvation. Or to be more specific, it’s grounded in the nature of their saving God.

To illustrate, think about *The Summit* at Scioto Hills Camp. It’s a massive thirty-foot climbing wall, pretty intimidating for a ten year old (and sixty year old). So what does the staff do? I’ve heard staff members tell person after person who looked fearfully at that wall, “You won’t fall. You can make it. *I know you can.*”

What makes the staff person so sure? Is it the inherent ability of the campers? No way. It’s in the fact that those campers are held securely in a harness with a rope that not only prevents their falling, but provides the necessary “oomph” to boost them onward and upward to the top.

Salvation is like that harness. When you’re in it, that is, when you’re *in Christ*, you are secure and your destiny is secure. You will make it to the top because your Savior will take you there. Might there be bumps along the way? Sure. Might your footing slip

⁵ Observation by Donald Guthrie, p. 147.

and you knock your shin against the wall? Sure. But you will never fall. The one holding the harness won't let that happen.

Beloved, we need this encouraging reminder. All of us do. And the biblical writers provide it again and again. For instance, listen to what Paul told the believers in Philippi in *Philippians 1:6*, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Here's another. To the Christians in Rome Paul said this, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39-39)."

And to the church in Corinth, which certainly had its share of problems, Paul had this to say in *2 Corinthians 7:4*, "I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged..." How could Paul say that? What gave him such confidence? I'll say it again. His confidence wasn't rooted in the Corinthians so much as in the God who saved the Corinthians.

Paul actually emphasized that point at the beginning of the same letter, saying in *2 Corinthians 1:10*, "He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us."

So, to encourage his readers, the writer of Hebrews makes two affirmations. First, he affirms his confidence in his readers. "We are confident of better things in your case." Then comes his second affirmation in verse 10.

B. He affirmed his confidence in God (10). While the writer's confidence in God is *implied* in verse 9, he states it outright in verse 10. "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

Now, there's an encouraging verse for all the Christ-honoring parents in the room! What others miss or take for granted, God doesn't. That's, of course, because God sees everything. Moms, those middle of the night feedings, those tear-filled-prayers you've offered for wayward children, He sees it all. Dads, those decisions you make to deny your own interests in order to prioritize the gospel in your family. He sees it.

You say, "Well, sure He sees everything. He's God! So why then do I still get so discouraged at times?" There are a lot of potential reasons, but here's the one Hebrews 6 addresses. The truth that God sees everything won't motivate us as it ought until we come to grips with this related question.

What is God's assessment of what He sees? Think carefully now. What does God think of people who believe in His Son and then work and make sacrifices for His honor out of love for others? We need not wonder, for Hebrews 6 tells us. The writer wants us to ponder three motivating truths about God.

1. *God is not unjust.* He's not *adikos*. It's a double negative, not "unrighteous," says the KJV. God will never and could never do anything that would violate His justice and righteousness.

2. *God never misses our work and love.* Listen to the *NLT* of verse 10, "For God is not unfair. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other Christians, as you still do."

In the real world, sure, others might miss your loving deeds. In fact, let's be honest, some might even take credit for them. But be assured, God won't. It would be unjust for Him to do so.

In what sense would such oversight be *unjust*? Think about it. Suppose you did a project at work, one that you stayed after hours to finish and you didn't even turn it in as

overtime. Now suppose at the team meeting the next day, when the boss asked who did the project, your associate gave the impression that *he* was the anonymous worker. You'd be upset, wouldn't you? And you'd be upset because what your associate did wasn't right. And if your boss rewarded him for his false claim, say with an extra vacation day, that reward would be *unjust*.

God doesn't do that because He isn't unjust. He never misses our work and love. Jesus said in Revelation 2:19, "I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first."

I think of the things I see as your pastor. A brother came to the church and cleaned up the weeds and trash around the parking lot. A husband and wife made a hospital visit to encourage a fellow church member. A sister spent time in our counseling room helping a person overcome anxiety. A child drops money in the offering box. Those are examples of deeds of love that I happened to see with my own eyes and they happen all the time in this church family. But even if I hadn't seen them, those deeds of love were seen by the One who never misses anything. But He doesn't just *see* it.

3. *God will reward our work and love.* The NIV uses the word "forget" in verse 10. It can mean "to neglect" or "to overlook" (as in the ESV). For instance, in James 1:24 we're told about a man who looks in a mirror, but immediately "forgets" what he looks like, which means he doesn't do anything with the information. In Philippians 3:13 Paul confessed that he "forgets" what is behind him. He puts it out of His mind. God does *not* do that when He sees the labors of love of His people. He doesn't *forget* it, not neglect it, nor overlook it.

And what's implied here but stated clearly elsewhere is that He *rewards* it. He blesses the giver for his gift. When? In this life? Not necessarily, certainly not fully. The reward is future and it will be given when we see the One for whom we did the deed.

The writer will have much to say about this later in the book. For instance, he says in Hebrews 9:15, "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called *may receive the promised eternal inheritance...*"

A few verses later he elaborates in Hebrews 9:27-28, "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but *to bring salvation* to those who are waiting for him."

Then he tells us plainly in Hebrews 10:35-36, "So do not throw away your confidence; *it will be richly rewarded*. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

You say, "I thought salvation was by grace through faith and *not* a reward for our works. This sounds like God rewards people on the basis of what they do for him."

Let's be clear. He does reward good works. And salvation is all of grace, not by works. Both are true.

John Calvin offers this helpful explanation, "He looks not so much on our works as on His grace in our works."⁶ That's an important distinction. Even the works that we may accomplish are done because of God's gracious enabling. Salvation from beginning to end is by His grace. By His grace, God sent His Son. By His grace, God's Son died for sinners. By His grace, God accepts sinners who repent and trust in the merit of His Son. And by His grace, His saved children do good works for Him, and He rewards them for the works they do. Yes, salvation is all of grace.

But not all works will be rewarded. Notice a couple of qualifiers in verse 10.

⁶ John Calvin, p. 79.

a. It must be done for His honor. The writer says that God “will not forget your work and the love *you have shown him.*” That’s the NIV. Literally, it says “which you have shown *unto His name.*” This is critical. The writer says these are works that the readers did “for the name.” In the eyes of the world, the name of Jesus is scandalous. But in the eyes of those who have received salvation and pardon from the One who bears that name, it is certainly precious. And the good deeds they do, they do *for His name*, that is, for His glory and honor.

So, you serve in this church. You teach a Sunday School class, make a home visit, prepare a dish for a funeral meal. Those are good works. But if you want to receive a reward for that good work, it must be done, for His honor. Not for your honor, not for recognition, not even for the good feel that comes from doing the good work. But for His name, His honor, His recognition, His pleasure. There’s a second qualifier.

b. It must be done as an expression of servanthood. The ESV says, “the love you have shown for his name *in serving the saints.*” The NIV says, “*as you have helped His people and continue to help them.*” The word “helped” is *diakoneo* which is often translated “serve” or “minister.” Commenting on the word *diakoneo*, Kittle says, “For the Greeks service is undignified; we are born to rule, not to serve.” But for Christians, service is highly prized. Our Savior came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom payment (Mark 10:45). And He calls us to follow in His steps.

Let’s not glamorize this. Being a servant involves *work*. What kind of work? John Calvin explains, “We are not to spare ourselves from labour if we want to do our duty to our neighbors. We are not to help them financially only, but with advice, and by our efforts in all kinds of ways. We must show great zeal, and put up with many annoyances, and sometimes undergo many hazards. Whoever wants to engage in the tasks of loving must be prepared for a laborious way of life.”⁷

Does that describe your Christian experience? A laborious way of life? Are you laboring hard for your Savior by serving His people? Is serving a way of life for you? Not, did it use to be, but is it now? I encourage you to begin this new week with the thought and prayer, “Lord, show me ways I can show my love for You by serving your people this week, all for Your honor.”

These are the qualifiers, brothers and sisters. When work is done for God’s honor and as an expression of servanthood, God sees it and will reward it.

Let that sink in. This text indicates that two Christ-followers could do the same activity, but receive different divine assessments. Motive matters. When a woman watches a baby in the church nursery and does so out of a sense of great appreciation to God for the privilege of serving Him in this way, when she cares for that child for the honor of God, God sees it and He will reward it. And men, that’s true for you, too, when you repair the roof of one of our widows. And that’s true for you, Sunday School teacher, when you prepare and teach your lesson. Every thing we do is either done *for the Lord* and as an expression of joyful *servanthood*, or it’s done for some other deficient, self-preoccupied goal. The former receives a reward. The latter doesn’t.

But let’s not turn this into a guilt trip. This is a word of encouragement from the writer. He says this is precisely what was happening in the lives of his readers. “As you still do,” says verse 10. They *were* working and showing love for the Name of their Savior by serving His saints. Not perfectly, for sure. But it was happening. And God saw it and one day would reward it.

⁷ John Calvin, p. 79-80.

That's the first kind of motivational word in Hebrews 6. When people are struggling, they can always benefit from *words of encouragement*. Put courage into their souls by pointing out evidences of grace. But since the race isn't over yet, they need something else, a second type of motivational speech that the writer models for us.

II. The writer gives us words of exhortation (11-12).

In verses 11-12, the writer spells out two, straightforward charges or exhortations.

A. He calls for perseverance (11). Notice verse 11, "And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end." The NIV says, "We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." The *same diligence*. That is, you've been serving God's people and continue to serve them, that's good. But don't stop now. Keep serving for the glory of God and the good of His people to the very end.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Wait a minute. Serving is hard, and costly too. At times people take you for granted, and you get weary. Remind me again why I should continue to serve." Okay, here are three reasons.

1. *It's what Jesus did.* That's what this whole book is about. Jesus! And what He did for us! The Son of God left the splendor of heaven to enter the world as a servant. He did the work His Father asked Him to do and died a criminal's death on a cruel Roman cross. And He went to that cross as a substitute for sinners like you and me, paying for our sins. Think of that the next time you hear yourself saying, "I'm tired of serving. Let somebody else do it." Why serve? It's what Jesus did.

2. *It's what each of us must do.* Notice the words "each one of you" in verse 11. "And we desire *each one of you* to show the same earnestness...until the end." Who does the writer have in mind? Some of his readers? No. He wants *each one of them* to keep showing the work and love he has seen them demonstrate in the past. And why is he giving this exhortation? Because it's needed. Inertia is a force we all battle. We're prone to stop working, stop loving, stop serving.

In 2023 Lifeway Research posted an interesting article entitled, "*Most Churchgoers Say They Want to Serve, Fewer Actually Do.*"⁸ The article states, "Two in three (66%) churchgoers say they have not volunteered for a charity (ministry, church or non-ministry) in the previous year. Three in ten (30%) say they have, and 4% are not sure."

When I became a pastor, I first heard of the twenty/eighty factor. In the typical church 20% of church members do 80% of the church's work. That's what I was told to expect. I'm thankful the twenty in the 20/80 factor isn't true at WBC. It's much higher. Yet it's still not 100. And according to the writer of Hebrews, that's the goal, to see 100% of us showing the same earnestness to the end. Granted, how we serve as we get older changes, but the call to serve remains to the end. Here's one of the reasons why.

3. *It's what makes our hope sure.* Notice the phrase at the end of verse 11, "And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness *to have the full assurance of hope until the end.*" The NIV says, "In order to make your hope sure." Notice the connection between working/loving/serving and assurance. The former is essential if one is to experience the latter.

If you say this morning, "I don't feel right with God." The first thing I would encourage you to do is to make sure you're truly saved, that you possess Christ and not just profess Him. But the next thing to do, according to Hebrews 6, is to make sure your life is exhibiting "*the things that belong to salvation*" (verse 9). Are you in the Word?

⁸ <https://research.lifeway.com/2023/05/23/most-churchgoers-say-they-want-to-serve-fewer-actually-do/>

Are you praying? Are you serving in His church? Our obedience has nothing to do with obtaining our salvation, but it has much to do with experiencing the hope of it.

The writer addresses his readers here, as Chrysostom observed, “not with the authority of a teacher but with the affection of a father.”⁹ Philip Hughes elaborates, “It is natural for parents to desire earnestly that their children should advance in strength of mind and body; so also the Christian pastor longs that those committed to his charge should go on to maturity... Arrested growth, whether physical or spiritual, is a tragedy.”¹⁰

This brings us to a second word of exhortation. First, he calls for perseverance.

B. He calls for participation (12). Verse 12 begins with a purpose clause, “so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” The NIV reads, “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” Here we discover three very practical lessons pertaining to finishing well.

1. *We must not become passive.* “Lazy” is the word in the NIV. “Sluggish” in the ESV. Back in 5:11, the author says he had much more to say to his readers but they couldn’t handle it because they were “slow to learn,” or literally “lazy hearers.” That’s the same word here.

Philip Hughes remarks, “The invitation to faith is not an invitation to inactivity, but to the perseverance of pilgrimage, for Christ is not only the source but also the goal of our salvation, the end as well as the beginning.”¹¹

That phrase says it well. *The perseverance of pilgrimage.* That’s what we’re called to, a pilgrimage that requires perseverance. One cannot be lazy and persevere. Passivity must go. Those who call themselves “Christian” must take steps if they’re to move ahead.

What kind of steps? In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul identifies the steps he took in his own perseverance of pilgrimage. He says in verse 19, “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them...” Are you free Paul? In Christ, yes I am! But not free to live a life of comfort. I’m free to serve.

Paul elaborates on his service in verses 22-23, “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

You say, “I want to be used of God, as Paul was.” That’s good. So do I. What does it take? In a word, *participation*, which Paul describes this way in verses 24-27, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

Lesson one shows what must go. Passivity. Lesson two shows what just stay.

2. *We must imitate godly role models.* In the Greek word translated “imitate,” *mimetai* we find the for our English word “mimic.” We’re not the first to have walked this pilgrimage path. Other followers of Christ have traveled the road before us. We’ll meet Abraham in the very next verse, and many others in Hebrews 11. And even now, we’re sitting in church with still others. Living role models.

This is one of a host of reasons we need the church. Some say the church is clunky, and maybe it is at times. But that’s because the church is comprised of all sorts of

⁹ Quote taken from Philip Hughes, p. 228.

¹⁰ Philip Hughes, p. 228.

¹¹ Philip Hughes, p. 228.

people, including examples and those who need examples, including old and young alike, mature and spiritual infants too. This is all by the Lord's design. In the church, the Lord surrounds us with living role models, real people we can look at and imitate, and real people who can look at us too.

The world says, "Be novel. Be yourself." But God's Word says, "No. That way leads to destruction. This is God's way. Be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

This is Christianity 101. Jesus said, "Follow Me." In Ephesians 5:1 Paul exhorts us to imitate God. But elsewhere in his letters Paul repeatedly called on people to imitate *him* because he knew his life would point people towards God (see 1 Thes 1:6; 1 Cor. 4:16 & 11:1).

Parents, you understand this. You use the principle of imitation to teach your kids lots of things. "Okay honey, watch daddy. Do what I do." And so, you teach your little ones how to use a fork and make a bed and throw a ball and brush their teeth and comb their hair. That's good.

And you're teaching them other things, too, whether you're aware of it or not. Like what to do with their Bible, and how to treat the Lord's Day, and what they should do with the money they make, and how to respond when adversity hits (or when they experience success). They're watching you and learning from you because they, like all of us, need role models to imitate. Which brings us to a third lesson.

3. *We must live, not for what we can see, but for what has been promised.* A farmer knows that. That's why he puts perfectly good seed in the ground instead of eating it. He's looking ahead to a harvest. And that's what it takes to persevere as a Christian, too. To live not for what we can *see* but for what has been *promised*.

What does it take to inherit the promises? Two things, says the writer. Faith and patience. Believe what He says, and keep following Him until He does what He says He is going to do. And this will help you. Do it together, as a family. Be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.¹²

Words of encouragement. Words of exhortation. We need them and have them.

The Bottom Line: In light of Hebrews 6, two responses are in order.

1. *Be encouraged today, for God sees what we are doing for Him.*

2. *Be a source of encouragement today, for God will not forget our work and love.*

He is not unjust, and He will not forget our work and the love we have shown Him as we have helped and are helping those entrusted to our care. He is the God who sees our work and love.

Closing Song: #354 "*Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*" (all three verses)

This evening: This evening we will explore a wonderful and needed subject! "*Heaven: A Needed Reminder of What Is Coming*" Revelation 21:1-8—part one. The Lord willing, we'll take a look at the rest of Revelation 21 on July 12 PM.

¹² The writer will have much more to say about this when we come to chapters 10-11. See Hebrews 10:32-39; Hebrews 11:24-27