

# YOU

**Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus**

**To be used with: Connecting to Christ's Body**

**Sermon Title Possibilities: Our Actions Together**

**Scripture: Hebrews 10:19-25**

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study *"Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus,"* this sermon explores specific actions a Christ follower is to personally engage in as it relates to gathering with other believers on a regular basis.

**Introduction:** The author of the book of Hebrews begins this passage by addressing his "brothers and sisters" (v. 19). We learn from this that he is talking to church members. Each of the actions we will explore today point back to the "brothers and sisters" in verse 19. This tells us that the actions are for the church body as a whole and not a select group. The author lays out specific actions that his brothers and sisters are to regularly engage in for their own personal betterment as well as the betterment of the overall body of Christ. This sermon will look at four specific actions outlined in this passage.

**1. We are to draw near to Christ (v. 22)**

The first action is to draw near to Christ. The meaning of this phrase is to approach with the desire for continued relationship. This is not something to place on a bucket list and check once you believe it has been accomplished.

We are also called to draw near "with a true heart." The NIV and NASB use the word "sincere." We learn from this phrase that Christ is most interested in our hearts. He is aware of our struggles and our joys. He invites each of us to approach Him with a true heart, no matter where we might be in this spectrum.

**2. We are to hold on to hope (v. 23)**

Our next action as brothers and sisters is to hold on to our hope. To hold on to shows a personal action lived out in the context of a greater community. Each of the four actions addressed in this passage are to be lived out in community as brothers and sisters.

The author clarifies this action by saying that we are to hold on to the confession of our hope. Yes, this is to be lived out in the context of community. But, the confession of our hope is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We are able to draw near to Him because of this relationship. We are able to hold on to hope because of this relationship. If we do not have a relationship with Him, it is not possible to live out these actions as intended.

**3. We are to watch out for one another (v. 24)**

The NKJV and NIV says that we are to “consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.” The phrasing here shows a deliberate act on behalf of one person directed towards another. Therefore, the fulfillment of this action cannot be done in isolation. If someone is disconnected from a local church body, it becomes impossible for this action to be completed as it should be.

Our watching out for one another is to be an encouragement in that we are striving after good works together. Jesus told His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, “let your light share before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). As we encourage one another in good works, God gets the glory. As a follower of Christ, we exist to bring God glory.

#### **4. We are to gather together (v. 25)**

The last action we see gives us something to avoid and something to embrace. The action to avoid is the neglect of gathering together. The passage shows that this neglect was already taking place within this particular church. This is a message that today’s church would be wise to embrace as regular attendance is becoming more and more irregular.

The positive action found as a result of consistent engagement with a local body of believers is that we get to encourage one another. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-a once said that it is easy to know if someone needs encouragement. If they are breathing, then they need encouragement. We are all in need of encouragement and being a part of a local body of believers is a great place to give and receive encouragement.

**Conclusion:** Each of the actions that we covered in today’s sermon is written to a group and not individuals. Individuals are responsible for carrying these out, but each individual is to carry them out in the context of a group. The group is the church. If you do not have a church home, then maybe today is the day you join this church as we strive to live out these actions addressed in this passage. Being a church member, however, begins with a relationship with Jesus. We must first be a part of God’s overall church and then determine which local congregation He wants us to join.

*Tod Tanner has degrees from Texas A&M, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. Tod and his family reside in Tennessee and he is serving at a church plant in Franklin, TN.*