



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR NOVEMBER 2, 2012

### HOLDING ON

*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. (Hebrews 10:35, NIV)*

IT'S EASY TO GIVE UP. I did it just the other day. We teed off in a howling wind creating effective temperatures somewhere in the 30s. I hit my first approach shot right into the glare of the rising sun, but also right at the heart of the green. We never found it.

On a day like that it was actually not bad to be relieved of all sense of "scoring duty," with such a quirky beginning to a round that was always going to be more about survival than success. But I've had plenty of other rounds under mild conditions and meaningful circumstances where my start has been just as daunting, and it's all I can do to remind myself that there is value in holding on.

The writer to the Hebrews faced a difficult task. His readers had gone through tough, tough times: insult, persecution, imprisonment, confiscation of property. All because they had said *yes* to Jesus. It doesn't make for a very good evangelistic promise to tell people they will struggle greatly because of their faith! But it had happened to these many Jewish believers. The author needed to do all he could to encourage them.

To begin, he spent many paragraphs confirming the excellence of their decision. The old sacrifices were insufficient, he wrote. They were incomplete and temporary. When Jesus came, he provided by his death a "once for all" solution to sin. Choosing Jesus put them in the one place where their sins were covered.

But he was wise to recognize that, challenged by persecution, they would be exposed to doubt. *Maybe it would be better to go back on all this*, some had to be thinking. So he told them to cling to three things:

- The truth of Jesus' great sacrifice
- The confidence they had in Christ, rather than in their own efforts
- The fellowship of one another, for they could encourage each other to go on

Faith in Christ will not always be easy. But in him, it can always be firm. And firmly held, it will be rewarded.

### Opening question: The challenge

What is the greatest obstacle to your faith—either in getting started with Jesus or going on with him?

### The greater Priest

*Read Hebrews 10:1-14.* In what ways did Jesus' sacrifice supplant that of animals?

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### Our confidence in Christ

*Read Hebrews 10:22-23 and 32-39.* Where is our confidence rightly placed? What is the greatest reward of that confidence? How does this encourage us all the more to follow the course of action prescribed in verse 22?

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### Our encouraging fellowship

*Read Hebrews 10:24-25.* What are we supposed to be doing to encourage confidence in one another?

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