

JUST FOR STUDENTS



FALL 2023

Please do not send this newsletter back to Crossroads.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.”
– James 1:2 (NIV)

Why did James open his epistle, or letter, with these words? James knew that no one wants to go through hard times. He wasn't suggesting that we try to find ways to suffer. Instead, he was stating that we will face difficult times as Christians and encouraging us to find meaning in them. When a Christian faces suffering, it is not meaningless “because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance” (James 1:3). Suffering actually helps us grow stronger in our faith. James wanted his readers to think beyond a day, a week, and even a year. Suffering often makes us focus only on what's happening right now. It tempts us to ignore the future and think only about ourselves.

We are called to trust God's plan for our future. It's important to make plans ourselves, but we need to remember that God's plans are more important than ours (James 4:13–17). As we enter a new season, it's important not to dwell too much on the challenges we're facing now or put all our hope in our own plans for the future.

Our hope belongs to Jesus, not to our past, present, or future circumstances. He Himself is our reward. Let's choose to focus on Him this fall.

Spread the Word!

“And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.” – Philemon 1:6, English Standard Version

We encourage you to invite others to join you in studying the Bible through Crossroads. If allowed by your facility, we have included some Spread the Word enrollment cards with this edition of *Just for Students*. As a Crossroads student, you know how encouraging and meaningful it is to receive letters from your mentors. You can probably think of some people in your facility who would appreciate encouragement and prayer from fellow Christians on the outside. Ask God to show you someone to share Crossroads with so they, too, can grow in their faith while studying alongside caring mentors. Please do not fill out the card for someone else—they will need to fill it out on their own and then send it to us.

Need Encouragement?

Our partner Victorious Living delivers hope through its bilingual *Victorious Living* magazine, VL Broadcasts (on prison tablets), and VL correspondence program. Ask your chaplain to call (352) 478-2098 to request bulk copies of VLMag. You can also write to them at PO Box 2751, Greenville, NC 27836, or hope@vlmag.org.

A Message from Crossroads' President, Joe Pryor

The season of fall brings many wonderful changes. In the northern part of the country, the air feels cool, and the leaves transform into beautiful colors. In the south, fall brings relief from the hot summer. Only God can create such amazing variety. But Jesus never changes. Hebrews 13:8 tells us, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Sometimes, things in life can feel out of control and cause feelings of hopelessness. But Hebrews 12:1–2 says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with

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perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” No matter what changes or challenges you face, I encourage you to trust in Jesus, who is unchanging.

Fun Facts about Early Christians

- Before paper was used in Europe, people handwrote the Bible on a type of animal skin called vellum.
- The first Christians were known for their hospitality and love for the sick and poor. Even Roman rulers noticed how Christians would visit the sick without any concern for their own safety.
- Some people thought the early Christians were atheists because they didn’t worship the local gods or say that the ruler, Caesar, was their lord.

Upcoming Race Event

We have an exciting opportunity for you to join us for the first-ever Crossroads Run on Saturday, September 30th, 2023. While our event will take place in Holland, Michigan, we invite you to run, walk, or pray with us, joining supporters across the country as we put hope in motion! If you don’t have a track or place to exercise, you can still participate by committing to 30–60 minutes of activity or prayer. Your participation matters, and we’re cheering for you! Although we can’t send you a race t-shirt or a medal, we would love to hear from you. Send us a letter telling us how you plan to take part in the race, and you might be featured at the live event! Please send your entries to the Crossroads address, ATTN: Robert Woldhuis.

Scripture Reading and Prayer Guide: The Early Church

This guide is designed to help you in your daily journey with God. Crossroads’ staff and mentors are also invited to use this guide to pray alongside you.

During September and October, we will read Hebrews through 3 John. These books are sometimes known as the general epistles. They are letters that were written to new Christians in the decades after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. As you read these letters, you will be encouraged to keep going and not give up, even when things are tough. The writers remind us about God’s love displayed through Jesus’ life and sacrifice. It is God’s love that saves us, not our own efforts.

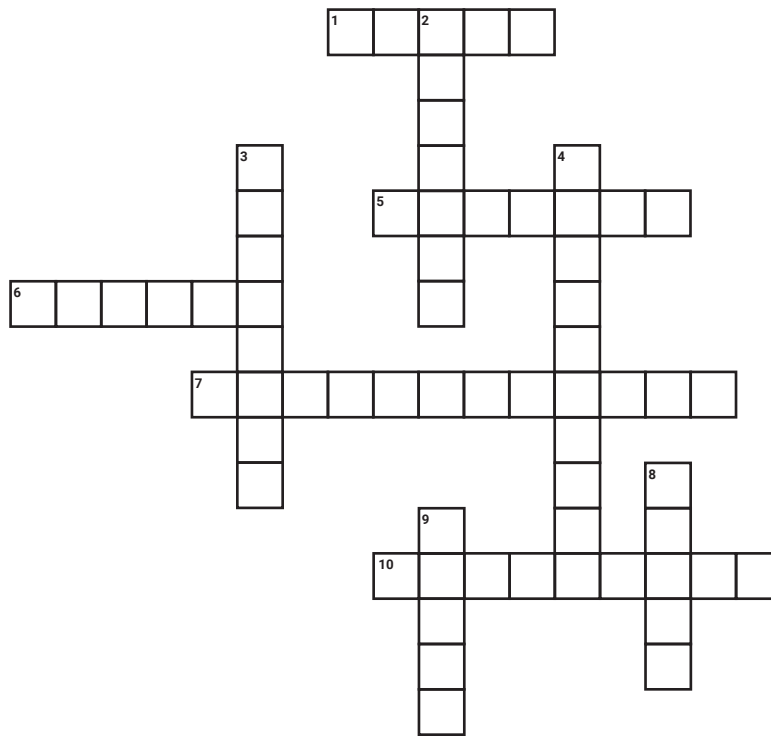
Date	Passage	Reading Topic	Prayer Focus
Sept. 1	Hebrews 1	God has spoken to us through His Son	That the whole world may know about Jesus
Sept. 2	Hebrews 2:1–4	A warning to pay attention	For a heart that wants to obey God
Sept. 3	Hebrews 2:5–18	Jesus made fully human	To grow closer to Jesus
Sept. 4	Hebrews 3:1–6	Jesus is greater than Moses	For leaders to whom God has given authority
Sept. 5	Hebrews 3:7–19	A warning against unbelief	For strong faith in God’s promises
Sept. 6	Hebrews 4:1–13	A Sabbath for God’s people	For greater trust in God’s plan for your life
Sept. 7	Hebrews 4:14–5:10	Jesus, our great high priest	For confidence to approach God’s throne of grace
Sept. 8	Hebrews 5:11–6:12	A warning against falling away	For spiritual maturity
Sept. 9	Hebrews 6:13–20	God keeps His promises	That your hope in God will anchor your soul
Sept. 10	Hebrews 7:1–10	Melchizedek the priest	For pastors and church leaders
Sept. 11	Hebrews 7:11–28	Jesus and Melchizedek	Praise God for Jesus’ permanent priesthood
Sept. 12	Hebrews 8	The new covenant	Thank God for forgiving your sins
Sept. 13	Hebrews 9:1–10	The earthly tabernacle	For someone who needs healing
Sept. 14	Hebrews 9:11–28	The blood of Jesus	For someone who does not know Jesus
Sept. 15	Hebrews 10:1–7	The Old Testament: a shadow of Jesus	To understand God’s love for you
Sept. 16	Hebrews 10:8–18	Christ’s sacrifice once for all	Thank God for Jesus’ sacrifice
Sept. 17	Hebrews 10:19–25	Don’t give up hope!	For steadfast faith during hard times
Sept. 18	Hebrews 10:26–39	Don’t turn away from God	For strength to follow God wholeheartedly

Sept. 19	Hebrews 11:1–12	Old Testament heroes of faith	For a heart of obedient faith
Sept. 20	Hebrews 11:13–22	OT heroes: Abraham to Joseph	To be encouraged by the faith of those in Scripture
Sept. 21	Hebrews 11:23–40	OT heroes: Moses to the prophets	For perseverance during trials
Sept. 22	Hebrews 12:1–13	Running the race	For eyes that are fixed on Jesus
Sept. 23	Hebrews 12:14–17	Warning and encouragement	For peace and holiness in the Church
Sept. 24	Hebrews 12:18–29	The two mountains	For joy, not fear, in God's presence
Sept. 25	Hebrews 13:1–19	Final encouragement	That the Church will remember those in prison
Sept. 26	Hebrews 13:20–25	Benediction and final greetings	That God will equip you to do His will
Sept. 27	James 1:1–18	Trials and temptations	To find joy in difficult circumstances
Sept. 28	James 1:19–27	Listening and doing	For strength to do what God's Word says
Sept. 29	James 2:1–13	Avoid favoritism	To love your neighbor as you love yourself
Sept. 30	James 2:14–26	Faith and works	That your faith may be accompanied by action
Oct. 1	James 3:1–12	Taming the tongue	That your tongue will speak words of blessing
Oct. 2	James 3:13–18	Two kinds of wisdom	To be filled with wisdom from heaven
Oct. 3	James 4	Submit to God	To be humble, not proud
Oct. 4	James 5:1–12	Jesus is coming soon!	To be ready for Jesus' return
Oct. 5	James 5:13–20	The prayer of faith	For those who are sick or in trouble
Oct. 6	1 Peter 1:1–12	A living hope	Praise God for giving you new life and hope
Oct. 7	1 Peter 1:13–25	Be holy	To become more holy
Oct. 8	1 Peter 2:1–10	The living Stone	That more people will build their lives on Christ
Oct. 9	1 Peter 2:11–25	Living godly lives	To shine Christ's light through the way you live
Oct. 10	1 Peter 3:1–7	Wives and husbands	For a familial relationship that needs healing
Oct. 11	1 Peter 3:8–22	Suffering for doing good	For the persecuted Church throughout the world
Oct. 12	1 Peter 4	Living for God	For strength to leave your former life behind
Oct. 13	1 Peter 5	Final exhortations	For strength to resist Satan's temptations
Oct. 14	2 Peter 1:1–11	How to be productive in the Lord	To live a godly life and follow God's calling
Oct. 15	2 Peter 1:12–21	Prophecy of Scripture	For wisdom to understand God's Word
Oct. 16	2 Peter 2:1–12	False teachers and their destruction	That the lost will find their way to God
Oct. 17	2 Peter 2:13–22	More about false teachers	For wisdom to discern between truth and falsehood
Oct. 18	2 Peter 3	The day of the Lord	To grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord
Oct. 19	1 John 1:1–2:2	The Word of life	For fellowship with the Lord and those around you
Oct. 20	1 John 2:3–14	Love and hate	To love what God loves and hate what He hates
Oct. 21	1 John 2:15–27	Do not love the world	To be in the world but not of it
Oct. 22	1 John 2:28–3:10	God's children and sin	For those who are in bondage to sin
Oct. 23	1 John 3:11–24	Why we should love one another	To love others the way God loves us
Oct. 24	1 John 4:1–6	Jesus has come in the flesh	That the world will not distract you from your calling
Oct. 25	1 John 4:7–21	God's love and ours	To live a life of love
Oct. 26	1 John 5:1–12	Faith in the Son of God	For strength to keep God's commands
Oct. 27	1 John 5:13–21	Concluding affirmations	For a brother or sister who has sinned
Oct. 28	2 John	John's joy and warning	For revival in Jesus' Church
Oct. 29	3 John	John's encouragement	To be generous and hospitable
Oct. 30	Jude 1–16	The future of the ungodly	For those who don't know Jesus
Oct. 31	Jude 17–25	A call to persevere	To know God's power in your life

Crossword Puzzle: The Early Church

Use the clues below to fill in the words.

- Words can go across or down.
- Letters are shared where two words cross each other.
- Scripture quotations are taken from the NIV Bible.



ACROSS

1. He preached the first sermon after the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. (Acts 2:14)
5. His accusers thought his face looked like an angel's face. (Acts 6:15)
6. God sent him to preach to someone in a chariot. (Acts 8:29)
7. The apostles were "proclaiming in Jesus the _____ of the dead." (Acts 4:2)
10. "Do not leave _____, but wait for the gift my Father promised." (Acts 1:4)

DOWN

2. Paul's close friend, whom he first met at Lystra. (Acts 16:1)
3. Peter said, "All the _____ who have spoken have foretold these days." (Acts 3:24)
4. The followers of Jesus were first called this in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)
8. Paul and _____ sang hymns together in prison. (Acts 16:25)
9. He died because he did not give praise to God. (Acts 12:23)

From the Operations Department

- Please don't send *Just for Students* or the crossword puzzles back to Crossroads. They are yours to keep!
- If you move to a new facility or go home and want to continue your lessons, please let us know. To continue studying from home, please wait until you are living there to send us a note with the address.
- We will send the next *Just for Students* newsletter to you in December.

