

Dear Northside Family,

The last two years have presented us with many struggles and challenges for the Body of Believers.

These struggles are not unique for the church. Christ himself warned that trials would come causing discouragement, pain, and separation from our commitment to Christ and His body.

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage those Christians that were struggling to stay committed to Christ and His church. The first danger is seen in Hebrews 2:1 where they were warned of *"drifting away"*. *"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away."*

The second danger is seen in Hebrews 3:12 where disbelief creeps in. *"Beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."*

The third danger was a disengaging that had come because some had *"quit hearing"* and maturing as a Christian, which led to a serious eternal condition. Hebrews 5:11-6:6 *"¹¹We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹²In fact, 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! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. ⁶Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ²instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And God permitting, we will do so. ⁴It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age ⁶and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."*

The Hebrew writer suggests how the Christians are to react when these conditions are seen. He encourages us to hold fast, consider one another, stir up each other and not forsake coming together. Heb. 10:24-25 *"²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

As shepherds given the duty to watch and warn when dangers creep in that can affect the eternal salvation of the Christian, for 2022, we are asking for each of us to re-evaluate our commitment to Christ and to His Body. We are asking for all to reach out to any that might be struggling and encourage them.

The book of Hebrews ends by asking for prayers of restoration and prayers of encouragement. Heb. 13:18-21 *"Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

In Christ,

Northside church of Christ Elders