

APPLICATION

- Have you accepted Jesus' invitation to draw near to God? If not, what do you think is keeping you from going closer to God?
- Because of Jesus, we can approach God. How will this change the way you pray and communicate with Him?
- Is there any temptation, struggle, or challenge you are facing right now? Ask Jesus to intercede for you and strengthen you to persevere with the help of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

- Thank God for sending and appointing Jesus as our high priest. Pray that you'll continue to tap into the Father's grace as you face trials of many kinds, as Jesus did.
- Ask God to help you not take for granted the relationship we now have with Him because of Jesus Christ. Pray for your relationship with and reliance on God to grow deeper.
- Pray for those around you who need to know that God loves us and has made a way for us to be right with Him. Ask for boldness to preach the gospel to them.

JESUS >

Better High Priest

WEEK 5

WARM-UP

- Tell us about one item that you only use for special occasions or a specific purpose. Why is it set apart for you?
- Have you ever felt afraid or shy to enter a venue or room? Why did you feel that way?
- Who is the most intimidating or high-profile person you've met? Did your view of this person change after you talked to him/her?

WORD *¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. HEBREWS 4:14-16*

(Read also **HEBREWS 4:17-5:10.**)

In the Old Testament, high priests acted as Israel's mediators and intercessors to God. Once a year, only they could go into the Most Holy Place to make atoning sacrifices on behalf of God's people. A thick veil or curtain set it apart from the rest of the temple, and the high priest was allowed to enter it only once a year. Because it is where God's presence dwelt, the high priest had to make sacrifices for his own sin before entering the Most Holy Place so that he wouldn't perish. There was so much ceremony involved in a high priest's life so he could fulfill his role. But when Jesus came, He became the great high priest, far better than any other high priest. What sets Jesus apart as a high priest and how is He better?



1 Jesus, our high priest, can sympathize with our weaknesses.

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

*¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. **HEBREWS 4:14-15***

Unlike other high priests, Jesus didn't have to make a sacrifice for His own sins because He's the only one without sin. And yet, Jesus, though being God, became man and experienced our frailties and went through trials, suffering, and temptations. Even in His holiness, He can sympathize with our humanity and weaknesses. Knowing this, we can hold fast the confession of our faith and persevere through challenges. How have you personally experienced Jesus' compassion in the midst of your weakness?

2 Jesus, our high priest, made a way for us to draw near to God.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

HEBREWS 4:16

Drawing near to God is an invitation to those who believe in the finished work of Jesus. It's an invitation to a relationship—to get closer, to know, and to be known. We can now draw near to God with confidence. When Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross on our behalf, He cleansed us who believe in Him, making us fit to dwell in His presence. This paved the way for us to enter the Most Holy Place and freely

have a relationship with God. This access is no longer limited to high priests; it's an access that we can enjoy anytime, anywhere. How did you begin to understand this truth, and how has it affected your life?

3 Jesus, our high priest, has a special relationship with His Father.

*⁴And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." **HEBREWS 5:4-5***

Aside from making sacrifices for the people's sins, the high priest also intercedes on their behalf. Jesus, the *appointed* high priest of the Father, continues to intercede for us today. Being closer to the Father than any other high priest because He is also God's Son, Jesus is our perfect intercessor and mediator to the Father. What does Luke 3:22 reveal about the Father's relationship with the Son?

The relationship that Jesus has with the Father is not out of our reach. The kind of relationship He has with the Father gives us confidence that, as Jesus intercedes for us, our prayers are heard. But more importantly, the answers to our prayers will be in line with God's will and purposes. Knowing that Jesus is the better high priest, let us respond with gratitude for what He has done and with confidence draw near to God.