

**Gathering Question:** Share with your group two things that irritate you more than anything else. Why do these things irritate you?

## Spur One Another

You don't have to be a Texan to know what spurs are. They are those little circular rings with sharp points that a cowboy straps to the back of his heels so that he can irritate his horse. That's right! Cowboys regularly irritate their horses on purpose to get them to do things that they might not want to do at the moment. It might be that the cowboy is trying to catch up with some calves that have been separated from the rest of the herd. He will spur his horse to catch up with strays so that they can be brought back into the fold. Or the cowboy might need to ford a river or climb a steep hill. Many times he will have to spur his horse to get him to move. The irritation that the spurs provide are often just enough stimulus to get the animal going in the direction that you need him to go.

Is it surprising that the writer of Hebrews uses spurring to describe one of the ways that Christians are to respond to each other. Just at the end of a series of exhortations that include exhortations to have confidence in the new and living way that Jesus has opened to the Father, to approach God with full assurance of faith, to hold fast to the hope without wavering because God is faithful, and encouraging one another as you see the day of the Lord approaching, is this exhortation to irritate other Christians! That's right we are called to irritate – to spur on.

You see some irritation is good. If the irritation is meant to keep us on the path of righteousness then that kind of irritation is very helpful. Sometimes it is called accountability. Or maybe the irritation is meant to help us find and use our gifts in the Kingdom. Here specifically the writer encourages us to irritate our brothers and sisters on towards love and good works!

It might seem a little strange but this is the way this author reminds us that we are not in this alone! No man or woman is an island. We all are accountable for each other. When we see a brother or sister begin to lose heart or become discouraged we should not stand idly by. We should carefully position the heel so that just enough spur irritates the side of that member of our spiritual family to cause them to realize that it is time to move! We have a responsibility to irritate each other!

**Read:** Hebrews 10:19-25

### **Discuss:**

1. Think of some times a brother or sister in Christ irritated you and it did you good.
2. What kinds of irritations seem to motivate you to get back on track? What kinds seem to be counter productive for you?

