

Hebrews 13

Day 1

Relationships. Read Hebrews 13:1-3

1. As the writer of Hebrews moves from theological truths to application, what is his first focus? 13:1 Why do you think he started there? (How had these people started? 6:10)

FYI: "The Greek word for 'love' here is not the usual *agape*, which is often used to describe divine love. It is *philadelphia*, which means 'brotherly love'...There is a family warmth and heartfelt affection about the word *philos*. The verb form is best understood as 'to cherish.'" - Charles Swindoll (87)

"John Calvin wisely observed (*Calvin's Commentaries* [Baker], p. 339), 'This precept is generally very needful, for nothing flows away so easily as love; when everyone thinks of himself more than he ought, he will allow to others less than he ought; and then many offences happen daily which cause separations.' 'Nothing flows away so easily as love' That's why there are 55 New Testament commands to do it." - Steven Cole

2. What did Jesus say about this?

- John 13:35
- John 17:21

3. What did John write? 1 John 3:14

4. What appeals did Paul make?

- 1 Corinthians 1:10; 12:25
- Philippians 4:2

5. Why is brotherly love so essential? Galatians 5:15

6. To whom are we to also show love? 13:2 (*The word for brotherly love in vs. 1 is in used in the word for hospitality/entertain*) (See Romans 12:13)

- How can hospitality be uniquely powerful in building relationships with each other and witnessing for Christ?
- Who entertained angels in Genesis 18:2,22;19:1?

7. How far did Jesus take this? Matthew 5:43-48

- What is added to this in 1 Peter 4:9?

FYI: "Inns were proverbially miserable places from earliest antiquity on...This coupled with the fact that many Christians had suffered ostracism by both society and family, necessitated Christian hospitality...Hospitality builds the Body of Christ and opens the door to a lost world"
- R. Kent Hughes (209)

8. What is the third group addressed in 13:3? How caring should we be to them? (Compare 10:33,34)

- What did Jesus say? Matthew 25:34-36

Applying the Word: *When have you seen divisive issues between believers be alleviated and overcome by brotherly love?*

What benefits are there for both those who are taken in and those who show hospitality beyond meeting someone's material needs?

Day 2

Personal Ethics. Read Hebrews 13:4-6

Marriage

9. What two commands were given about marriage? 13:4a

FYI: "Christian sexual morality was unique in the pagan world and a source of wonder. And it has become increasingly so today in a world that considers adultery irrelevant, purity abnormal, and sex a 'right' (however and with whomever one may get it)."
- R Kent Hughes (217)

"The Lord's purpose for His human creation was that of permanent, monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-24; Matthew 19:3-6), with children raised in the corresponding family unit. Any other type of sexual relationship is wrong."
- Defender's Study Bible

"The command to honor marriage is directed to those who dishonored it in two opposite ways – asceticism and libertinism. Some first-century Christian ascetics considered 'virginity as necessary to Christian perfection.' This later developed in the second century into Montanist movement, which later spawned celibate monasticism. To such, those who choose marriage choose inferior spirituality. Marriage was thus implicitly dishonored. But the greatest assault on marriage's honor came from the libertines who saw marriage as irrelevant as they pursued unbridled sexual fulfillment....

But for those of us who live under the authority of God's Word, marriage is an ordinance of God...(See Genesis 2:14) Therefore, in the words of our text, 'Marriage should be honored by all' – or more literally, 'Let marriage be precious to all of you.'...Marriage is divinely given and deserves our greatest honor!"
- R. Kent Hughes (216)

10. How is marriage defined? Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5,6

- What witness can a loving, godly marriage have? Ephesians 5:25-32

11. How does God feel about unrepentant and ongoing sexual immorality? 13:4b (See 1 Corinthians 6:9,10)

- What insights does 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 add to this?

12. Why is sexual purity so important and have such heavy consequences? 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

- Where did David turn for help? Psalm 32:1-7 How had his sin affected him? Ps. 32:3,4 (See also his prayer in Psalm 51.)
- What damage do you think a dishonorable view of marriage and purity does to a society? To a family? To young adults? *To what other attitudes and practices can it lead?*

FYI: "Sexual immorality can never be contained to simply physical consequences because it is not merely a physical act. It involves the whole person - body, emotions, will and spirit. And it affects the whole person. The memory becomes permanently etched with the experience, the conscience becomes scarred, and the spirit becomes polluted."
- Charles Swindoll (94)

Money

13. What two commands are linked in 13:5a? How do you see them related?

- To what can a **love** of money lead? 1 Timothy 6:9,10

14. What statements did Jesus make about material possessions? Matthew 6:19-21,24; Luke 6:12

15. Why can we be content? 13:5b (See Paul's attitude and testimony in Philippians 4:11,12; 2 Corinthians 6:10b.)

- What is said about contentment in 1 Timothy 6:6-8?

Digging Deeper

What interesting insights about material wealth do you find from Solomon's writings in Ecclesiastes 2:4-11; 5:10,15?

Mind-set

16. How should we view all of life? 13:6 (Compare Matthew 10:28)

- What do the quotes in 13:5 and 13:6 indicate about the underlying fears and reasons we cling to material possessions?
- How does this perspective and assurance affect our behaviors and help in the fight against seductive influences (sensual and material) of this world?

Applying the Word: Which directive in 13:1-5 do you feel you should give more attention to? What specific step could you take to begin to make this more a part of your life?

Day 3

Leadership. Read Hebrews 13:7-16

17. What three commands are given concerning our relationship with godly leaders? 13:7 (Cross ref. 6:12)

- How does this compare to the command Paul gave in Philippians 3:17?
- Why could Paul say this? 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1

18. What is everyone's anchor and focus and why? 13:8 (Crossref James 1:17) *How is that connected to following leaders who follow Christ?*

FYI: Jesus Christ the same "Jesus Christ is 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1:11). He created all things yesterday (Colossians 1:16), is 'upholding all things' today (Hebrews 1:3), and shall 'make all things new' tomorrow (Revelation 21:5). He is the eternal Creator, the living Lord, and our coming King." - Defender's Study Bible

19. What can happen if we get our focus off of the grace of God? 13:9a (Compare Ephesians 4:14)

20. Why doesn't food determine our standing with God? See Colossians 2:16,17 (1 Corinthians 8 focuses on the issue of food being offered to idols. 1 Cor.10:13-33 addresses a believer's freedom regarding food.)

Food for Thought: "The word *varied* is from the Greek *poikilos*, from which we get the word *polka dot*. This word pictures a variety of color that please the eye and titillate the senses...There 'varied and strange teachings' basically attack the principle of grace – which is God's gift of spiritual strength. It is made available to us through what His Son accomplished for us on the cross, not from 'foods' or some ceremonial substance or from tangible trinkets, as the last part of verse 9 shows. And emphasizing these externals is like feeding people husks of hollow religion instead of nourishing kernels of truth. The result? Here's no benefit, no health, no strength. Why? Because there is no true substance...there is no grace..."

When we find in Christ all that God needed, then we find in Christ all that we need. And when we realize that all that we need flows freely from Christ, then we start to operate by grace. Then we start looking at ourselves as recipients of unmerited favor rather than wage earners of works." "

- Charles Swindoll (114,117)

21. What do believers have that unbelievers don't? 13:10

FYI: Altar "referring to the cross because in a Christian context the sacrifice must be on the cross – the sacrificial altar of our faith. Our spiritual food is nothing less than the life of Christ!"

- R. Kent Hughes (229)

"Those who seek fulfillment by serving the tabernacle – that is, by worshiping in form only – 'have no right to eat' at that altar. To *them*, the crucified Christ means nothing. But to *us*, He is our altar."

- Charles Swindoll (115)

22. Where were the sacrificial animals that were offered for the peoples' sins taken on the day of atonement? 13:11 (See Leviticus 16:27)

- Where was Jesus crucified and what significance does that have? 13:12 (See Mark 15:20-22) *What does that say about accessibility to Christ for anyone?*
- What does that mean for us? 13:13 (See John 15:18; 1 Peter 4:14-16)

FYI: 13:13 without the camp. "Lepers, whose disease was regarded as a symbol of sin, were made to remain 'without the camp' (Leviticus 13:46)...The bodies of animals slain in sacrifice for the sins of the people likewise had to be 'burned without the camp' (Hebrews 13:11). Therefore Jesus, upon whom was laid the whole 'sin of the world' (John 1:29), had to suffer and die 'without the gate' (Hebrews 13:12). In Jesus' time on earth, there was no camp as such, for the people were then living in the city of Jerusalem, so they executed Jesus outside the city walls. We therefore, as His followers, should be willing to suffer with Him, outside the wall of the world system, bearing the opprobrium [*harsh criticism*] of organized society."

– Defender's Study Bible

23. What was the point of the argument starting in 13:9? 13:12-14 (Crossref. 11:13-16)

- What sacrifices please God? 13:15-16 (See Galatians 6:10)

Applying the Word: *Have you ever been confronted with “strange” teachings? How did you handle it?*

Day 4

Final Greetings. Read Hebrews 13:17-25

24. List the ways we should relate to godly leaders. 13:17 Why should we do this? What benefits does that bring?

- What special burdens and joys does a leader bear? 2 Corinthians 11:28,29; 3 John 4)

FYI: Watch NT:69 *agrupneo*; to be sleepless, i.e. keep awake

“The verb keep watch literally means ‘to search for sleep.’ It’s the picture of someone staying awake at night, of a person who is seeking sleep but can’t find it, of a person so burdened with concern for others that it keeps this person awake at night.”
- Charles Swindoll [Compare Luke 2:8.]

25. What instruction did Jesus give about following or recognizing ungodly religious leaders? Matthew 15:12-14; 7:15-19

- What did Paul write? Galatians 1:8

26. What prayer requests did the writer have? 13:18,19 *What does this indicate about his relationship with the Hebrew Christians? What does it indicate about his dependence on God? On the necessity and power of prayer?*

Digging Deeper

See Paul’s requests for prayer for himself and his ministry in Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:19; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:3

FYI: “The word *desiring* in this verse gives us a clue to the reason for this writer’s request. Rather weak in the translation, in its original form it carried the idea of being ‘bound and determined’ to do something – in his case, to live a godly life.”
- Charles Swindoll

27. How is the command to “live honestly/honorably” expressed in Romans 12:17 and 2 Corinthians 1:12. 8:21.

- What effect can that have on unbelievers? 1 Peter 3:16

Benediction

28. As he begins his prayer, what did the writer remind his readers about God and the Lord Jesus? 13:20 What do each of the titles he used communicate?

- What kind of power does this indicate for us? See Ephesians 1:19,20
- What did Jesus say about peace? John 14:1, 27

FYI: God of peace "A practical paraphrase of this term might be 'mental health,' for God desires there to be a calm within our hearts, not panic. He wants there to be an inner assurance that He is in control (see Ps. 46 and John 14:1-3)." - Charles Swindoll (131)

"Note the many wonderful appellations of God. Here He is called 'the God of peace' (also in Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:9; and I Thessalonians 5:23). He is, in addition, 'the God of glory' (Acts 7:2), 'the God of patience and consolation,' as well as 'the God of hope' (Romans 15:5,13); 'the God of all comfort' (II Corinthians 1:3); 'the God of love and peace' (II Corinthians 13:11); and 'the God of all grace' (I Peter 5:10)." - Defender's Study Bible

"Now reflect for a moment on the richness of our foundation from God: 1) We have his peace/shalom. 2) We have his unbreakable, immutable eternal promise. And, 3) we have His risen Shepherd's care. We have His peace, His promise, His care. This grand foundation can bear the weight of the loftiest benedictions of His people and the ascription of glory to God." - R. Kent Hughes (246)

29. Finish the phrases about what God does in us. 13:21.

- Equip/make you complete _____

- Work _____
_____ (See Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6; 2:13)

FYI: Equip/make you complete NT:2675; *katartizo*; to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust:
KJV - fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, restore.

"The relevance of this closing prayer for the church on troubled seas (heading into the rising ominous seas of Roman persecution that would explode full-fury under Nero's infamy) is obvious: God can put you back together so you can do His will, no matter what. Can you hear the prayer as its benediction lingered over the beleaguered congregation with its sweet, healing hope." - R. Kent Hughes (246)

30. To whom does this bring honor? 13:21c (See Romans 11:36)

31. What does the writer urge his readers to do? 13:22

Digging Deeper
See the following about God's ability to equip us:
Philippians 2:13;
1 Corinthians 15:10;
2 Corinthians 18-11; 3:5;
4:7, 9:8
Ephesians 2:10

FYI: Bear with NT:430 *anechomai*; to hold oneself up against, i.e. put up with:
"Literally means 'to listen to, hold up, endure.'" - Charles Swindoll (138)

"The word of exhortation refers to the whole Epistle of the Hebrews. It is an exhortation not to depart from the living God (3:12), but to go on to maturity (6:1) and endure in the faith to the end (3:6; 14) In a few words is used as a comparison to what more could have been said." - The Nelson Study Bible (2101)

32. In the following, what are encouraged to do with what we have learned?

- James 1:22-24
- Matthew 7:24ff
- 1 Timothy 4:14-16

33. How did the writer encourage the believers to connect and support each other? 13:23,24

FYI: Salute all them "In the sense of showing respect and appreciation. Those who exercise such 'rule,' if they are faithful to their calling, do not rule arbitrarily, 'as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock' (I Peter 5:3). Note that they 'have spoken unto you the word of God,' are men whose 'faith' deserves following, and are men who 'watch for your souls' (Hebrews 13:17)." - Defender's Study Bible

34. Review some of the the warnings and teachings given in the letter that the writer was urging them to follow:

- 2:1
- 3:1
- 3:12-15
- 4:1,2
- 4:14-16
- 6:1,11
- 10:22-25; 35-36
- 12:1-2, 7, 14-16; 25

35. With what final words of farewell did the author conclude? 13:25 (Compare Romans 16:24; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15)

Applying the Word: *In what specific ways do you pray for your leaders? What are some practical ways you can help and support your leader to make it a joy for them to lead?*

What "sacrifice of praise and doing good" can you offer to the Lord this week?

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16*