

## Hebrews 13

**1** A list of exhortations begins with the most important one. It comes right after loving God. This was a command straight from Jesus' lips. John 15:12,17 Notice it is the present progressive tense, now and on into the future. It is not something we can do and be done with. It will always be a challenge to our flesh. How are you doing with this first exhortation? Most of us have a person in our life that stretches us in this regard. Don't give up! Keep praying for God's supernatural love. In what ways are we tempted not to love those weaker? more mature?

**2** Is the writer referring to Abraham? Genesis 18:1 or Manoah in Judges 13:3ff. Most of us have heard a story or two about this. Hospitality is a required trait in elders. I think it is bound up with loving each other. If you love people with God's love you will entertain strangers. This rubs us wrong today because fear has taken so many captive. Inns were notoriously expensive and dirty in this time of the early church. This was a way to share your faith and show the love of God.

**3** To feel what others feel as if you were enduring the same hardship. It is easy to put out of our mind the suffering. I think of my brothers and sisters with serious afflictions and our brothers in China's jails. If you want to learn to pray from your heart, learn to have compassion - sharing feelings. During the first century, prisoners had to buy their own food. A prison sentence could mean death. The early church became notorious for helping prisoners. In the fourth century a law was passed to keep them from helping.

**4** Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:22-33 Hosea's wife illustrated what a tragedy an unfaithful wife is. We mar the picture of Christ and the church when we are unfaithful in marital relations. An unfaithful person paints a picture that says you do not need to be true to God and can worship false gods (demons) as well. The two word pictures that God judges are those who do not keep their marriage vows and the other is sexual perversion.

**5** A quote from Deuteronomy 31:6, If we have Jesus and understand all that means to us, we should be content. The LOVE of money is the root of all evil. This is one of the biggest snares today. Just a little more and I'll be set. I can't tell you how many times I have heard this from the family of God. What is the cure? Knowing Him and all He means to us, and understanding that He will never abandon us. If that doesn't bring contentment we haven't quite grasped it.

**6** From Psalm 118:6,7 If God is for us, who can be against us? Just to know Emmanuel - God with us - and that He will never forsake us, is always there to help, should eliminate our fear. What is the worse man can do? Kill me and send me home to His Presence.

**7** Godly leadership is a real gift from God. They speak God's word to us. We can follow their example because we see the end result. A saint has been defined as "a man in whom Christ lives again."

**8** The leaders pass away before our eyes. James 1:18 The timeless eternal God is always the same, always perfect in all His attributes. If He changed, what would that mean? What does it mean that He does not change?

**9** There will always be some "new" exciting secret wisdom that someone is trying to sell. Ritual does not strengthen the Christian's heart, grace alone does. The more we fathom the grace given to us the more we will be in loving awe of our Savior.

**10** The cross is the altar, and we eat the sacrificial Lamb. John 6:51-57 The priests could eat what remained of the sacrifices on the altar. It was their privilege as ministers of God. Leviticus 6:25,26 But even birth as a descendant of Aaron does not qualify one to eat of this sacrifice on the altar of the cross. Faith alone qualifies one to eat of it. Ephesians 2:8

**11-12** That which bore sin was taken outside the camp to be burned. God did not want the sin remaining in the camp or city. It is a picture of the holiness God calls us to. Jesus had to go outside the city to carry the sins of the world. 9:22 His blood washes away our sin. The blood of a new covenant based on what He did once for all.

**13** Follow Jesus down the road to death to self. The world will mock and abuse you for being different, for not conforming, but His grace will be sufficient. 1Peter 4:14

**14** Here is the pilgrim message again. We need to hear it over and over because we forget that eternity is the real world. Our senses are so absorbed with this world we are passing through. How can we keep this in front of us daily?

**15** Through who? How often? to whom? What is the fruit of lips that confess his name? Where does that leave whining?

**16** The sacrificial system is past, but we can still offer up sacrifices that please God by doing good and sharing what God has blessed us with. What has God given you that you can share?

**17** It takes faith in God to believe He has placed you under certain leaders, and that they will be responsible if they lead you into error. The exception is when

they tell you to go against clear guidance of Scripture. Most of our problems stem from minor issues blown out of proportion. That is when we must let leaders lead and trust God who has placed them in authority over us. Do you think there are more corrupt leaders now than in the past? Can you see how challenging God ordained authority would create an unnecessary burden on leadership? The word for 'submit' (Hupeteiko) is used only here in the Bible. It means 'to resist no longer'. Scripture tells us to obey those in civil authority, how much more should we 'resist no longer' spiritual authority? 3John 1:4 A spiritual leader's delight is to see those he leads mature in Christ. Conversely when those he cares for fall away it is a great burden.

**18-20** The writer believed in the power of prayer! He also lived WWJD His closing remarks remind them of the vast difference between the old and new covenant. One was temporal, the other eternal, only one has the power to raise life out of death, only the new based on what the great Shepherd did for His sheep.

**21-25** Here is evidence that the writer was of Southern origin. You all. (Joke) Just kidding! A simple closing packed with depth. Grace is said to be the most beautiful word to land upon human ears. Charis - the unmerited favor of God be with you!