

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part IV

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-THREE - HEBREWS 13:1-17

When you come to Hebrews Chapter 13
it's like you finished the letter and
you still have something else to say;
it's the P.S.,
it's the POSTSCRIPT.

The author has been writing to some people
who are contemplating throwing in the towel and
going back under Judaism.

He's tried to make a strong case
for the person of Christ and
the serious consequences
of doing what they are contemplating doing.

Now the big question for them is this:
If I hang in there,
if I stay by the stuff,
if I'm faithful to persevere—

What am I going to look like?

Why would I do this?

**What's the difference if I stay and I'm faithful
or if I give up and go on?**

**What is all of this adversity
going to accomplish in my life?**

**Now what I would like to do,
I'd like to take just a few minutes and
I'd like to share **THREE VERSES** of scripture with you.**

**These three verses will kind of set the stage
for what we are going to see in the verses
that come under consideration.**

The first two, Jeremiah 17:7, 8

**But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree
planted by the water that sends out its roots by the
stream. It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a
year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.**

**That kind of summarizes Hebrews Chapter 13.
No matter how bad it gets, the person who really
has genuine faith will keep on bearing fruit.
His life will continue to be a benediction and a witness
until the day he dies.**

And Psalm 1:3 agrees with that.

**He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.**

Colossians 2:7

**Let your roots grow down into him and draw up
nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith,
strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught.
Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all
he has done.**

Let your roots go down deep.

**Where you are rooted is going to determine
the quality of the fruit that is going to be born.**

**And then I would go to the upper room
for just a moment in John 15:8.**

Jesus says:

**Herein is my Father glorified,
that you bear much fruit.**

So today in Hebrews Chapter 13 we will look at the first 17 verses and then we get to look at verses 18-25 to wrap up the book next week.

The writer is going to give us ELEVEN COMMANDS in this study.

So we are going to focus just primarily on the commands themselves. and the commands become part of your lesson sheets.

Many of the commands are going to have the little word FOR in it.

When you have the word FOR it's giving you the reason for the command so even after the command is given, there will be a reason for it, that we'll also discover.

v. 1 Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.

Notice that he doesn't say, "start loving the brethren;" he says, "keep on letting it CONTINUE."

Now that's a hard thing isn't it? Because when you think about the subject of love you may say, "Oh, I'm not very loving so I'm going to go out today and I'm going to start loving everybody. And it becomes a performance.

To let love continue you have to realize that you have a relationship with someone who is famous for producing it through you.

And the kind of love he's talking about is the fruitage of the Spirit of God in your life.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love . . .

And there's a certain quality of love that the Spirit of God produces in the life of the believer that can get you through an awful lot of difficult interpersonal relationships.

And so the first command is:

“Keep on letting love of the brethren [what?] continue.”

When he is talking about continuing, obviously, there is something that is stopping it.

And maybe it has gotten down to a trickle and it's not doing what it should be doing.

So he is saying, “Let it continue.” “Let it keep flowing.”

Now why do they need that command?

**Because the congregation is split.
Half of them are over here and
believe that they need to go back under Judaism and
the other half want to stay there and
hang in there and persevere.**

**When you have that kind of tension
in the congregation, guess what?**

**What's the first thing that goes?
It's love, every time.**

**Jesus, when he writes those little postcards
to the seven churches in Revelation 2:4,
and he's writing to Ephesus he says,**

"I have this thing against you, you left your first love.

So it is an important issue as far as Christ is concerned.

Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.

Here's a great little piece on hugging.

**Hugging is healthy.
It helps the body's immune system,
it keeps you healthier, it cures depression,
it reduces stress, it induces sleep, it's invigorating,
it's rejuvenating, it has no unpleasant side effects, and
hugging is nothing less than a miracle drug.**

Hugging is all natural. It is organic, naturally sweet, no pesticides, no preservatives, no artificial ingredients and 100 percent wholesome.

Hugging is practically perfect.

There are no movable parts, no batteries to wear out, no periodic check-ups, low energy consumption, high energy yield, inflation proof, nonfattening, no monthly payments, no insurance requirements, theft-proof, nontaxable, nonpolluting and, of course, fully returnable.

David Jeremiah in his book *Acts of Love* describes the hug too.

**It's wondrous what a hug can do.
A hug can cheer you when you're blue.
A hug can say, "I love you so,"
Or "I sure hate to see you go."**

**A hug is, "Welcome back again!"
And, "Great to see you, where've you been?"
A hug can soothe a small child's pain,
And bring a rainbow after rain.**

**The hug. There's no doubt about it.
We scarcely could survive without it.
A hug delights and warms and charms.
It must be why God gave us arms.**

v. 2 Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

The second command, hospitality.

When you see the structure of that sentence it says, “do not be neglecting.”

Whenever you have a negative imperative or a negative command, if it is in the present tense, you can always translate it STOP! Stop neglecting.

Obviously the relationships have deteriorated to the point that they are having problems keeping brotherly love flowing.

And now they have stopped actually inviting people into their homes and displaying hospitality.

Now hospitality is a very interesting word.

It's *philoxenia* (fil-ox-en-ee'ah).

***Phileo* means “to love.”**

Philadelphia – city of brotherly love.

***Xenia* means “stranger.”**

So TO LOVE THE STRANGER is what HOSPITALITY is.

**I really think we miss the boat
more than we care to admit by the fact
that we fail to recognize
that our homes and
our hospitality
is the greatest basis
for building relationships and
sharing our faith with others.**

**The epitome of effective evangelism
is building the bridge of relationship
in the home.**

**He is saying,
“do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.”**

But what do we like?

We want to show hospitality to the brothers and sisters.

**Remember we are here on assignment right now.
That’s the whole purpose of it.**

**And one of the qualities of a person
who is walking with God is
he is given to hospitality.**

**Now it is interesting here,
he gives you a reason why you are to do that.
“For by this some have entertained angels without
[even] knowing it.”**

Now does that mean that you might invite some stranger into your house and it turns out to be an angelic being?

It could very well be.

v. 3 Be constantly mindful of the prisoners, as [though you were] fellow-prisoners, and those who are suffering ill-treatment, since you yourselves also are being in the body.

Now that doesn't mean, in the body of Christ the church, okay.

Verse 3 means that you are in a physical body and you know what it is to suffer and to hurt.

And when you are isolated and all alone and you feel like nobody understands.

It's nice to have somebody express or take the initiative to come to you and minister to you.

And evidently several of these people had been arrested for their faith and put in prison.

He is just saying, "be constantly mindful" of these people.

Remember they need you and there are things you can do for them that's very, very important.

In verse 1 you have an OPEN HEART.

In verse 2 you have an OPEN HOUSE.

And in verse 3 have got an OPEN HAND.

In your OPEN HEART you're motivated by LOVE.

This moves you to an OPEN HOME where you build bridges of RELATIONSHIP.

And out of that you have an OPEN HAND where you are willing to take the initiative to be involved in showing COMPASSION and SYMPATHIZING FELLOWSHIP.

We might have someone sitting here today feeling like nobody really knows and nobody really understands.

What they are going through and they just wish somebody would come alongside and would just talk to them and give them a chance to really be transparent and honest about what they are going through right now.

**But we just don't do that naturally.
We have to prepare to do that and
then reach out and do it and
be constructively involved in bringing healing and
help into lives.**

Command #1: Let the love of brothers continue.

Command #2: Don't neglect to show hospitality.

Command #3: Be constantly mindful of the prisoners.

Now we're going to talk about marriage.

**v. 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let
the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and
adulterers God will judge.**

Command #4:

- 1. "Let marriage be held in honor among all"
that's the first part of the command.**
- 2. "And let the marriage bed be undefiled"
that's the second part.**

Now let me put TWO WORDS by that.

**"Let marriage be held in honor among all"
that is the COMMITMENT.**

**I recognize that marriage is a lifetime commitment
as far as God is concerned.**

I honor marriage in that way.

**I honor marriage in a culture
that does not honor marriage.**

**If I am wanting to mature in Christ
I honor marriage by this commitment.**

**Then I protect that marriage by purity and
FAITHFULNESS. That's the next part.**

“Let the marriage bed be undefiled.”

I KEEP MYSELF FOR THE ONE THAT I LOVE.

**Now when it comes to marriage
there has been a whole lot written.**

**Listen to this statement,
“the difference between a successful marriage and
a mediocre one consists of
leaving about three or four things a day unsaid.”**

**Now think about that for a little while.
Just leaving three or four things a day unsaid
would make for a better marriage.**

**All right. There's your commitment,
and there's your faithfulness.**

**Now verse 4 has a reason too,
because you have the word FOR.**

**“For fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”
He singles them out. They are going to be judged.**

Granted God forgives.

**He tells the Corinthians, you were this way
but God forgave.
You’ve been washed.
You’ve been cleansed.**

**The grace of God is capable of handling
the adulterer and the fornicator and
you can be washed clean in the blood of the Lamb.
That’s Isaiah 1:18. That’s grace.**

**You have a choice.
Do you want to experience His grace?**

**Or do you want to put this off and
experience His judgment?**

You must accept the responsibility and realize that.

**Billy Graham is right.
If God doesn’t judge America He owes an apology to
Sodom and Gomorrah for what took place.**

Stephen Covey says;

**You wake up to yoke up.
And you do that until the day you die.**

**You yoke up with your mate and
you make a commitment on a daily basis
of, “How can I be a blessing to you?”
Let me be your servant.**

Somebody put it this way.

**No man was ever shot by his wife
while doing the dishes.**

**v. 5 Let your manner of life be free from the love of
money, being satisfied with what you are having;
for He Himself has said: “I will never desert you, nor
will I ever forsake you,”**

What is Command #5:

Let your manner of life be free from the love of money.

**The scripture warns us over and over again
about making material things a priority.**

**Rather we ought to be content
with what the Lord has given us.**

“Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having.”

And there is a reason here. “for He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”

Is there power in that?

Remember they are going to forsake Him.

They are going to throw in the towel.

Some of them are going to

but he says, “I’m going to tell you something

I’m not going to.”

“I will absolutely, positively, no, never, forsake you.

I love you and in essence

you can leave me

but I will not desert you.

I will never forsake you.

Doesn’t that bring a great sense of security of knowing that He is committed to you and to your relationship and no matter how bad it gets He’ll never leave you?

v. 6 so that we are saying with confidence:

“The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.

What shall man do to me?”

**I don't have to be afraid anymore
because I know that God is my refuge and my strength
that's Psalm 46:1.**

**He's an ever-present help in time of my trouble.
Mickey Rivers, the baseball player
from the New York Yankees and the Texas Rangers says:**

**“Ain't no sense worrying about things
you got control over, 'cause if you got control over them,
ain't no sense worrying.**

**And there ain't no sense worrying about things
you got no control over, 'cause if you got no control
over them, ain't no sense worrying about them.”**

That sounds like baseball wisdom, doesn't it?

**v. 7 Be constantly remembering those who are leading
you, who spoke the word of God to you; and
considering the outcome of their way of life, be
imitating their faith.**

Command #6:

**He focuses on the leaders in verse 7 and in verse 17
today and then next week one more time.**

Here are these leaders and evidently many have died.

**They have been martyred and
so he's asking and paying tribute to them.
He says just remember them.**

**These are the people who led you and
they are the people who taught the word of God
to you and what you need to do about them
is you need to remember some things.**

You need to REMEMBER their FAITHFULNESS.

**And you need to REMEMBER the
FRUIT FROM THEIR LIVES.**

**And then you need to IMITATE THEIR FAITH and
be people who stay in there and keep going.**

**v. 8 Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today,
[yes] and forever.**

He is OUR FOCUS.

He's ALL WE NEED.

He's the CENTER OF OUR ATTENTION.

He has ALL THE BASES COVERED:

The PAST,

PRESENT and

FUTURE.

He will be there.

He will never desert you.

And He's the same.

v. 9 Stop being carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, by means of which those who are ordering their behavior were not benefited.

Command #7: Stop being carried away by that which is weird and wrong. Don't get caught up in stuff that isn't the truth. And there's a lot of that stuff out there today.

What does it mean when it says, "for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace"?

When you're having a hard time the one thing that ought to be dominant in your thinking, is that God has adequate grace to get me through these circumstances and I can experience that.

Grace is the experience to go through something.

**Grace is the ability to be victorious
in the difficult circumstances.**

**And these people who are focusing on food
were not benefited.**

They didn't gain any fellowship with God by that.

**v. 10 We are having an altar, from which those who are
serving the tabernacle are having no right to eat.**

**These guys in the Old Testament had no right
to eat from that altar except the priests.**

**v. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is
being brought into the holy place by the high priest
as an offering for sin, are being burned outside the
camp.**

**When they sacrificed the little animal,
if it was a SIN OFFERING,
they took the animal's blood but then they took
the animal outside the camp and
his body was destroyed away from the camp.**

**How is Christ a sacrifice for us?
The altar we are talking about is the cross of Calvary.
That's the next verse. Look at that.**

v. 12 Therefore Jesus also, in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

**He went outside the gate, up to Golgotha's brow.
He became a SIN OFFERING for us
by the shedding of His own blood.**

So, what are we supposed to do?

v. 13 Hence, [Command #8:] let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

**Don't lose it.
Go with Him.
Bear the reproach of Christ.**

Your eternal destiny hangs in the balance.

**Stick with Him and everything is going to be okay.
Don't forsake Him.**

Why do we want to do that?

v. 14 For here we are not having a permanent city, but we are seeking [the city] which is about to be coming.

We are just people passing through.

v. 15 Through Him then, let us [**Command #9:**]
continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to
God, that is, the fruit of lips which are making
confession of His name.

**Do you want to offer a sacrifice?
Then offer a sacrifice of PRAISE.**

**There is a level of maturity
in the lives of Christians when finally
their tongues are freed to praise the Lord.**

When you read the Psalms you see David praising God.

**The problem with so many men and
praising God is they are not humble enough
to be willing to do that, to sing the song,
to praise the glories of our Savior.**

**If you have a problem along that line,
you can make a sacrifice
that will please God and
that's praise Him.**

**Make it a practice on a daily basis
to find something to praise God for
instead of constantly petitioning Him
with this great list of needs.**

**It will revolutionize your devotional time
when you take time to praise Him.**

v. 16 And do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Command #10: This is another sacrifice you can make. There's not only the sacrifice of PRAISE but DOING GOOD and SHARING.

And you say what is that? I don't know.

For you, it might be doing good because of some assignment God gave you to do good for somebody.

What does it mean to share? I don't know.

**Maybe it's just sharing your time,
maybe it's sharing your ear,
maybe it's sharing some of your treasures
because you are at a position to help somebody and
to meet their need.
That pleases God.**

**It pleases Him when we praise Him and
it pleases Him when we get involved in sharing and
helping the needs of others.**

Now He comes back to the leaders with the last one.

v. 17 Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]; for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, [just like a real good shepherd] as those who will give an account, [and they will] in order that they may be doing this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no help to you.

Cooperate with your leaders and keep on persevering.

So we have seen eleven commands.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: “Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.”

LESSON #2: “Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.”

LESSON #3: “Be constantly mindful of the prisoners.”

LESSON #4: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.”

LESSON #5: “Let your manner of life be free from the love of money.”

LESSON #6: “Be constantly remembering those who are leading you.”

LESSON #7: “Stop being carried away by varied and strange teachings.”

LESSON #8: “Let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”

LESSON #9: “Let us continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to God.”

LESSON #10: “Do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing.”

LESSON #11: “Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them].”

LESSON #12: Remember He said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”

LESSON #13: The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid what men are going to do to me.

LESSON #14: Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today, and forever.

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PART IV

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-THREE — Hebrews 13:1-17

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v. 5 Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having; for He Himself has said: "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

v. 6 so that we are saying with confidence: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

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v. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is being brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are being burned outside the camp.

v. 12 Therefore Jesus also, in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

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v. 16 And do not be overlooking the doing of good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

v. 17 Keep on obeying your leaders and submitting [to them]; for they themselves are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account, in order that they may be doing this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no help to you.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Hebrews 13:1-17 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. What are we to be doing, according to verse 1?
3. What are we not to be “neglecting,” according to verse 2? and why?
4. What is our responsibility to the marriage relationship, according to verse 4?
5. What are we commanded to do in verse 5? and why?
6. What are we commanded to do in verse 7?
7. How is Jesus characterized in verse 8?
8. What are we commanded to do in verse 17?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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