

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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

TEXT:

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

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

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.

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

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?"

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.

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

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.

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

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.

v.13 Hence, let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

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

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

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.

INTRODUCTION:

Dear Ann Landers: About 20 years ago, you printed a Christmas newsletter from Bruce and Rose Bliven. Unlike most holiday newsletters, I enjoyed that one. I've saved the column and hope you will print it again.--San Fran

Dear S.F.: I agree that the Blivens newsletter is a classic, and I am delighted to share that column with my readers once again. Read on:

Dear Ann Landers: Since you and Herb Caen of the *San Francisco Chronicle* are against mimeographed Christmas letters, I thought you might consider quoting something from Herb's column which my husband and I enjoyed immensely. Here it is:

"I don't care for Christmas letters, but Bruce Bliven's are different. Now 86 [Jan. 19, 1976], the one-time editor of *The New Republic* [for 30 years] lives with his wife at Kingscote Gardens, Stanford, in England. He wrote:

'At 86, Rose and I live by the rules of the elderly.

'If the toothbrush is wet, you have brushed your teeth. If the bedside radio is warm in the morning, you left it on all night. If you are wearing one brown shoe and one black shoe, you have a pair just like it somewhere in the closet.

'Try not to mind when a friend tells you on your birthday that a case of prune juice has been donated in your name to a retirement home.

'I stagger when I walk, and small boys follow me, making bets on which way I'll go next. This upsets me. Children shouldn't gamble.

'Like most elderly people, we spend many happy hours in front of the TV set. We rarely turn it on."

Sweet, isn't it?--Your Friend Blondie in Reno

I responded:

Dear Blondie: Right you are! That's a Christmas letter that warms my heart. Not a word about "Jim's" promotion, the children's stellar achievements, the dog's litter of puppies, Mother's arthritis or the new Mercedes. I hope Bruce and Rose see this and put me on their list for next year.

Well, folks--I'm happy to report that Bruce and Rose did put me on their list and here's a condensed version of their Christmas 1976 letter:

Dear Friends: Rosie and I are now 87. Would we care to try for 174? The answer is no. I'm 46 percent as old as the United States and still can't spell 'seize.'

Rosie has aged some in the past year and now seems like a woman entering her 40s. She chides me about the little elf who regularly enters our house in the middle of the night, squeezes the toothpaste tube in the middle and departs. Last May, we celebrated our 63rd wedding anniversary.

As for me, I am as bright as can be expected. I remember well the friend who told me years ago, 'If your IQ ever breaks 100--sell!'

I walk with a slight straddle, hoping people will think I just got off a horse. On my daily excursions, I greet everyone punctiliously, including the headrests in parked empty cars. Dignified friends seem surprised when I salute them with a breezy 'Hi!' They don't realize I haven't enough breath for a two-syllable greeting.

When we are old, the younger are kinder to us and we are kinder to each other. There is a sunset glow that radiates from our faces and is reflected on the faces of those about us. But still, it is sunset.--Rose and Bruce Bliven.

(*The Dallas Morning News*, Wednesday, December 13, 1995)

(All I Know About Animal Behavior I Learned in Loehmann's Dressing Room
by Erma Bombeck)

I know what would make me pass out cold. Someone who would say, "Good Lord, your roots are coming in white."
p. 127

(Don't Shoot, It's Only Me by Bob Hope and Melville Shavelson)

That's when I found out George still chases after girls. It's after he catches them that he's in trouble.

That reminds me of the joke about the George Burns doll--you wind it up and it takes a nap.
p. 292

Dear Abby: I am a bandleader who frequently gets requests to play a song in honor of a wedding anniversary. I always get a laugh when on the occasion of the first anniversary, I play *Night and Day*.

For the fifth anniversary, I play *Saturday Night*.

For the 10th anniversary, I play *Once in a While*.

For the 25th anniversary, I play *Now and Then*.

For the 50th anniversary; I play *Thanks for the Memories*.

Have you any suggestions for anniversaries over 50?

--Open to Suggestions

Dear Open: How about, *We Did it Before and We Can Do It Again?* Or, *Never in a Million Years?*

(Just As Long As I'm Riding Up Front: More Stories I Couldn't Tell While I
Was a Pastor by Bruce McIver)

In the ensuing weeks I visited with them, talked with them, prayed with them, and read the Bible with them. I did everything I knew to make sure they were prepared for baptism.

"We're ready, Pastor!" Alfred exclaimed one day after an extended visit. "We're ready to be baptized." Ernestine nodded in agreement.

I left their house that night, sighed gratefully, and thought, "Maybe . . . just maybe . . . I've seen another miracle out there in the 'real world.'"

The physical preparations were made. The baptistery was filled with water, the instructions were given, and those assisting in the baptismal service were in place. The organ music played softly and the lights dimmed. A reverent hush settled over the entire congregation.

I baptized Ernestine first. There was an angelic look on her face as she came down into the water dressed in a white robe. My heart skipped a beat. Miracles really do happen! In my most serious ministerial tone I quoted from Romans, "Buried with Christ by baptism into death," and then lowered her briefly under the water. "Raised to walk in newness of life!" I proclaimed as I lifted her out of the water.

It was a beautiful moment--one that makes the work of the ministry worthwhile.

Ernestine moved up the steps on her way to the women's dressing room. I turned in the opposite direction, smiled at Alfred, and nodded for him to enter the water. By now I was not only feeling good about the baptisms; I was delighted.

Alfred reached the center of the pool, turned around (just as I had instructed), folded his hands over his chest (as I had instructed), and closed his eyes in prayerful contemplation. I raised my right hand high (as I had been instructed as a young student in seminary) and paused for effect.

What a beautiful, moving picture for the congregation! Dimmed lights and soft organ music, white robes and gentle stirrings of the waters, personal commitments and public affirmations--all symbolizing "newness of life."

By now Ernestine had reached the top step and was out of view of the congregation. She was met there by a gracious lady, a faithful member of our church who had volunteered to assist in the service. The lady smiled warmly, handed her a dry towel, and suggested in a soft voice, "Perhaps you'd like to stand here for a moment and watch your husband be baptized."

As the organ played softly, as Alfred closed his eyes and prepared to go under the water, and as I held my right hand high toward heaven, a voice from the top step on the women's side shrilled loudly . . .

"I HOPE HE DROWNS!"

pp. 88-89

(Rise and Walk by Dennis Byrd with Michael D'Orso)

I moved my toes.

It actually had happened for the first time on Thursday, just a microscopic movement, a flick in my right big toe. Steve Nicholas had been there and thought he saw it, too. But I couldn't reproduce it, I couldn't make it happen again, so the doctors wrote it off as an involuntary reflex, a withdrawal response, although Steve maintained it was genuine.

By Friday, though, I could feel the impulses inside the toes of my right foot. I couldn't move anything, but I told Steve I could feel the nerves firing. Something was happening down there. There was no doubt about it. This was not the totally dead feeling I'd had up till then. I'm sure the doctors believed I believed I was feeling those nerves. They see a lot of people in my situation who believe what they need to believe. Hope and fear can be a strong combination. I had no doubt the nerves were sparking, but the doctors' attitude was, "We'll believe it when we see it."

Saturday they saw it.

It was about 7:30 in the morning, and Dr. O'Leary was giving me the once-over, asking me the usual questions, pushing and poking me in the usual places, telling me to try to move this, try to move that. Finally, he came to my right foot. He asked me to try to move the toes, which I did. And suddenly, almost imperceptibly, the big toe . . . moved. You could hardly see it. It was like the flick of an eyelash. But it definitely moved.

Dr. O'Leary asked me to do it again, to make sure it was voluntary.

Then again.

Then he went through the ceiling.

"It's a miracle!!!" he shouted.

And he was out the door, racing down the hall to make some phone calls.

Steve Nicholas was across the hall, examining a ninety-four-year-old man with a hip fracture. He came over to see what all the fuss was about.

"Hey, bud," I said. "Watch this."

And I wiggled the toe.

Steve couldn't believe it. He was ecstatic. "Oh my God," he said. He had his right hand on the top of my foot and this big grin on his face.

"So is this good?" I asked.

"Good?" he said. "If you had done this two months from now, we would have been thrilled."

Steve rushed out to call Bob Reese over at the Jets complex, where the team would be coming in soon for morning practice before leaving for Buffalo, where we'd be playing the Bills Sunday.

I dialed Angela, who was still at the hotel. Mindi Blanchard had spent the night with her. They were getting set to come over about ten. I asked her how she was doing, what was going on. We chatted for a couple of minutes, then she asked me what was happening here.

"Oh, nothing much," I said. "I moved my toe this morning."

She went crazy, screaming and yelling. She hung up the phone and rushed right over. By the time she and Mindi got there, I was moving the foot itself, just a hair.

Jim Nicholas came in about then. From the start of the week, he'd been making a football analogy, telling me I was backed up against the goal line, that I was fighting my way out a yard at a time. When he saw my toe moving, he told me I'd just completed a bomb. I was out to midfield now. But even that wasn't good enough for him.

"Well, son," he said, "now that this right side's working, we've got to get that left side going."
pp. 167-8

We come now to the FINAL CHAPTER of the BOOK OF HEBREWS--CHAPTER 13.

We are going to be considering the FIRST SEVENTEEN VERSES of this particular chapter.

This is a PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE MANY TRUTHS that have been presented impersonally through the epistle.

It is called by some commentators:

AN INFORMAL POST-SCRIPT.

We are going to be looking at:

THE SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE BELIEVER (13:1-6) and then

THE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS (13:7-17).

Lightfoot points out:

"The chief task of the author has now ended. The remainder reads very much like an extended postscript to the main work. It is here that Hebrews assumes the manner and the characteristics of a personal letter sent to a particular group of Christians from a Christian friend. The author does write as a friend. His salutations are warm. He knows and speaks of particular situations in which his readers have an interest. His exhortations and warnings are varied but they are to the point, and they are given in rapid-fire order as a teacher might counsel his students on numerous subjects, not wishing to overlook a single pitfall that might prove fatal."

Hebrews 13 is a BASKET OF BEAUTIFUL FRUIT. It is the fruit which the Lord looks for in the life of the believer as a result of his growing in grace until maturity is reached. The more mature and the healthier the tree, the greater will be the quantity of fruit. As a tree is known by its fruit, so too the progress of the believer in his growth in grace will be evidenced by the amount and quantity of fruit evidenced in daily life.

In the FIRST FOURTEEN VERSES of Hebrews 13 NINE MANIFESTATIONS OF FRUIT are given.

The FRUIT that is described here is what the Lord looks for in a maturing life.

UNTIL OUR WORDS ARE BACKED UP BY OUR WORKS THEY WILL CONVINCE NO ONE. That is probably why the admonition to offer the "fruit of our lips" is not mentioned until after the other fruit is spelled out:

LOVE,

HOSPITALITY,

SUBMISSION,

PURITY,

CONTENTMENT,

BOLDNESS,

SYMPATHY,

STABILITY, and finally,

SEPARATION WITHOUT THE CAMP.

All these come first, and then our testimony will be believed.

The BIG QUESTION that we ask ourselves is:

WHAT IS ALL THIS STRESS AND STRUGGLE GOING TO
PRODUCE IN OUR LIVES?

THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS MATURITY.

In Hebrews 5 we saw THE CHARGE OF IMMATURITY BROUGHT
AGAINST THESE HEBREWS.

THEY WERE CHILDREN STILL ON A MILK DIET, DEVOID OF FRUIT,
UNDERDEVELOPED AND STUNTED.

The ADMONITION was:

GO ON TO MATURITY and

GROW UP AND BECOME MATURE.

Only mature trees bear a maximum of fruit. Young trees may blossom profusely but the flowers do not set and the fruit does not develop. As we come close to the close of Hebrews, the fruit of mature Christian development is therefore enumerated, beginning with brotherly love and ending with prayer. The benediction which follows is that they may continue to grow and be made mature in every good work, working that which is well-pleasing in His sight. The expression "make you perfect" means "bring to completion", and the evidence of this Christian maturity is works; and therefore the closing admonition "make you mature in every good work."

G. Campbell Morgan points out:

The closing chapter of the letter to the Hebrews consists of injunctions and instructions based upon all the teaching that has preceded. Faith in God

manifested as obedience to His revelation is seen to be the secret of life. God has spoken. Men have heard. When they have believed what God has had to say, whether in times past in divers portions and in divers manners through the prophets, or now in His final speech to man in His Son; and when they have believed with the belief that produces obedience, they have found the secret of life.

p. 149

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.

Psalm 1:3

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.

Wiersbe says:

As you read this last chapter in Hebrews, you get the impression that the writer had a great deal of miscellaneous matter to discuss and saved it till the end. In chapter 12, we were rejoicing on Mt. Zion; and now we are discussing such everyday topics as hospitality, marriage, church officers, and who was the last one to be released from jail.

But in the Bible, there is no division between doctrine and duty, revelation and responsibility. The two always go together. The emphasis in this last section of the book is on *living by faith*. The writer presented the great *examples* of faith in chapter 11, and the *encouragements* to faith in chapter 12. In chapter 13, he presented the *evidences* of faith that should appear in our lives if we are really walking by faith and not by sight.
p. 145

Stedman says:

The closing word of this letter is highly practical, crowded with many helpful things. This unknown writer (whom I strongly suspect to be the apostle Paul) felt very much like the sentiment of a limerick I often quote,

"There was a young poet in Japan
Whose poetry no one could scan.
When told it was so,
He replied, 'Yes, I know,
But I try to get as many words in the last line as I can.'"
(Anonymous)

And in this last chapter the writer has tried to squeeze in every bit he can in the way of practical application.
p. 229

Wiersbe says once again:

Lest we get the idea that we can run the race successfully alone, the writer closes his letter by reminding us to follow our spiritual leaders. If we do, we will love the brothers and sisters (v. 1), help strangers (v. 2) and prisoners (v. 3), live above lust (v. 4) and covetousness (vv. 5-6), and not be led astray by false doctrines (v. 9.)
p. 822

Thomas says:

THE APPEAL for love (10:24) is here taken up, as faith and hope have already been in preceding chapters. Love is exemplified in various ways, and first of all in connection with the personal life of each believer.
p. 172

Draper says:

This thirteenth chapter is the climax of the entire Book of Hebrews. In it, the writer becomes very personal. In effect he states, "Having said all this, let me tell you how to act. Here is my appeal to you."
p. 361

Delitzsch summarizes the FIRST SEVENTEEN VERSES of chapter 13 with these words:

Divers admonitions to Christian virtues, especially to an imitation of the faith of their departed leaders; and also, in contrast to the Levitical legal prescriptions and the Levitical divine service, both now done away with, exhortations to a faithful holding fast to Jesus Christ eternally the same; who offered Himself up without the gate of Jerusalem in order to direct our views away from the earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly and abiding city.

p. 368

Richards sets the stage for this exposition by saying:

Launching out into the life of faith will most certainly mean a new experience of love for you. A new warmth in your relationships with other people. A new capacity to care for other people, and a new awareness of their warm support.

What a wonderful theme with which to close the Book of Hebrews. These people had been ready to turn back. They were missing something. Their lives were seemingly growing empty. In response the writer has turned their attention to the towering truths of who they are in Jesus. Their new identity established, he challenged them with a blunt description of the path on which commitment and discipline would lead them. And now, in closing, he speaks of love.

pp. 136-7

DeHaan says:

Now the course is completed and the examination follows in the closing chapter. Hebrews thirteen is the final examination at the end of the course.

The test is in the form of a quiz program, where the student is presented with a set of suggested questions and permitted to grade himself.

p. 184

Hughes says:

Chapter 12 builds to an intensely theological crescendo with the statement that "God is a consuming fire," which is then met by the intensely *practical* command that opens chapter 13, namely, to "keep on loving each other as brothers." So now we move from *fire* to *function*-from *vertical* to *horizontal*-from *love for God* to *love for the church*.
p. 205

Westcott does a great job setting the stage for this chapter by saying:

The character of the precepts suggests that the society to which they were addressed consisted of wealthy and influential members. The two special illustrations of the practical exhibition of 'love to the brethren' point to services which such persons especially could render; and the warnings which follow regard the temptations of a similar class to luxury and love of money.

The succession of thought is perfectly natural. Particular duties spring out of the recognition of the new relation to God and men established in Christ.
p. 429

Hewitt says:

The concluding exhortations deal first with the individual Christian's duties towards other Christians (1-6), and then with his special duties within the Church's fellowship, among which are submission to pastoral and to spiritual authority, and most important of all, complete devotion to his Lord and Master Jesus Christ (7-17).
p. 204

Lane titles this THIRTEENTH CHAPTER:

Life within the Confessing Community (13:1-25)
p. 491

He titles this section (verses 1-6):

Pastoral Precepts
p. 507

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says much the same thing:

The first section of the Epilogue contains moral directions for the readers. Obeying these would inculcate personal kindness to **brothers** (v. 1), **strangers** (v. 2), and **prisoners** (v. 3). The writer then called for sexual purity in which **marriage** is held in high regard (v. 4). The readers we also to avoid monetary greed **and to be content with what they have** (v. 5). Even if they had little on the material level, they had the Lord (Heb. 13:5) and His help (v. 6).

p. 811

Macaulay says of these FIRST SIX VERSES:

Here we are exhorted to:

1. Charity in the church
2. Chastity in the home
3. Contentment everywhere

p. 238

Phillips titles the FIRST SEVENTEEN VERSES as:

THE WAY OF LOVE (13:1-17)

The Christian life is a very practical life, and the driving force behind everything is love. Love first conceived salvation's plan and past eternity. Love brought the Son of God from heaven die for sinners on the cross. Love is shed abroad in the hearts of believers by the Spirit of God. Love led the writer of this letter to take his pen and pour out his heart, urging, pleading with those professing the Christian faith to prove their profession to be real by going on. Now he spreads wide the net of love and shows how it embraces the various functions of the Christian life.

p. 208

Kistemaker says:

The sequence of exhortations which the author began in the preceding chapter continues. Some commentators are of the opinion that the exhortations in this section are unrelated.¹ Others see the hand of a literary artist at work in the construction of this passage.² The writer mentions the topic *love* in its expression in society: among the brothers, for strangers, for prisoners and for the underprivileged. The second topic concerns the home in which marriage and morality are upheld; and the third subject is contentment based on confidence in God.

p. 407

J. Vernon McGee puts the chapter in context when he says:

As we have said, chapter 11 is the faith chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; chapter 12 is the hope chapter; and chapter 13 is the love chapter.

p. 610

The OUTLINE that we will be following as we look at these SEVENTEEN VERSES in this study is:

TRACING THE ELEVEN COMMANDS.

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

COMMAND #1:

"KEEP ON LETTING LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE."

This COMMAND SUGGESTS that the BOND OF LOVE WAS IN DANGER OF BEING BROKEN by the use of the word "CONTINUE."

The UNWRITTEN MESSAGE to these Hebrew Christians is:

DO NOT GET DIVIDED BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANT TO LEAVE
AND THOSE WHO WANT TO HANG IN THERE.

LOVE IS SOMETHING THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD PRODUCES IN OUR LIVES.

Galatians 5:22 says as much:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, . . .

John 13:34, 35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

I think one of the KEYS TO MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY of our unselfish relationships with each other is to:

CONSTANTLY BE PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

pray without ceasing;

Lane makes this observation:

In verse 1 the term *philadelphia*, "brotherly love," clearly refers to the quality of love that binds the community together as brothers and sisters within the family of faith.

p. 510

Stedman says:

Here is a very striking commentary on Romans 12:2. *Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.* That is the Christian's calling: not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed in the midst of it. The Christian must live his life in touch with the world. There is a very dangerous and terrible philosophy which has been widespread among Christians (fortunately, it is beginning to fade), that Christians were intended to isolate themselves from the world, to draw lines of demarcation, to huddle behind high, towering walls that would exclude them from the activities, the thoughts, and the attitudes of the world.

p. 231

MacArthur says:

Brotherly love is important for three primary reasons: it reveals to the world that we belong to Christ; it reveals our true identity to ourselves; and it delights God.

p. 424

Lenski says:

The pertinency of this admonition is obvious. Anyone of the readers who would be inclined to give up Christ and to revert to Judaism would promptly show that decline in faith by coldness and indifference to his Christian brethren. Love to the brethren is one of the outstanding marks of Christian faith.

p. 468

Owen says:

Next unto faith in Christ Jesus and the profession thereof, the life and beauty of Christian religion consist in the mutual love of them who are partakers of the same heavenly calling. And in vain shall men wrangle and contend about their differences in opinions, faith, and worship, pretending to design the advancement of religion by an imposition of their persuasions on others; unless this holy love be again introduced among all those who profess the name of Christ, all the concerns of religion will more and more run into ruin.

p. 268

The FIRST COMMAND is that the:

BOND OF LOVE SHOULD BE MANIFEST BETWEEN BROTHERS
IN CHRIST.

It is the CHALLENGE OF THE APOSTLE for this to "CONTINUE."

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Alvin Toffler in his book The Third Wave describes love in the '90's with this little poetic piece:

We may, who knows, hear John Denver of the future croon lyrics like, "I love your eyes, your cherry lips, the love that always lingers, Your way with words and random blips, your skilled computer fingers."

p. ?

To dwell above with saints we love
That will indeed be glory.
To dwell below with saints we know
Well, that's another story.

It is to be noted that these Hebrew believers were
NOT EXHORTED:

"let us have brotherly love."

BUT:

"KEEP ON LETTING LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE."

Thus the apostle's language clearly supposes that they already have love for each other, that he approvingly notices the same and then calls upon them for a continuation of it.

Gary Inrig in his book Quality Friendship says:

Celeste Holm, the actress, has commented that "we live by encouragement and die without it, slowly, sadly and angrily." The picture given us in the words, "love bears all things" is of love as an encourager and protector. It always protects people; it always covers faults from public exposure; it always supports. What a challenge this one descriptive of love is!
p. 194

Katherine Ann Porter said:

"Love must be learned and learned again and again. There is no end to it. Hate needs no instruction but wants only to be provoked."

(Quality Friendship by Gary Inrig)

Upon the death of his friend, A. H. Hallam Tennyson declared:

"'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all."
p. 103

Probably one of the GREATEST WITNESSES OF LOVE AND COMMITMENT between two young men is that relationship which was established between Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo who were both running backs for the Chicago Bears. Theirs was one of the best relationships in the history of sports.

. . . during the 1969 season, Piccolo was cut down with cancer. He fought to play the season out but he was in the hospital more than he was in the game. Gale Sayers flew to be beside him as often as possible. They had planned with their wives to sit together at the professional football writers' annual dinner in New York, where Sayers was to be given the George S. Hallas award as the most courageous player in pro football. But instead, Pic was confined to his bed at home. As he stood to receive the award, tears sprang to Sayers' eyes. The ordinarily laconic black athlete had this to say as he took the trophy, "You flatter me by giving me this award. But I tell you here and now that I accept it for Brian Piccolo. Brian Piccolo is the man of courage who should receive the George S. Hallas award. I love Brian Piccolo and I'd like you to love him. Tonight when you hit your knees, please ask God to love him too.
(source???)

(Worms In My Tea: And Other Mixed Blessings by Becky Freeman & Ruthie Arnold)

Thankfully, I have landed in a group of people at my church who take me just as I am, without one plea.
p. 77

(Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

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.

Source Unknown

pp. 17-18

(Becoming Soul Mates: Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy in the Early Years of Marriage by Les & Leslie Parrott)

As Victor Hugo put it, "The supreme happiness of life is in the conviction that we are loved."

p. 91

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

Sometimes it's a hug.

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.

Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,
Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers.
And chances are your favorite aunts
Love them more than potted plants.

Kittens crave them, puppies love them,
Heads of state are not above them.
A hug can break the language barrier,
Make your travel so much merrier.

No need to fret about your store of them.
The more you give, the more there's of them.
So stretch those arms without delay.
And give someone a hug today.

This simple little poem has a marvelous message: We encourage people when we touch them with the love of God. People are encouraged by what they feel.
pp. 86-87

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Love is a fabric that never fades, no matter how often it is washed in the water of adversity and grief.

Where love reigns, God reigns.

Humans are made to run on love, and they do not function well on anything else.

Love does not consist of gazing at each other but of looking together in the same direction.

Love is an ocean of emotion surrounded by expanses of expenses.
p. 185

(Quality Friendship by Gary Inrig)

The love of today's culture is built on EXTERNALS and is captured nicely in this profound piece of poetry:

John's girl is rich and haughty,
My girl is poor as clay.
John's girl is young and pretty,
Mine looks like a bale of hay.

John's girl is smart and clever,
My girl is dumb but good.
But would I trade my girl for John's girl?
You bet your life I would!

p. 145

It is so easy to give up on people, to "write them off!" But the love of the Lord Jesus toward me is incredibly persistent. I fail and fall and sin yet, He keeps on wrapping His arms of love around me and drawing me to Himself. Because He loves me like that, I am to love others like that, with a self-giving, long-suffering, persevering love. The first great quality is that it suffers long. It does not give up on people, and it does not seek revenge. There is a cost to that. After all, suffering hurts. It is not what we would choose. But love suffers and suffers long, because it longs to serve.

p. 160

Paula d'Arcy in her little book Song for Sarah says it well:

So the question in life every day for every person is not, What can I enjoy? or who will I please? or how do I look? or what can I do or achieve? The question is, How do I love? Am I a channel for the light?

S. Craig clickman in his book Knowing Christ says:

When I was a child, I read a story of a velvet rabbit owned by a young boy. The rabbit became worn, torn and unattractive to everyone but the boy. But he loved the rabbit with all his heart. Yet one day the boy returned to his home and discovered his rabbit had been thrown away. He cried over the loss and remembered his love for his long-time companion. Not long after this, a real rabbit bounded through his yard with markings so identical to his velvet rabbit's that the boy knew his velvet rabbit had become real. The point of the story, as I understand it, was that the boy's love made the velvet rabbit become real. The story is really a modern myth because, like most ancient myths, it teaches a profound truth. People only become real when they are loved too. And humble dependence upon God, which liberates a person from self-centeredness, will in turn liberate that person to love others with a love that makes them real. His love will create life.

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

COMMAND #2:

"DO NOT BE NEGLECTING TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS."

The fact that we have a PRESENT NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE suggests that this has been NEGLECTED IN THE PAST.

"DO NOT BE NEGLECTING TO SHOW HOSPITALITY."

The word for "HOSPITALITY" is:

"LOVE OF THE STRANGER."

Lightfoot points out:

Brotherly love shown in hospitality brings results. Some have unknowingly entertained angels. One thinks readily of the angelic visits to Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18 and 19, but the lesser known visits to Gideon and Manoah should not be passed over in Judges 6:11; 13:2. The reference to angels does not mean that Christians should practice hospitality with the express hope of entertaining angels. It is, instead, another way of saying that those who show hospitality to all often gain, unexpectedly, benefits from their guests. You never know, the author says, what hospitality might bring.
p. ?

Thomas says:

The believers are urged to remember those that were in bonds as though "bound with them," and they are to keep in mind those who were suffering adversity because they themselves were still in the body and so liable to the same afflictions. This seems a more natural meaning than that which is offered by some, that "the body" means the Church, and that the

thought is of oneness in the body of Christ
(I Cor. 12:27).
pp. 173-4

Westcott observes:

The circumstances of the time made private hospitality almost a necessity for travellers.
p. 429

Phillips, speaking of the "ANGELS" in verse 2, says:

This was literally true in the experience of Abraham. The three wayfaring men visited him; two were angels, and the other was the Son of God Himself.
p. 209

Lane says:

The admonition to fraternal love is exemplified in vv 2-3. These directives concern hospitality to strangers and ministry to those who have been imprisoned or mistreated. They constitute a plea for unselfishness and for the expression of love as service.
p. 511

MacArthur says:

We are not to be hospitable because on some occasion we might find ourselves ministering to angels. We are to minister out of brotherly love, for the sake of those we help and for God's glory. The point of the second half of verse 2 is that we can never know how important and far-reaching a simple act of helpfulness may be. We minister because of need, not because of any consequences we are able to foresee.
p. 426

Bruce says:

Strangers, and especially strangers belonging to the Christian brotherhood, must be shown hospitality. Among Jews and Gentiles alike hospitality to strangers ranked high as a virtue; it was, indeed, a religious obligation.
p. 370

Vine points out:

"Literally, some entertaining angels were unaware that it is what they were doing. The exhortation suggests that there is a greater honor and reward than might be supposed."

John Brown points out:

The motive which the apostle employs to enforce this exhortation is drawn from the unlooked for honor and advantage which in former times had arisen from the performance of a similar duty. "For thereby, by entertaining strangers, some had entertained angels unawares." There is plainly here a reference to Abraham and Lot, who entertained angels hospitably in their houses, supposing they were human strangers. It is quite possible that the same thing may have happened to other good men under the former dispensation. The force of the motive does not seem to lie in any probability that they might have the same honor but in this general principle that they might derive advantage from the exercise of hospitality greater than they anticipated, that they might have the honor and happiness of entertaining men distinguished for their Christian worth and excellence; and who, by the spiritual communications made by them, would far more than compensate for the external accommodations afforded them.
p. ?

Montefiore points out:

People who had come to the aid of those in need will find on Judgment Day that they have, without realising it, served the Son of Man (Matt. xxv. 31-46).
p. 239

Matthew 25:34-40

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'"

Swindoll in his book Improving Your Serve cites the following illustration:

Shortly after World War II came to a close, Europe began picking up the pieces. Much of the old country had been ravaged by war and was in ruins. Perhaps the saddest sight of all was that of little orphaned children, starving in the streets of those war-torn cities. Early one chilly morning an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks in London. As he turned the corner in his jeep, he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside, the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared in silence, watching every move. The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing. Through the steamed-up window, he could see the mouth-watering morsels as they were being pulled from the oven piping hot. The boy salivated and released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them onto the glass-enclosed counter ever so carefully. The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside. "Son, would you like some of those?" The boy was startled. "Oh, yeah, I would." The American stepped inside and bought a dozen, put them in a bag and walked back to where the lad was standing in the foggy cold of the London morning. He smiled, held out the bag and said simply, "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He looked back and heard the child ask quietly, "Mister, are you God?" We are never more like God than when we give. "God so loved the world that He gave." pp. 52-53

COMMAND #2:

“DO NOT BE NEGLECTING TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGER.”

The author then gives us THE REASON for the command:

“FOR BY THIS [that is, SHOWING HOSPITALITY] SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED ANGELS WITHOUT KNOWING IT.”

NEEDING A FRIEND

A survey of international students studying in the United States revealed that the one thing 98% of them wanted most while in America was a genuine, long-term friendship. The percentage who felt they had actually experienced that was only 15%

(in Student Leadership, Fall 1992)

ANGEL STATS

A Yankelovich survey last December found that 69% of American adults believe in angels, and 55% think angels are spiritual beings created by God with special powers to act on earth as His agents. Almost half (45%) think they have their own guardian angel, but only one out of three has ever felt the presence of an angel.

--Emerging Trends, Jan 1994

LIGHTEN UP, PREACHER

"The reason angels can fly is they take themselves lightly."

--G. K. Chesterton

(quoted in Circuit Rider, Apr 1994)

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality--the gift of making your guests feel at home when you wish they were.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Daniel Webster was once bested by one of the farmers of his native state. He had been hunting at some distance from his inn, and rather than make the long trip back, he approached a farmhouse some considerable time after dark and pounded on the door. An upstairs window was raised and the farmer, with head thrust out, called, "What do you want?"

"I want to spend the night here," said Webster.

"All right. Stay there," said the farmer. Down went the window.

The most embarrassing moment in the life of Jane Wyman happened when she was entertaining very special guests. After looking over all the appointments carefully, she put a note on the guest towels, "If you use these I will murder you." It was meant for her husband. In the excitement she forgot to remove the note. After the guests departed, the towels were discovered still in perfect order, as well as the note itself.

No bed is big enough to hold three.

German Proverb

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

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.

Hebrews 10:34

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted with joy the seizure of your property, knowing that you are having for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

Here in verse 3 we have COMMAND #3:

“BE CONSTANTLY MINDFUL OF THE PRISONERS.”

Whereas, we have an:

OPEN HEART (verse 1),

OPEN HOME (verse 2), and

OPEN HAND (verse 3).

This verse FOCUSES on:

COMPASSION and CARING.

This is the SYMPATHIZING FELLOWSHIP--THE UNITY OF THE BODY.

“BE CONSTANTLY MINDFUL OF THE PRISONERS, AS [THOUGH YOU WERE] FELLOW-PRISONERS.”

Bruce observes:

A capacity for putting oneself in another's place and exercising imaginative sympathy is part of true charity. This same imaginative sympathy should be extended to all who are ill-treated;²⁹ those who are themselves "in the body"

are in a position to imagine how they would feel if the same ill-treatment were meted out to them. The phrase "in the body" should not be interpreted to mean "in the body of Christ (as fellow-members)." ³⁰
p. 372

Wuest says:

Writing to these first-century Jews who were enduring the persecution of their brethren after the flesh who had not left the temple, the writer exhorts them to be mindful of their fellow-believers when they suffer imprisonment and adversity, remembering that each of them is still in the physical body, and thus subject to persecution.
p. 232

Lane says:

The sequence of 13:1-3 suggests an implied call to full participation in the life of the confessing community. Those who respond in love, providing shelter to persecuted brothers and sisters, visiting them in prison, and caring for them when they are ill-treated, will through these acts acknowledge themselves to be Christian. Their actions will complement and validate their public confession of Christian faith. In the absence of demonstrations of love to other confessors of Christ, public confession is an empty gesture.
p. 515

Westcott says:

Hospitality is the answer to a direct appeal. We must also seek for those who need our help, and whose circumstances withdraw their claims from our sight. Such sufferers may owe their distress either to direct persecution, . . . or to the 'changes and chances of this mortal life' . . . In both cases Christians must acknowledge the obligation of fellowships.
p. 430

Owen points out:

And whereas we are in the same natural state of life with them, equally exposed unto all the sufferings which they undergo, be they of what kind they will, and have no assurance that we shall be always exempted from them, this ought to be a motive unto us to be mindful of them in their present sufferings.
p. 270

Lenski says:

Although we are unable to effect their release we can do what the Christians did for Peter (Acts 12:5): pray for such prisoners. In Peter's case the prayers brought about even his release.

p. 470

Kistemaker says:

Visiting prisoners was a common practice in ancient times. Jesus refers to it in his discourse on the sheep and the goats: "I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Matt. 25:39, 43). And Luke writes about Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea and in Rome (Acts 24:23; 28:16). Paul was given much freedom, was allowed to have his own rented house in Rome, "and welcomed all who came to see him" (Acts 28:30).

p. 409

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The literal translation of our text would be 'for you too are in the body'. This recalls similar Pauline usage

(2 Cor. v. 6; xii. 2); but it would be wrong to see here a reference to common membership of the Body of Christ, since this does not form part of our author's ecclesiology.

p. 239

Lange quotes Starke:

Love is a cardinal virtue, which embraces in itself all others . . . and is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, in which faith becomes active . . . Brotherly love must not be love in words, but must evince itself in act, especially toward those who are, for the sake of the Gospel, imprisoned, or otherwise suffering persecution, SO that we may extend to them counsel, aid and refreshment (1 John iii.)

p. 213

Pink points out:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.
We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear."

p. 221

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Here we are CHALLENGED in COMMAND #3 to:

REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE HURTING, those who have been put in prison and "THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING ILL-TREATMENT."

Paul, writing from prison to the Philippian assembly says in chapter 2:verses 1, 2:

If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Morris West speaks about the need in this regard when he talks about the clown in his book The Clowns of God:

Big boots, floppy clothes, painted face, button nose, that's Johnny the clown. Johnny, Johnny, bounced and humbled. Johnny, Johnny, trounced and tumbled. Johnny kicked and Johnny clouted. Johnny chased and Johnny routed. Who says thanks for all the laughter, gives you hugs and kisses after? Johnny, are you lonely too? Comic smile, goggle eyes. Who knows if he laughs or cries? Just Johnny, Johnny the clown.

Paul certainly knew what it was to be in prison. He knew what it was to hurt and to be lonely, to have the agonizing hours of suffering and buffeting that took place.

J. Vernon McGee points out:

We talk a great deal about the Christian fellowship which we have in our little group meetings or around the banquet table. But what about the poor saint who is off yonder lying on a bed and whom no one has visited? Many of you could have a wonderful ministry visiting the sick and lonely. This is the brother love that he is talking about here. Brother love is not something that takes place only in the church or in little groups that meet together.
p. 611

In COMMAND #1 we were told to:

“Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.”

We are challenged to OPEN OUR HEART.

In COMMAND #2:

“Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.”

We are challenged to OPEN OUR HOME.

Now in COMMAND #3:

“BE CONSTANTLY MINDFUL OF THE PRISONERS.”

We are challenged to OPEN OUR HAND and to share and to bear the burden of the incarcerated.

EVERY SINGLE DAY

In the United States every 24 hours 65 murders, 299 rapes, 3,088 aggravated assaults, 4,413 auto thefts, and 8,164 burglaries are reported.

--U. S. News & World Report

Nov 15, 1993

PRISON POPULATION UP

With 1.3 million inmates, the incarceration rate in the United States has reached an all-time high of 519 prisoners per every 100,000 Americans (a 22% increase in the last five years). The number of black male prisoners has surpassed the number of black men enrolled in college.

--National & International Religion

Report, Oct 3, 1994

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul, A: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

Two Brothers

Two brothers worked together on the family farm. One was married and had a large family. The other was single. At the day's end, the brothers shared everything equally, produce and profit.

Then one day the single brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share equally the produce and the profit. I'm alone and my needs are simple." So each night he took a sack of grain from his bin and crept across the field between their houses, dumping it into his brother's bin.

Meanwhile, the married brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share the produce and the profit equally. After all, I'm married and I have my wife and children to look after me in years to come. My brother has no one, and no one to take care of his future." So each night he took a sack of grain and dumped it into his single brother's bin.

Both men were puzzled for years because their supply of grain never dwindled. Then one dark night the two brothers bumped into each other. Slowly it dawned on them what was happening. They dropped their sacks and embraced one another.

Author Unknown

from More Sower's Seeds by Brian Cavanaugh

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging by Brennan Manning)

What is indiscriminate compassion? "Take a look at a rose. Is it possible for the rose to say, 'I'll offer my fragrance to good people and withhold it from bad people'? Or can you imagine a lamp that withholds its rays from a wicked person who seeks to walk in its light? It could do that only by ceasing to be a lamp. And observe how helplessly and indiscriminately a tree gives its shade to everyone, good and bad, young and old, high and low; to animals and humans and every living creature--even to the one who seeks to cut it down. This is the first quality of compassion--its indiscriminate character."

A while back Roslyn and I took a day off and decided to play in the French Quarter here in New Orleans. We roamed around Jackson Square sampling gumbo, inhaling jambalaya, and finally stopping at the Häagen-Dazs shrine for the *pièce de résistance*--a praline-pecan Creole hot-fudge sundae that induced a shortlived seizure of pleasure.

As we turned the corner on Bourbon Street, a girl with a radiant smile, about twenty-one years old, approached us, pinned a flower on our jackets, and asked if we would like to make a donation to support her mission. When I inquired what her mission was, she replied, "The Unification Church."

"Your founder is Doctor Sun Myung Moon, so I guess that means you're a Moonie?"

"Yes," she answered.

Obviously, she had two strikes against her. First, she was a pagan who did not acknowledge Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. Second, she was a mindless, witless, naive, and vulnerable kid who had been brainwashed by a guru and mesmerized by a cult.

"You know something, Susan?" I said. "I deeply admire your integrity and your fidelity to your conscience. You're out here tramping the streets doing what you really believe in. You are a challenge to anyone who claims the name 'Christian.'"

Roslyn reached out and embraced her, and I embraced the two of them.

"Are you Christians?" she asked.

Roslyn said, "Yes."

She lowered her head and we saw tears falling on the sidewalk. A minute later she said, "I've been on my mission here in the Quarter for eight days now. You're the first Christians who have ever been nice to me. The others have either looked at me with contempt or screamed and told me that I was possessed by a demon. One woman hit me with her Bible."

What makes the Kingdom come is heartfelt compassion: a way of tenderness that knows no frontiers, no labels, no compartmentalizing, and no sectarian divisions. Jesus, the human Face of God, invites us to deep reflection on the nature of true discipleship and the radical lifestyle of Abba's child.

p. 76-77

(Pain: The Gift Nobody Wants by Paul Brand and Philip Yancey)

Dr. Karl Menninger was once asked, "What would you advise a person to do if that person felt a nervous breakdown coming on?" His reply, "Lock up your house, go across the railway tracks, find someone in need and do something to help that person."
p. 283

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

We come now to COMMAND #4:

“LET MARRIAGE BE HELD IN HONOR AMONG ALL, AND LET THE MARRIAGE BED BE UNDEFILED.”

This command is broken into TWO PARTS:

1. Speaking of “MARRIAGE”--“LET MARRIAGE BE HELD IN HONOR AMONG ALL.”

This is focusing on THE COMMITMENT.

Psalm 89:33, 34

but I will not take my love from him,
nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.
I will not violate my covenant
or alter what my lips have uttered.

2. “LET THE MARRIAGE BED BE UNDEFILED.”

This part is focusing on FAITHFULNESS.

KEEPING OURSELVES FOR THE ONE THAT WE LOVE.

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

A French historian once described marriage as three weeks of curiosity, three months of love, and thirty years of tolerance. Someone else described marriage as a proposition ending in a sentence. One comic said the honeymoon was the interval between the man's "I do" and the wife's "You'd better!" Still another wrote, "After man came woman, and she's been coming after him ever since."

I remember hearing a story about a man who was asked about the success of his long-term marriage. He responded by saying, "The secret to our marriage is this, we never have any extended arguments. Whenever my wife gets upset, she takes out her frustrations by rearranging the furniture in the house. Whenever I get upset, I go outside and take a long walk. The secret to our marriage is this: I have substantially led an outdoor life." pp. 117-18

NO MORE BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

A man who had been dating a girl for several years took her to a Japanese restaurant. After looking over the menu for several minutes he asked her, "How would you like your rice--fried or boiled?"

Without a moment's hesitation she looked him straight in the eye and said, "Thrown!"

TRUE (BUT INCOMPLETE) CONFESSION

An absent-minded pastor heard a good joke at a wedding banquet. The groom got up and said, "I have a confession to make to my bride in front of all of you. I confess, dear, that before I married you, I spent many happy hours in the arms of another woman--my mother."

Everyone laughed, and the minister made a mental note to use the same joke on the occasion of his golden wedding anniversary to be celebrated that week at his church.

The fellowship hall was full of guests to honor the pastor and his wife. He rose to speak. "After fifty years of married life, my dear, I have a confession to make to you in front of all our friends. Before I married you, I spent many happy hours in the arms of another woman--and for the life of me, I can't remember who she was."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The pastor was visiting the fourth-grade Sunday School class to talk about marriage as part of the lesson. He asked the class, "What does God say about marriage?" Immediately, one boy replied, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The wedding ring is that small piece of jewelry placed on the finger that cuts off your circulation.

My friend Jim told me when he asked his wife where she wanted to go on vacation, she said that being married to him was a vacation.

When I commented that it was a really nice thing to say to him, Jim replied, "Well, actually, what she said was I was the 'last resort.'"

--Richard D. Oliva, *Reader's Digest*, November 1993, p. 111.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Worms In My Tea: And Other Mixed Blessings by Becky Freeman & Ruthie Arnold)

I'm beginning to feel I'm failing somewhere in this area because when I asked Zach the question, "Why do we treat women with respect?" he answered sincerely, "Because we never know when you might need to use one."
p. 81

(Worms In My Tea: And Other Mixed Blessings by Becky Freeman & Ruthie Arnold)

I have compiled the following inventory, to be sung to the tune of “A Partridge in a Pear Tree.”

In our lakeside backyard my husband gave to me,
 Twelve pipes a laying,
 Eleven Schwinns a swarming,
 Ten boards a warping,
 Nine puppies barking,
 Eight trash cans filling,
 Seven cans a rusting,
 Six bowls of dogfood,
Five Lawn Mo-wers!
 Four fighting kids,
 Three gas tanks,
 Two buildings, outhouse style,
 And a bass boat whose engine has expired!

pp. 166-7

(Don't Shoot, It's Only Me by Bob Hope and Melville Shavelson)

Nobody's ever figured out how to get both parties together. Democracy is like a marriage made in heaven; that's the only place it might work.

p. 181

(Only Angels Can Wing It: The Rest of Us Have to Practice by Liz Curtis Higgs)

Harlan Miller once said that “the difference between a successful marriage and a mediocre one consists of leaving about three or four things a day unsaid.”

p. 44

One writer said:

I talked to a man whose marriage had gone bad after 18 years. How did you know that it was over? I asked. When she stopped putting toothpaste on my brush in the mornings, he replied. When we were first married, whoever got up first would roll toothpaste on the other's brush and leave it laying on the sink. Somewhere along the line, we stopped doing that for each, and the marriage went downhill from there. That, of course, is an oversimplification of why a marriage went wrong but the little courtesies do count. They count a lot. "The roots of the deepest love," wrote Von Hurder, "die in the heart if not tenderly cherished."

Edna St. Vincent Millay lamented:

'Tis not love's going hurts my days, but that it went in little ways.

Theodore Roosevelt, while in his junior year at Harvard, met Alice Hathaway. He writes the following:

A year ago last Thanksgiving I made a vow that win her I would, if it were possible. Now that I have done so, the aim of my whole life should be to make her happy and to shield her and guard her from every trial, and oh how I cherish my sweet queen. How she so pure and sweet and beautiful can think of marrying me I cannot understand. But I praise and thank God it is so.

Woodrow Wilson wrote the following to his fiancée Ellen Axson:

How I long for your presence, my darling. It would be such a comfort and such pure delight to sit in sweet communion with you at such times, to talk of the future, of how we shall sustain each other in love, of how we shall work together to do good, to make a bright spot around us in the world.

Marlene Dietrich, asked to write an article on how to be loved by a man, had this simple, sure-fire suggestion: "Love him."

Gary Inrig writes:

My wife's mind is always on the prowl to discover people's little preferences, and that quality makes her the best gift-giver I have ever known. The pen with which I am writing this chapter cost less than a dollar, yet it is one of her innumerable little presents that has delighted me. She overheard my saying that I liked the way a borrowed felt-tip pen wrote but that I could not find the brand in any store, so she began shopping. A few days later I found on my desk a reminder of the way she thinks of me often during her waking day.

Kistemaker says:

Love for the neighbor, whoever he may be, most effectively flows forth from a home in which husband and wife work together in mutual love. When marriage is honored in the home, love emanates to society in numerous ways. For this reason the author stresses the necessity of maintaining the sanctity of married life.
p. 409

Kistemaker, commenting on the word "HONOR," says:

He is actually saying, "Let marriage be precious to all of you." Marriage is a treasure we receive from God who has instituted it. Therefore, marriage must be honored by all.
p. 410

Wuest, commenting on the word "HONOR," says:

The word "honor" is *timios* which means, "held as of great price, esteemed, especially dear."
p. 233

Pink says:

"This is the first great Scripture lesson on family life, and it should be well learned. . . . The Divine institution of marriage teaches that *the ideal state* of both man and woman is not in separation but in union, that each is meant and fitted for the other; and that God's ideal is such union, based on a pure and holy love, enduring for life, exclusive of all rivalry or other partnership, and incapable of alienation or unfaithfulness because it is a union in the Lord--a holy wedlock of soul and spirit in mutual sympathy and affection" (A. T. Pierson).

p. 224

DeHaan says:

The free rendering of this verse may be given as follows: "Let your marriage be honorable, and keep it pure and undefiled."

Purity in the home, the husband honoring the wife, and the wife reverencing her husband, should be the norm for every Christian home. Husbands and wives can live in love and harmony, and solve all their difficulties if they will but heed one single verse of Scripture:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:32).

p. 187

Hughes makes this observation:

Now in the present text, verses 4-6, he becomes even more intimate in his advice, *giving very personal ethical directives about marriage, money, and one's mind-set*. He knows that nothing will sink a church faster than moral wavering in respect to sex, materialism, or mental outlook. Here is intimate advice regarding how to keep our ship afloat. It is so essential that any church that ignores it will founder and possibly even sink.

p. 215

COMMAND #4:

“LET MARRIAGE BE HELD IN HONOR AMONG ALL.”

That is focusing on COMMITMENT.

“AND LET THE MARRIAGE BED BE UNDEFILED.”

That is focusing on FAITHFULNESS.

Our writer then gives us THE REASON just like he did back in verse 2.

After giving THE COMMAND in verse 2:

“Do not be neglecting to show hospitality to strangers.”

He gave THE REASON:

“for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Now having given this TWO-FOLD COMMAND here in verse 4, he follows it with THE REASON:

“FOR FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS GOD WILL JUDGE.”

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul then goes on to say in verse 11:

And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Revelation 21:8

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

Hughes says:

All who are living in serial adultery or fornication and are unrepentant and under God's wrath and ultimate judgment regardless of what they assert about a salvation experience.

The judgment God metes out has both a fixture and a present reality. In the future, unbelieving sensualists will stand before the Great White Throne and be judged accordingly (cf. Revelation 20:11ff.), and Christians will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ where their works will be judged (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Notwithstanding the inexorable coming of the future judgment, the fact remains that infidelity and its attendant sexual immoralities also regularly inflict judgment in the present. Significantly, Paul tells us, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body"

(1 Corinthians 6:18). *Physical* misery grimly follows immorality in the present epidemics of herpes and AIDS. *Mental* firestorms afflict millions in the form of guilt, self-hatred and ego disintegration. *Relational* wars are the proverbial result of sensuality--alienation, estrangement, hatred and sometimes murder. Societal degradation follows--jungle ethics, brutalization, illegitimate children, abortion. Anyone who imagines that unrepentant adultery and sexual immorality will go unpunished is in La-la Land. It is happening right now from every angle, and in addition a terrible judgment awaits, for all unrepentant sinners will stand before God, who is a "consuming fire" (cf. 12:29; 10:27). pp. 218-19

Stedman says:

Nonconformity to the world must certainly involve these areas. The loose sexual standards of our generation and the intense materialistic spirit of this age constitute a constant peril to our hearts, and we must beware of them. We must realize that God has under-taken to sustain the sacredness of marriage and that He unceasingly, unrelentingly judges violations of it. Therefore, we dare not heed the fine-sounding declarations being made today about a "new morality," as though we had passed beyond the ancient standards and they no longer had significance. As this writer reminds us, God judges the immoral and adulterous. He does not mean that God looses lightning bolts from heaven against them, or that He causes terrible diseases to come upon them; these are not the forms of judgment. But we can see the judgment of God in the terrible tempest of mental pressures and crackups which sweep like a plague across this land. They are due to the breakdown of moral standards.

p. 235

MacArthur observes:

Billy Graham has commented that writings coming out of contemporary authors are "like the drippings of a broken sewer." Judgment already exists in the broken homes, the venereal disease, the psychological and physical breakdowns, and the murder and other violence that is generated when passion is uncontrolled. It is not possible to live and act against the moral grain of the universe established by God and not suffer terrible consequences. p. 431

A. T. Robertson warns:

God will judge both classes whether men do or not. p. 445

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Although the word translated **fornicators** can signify those who indulge in any kind of sexual immorality, there is probably here a condemnation of both pre-marital and extra-marital relationships. It was common in the primitive church to issue these dire warnings about the dreadful consequences of sexual immorality (cf. I Cor. vi. 9;

Eph. v. 5).

p. 240

Lane observes:

Sexual immorality is actually a rejection of the presence and goodness of God who created the human family in its maleness and femaleness. It is an expression of a selfishness blind to the emotional fragility that characterizes every person. The writer warns that those who place personal gratification above responsibility to God and to the community will encounter God himself as Judge.

p. 517

The other day we heard about a conversation between a teenager and his grandfather. The young man said, "Gee Grandad, your generation didn't have all these social diseases. What did you wear to have safe sex?"

The wise old gentleman replied, "A wedding ring."

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

Ann Landers recently asked her readers the question: Has your sex life gone downhill since marriage?

One reader, a man age 52, from Newark, New Jersey put it best:

"Your question--has sex gone downhill since marriage?--is an insult to those of us who waited until marriage to have sex. You ought to tell your readers that if they don't eat the icing off the cake before dinner they are likely to enjoy the dessert more."

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)

Jezebel, like an erstwhile Madonna, presided over this "cultural revolution," freeing God's children from their moral inhibitions and sexual hang-ups, broadening their minds, stretching their consciences, and justifying every intolerable act in the name of "tolerance."

p. 18

(Aladdin Factor, The by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen)

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

--Source Unknown

Women want their husbands and boyfriends to help out with chores around the house: doing the dishes, taking out the garbage, putting the kids to bed, cleaning up and running errands. When they don't get these things, they tend to harbor deep resentments toward their men, especially if the wife also works an eight-hour day on a job. If these resentments are not communicated and turned into clear requests, they can eventually lead to an emotional gulf in the relationship. Romance disappears, intimacy disappears and sex goes out the window.

It is very important to keep all of your expectations and requests clearly communicated so that love and intimacy can flourish.

p. 170

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging by Brennan Manning)

I am reminded of a statement by the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy: 'If the sexual fantasies of the average person were exposed to view, the world would be horrified.'

p. 71

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

Dr. J. Allan Petersen expressed it more eloquently and compellingly than anyone I've ever heard in his publication *Better Families*:

Lying to anyone has a strange effect of turning that person into an enemy, so when we lie to ourselves we become our own worst enemy.

In the tender intimacy of love we find deep pleasure in opening our hearts to another in telling the truth. But when we feel the necessity of lying to the one we love--the one who trusts us implicitly--we're trapped in a double bind. The boomerang comes back.

This is the predicament of the unfaithful husband who still loves his wife. When he comes back, he wants to restore the closeness with her, but he can't tell her what he has done, so he lies again. The lie protects him from her anger and rejection. At the same time it robs him of the tender intimacy he longs for. He can't open his heart to her--every thought must be monitored, every word weighed. Fear grips him lest a lapse of memory betray him. He is indeed his own worst enemy.

When God said, "Do not commit adultery," He knew exactly what He was doing. Adultery ends in humiliation, heartache, and revenge.

From the hundreds I've counseled, I know this to be true.

pp. 258-9

(Breaking Free--From the Bondage of Sin by Henry Brandt)

Galatians 5:19 says that two acts of the sinful nature are sexual immorality and impurity. You may recall when Magic Johnson, one of the greatest basketball players of all time, said he had an announcement to make. There he stood, in superb physical condition, a wholesome smile, admired by many, wealthy, a successful businessman and athlete. He recently married his college sweetheart. They were expecting their first child. He had it all; a truly magic career. But then he announced that he was retiring from basketball immediately because a medical test revealed that he had contracted the HIV virus--AIDS.

The nation was stunned. All that many would say was that he took the news with courage, grace, and dignity. The sad fact is that our magic hero had so many sex partners he lost count. And now he is paying the price of ignoring a biblical one-liner: "*avoid sexual immorality*" (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

Mary Fisher had wealth, power, and knowledge--a combination that some people mistakenly perceive as sure protection against AIDS. But Fisher, the daughter of multimillionaire, financier, philanthropist, and presidential confidante Max Fisher, knows better. In July she tested positive for HIV, which causes AIDS.

She contracted the virus through her marriage to artist Brian Campbell. They divorced in 1990, but she cannot be freed from paying the price for her husband's infidelity. Allow me to cite another biblical one-liner: "*You shall not commit adultery*" (Exodus 20:14).

The William Kennedy Smith rape accusation trial captured newspaper headlines all across the country for days. His accuser did not prove her case, but the trial brought up the issue of sexual immorality. Mr. Smith went into a bar and met this lady for the first time. They drank and danced together for several hours, and at 3:00 A.M. they went to the Kennedy estate. They had sex together on the lawn at 4:00 A.M. Easter Sunday. *The only issue at the trial was whether the act was rape.* They couldn't even remember each other's names. Ironically, his lawyer called this incident "an act of love." Heaven help us!

On prime-time TV I watched a show hosted by Peter Jennings. One feature of the program was a demonstration of how to use a condom properly. I remember when the subject of sex was discussed in a whisper; today, it's prime-time material.

The law of sin draws people toward sexual misuse. In a marriage relationship, satisfying the sex urge is one of life's most pleasant experiences. The process is exciting and pleasurable. But the end result of practicing adultery and fornication is fear, guilt, embarrassment, broken hearts, disease, pregnancy out of wedlock, poorly matched and early marriages, divorce, and death.

In Florida, Governor Chiles reports that there were 28,000 teen pregnancies in 1991. The state spent \$796 million to support these families.

He says that 85 percent of teen parents drop out of school. They are seven times more likely than their peers to spend the rest of their lives in poverty.
pp. 52-53

(The Message: Proverbs by Eugene H. Peterson)

Proverb 5

The lips of a seductive woman are oh so sweet,
her soft words are oh so smooth.
But it won't be long before she's gravel in your
mouth,
a pain in your gut, a wound in your heart.
p. 20

Proverb 6

Adultery is a brainless act,
soul-destroying, self-destructive;
Expect a bloody nose, a black eye,
and a reputation ruined for good.
p. 25

(Becoming Soul Mates: Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy in the Early Years of Marriage by Les & Leslie Parrott)

Your marriage relationship will either develop a depth that binds your two souls together, or it will experience a superficial bonding which rides the waves of emotion until the relationship is beached for lack of depth.
p. 14

(From Beginning to End: The Rituals of Our Lives by Robert Fulghum)

When her husband was home during the week, his morning routine was similar to hers. Probably for the same reasons. They seldom talked in the morning. Not because they didn't have anything to say, but because they didn't have to say anything. They were in touch, but not with words.

p. 13

(The Things that Matter Most by Cal Thomas)

I detest the word "illegitimate" when it is used to refer to a baby born to people who are not married to each other, almost as much as I dislike the word "bastard" when applied to a child.

The stigma is placed on the wrong person. The baby should not be considered illegitimate, or a bastard, because the child had nothing to do with his or her conception or the circumstances surrounding it.

So, instead of saying that the number of "illegitimate" births in 1990 reached a record high, 1,165,384--the crest of a social tidal wave that began in the sixties--let's say that there were at least 1,165,384 couples who engaged in illegitimate behavior that produced children who deserved better. This doesn't count the 1.6 million abortions that same year, the ultimate in illegitimate behavior.

p. 86

- 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,"

COMMAND #5:

“LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY.”

THE KEY TO UNHAPPINESS

"The most unhappy person in the world is not someone who didn't get what he or she wanted. The most unhappy person is the one who got what he or she wanted and then found out that it wasn't as wonderful as expected. The secret of a happy life is not to get what you want but to live with what you've got. Most of us spend our lives concentrating on what we don't have instead of thanking God for what we do have. Then we wake up, our life is over, and we missed the beauty of the present."

--Steve Brown
(in *Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks*, 1992)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

In verse 1 we were commanded to:

“Keep on letting love of the brethren continue.”

Here we are commanded to:

“LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY.”

Ecclesiastes 5:10

Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

Luke 12:15

And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

Lane says:

. . . a life unhampered by the love of money will reflect a contentment that is theologically grounded.

p. 518

Pink says:

In this chapter of Hebrews the apostle makes a practical application of the theme of the epistle. Having set forth at length the amazing grace of God toward His believing people by the provision He has made for them in the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, having shown that they now have in Christ the substance of all that was shadowed forth in the ceremonial law, the tabernacle, and the priesthood of Israel, we now have pressed upon us the responsibilities and obligations which devolve upon those who are the favoured recipients of those spiritual blessings. First, that which is fundamental to the discharge of all Christian duties is exhorted unto: the continuance of brotherly love (v. 1). Second, instances are given in which this chief spiritual grace is to be exemplified: in Christian hospitality (v. 2), and in compassion for the afflicted (v. 3). Third, prohibitions are made against the two most radical lusts of fallen nature: moral uncleanness (v. 4) and covetousness (v. 5), for the indulgence of these is fatal to the exercise of brotherly love.

p. 232

Macaulay summarizes the commandments thus far given here in chapter 13:

Charity in the church; chastity in the domestic sphere; and then contentment in regard to one's station in this life.

p. 242

Bruce says:

The chief pang which pierces the heart of the lover of money is gnawing anxiety. The greedy person can never be happy, but the opposite of covetousness is contentment. Here too there is a close affinity between this passage and 1 Timothy: "There is great gain in godliness with contentment;⁴⁰ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:6-8). Behind both documents lies our Lord's teaching: "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:31-33).

p. 374

(A Dangerous Grace by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

The fact that Americans spend billions of dollars today on lotteries means that many of them place their real faith in the god of Luck. And the money they spend on lottery tickets is nothing less than their tithes and offerings laid on the altar of Fortune.

p. 279

(All I Know About Animal Behavior I Learned in Loehmann's Dressing Room by Erma Bombeck)

Heading the list are the lottery winners. Here's a couple sitting around the house doing nothing when they hear their numbers announced on TV. Within minutes, their front yard is overflowing with photographers and cameramen and bloodsucking relatives from as far away as Hawaii. Helicopters circle. Just before hyperventilating, they say into the camera, "Oh my God." Asked if all this money will change their lives, they say, "Absolutely not."

I will never forget the story of the lottery winner from Ohio who won \$50 million. When asked what he was going to do with all that money, he was quoted as saying, "I've always wanted one of them eight-slice toasters."

Is that the American dream or what!

Of all the luxuries that torment people but elude them, a toaster doesn't seem to be one of them, but what do I know? Maybe there are dreamers who lie in a hammock, stare at the sky, and plan for the day when they can make toast for an entire Marine base.

The irony is that most lottery winners lust after some small thing that probably has been within their grasp all along. So they wish for something they've been putting off . . . a new sofa for Mama, a trip to the Smokies with the kids, or as the man from Ohio added, "Fill in the dents in my Pinto."

Another recipient in New York State's lottery retired early to a modest house to "order take-out food and save for when we're poor again."

Ridiculous, you say? How long have you had a cookie sheet that looks like a bad patch of road? You could probably pick one up for \$2.95, but instead, you open the window to get rid of the smoke each time you use it.

I've fantasized about winning the lottery and being a celebrity on all the newscasts. I've always wanted an extra set of door keys. My husband's dream is a set of salt and pepper shakers for the table so he won't have to walk to the stove every meal. Hey, as long as you're dreaming, why not reach for the stars?

pp. 113-14

(The Message: Proverbs by Eugene H. Peterson)

Proverb 23

Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich;
 restrain yourself!
 Riches disappear in the blink of an eye;
 wealth sprouts wings
 and flies off into the wild blue yonder.
 p. 77

(The Seven Laws of the Harvest: Understanding the Realities of Sowing and Reaping by John W. Lawrence)

“The folks who spend their days
 In buying cars and clothes and rings
 Don't seem to know that empty lives
 Are just as empty filled with things!”
 p. 78

(Active Spiritually by Charles R. Swindoll)

As the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu once said:

There is no calamity greater than lavish desires.
 There is no greater guilt than discontentment.
 And there is no greater disaster than greed.
 p. 76

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

None of us can deny our inner desire for more, and denial is not the answer. Like our drive for significance, and our need to fulfill our pleasure, pride, and passion, our desire for more is built into us by the Creator.

We're built for fulfillment in the more of Christ, but our fallenness drives us to seek more in the things around us. Only when we come to Christ in repentance and faith can our God-given longing for more be truly satisfied.

p. 79

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Many people want what they don't need and need what they don't want.
p. 42

True contentment is the power of getting out of any situation all that
there is in it.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it sooner.

Colette

When I have any money I get rid of it as quickly as possible, lest it find a
way into my heart.

John Wesley

A little house well filled, a little land well tilled, and a little wife well
willed, are great riches.

Anonymous

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Plenty of people are willing to give God credit, yet few are willing to
give Him cash.

--*Quotable Quotations*

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

The first concern of the leadership of the church should be for the filled seats, not the empty ones. When a young preacher complained to Charles Spurgeon that his own congregation was too small, Spurgeon replied, "Well, maybe it is as large as you'd like to give account for in the day of judgment."

Sidney Harris once wrote, "The most miserable people I have known have not been those who suffered from catastrophes--which they could blame on fate or accident--but those who had everything they wanted, except the power to enjoy it."

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

"HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW!"

When the birds begin to worry
And the lilies toil and spin,
And God's creatures all are anxious,
Then I also may begin.

For my Father sets their table,
Decks them out in garments fine,
And if He supplies their living,
Will He not provide for mine?

Just as noisy, common sparrows
Can be found most anywhere--
Unto some just worthless creatures,
If they perish who would care?

Yet our Heavenly Father numbers
Every creature great and small,
Caring even for the sparrows,
Marking when to earth they fall.

If His children's hairs are numbered,
Why should we be filled with fear?
He has promised all that's needful,
And in trouble to be near.

--Anonymous

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Ecclesiastes 2:24, 25

A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

COMMAND #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.'"

Once again we have a STATEMENT OF REASON following the COMMAND like we did back in verse 2:

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

And then we also saw this in verse 4:

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

Now, THE REASON:

"LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY."

We are to manifest a spirit of CONTENTMENT "WITH WHAT YOU ARE HAVING." This is given in the last part of the verse:

"FOR HE HIMSELF HAS SAID."

Draper says:

The child of God has the desires of his soul fulfilled in what God has said. He himself has said it. God has spoken.

We do not rest on the whims of men, nor the ideas of society, but on what God has said. What God has said, we can believe. What God has commanded, we must do. What God has revealed is precious to our hearts. It is the Word of God that will give guidance, wisdom, and direction to our lives. It is the Word of God that will challenge and call forth the very best in us. It is the Word of God that will shield us from the tempter and give us victory in every pursuit of life. He himself has said it. We as God's children need to remind ourselves each day of what God has said.

p. 362

"FOR HE HIMSELF HAS SAID: 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.'"

Isaiah 46:4

Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Richards says:

Our relationship with God is a forever thing, and knowing Him is the basis for our sense of security.

p. 139

Owen says:

All the efficacy, power, and comfort of divine promises arise from, and are resolved into, the excellencies of the divine nature. He hath said it who is Truth, and cannot deceive. He who is Almighty, the supreme disposer of all things in heaven and earth, in whose hand and power are all the concerns of men.

p. 271

Kistemaker says:

Rather, the text itself appears in varying forms in many places, and always signals God's faithfulness and assurance. Jacob fled from his brother Esau and in a dream heard God say to him, "I am with you . . . I will not leave you" (Gen. 28:15). Near the end of his life, Moses encouraged the Israelites and said, "For the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6, 8). When Joshua began his work as leader of the Israelites, God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). And last, when David instructed Solomon to build the temple, he encouraged him with these words, "Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you" (I Chron. 28:20).⁹
p. 411

Draper says:

"Without covetousness" is an interesting expression. It comes from the Greek term *philarguros*, which has three parts to it. The root word is *phileo*, which we have already seen means "to like" or "to love." The prefix *arguros*, "silver," is added to the root to mean "to love silver." Hence, "to love silver" is to be covetous.
p. 367

Draper says further:

God is saying, "I will never fail to uphold you or let you sink." But, in order to give us added assurance, he makes it even stronger by adding a double negative, *oume*, to the term. This is a strong statement. God declares he will never, never leave us. He will never, never fail to uphold us. Not only that, but he will never forsake us. That means he will not desert us, abandon us, or leave us lifeless or destitute.
p. 368

Hughes says:

In no situation will God leave us, nor for any reason will he leave us. He will not leave us even for a little while. He may seem to hide his face, but he will not leave us.

*The soul that on Jesus hath lean'd for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

(*Rippon's Hymns*, 1787)

p. 222

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

The knowledge of God's help gives an assurance of personal security such that a person feels invincible against the attacks of his fellow-men.

p. 241

Isaiah 41:13

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Lane says:

The call to contentment is grounded in the solemn promise of God's unfailing presence and care, which is asserted emphatically with a quotation from Scripture. It is unnecessary for Christians to place their trust in wealth because they can trust in God, who shares their vulnerability (cf. 1 Tim 6:17). Consequently, greed for wealth is an expression of idolatry (Thuren, *Lobopfer* 217).

p. 519

Let us take time now to MEDITATE on several passages that give us the PROMISES THAT WE BASE OUR SECURITY UPON.

Genesis 28:15

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Deuteronomy 31:8

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Joshua 1:5

No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

1 Chronicles 28:20

David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.

God has said:

"I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU."

This is a GUARANTEE OF GOD'S CONTINUAL PROVISION AND PROTECTION.

This REBUKES ALL INORDINATE DESIRES and CONDEMNS ALL ANXIOUS FEARS.

God in essence is saying:

"You might leave and forsake Me, when the going gets tough, but I can tell you this, I will never leave you, no matter what!"

"I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU."

It is almost impossible to reproduce in English the emphasis of the original in which no less than FIVE NEGATIVES are used to increase the strength of the negation according to the Greek idiom.

Perhaps the nearest approximation is to render it "I will never, no never, leave thee nor ever forsake thee." In view of such assurance we should fear no want, dread no distress, nor have any trepidation about the future. At no time, under any circumstances, conceivable or inconceivable, for any possible cause, will God utterly and finally forsake one of His own. Then how safe they are. How impossible for one of them to eternally perish. God has here graciously condescended to give the utmost security to the faith of believers in all their difficulties and trials.

The continued PRESENCE of God with us insures the continued SUPPLY of every need.

"I Will Not Leave Thee"

God is with us in our sorrows. There is no pang that rends the heart, I might almost say, not one which disturbs the body, but what Jesus Christ has been with us in it all. Feel you the sorrows of poverty? He "had not where to lay His head." Do you endure griefs of bereavement? Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. Have you been slandered for righteousness' sake, and has it vexed your spirit? He said, "Reproach hath broken Mine heart." Have you been betrayed? Do not forget who sold Him for the price of a slave. On what stormy seas have you been tossed which have not roared about His boat? Never glen of adversity so dark, so deep, apparently so pathless, but what in stooping down you may discover the footprints of the crucified One. In the fires and in the rivers, in the cold night and under the burning sun, He cries, "I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am both thy Companion and thy God."

--Spurgeon.

(The Mountains of Spices by Hannah Hurnard)

Art thou fearful Love will fail?
 Foolish thought and drear,
 "God is Love" and must prevail,
 Love casts out all fear!
 We have seen His lovely plan
 In God's son made Son of Man.

Holy love could not create
 Save for love's sake sweet,
 Therefore we His creatures wait
 Union made complete.
 When Love's perfect work is done,
 God and Man will be at one.

We may know that God is love,
 Know His Father's heart,
 He hath spoken from above
 And our doubts depart.
 We have been what hath sufficed
 In the face of Jesus Christ.

p. 243

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?"

The RESULTING ACTION in verse 6 comes from the PREVIOUS PROMISE made in verse 5:

"SO THAT WE ARE SAYING WITH CONFIDENCE."

"THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?"

This is the TESTIMONY of one who is WALKING IN FAITH, BELIEVING THE PROMISE of verse 5.

Psalm 118:5, 6

In my anguish I cried to the Lord,
and he answered by setting me free.
The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. . . .

Proverbs 29:25

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

Lane says:

The experience of the covenant faithfulness of God invites the confident assertion of trust in the Lord in the presence of peril.
p. 520

Kistemaker says:

Once again the author places himself on the same level with his readers, for together they confess their confidence and trust in God. They recite the words from Psalm 118:6 and do so courageously. For them the quotation is a confession of faith. If we look at the passages liturgically, we notice that in the Old Testament text in the preceding verse, God is the speaker. The testimony of faith in the lines from Psalm 118:6 is the response of the people.
p. 411

Stedman says:

That is the promise of God. He is our great unending resource and He will never fail us. Here is the strongest negative in the New Testament. The original carries the thought, "I will never, never, under any circumstances, ever leave you nor forsake you." It is a mighty declaration and on the basis of it the writer says we should declare, *The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid* (of loss or poverty or anything else); *what can man do to me?* (v. 6). If I have God, what can man do to me? The point is that we must be content to take only what God gives us.
p. 236

Phillips observes on this verse:

Next comes Christian courage. "So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" (Heb 13:6). The Hebrews were facing persecution from family, friends, and foe alike. God was using that very persecution to separate the wheat from the chaff, those who were merely professing Christianity from those who were genuinely saved, those who were drawing back from those determined to press on at all costs. What was needed was courage, courage born of a dynamic faith in the Lord Himself, courage before which the fear of man would melt as the snow before noonday sun. Men can be very cruel, and the fear of man is a real snare for the soul. None of us can say for sure how he would react when faced with torture, prison, and the stake. But God gives grace to help in time of need.
p. 211

Thomas points out:

In all these counsels the ruling thought is that of love because, when that actuates the soul, there will be the greatest possible care both in regard to our practical duties to others, our relation to the persons of others, and above all our attitude to God in regard to His provision for our lives. Love will express itself to brethren, to strangers, to the suffering; love will respect the rights of others, and will be content with what we possess, because we are able to say with confidence that "the Lord is my helper."
p. 174

Hewitt says:

The best commentary on this quotation from Psalm cxviii. 6 is 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Rom. viii. 31).
p. 207

2 Chronicles 32:7, 8

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)

God calls us to get a grip on him and by his power walk through the walls of our fear. Courage is mastery of fear, not it's absence.
p. 36

AIN'T NO SENSE

"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."

--Mickey Rivers,
former New York Yankees outfielder
(quoted in Campus Life, Jan 1994)

LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES THE SAME SPOT TWICE

Timid airplane passenger:

"Stewardess, how often do big jets like this one crash?"

Stewardess:

"As a rule--only once."

Courage is the mastery of fear, not the absence of fear.

Mark Twain

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon)

Live in peace without worrying about the future. Unnecessary worrying and imagining the worst possible scenario will strangle your faith.
p. 46

Avoid things which distract you from Christ, and be careful that all your extra energy does not lead you into trouble. Above all, live in the present moment and God will give you all the grace you need.
p. 47

(The Leader In You by Dale Carnegie & Assoc., Inc.)

That's what Mother Goose was driving at:

For every ailment under the sun,
There is a remedy, or there is none.
If there be one, try to find it,
If there be none, never mind it.

The real trick is telling them apart.
p. 207

Whereas we have been considering the:

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS (verses 1-6).

We now turn to:

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS (verses 7-17).

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:

"BE CONSTANTLY REMEMBERING THOSE WHO ARE LEADING YOU."

Galatians 6:6, 10

And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Religious directions follow the moral ones and this segment of the Epilogue extends through verse 17.
pp. 811-12

[In verse 7] The call, **Remember your leaders**, perhaps referred to former leaders who had passed away. The **outcome of their way of life** could be contemplated with good effect and the readers were to **imitate their faith**.
p. 812

Kistemaker says:

Three times in this chapter the author stresses the word leaders: "remember your leaders" (v. 7), "obey your leaders" (v. 17), and "greet all your leaders" (v. 24). In the first instance, the concept leadership is related to Jesus Christ himself.
p. 414

Barclay says:

IMPLICIT in this passage there is a description of the real leader of men.

(i) The real leader of the Church preaches Christ, and thereby brings men to Christ. It is not to himself that he draws attention, but to the person of Jesus Christ. Leslie Weatherhead somewhere tells a story of a public schoolboy who decided to enter the ministry. He was asked when he had come to that decision. He said that he had come to it after hearing a sermon in his school chapel. He was asked the name of the preacher. His answer was that he had no memory of the preacher's name; all he knew was that that preacher had shown him Jesus. The duty of the real preacher is to obliterate himself and to show men nothing but Jesus Christ.

(ii) The real leader of the Church lives in the faith, and thereby he brings Christ to men. A saint has been defined as "a man in whom Christ lives again." The duty of the real preacher is not so much to talk to men about Christ as to show men Christ in his own life and work and being. Men listen not so much to what the man is saying as to what the man is. His life is not an argument in words but a demonstration in living.

(iii) The real leader, if need be, dies in loyalty. He shows men how to live, and in the end he shows men how to die. He demonstrates a loyalty to which there is no limit. Jesus, having loved His own, loved them to the end. And the real leader, having loved Jesus, loves Him to the end. His loyalty never stops halfway.

(iv) Thereby the real leader leaves to those who come after two things-- he leaves an example and an inspiration.
pp. 222-3

Lenski observes:

In this paragraph the writer addresses to his readers the call to separate themselves completely from the camp of Judaism, to go out to Christ crucified, the changeless Christ, to be true to those who have preached and are now preaching this Christ, and to bring the offering of praise and obedience. The absence of a connective in v. 10 and in v. 17 might lead us to think that we have points of division in those verses, yet the thought presents itself as a unit and should be left so.
pp. 174-5

Wiersbe says verses 7-8 could be titled:

Remember them (7-8). This may refer to leaders now dead, but their ministry goes on. Remember what they taught you, how they lived, and what they lived for. Church leaders may come and go, but Jesus is the same; and they must fix our eyes on Him.
p. 822

Richards observes:

It's interesting to note that we are not asked to imitate their accomplishments. Or their activities. What we're to imitate is their *faith*. God leads each of us down different roads to find our own place in life. We're wrong if we "try to be like Billy Graham and become an evangelist." What is significant is not what a particular leader *does*, but the evidence from his life that faith's way is profitable. Leaders become who they are through faith.
p. 140

Lane says:

The members of the house church are to continue to remember their former leaders because of the example of their forward-looking faith . . . These now deceased preachers of the word of God retain authority for the community because one can refer to their faith, which was validated by the solid accomplishment of their lives (v 7b).
p. 527

"BE CONSTANTLY REMEMBERING THOSE WHO ARE LEADING YOU, WHO SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD TO YOU."

He CHARACTERIZES them in TWO WAYS. They are "THOSE WHO":

1. "ARE LEADING YOU," and
2. "SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD TO YOU."

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edge sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

"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."

Kistemaker says:

The next command is to "consider the outcome of their way of life." The verb *consider* actually means to "look at again and again," to "observe carefully."¹⁵ The author urges the people to look attentively at the lives these leaders lived and at the totality, that is, the result, of their lives. "Observe how they closed a well-spent life" (MLB). Look at their lives from begging to end!
p. 414

The readers are to be:

"REMEMBERING" and

"CONSIDERING"

their leaders' WORDS and their WAY OF LIFE.

They are to be "REMEMBERING" and "CONSIDERING" their:

FAITHFULNESS,

FRUIT, and

FAITH.

They are to be:

"REMEMBERING" their faithfulness,

"CONSIDERING" their fruit, and

"IMITATING THEIR FAITH."

This reminds us of Hebrews 11 and the "great cloud of witnesses surrounding us" who have lived by faith and have been victorious.

A. T. Robertson reminds us that this last command "TO BE IMITATING THEIR FAITH" is in the present tense and could be translated:

Keep on imitating the faith of the leaders.
p. 446

(The Leader In You by Dale Carnegie & Assoc., Inc.)

As Walter Lippmann wrote upon the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on."
p. 109

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

The qualities needed to be valuable? Let me suggest at least eight:

- Initiative--being a self-starter with contagious energy.
- Vision--seeing beyond the obvious, claiming new objectives.
- Unselfishness--releasing the controls and the glory.
- Teamwork--involving, encouraging, and supporting others.
- Faithfulness--hanging in there in season and out.
- Enthusiasm--providing affirmation, excitement to a task.
- Discipline--modeling great character regardless of the odds.
- Confidence--representing security, faith, and determination.

p. 183

(Standing Tall by Steve Farrar)

Wilson L. Harrell writes:

Psychologists claim that leadership asserts itself early in life. They're wrong. How many voted "most likely to succeed" at your school ever amounted to anything? Leadership is acquired--forged in the hell of combat. Being called upon to "face fire" transmutes ordinary men into leaders. It matters not whether the bullets are the lead kind or the more insidious projectiles of corporate battle.

A few years after every war, there is an explosion of entrepreneurship. Why? Because many of us discover courage we never knew we had. Courage is the kernel of leadership. In World War II, I was a combat fighter pilot flying a P38, giving "close support" to General Patton in his march through France. Our mission was to bomb and strafe enemy positions ahead of his troops. One day, my flight of four planes was ordered to take out a German airfield 100 miles behind their lines. We zoomed down, made our run, and survived the antiaircraft fire. As we pulled up, I saw in the distance what looked like a big flock of buzzards. Then I realized: "Those aren't buzzards. Those are airplanes . . . German airplanes!"

I got on the intercom and called in to my leader, Jerry Gardner. In a voice two octaves above high C, I yelled: "Jerry, there's a whole mess of bogeys at 10 o'clock low! Jerry looked up. After a moment of silence, he said calmly, "Let's go get'em."

Off we went, four idiots chasing what turned out to be 67 enemy fighters--the dreaded Hermann Goering yellow-nose fighters. Toward the end of the war, America had destroyed most of the Luftwaffe, so General Goering brought together his best pilots into one invincible unit. They'd had a field day bombing our airfields and killing our troops. They'd never been challenged--until now.

As we got closer, we could see that they carried bombs and belly tanks. They were off bombing some unsuspecting airfield and not eager to play with four. Then they turned into us--67 of them head-on. Almost in range. My backside was chewing up the seat. Now, there is one sacred rule in the Air Force: Always keep formation. The only way to survive air-to-air combat is to stay together and protect each other. At that moment, Jerry got on the horn and uttered some immortal words:

"Every man for himself."

We zoomed right into the middle of their formation. I ended up on the tail of a German general leading the group with his three wingmen. Nobody behind me could shoot at me for fear of hitting the general--a no-no for any German pilot who didn't want to face a firing squad. I shot down the three wingmen without even getting shot at.

Then the general and I had ourselves one hell of a dogfight. He probably flew into my fire, since from the beginning I was squeezing every trigger in the cockpit. He went down.

The next second, every #*&%#@ that wasn't shooting at Jerry and my other two buddies opened up on me. My plane and I caught fire.

I bailed out, pulled my rip cord, and looked up. My chute was on fire. . . . Luckily, I was so low that my chute swung only a couple of times before I hit the ground, badly burned, and was picked up by the French underground. Eleven days later, when I was near death, Patton sent in a squadron of tanks to get me out of there.

The day of our dogfight, 47 yellow-nose fighters were shot down. . . . All four of us survived and earned Presidential citations. But the real question is: Why? Why did three pilots willingly follow Jerry in to what we knew was most certain death?

Jerry Gardner was a leader. Remembering his example, I became one.
pp. 162-4

Stedman says:

The first injunction seems to look back to the heritage of the past, to those men and women who have died and left their testimony behind. Perhaps it refers to those who led them to Christ, whom they knew personally and who spoke to them the Word of God. He says of them, *Notice the way they ended their lives and imitate their faith*, and links with this the great declaration, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*. What He was to the men and women of the past, He can be and is to us today, absolutely changeless. It is this changeless Christ which is the great refuge of the Christian in a changing world.
p. 239

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

JESUS CHRIST, He is OUR FOCUS.

JESUS CHRIST, He is ALL WE NEED.

JESUS CHRIST, He is the CENTER OF OUR FAITH.

It is the RESPONSIBILITY of the leadership to POINT EVERYONE TO JESUS CHRIST rather than call attention to themselves.

He is "THE SAME" in the:

PAST--"YESTERDAY,"

PRESENT--"TODAY," and

FUTURE--"FOREVER."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Those leaders were gone, but **Jesus Christ** of whom they spoke remains continuously **the same**.

p. 812

What a tribute this is to the ROCK-SOLID STABILITY OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

He has got ALL THE BASES COVERED

The PAST,

PRESENT and

FUTURE.

Lamentations 3:22, 23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Page in his book, Bringing Many Sons Into Glory, says:

Whether men are faithful or faithless to their trust and their office, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. In other words, He is faithful and in His faithfulness we can rest.

He will not desert, He is always the same. We may change and probably will, but He will not.

Kistemaker says:

In this fast-changing world, nothing seems dependable and permanent. Leaders come, and leaders go. One leader, however, is unchangeable: Jesus Christ. Says the author, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." More sermons have been preached on this text than on any other verse from Hebrews, so that this verse almost has attained confessional status in the church.

p. 415

Furthermore, note the sequence of time: past, present, and future. The term *yesterday* relates to the mediatorial work of Jesus on earth, proclaimed and confirmed to the readers by those who heard him (2:3). The expression *today* refers to the intercessory work Jesus performs in heaven, where he represents the believer in God's presence (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24). And the word forever pertains to the priesthood of Christ. He is priest forever

(5:6, 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28).

p. 415

Lane says:

The intent of the acclamation in v 8 is to drive the men and women of the house church back to the foundational preaching received from their original leaders.

p. 530

Hewitt says:

This verse is a connecting link between what precedes and what follows. Whether in life or in death the leaders bore testimony to the unchangeableness of Christ. This fact was the ground of their consistent loyalty to the Christian faith and the inspiration of their lives. They have passed away, but their Lord and Saviour not only abides for ever but remains the same--the eternal, unchangeable Christ.

p. 208

Thomas says:

Amidst everything else that was changeable, Jesus Christ remains ever the same. It is very striking to notice this verse flanked on both sides by verses containing ideas in marked contrast. Like a great mountain in the midst of the sea, Jesus Christ stands ever the same. In view of the fact that we are now over eighteen centuries from the time that Jesus Christ was on earth, it is a marvelous claim to make on His behalf that He is always the same. Of no one less than God could this be said. Here is the rock foundation for our life, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

p. 175

Bruce says:

It is not necessary to suppose that they had suffered martyrdom;⁴³ but like the heroes of ch. 11 they "died in faith."

Yet they died; they lived on in the memory of those who had known them, but they were no longer available for consultation and wise guidance as they had once been. Jesus Christ, by contrast, was always available, unchanging from year to year, "the same yesterday and today and forever."

p. 375

Westcott titles verses 8-16:

The rule and strength of Christian devotion

Having glanced at the former leaders of the Hebrew Church the Apostle goes on to shew that at

(a) Christ Himself is the sum of our religion: which is eternal, spiritual (8, 9); and that

(b) He who is our sin-offering is also our continuous support (10-12), and that

(c) He claims our devotion and our service (13-16).

p. 435

He says further:

The thought of the triumph of faith leads to the thought of Him in whom faith triumphs. He is unchangeable and therefore the victory of the believer is at all times assured.

The absence of a connecting particle places the thought as a reflection following the last sentence after a pause.

p. 435

Delitzsch says:

This watchword of salvation forms the basis for the exhortation just given to imitate the faith of the departed leaders, and also a preparation for the warning which follows in ver. 9, that the readers should not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

p. 379

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Yesterday, today and for ever is a graphic way of alluding to past, present and future in order to affirm the unchanging nature of Christ.

p. 242

F. B. Meyer says:

Oh, take me not back through the long ages to a Christ that was! He is! He lives! He is here! I can never again be alone, never grope in the dark for a hand, never be forsaken, or forlorn. Never need a Guide, a Master, a Friend, or a Husband to my soul. I have Him, who suffices for uncounted myriads in the dateless noon of eternity. He who was everything in the yesterday of the past, and who will be everything in the tomorrow of the future, is mine today; and at each present moment of my existence--here, and in all worlds.

p. 56

Wiersbe says:

However, I believe that "the outcome of their way of life" (13:7, NASB) is given in verse 8--"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Their lives pointed to Christ! Church leaders may come and go, but Jesus Christ remains the same; and it is Christ who is the center of our faith.
p. 150

English says:

Pages could be filled in contemplation of Him who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." His love, His sufferings, His conduct, His leadership, His faith may be followed, for He is the perfect example. It is He who satisfies. And He it is who never leaves nor forsakes His own, and who is our helper day by day. He who stood with His own in days past will stand by their side today. He who walks with us today will be the same forever. He is eternally stable. He is unchanging.
p. 490

G. Campbell Morgan says:

This is the ultimate statement in the book as to the finality of what God has said to men in His Son. There can be no change, because He is changeless. While referring to Him "today", the writer links the statement with the past "yesterday," and with all the future, "unto the ages." The reference to "yesterday" includes not merely the period of God's speech to men, but the far-flung mystery of which we can only speak as ages past. The reference to the future shows that in Him all life is to be conditioned not here and now alone, but in all the mystery of that which is to come, "unto the ages."
p. 150

Morgan says further:

In all human life we need a centre of permanence, that to which we can fasten our lives, and know that it abides. We also need a secret of perennial freshness. Both are found in Him. I change, He changes not. Moreover, He is the Secret of perennial freshness. There is never a day in the loneliness of our own situation when, if we abide in Him, He does not break upon us with some new glory, some new beauty.

Thus the final word of God to men is spoken in a Son, Jesus Christ, Who is "the same yesterday, today and unto the ages."
p. 160

Ray Stedman points out:

This verse, by the way, is often misused today. There are those who say because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, He must inevitably do the same in every age that He has done in the past. For example, because Christ healed all those who came to Him, they insist all who come today must inevitably be healed. But remember this verse does not say Jesus Christ *does* the same, but that He *is* the same. His doing may change according to the times, but His character never changes; it is always the same.
pp. 239-40

Pink points out:

Some of their spiritual guides had already passed away, and in those still left, time and change would swiftly work their sure effects; but the great Head of the Church remained, being alive for evermore. Jesus Christ was the One who had supported their deceased leaders, who had passed through their trials victoriously, and if trusted in, He would sustain *them*, for He was the same gracious and powerful Shepherd of the sheep. He is for *you*, as for them, "the same" Object of faith, "the same" all-sufficient Saviour, "the same" effectual Intercessor. He is "the same" in His loving design and covenant faithfulness. Then cleave to Him with unshakeable confidence.
p. 261

(The Living Body: The Church Christ Is Building by Dr. Richard Halverson)

This brings us to a further insight into what Jesus meant when he used the word *church*. He said, "I will build my church." The church Christ is building is *his*. It does not belong to the people, the members; they belong to him. It does not belong to the officers; they belong to him. It does not belong to the pastors; they belong to him. It does not belong to a hierarchy; the hierarchy belongs to him.

The church belongs to Jesus Christ. It does not belong to popes or presidents. It does not belong to committees. It does not belong to associations or agencies. It does not belong to a few people who move into positions of power in a local congregation and try to dictate whatever happens. *Whatever the church is, it belongs to Jesus Christ alone.*
pp. 33-34

(Turn Toward the Wind by Dale Hanson Bourke)

Theologians call it the immutability of God. Both the Old and New Testaments contain such verses as "I the Lord do not change" (Mal. 3:6) and "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).

God is perfect. He cannot get better or worse. He always was and always will be. He is the one thing we can count on throughout this life and the one to come.
p. 138

"The immutability of God appears in its most perfect beauty when viewed against the mutability of men," observed A. W. Tozer. "In God no change is possible; in men change is impossible to escape. Neither the man is fixed nor his world, and he and it are in constant flux."

We are called by the God who never changes to be ever changing. It is one more heavenly paradox, another mystery in a life that is both temporal and eternal. For those who have set out on the voyage of change, there is no going back. As we move through the pain to the glory, we hear the wind whisper our name.
p. 140

Lange says:

What *comfort* lies in the fact that Jesus Christ *is always the same*; and in like manner, what *warning* and *what encouragement*!
p. 217

Lange quotes Molenaar when he says:

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today, and the same also forever. We ponder this, 1, for our consolation, and for our quiet, since also in this year Jesus is the same, *a.* in His Word, as our Teacher and Prophet; *b.* in His grace, as our Mediator and High-Priest; *c.* in His power, as our King and Lord; 2. for instruction and warning; *a.* for unbelievers; *b.* for believers.
p. 217

Morgan in his little book The Triumphs of Faith says:

You will remember those lines of Martin Luther written in dark and difficult days. I think they are very applicable today. Let me end with them:

"We wait beneath the furnace blast
The pangs of transformation,
Not painlessly doth God recast
And mould anew the nation"

Where wrongs aspire;
Nor from the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

p. 191

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 VARIED AND STRANGE TEACHINGS."

Once again, following the COMMAND is a REASON stated in the phrase:

"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."

Obviously some of this was going on because he uses the PRESENT NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE here:

"STOP BEING CARRIED AWAY."

Then he calls these "TEACHINGS":

"VARIED AND STRANGE."

THEY ARE WRONG AND THEY ARE WEIRD!

Galatians 1:6, 9

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Matthew 7:15

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

"STOP BEING CARRIED AWAY."

The words "CARRIED AWAY" reminds us of:

Hebrews 2:1-3

For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels was valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

That is why new doctrines which conflict with the unchanging message about Jesus Christ should be rejected. The author's reference here to **all kinds of strange teachings** does not sound at all like a reference to normative Judaism but as if the readers were confronting a peculiar, sectarian variation of that religion . . .
p. 812

Lane says:

The tenor of the passage is clear. The word that the former leaders proclaimed is now threatened by teaching that is inconsistent with the message the community received. The "various strange teachings" competing for their attention are incompatible with the original, always valid, instruction delivered by the founding fathers of the community (vv 7-8). Foreign teaching and the grace of God mediated through the new covenant are mutually exclusive.
pp. 530-31

Richards says:

In this concluding chapter, the writer returns to an earlier thought. The shadows are gone. Our lives are no longer to be built on form and habit, on externals and empty behavior.
p. 141

Bruce says:

The reminder that "Jesus Christ is the same" links what precedes it with what follows it. Because "Jesus Christ is the same," says our author, "do not be swept off your course by all sorts of outlandish teachings;⁵⁴ it is good that our souls should gain their strength from the grace of God, and not from scruples about what we eat, which have never done any good to those who were governed by them" (NEB).
p. 376

English says:

From the fact of the unchangeableness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," the readers of this letter are instructed and exhorted not to be removed from the truth as it is in Him.
p. 491

J. Vernon McGee points out:

It is amazing that most of the cults today go in for special diets. I believe that food is important as far as the health of the body is concerned, but it has nothing to do with your relationship to God. Paul wrote, "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (1 Cor. 8:8). He is saying the same thing here. Do not go off into these strange cults and teachings in which diet and ceremonies and rituals and little study groups are supposed to make you a super-duper saint.
p. 614

You can always tell a cult because of:

FOODS,

FAMILY, and

FALSEHOOD.

They focus on the:

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP--which are usually distorted,

FOODS--which is usually distorted, and

FALSEHOOD--instead of truth in the teaching which they perpetrate.

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Colossians 2:16, 17

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson)

In our own day, Satan is deceiving the world to accept his lies, for example in:

- *The women's liberation movement* with its unisex design, which denies God's order in the family.
- *The gay movement* with its homosexuality and lesbianism that is a total perversion of God's creation of sexuality.
- *The pro-choice movement*, which denies God's creation the right to be born.
- *The proliferation of cults*, which deny the clear teaching of Scripture about Jesus Christ and salvation.
- *The spread of secular humanism*--liberal theology and pop psychology, mysticism, and New Age thinking, all of which deny God and Scripture's authority.

p. 32

(Heaven Help Us! Truths About Eternity That Will Help You Live Today by Steven J. Lawson)

Like the old gospel song says, "It won't be old Buddha who's sitting on the throne. And it won't be old Mohammed that's calling us home. And it won't be Hare Krishna who plays that trumpet tune, Cause we're going to see the Son, not Reverend Moon."³

3. "Oh Buddha" by Mark Farrow, © 1993, Word Music. Used by permission.

p. 45

"STOP BEING CARRIED AWAY BY VARIED AND STRANGE TEACHINGS."

THE REASON:

"FOR IT IS GOOD FOR THE HEART TO BE STRENGTHENED BY GRACE."

You have a POSITIVE and a NEGATIVE here.

POSITIVELY:

"IT IS GOOD FOR THE HEART TO BE STRENGTHENED BY GRACE."

Let us MEDITATE for a few moments on some verses that talk about the:

STRENGTH THAT IS AVAILABLE TO US IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST.

Colossians 1:11

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Isaiah 40:31

but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

"FOR IT IS GOOD FOR THE HEART TO BE STRENGTHENED BY GRACE."

Hebrews 12:14, 15

Be pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Be seeing to it that no one is coming short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up is causing trouble, and by it many be defiled;

NEGATIVELY:

"NOT BY FOODS, BY MEANS OF WHICH THOSE WHO ARE ORDERING THEIR BEHAVIOR WERE NOT BENEFITED."

In other words:

THEY NEVER ATTAINED FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

What we have here is the UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST is CONTRASTED to:

HUMAN DOCTRINE and TEACHING.

Swindoll in his book Improving Your Serve says:

Philosophers are people who talk about something they don't understand and make you think it's your fault!

Lots of philosophies are floating around, and most of them are more confusing than they are helpful. Interestingly, those that are clear enough to be understood usually end up focusing full attention on the individual. Consider a few of them:

Greece said, "Be wise, know yourself!"
 Rome said, "Be strong, discipline yourself!"
 Religion says, "Be good, conform yourself!"
 Epicureanism says, "Be sensuous, enjoy yourself!"
 Education says, "Be resourceful, expand yourself!"
 Psychology says, "Be confident, assert yourself!"
 Materialism says, "Be satisfied, please yourself!"
 Pride says, "Be superior, promote yourself!"
 Asceticism says, "Be lowly, suppress yourself!"
 Humanism says, "Be capable, "Believe in yourself!"
 Legalism says, "Be pious, limit yourself!"
 Philanthropy says, "Be generous, release yourself!"

pp. 38-39

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

This reminds us of:

Hebrews 6:19

This hope we are having as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and secure and one which is entering within the veil,

"WE ARE HAVING AN":

"anchor" (6:19), and

"ALTAR" (13:10).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If those who hawked "strange teachings" tended to idealize the wilderness experience and the tabernacle, the writer's words now make a special point. A Christian has a special **altar** (probably a figure of speech for the sacrifice of Christ) from which he derives spiritual sustenance. **Those who minister at the tabernacle** were not entitled to partake of that kind of spiritual food. If some people preferred a desert way of life and considered themselves "servants" of the ancient tabernacle they were, the writer pointed out, debarred from Christian privileges.
p. 812

Owen says:

The altar which we now have is Christ alone and His sacrifice, for He was Priest, altar and sacrifice, all in Himself.
p. 274

Wiersbe says:

The emphasis in this section is on separation from dead religion and identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His reproach. The image comes from the Day of Atonement. The sin offering was taken outside the camp and burned completely (Lev. 16:27). Jesus Christ, our perfect sin offering, suffered and died "outside the gate" of Jerusalem. All true Christians must go out to Him, spiritually speaking, to the place of reproach and rejection. "Why stay in Jerusalem when it is not your city?" asked the writer. "Why identify with the Old Covenant Law when it has been done away with in Christ?"

p. 153

McGee points out:

Believers today have an altar, but this altar is not the Lord's Supper as some people have mistakenly interpreted it to mean. We do not have a material altar with a local address, but we have an altar which is in heaven. It is the throne of grace up yonder. It was a throne of judgment--He condemned us there--but now that the blood has been placed there, we can come and find grace and salvation.

p. 614

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.

In verse 11 the writer is referring to the SIN OFFERING. When Christ died, it was for the fact that you and I were sinners. Not only do we commit sin, we are sinners by nature; and He took our sins on Himself, that He might give us a new divine nature.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Under the old institution the **blood** from sacrifices made on the Day of Atonement was brought **into the most holy place, but the bodies** were **burned outside the camp** (v. 11), a location deemed unholy in the years of the wilderness sojourn.
p. 812

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

Now the writer relates the:

DEATH OF CHRIST to the DAY OF ATONEMENT.

"THEREFORE JESUS ALSO, [PURPOSE] IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD."

That is the only way that it could happen. Through the shedding of "HIS OWN BLOOD," "not the blood of bulls and goats" as we looked at back in chapter 9.

He suffered outside the gate. He went outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem and died upon Golgatha's brow.

The PURPOSE in giving Himself in such a way as a sin offering was:

"IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE."

The INSTRUMENT OF SANCTIFICATION is:

"HIS OWN BLOOD."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

But **Jesus also suffered outside the city gate** (i.e., outside Jerusalem), but the effect of His sacrifice was **to make the people holy**. Far from association with Him being unholy, as some unbelieving Jews regarded it, the readers were in fact "holy" (or sanctified . . .
p. 812

McGee says:

Jesus died outside the city. Why? Because He was the sin offering. The sin offering was taken away from the temple and "burned without the camp."
Jesus was our sin offering, and He paid the penalty for our sin.
p. 614

v.13 Hence, let us be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

We come now to COMMAND #8 in a SERIES OF ELEVEN COMMANDS.

COMMAND #8:

"LET US BE GOING OUT TO HIM OUTSIDE THE CAMP, BEARING HIS REPROACH."

Here the author IDENTIFIES WITH THE READERS by saying:

"LET US BE GOING OUT TO HIM OUTSIDE THE CAMP, BEARING HIS REPROACH."

The "GOING OUT" denotes OBLIGATION and it needs to be done immediately.

"GOING OUT TO HIM OUTSIDE THE CAMP, BEARING HIS REPROACH."

Hebrews 11:25, 26

choosing rather to be suffering ill-treatment with the people of God, than to be enjoying the short-lived pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking forward to the reward.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[They] should not hesitate to share in **the disgrace He bore** (cf. 12:2) by abandoning **the camp** of Judaism and identifying with Him. If the readers actually were acquainted with sectarian encampments in their region this exhortation would have had special force.

p. 812

Richards says:

Let us turn our backs on all the now empty forms and means of grace that reflect the old shadow system. Let us go *outside* that whole system, outside the city which was its center, and let us go to Jesus. Let's find *in Him* the reality that everything else only pictures. And, having the reality, let's realize that we have no more need of shadows. p. 141

Bruce says:

Now, in the person of Jesus, God had again been rejected in the camp; his presence was therefore to be enjoyed outside the camp, where Jesus was, and everyone who sought him must go out and approach him through Jesus. In this context the "camp" stands for the established fellowship and ordinances of Judaism. To abandon them, with all their sacred associations inherited from remote antiquity, was a hard thing, but it was a necessary thing. p. 381

Thomas says:

This is a call to separation, based on the fact that our Lord suffered outside the city of the Jewish people. As Weymouth well puts it, we are to go forth "sharing the insults intended for Him." It is very striking that the believer is shown to occupy two positions in this Epistle. In 10:9-16 he is regarded as inside the veil with his conscience purged, with a spiritual position that is permanent, and with an access to God which is constant and perpetual. But here he is regarded as outside the camp, living a life of separation involving experiences of suffering, and yet one that is marked by perfect satisfaction because he is in fellowship with his Lord, who has similarly suffered. p. 178

Lane says:

The exhortation to leave the camp and to identify fully with Jesus introduces a distinctive understanding of discipleship. Jesus' action in going "outside the camp"

(v 12) set a precedent for others to follow. The task of the community is to emulate Jesus, leaving behind the security, congeniality, and respectability of the sacred enclosure, risking the reproach that fell upon him. Christian identity is a matter of "going out" now to him. It entails the costly commitment to follow him resolutely, despite suffering.

p. 543

A. T. Robertson says:

"Let us keep on going out there to him." If a separation has to come between Judaism and Christianity, let us give up Judaism, and go out to Christ "outside the camp" and take our stand with him there on Golgotha, "bearing his reproach["] . . . as Jesus himself endured the Cross despising the shame (12:2) and as Moses accepted "the reproach of the Messiah" (11:26) in his day. The only decent place for the follower of Christ is beside the Cross of Christ, with the reproach and the power (Rom. 8:1f.) in it. This is the great passionate plea of the whole Epistle.

p. 449

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Christians are here exhorted to cut themselves off from Judaism. Where Jesus died, there they should be. Although they have been redeemed by Jesus from the curse of the law, they should take their stand at the very place where he became a curse for them (cf. Gal. iii. 10). In thus cutting themselves off from Jewry, they will **go out** into the unknown, as Abraham went out to his unknown inheritance (xi. 8) and as Moses went out into the unknown wilderness . . .

p. 246

MacArthur says:

The practical point is that, as Christians, we must be willing to go out from the system, to bear the reproach and the shame that both the sin offering and Christ Himself bore, and to be rejected by men. This is the attitude Moses had toward the world. He considered "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:26).
p. 441

F. B. Meyer says:

IF WE GO OUTSIDE THE CAMP, WE MUST BEAR HIS
REPROACH.

--It is related of the good Charles Simeon, that, at the commencement of his career as an evangelical clergyman at Cambridge, he encountered such virulent abuse and opposition that his spirit seemed on the point of being crushed. Turning to the Word of God for direction and encouragement, his eye lighted on the following passage: "As they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross." The similarity of the name to his own arrested him, and he was moved to new courage with the thought of his oneness with the sufferings of Jesus. So is it with us all. If we are reproached for the name of Jesus, happy are we; and we should rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory is revealed, we also may be glad with exceeding joy.
p. 60

J. Vernon McGee says:

The writer is saying to these Hebrew Christians, "Don't mind leaving the temple. Don't remind leaving the rituals. Those things are not helpful. Go to Him--Go to Christ."

My friend, we, too, are to go to Him. We are on our way to a heavenly Jerusalem. This is real separation he is talking about here. Today we put the emphasis on separation *from*; we are separated from something--that is, "I don't do this and I don't do that." Real separation is not *from*; it is *unto*. Paul said he was separated *unto* the gospel, separated *unto* Christ, separated *unto* the Word of God.
p. 614

Pink says:

To go forth unto Christ without the camp means for the believer to make a complete break from his manner of life, to renounce every thing which is opposed to Christ, to relinquish whatever would hinder communion with Him. In a word, the exhortation of our text is only another way of presenting that declaration of our Lord, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."
p. 298

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

Once again with this COMMAND #8 we have a REASON:

"Why should we "be going out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach"?

THE REASON being:

"FOR HERE WE ARE NOT HAVING A PERMANENT CITY, BUT WE ARE SEEKING [THE CITY] WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE COMING."

We have a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE here in verse 14:

"WE ARE NOT HAVING A PERMANENT CITY, [NEGATIVELY] BUT [POSITIVELY] WE ARE SEEKING [THE CITY] WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE COMING."

Once again the writer IDENTIFIES WITH THE READERS by the use of the word "WE."

"[THE CITY] WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE COMING" is the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

Hebrews 11:16

But as it is, they are longing for a better [home], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to a festal gathering and church of the firstborn who have been registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men who have been brought to perfection, and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is speaking better than the blood of Abel.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The readers' true home was no camp or city that then existed, but **the city that is to come . . .**

p. 812

The songwriter has it correct:

My heart can sing when I pause to remember
 A heartache here is but a steppingstone
 Along a trail that's winding always upward
 This troubled world is not my final home.
 But until then my heart will go on singing
 Until then with joy I'll carry on.
 Until the day my eyes behold the City,
 Until the day God calls me home.

I am reminded once again of those words of that great song "The Holy City":

And once again the scene was changed
 New earth there seemed to be.
 I saw the Holy City beside the tideless sea.
 The light of God was on its streets
 The gates were opened wide.
 And all who would might enter
 And no one was denied.
 No need of moon or stars by night
 Or sun to shine by day.
 It was the new Jerusalem
 That would not pass away.
 It was the new Jerusalem
 That would not pass away.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, sing for the night is o'er.
 Hosanna in the highest, hosanna forevermore.
 Hosanna in the highest, hosanna forevermore.

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

"THROUGH HIM [that is, CHRIST] THEN, LET US CONTINUALLY BE OFFERING UP A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD."

COMMAND #9:

"LET US CONTINUALLY BE OFFERING UP A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD."

The writer is saying:

YOU WANT TO OFFER A SACRIFICE, I HAVE ONE FOR YOU!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

No blood sacrifices were needed in the light of Jesus' death, but to **offer . . . praise and to do good and to share with others** were indeed **sacrifices** that **God** desired (cf. 10:25).
p. 812

Psalm 34:1

I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.

Psalm 92:2

to proclaim your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,

Psalm 104:33

I will sing to the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Psalm 106:2

Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord
or fully declare his praise?

Psalm 31:7

I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.

Lightfoot points out:

The sacrifice to be offered by the Christian is a sacrifice of praise which is described as the fruit of the lips. Whatever may come, whether good or bad, the Christian owes God sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. The exhortation here is very much in keeping with the spirit of the Psalms expressed in such words as "with a freewill offering I will sacrifice to thee. I will give thanks to thy name, O Lord, for it is good."

Draper says:

Praise is the most beautiful expression of a redeemed soul. It is our heart cry to God. This praise is to be offered to Jesus Christ. That's a reminder that we can never go one step without Jesus Christ. We have nothing to offer God apart from him. There is nothing in us that is acceptable to God. There is nothing in our merit, nothing in our strength, nothing in our wisdom. We cannot go one step without Jesus Christ. If we are to know God, if we are to walk in fellowship with him, if our hearts are to be kept warm, it will be by Jesus Christ. It is by him that we come to God. He is our great high priest. He is still the One who brings us into the holiest of all. He brings us into the presence of the Father. We go there in Jesus' name. It is all by him. The sacrifice of praise we give to God is by Jesus Christ. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is Almighty God. He is Eternal Father. He is Everlasting Sacrifice. He is the Eternal High Priest. We cannot get to God without him.
p. 382

Hewitt says:

The author now comes to his closing exhortation and urges the readers to offer to God through Christ the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Great emphasis is placed upon *di'autoa, by him*, for their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving must be offered not through the intervention of the Jewish sacrificial order, or any other order, but through Christ the one great High Priest and Mediator of the new covenant. The *sacrifice of praise*, which is to be offered *continually*, is in opposition to the animal sacrifices which have ceased, and implies that the one perfect sacrifice has already been offered and accepted by God.

p. 210

DeHaan says:

HEBREWS thirteen is a basket of beautiful fruits. They are the fruits which the Lord looks for in the life of the believer as a result of his growing in grace, until maturity is reached. The more mature and the healthier the tree, the greater will be the quantity of fruit. As a tree is known by its fruits, so too the progress of the believer in his growth in grace will be evidenced by the amount and quantity of fruits evidenced in daily life. In the first fourteen verses of Hebrews 13, nine fruits are given. These we have briefly discussed in our previous chapters. And now we come to the tenth fruit.

p. 197

DeHaan says further:

And that is probably why the admonition to offer the fruit of our lips is not mentioned until after the other fruits are enumerated: love, hospitality, submission, purity, contentment, boldness, sympathy, stability, and finally separation without the camp. All these come first and then our testimony will be believed.

p. 199

Wiersbe says:

The writer named two of the "spiritual sacrifices" that we offer as Christians (Heb. 13:15-16). Note that the word "spiritual" is not in contrast to "material," because material gifts can be accepted as spiritual sacrifices (see Phil. 4:10-20). The word "spiritual" means "spiritual in character, to be used by the Spirit for spiritual purposes." A believer's body, presented to God, is a spiritual sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

The first spiritual sacrifice is *continual praise to God* (Heb. 13:15). The words of praise from our lips, coming from our hearts, is like beautiful fruit laid on the altar. How easy it is for suffering saints to complain, but how important it is for them to give thanks to God.

The second spiritual sacrifice is *good works of sharing* (v. 16). This would certainly include the hospitality mentioned in verse 2, as well as the ministry to prisoners in verse 3. "Doing good" can cover a multitude of ministries: sharing food with the needy; transporting people to and from church or other places; sharing money; perhaps just being a helpful neighbor. I once had the privilege of seeing a man come to Christ because I helped him mow his lawn after his own mower broke.

p. 154

Richards says:

"Through Jesus, therefore," the thought concludes, "let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise" (v. 15). Through Jesus, let's do good and share with others (v. 16). Through Jesus, and through Jesus *alone*, let's go on to discover the full meaning of being saved.

p. 142

McGee says:

A child of God is a priest today and can bring sacrifices to God. There are four sacrifices of a believer. (1) You can sacrifice your *person* (see Rom. 12:1). Someone has said, "When one truly gives himself to the Lord, all other giving becomes easy." (2) You can sacrifice your *purse* (see 2 Cor. 8:1-5). If He doesn't have your purse, He doesn't have you. (3) You can offer the sacrifice of *praise*, which we find in this verse: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (4) Finally, you can offer the sacrifice of *performance* or doing good, which we find in the following verse.

p. 615

Thomas points out:

Here comes the last occasion of the characteristic phrase "let us," which is found twelve times in this Epistle, all of them possessing special point and force.

p. 180

I went back through the epistle and came up with THIRTEEN of them:

1. "Therefore, let us fear lest, a promise that is still open of entering into His rest, anyone of you should seem to have failed to reach it" (4:1).
2. "Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience" (4:11).
3. "Let us be holding fast our confession" (4:14).
4. "Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace" (4:16).
5. "Let us be pressing on to maturity" (6:1).
6. "Let us keep on drawing near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (10:22).
7. "Let us constantly be holding fast the confession of our hope" (10:23).
8. "Let us be considering how to stimulate one another love and good deeds" (10:24).
9. "Let us also lay aside every encumbrance" (12:1).
10. "Let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us" (12:1).
11. "Let us be having grace showing gratitude by means of which we have we may be serving God" (12:28).
12. "Hence, let us be going out to him outside the camp bearing His reproach" (13:13).
13. "Let us continually be offering up a sacrifice of praise to God" (13:15).

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

As fire melts unrefined silver, bringing the impurities to the surface, so trials bring the "scum" to the top in your life. When you praise God in the midst of a trial, you cooperate with His plan to remove the scum; when you complain, you resist His plan and stir the impurities right back into your character. This means that God, to accomplish His good purposes, may have to send or permit another trial; it may delay the unfolding of His good plan for you and your loved ones.

p. 127

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

COMMAND #10:

"DO NOT BE OVERLOOKING THE DOING OF GOOD AND SHARING."

In COMMAND #10 we also have A REASON:

"FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS PLEASED."

Galatians 6:10

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

James 2:15-17

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

2 Kings 7:7-9

So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives. The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents. They ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also. Then they said to each other, "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace."

Thomas says:

This divine pleasure is twofold: God is pleased with our faith (11:6), and with our works (13: 16).
p. 180

BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE

"Even while I was a boy at school, it was clear to me that no explanation of the evil in the world could ever satisfy me. . . . But however much concerned I was at the problem of the misery in the world, I never let myself get lost in broodings over it; I always held firmly to the thought that each one of us can do a little to bring some portion of it to an end."

--Albert Schweitzer
(quoted in When You Can't Come Back,
Zondervan, 1992)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

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.

COMMAND #11:

"KEEP ON OBEYING YOUR LEADERS AND SUBMITTING [TO THEM]."

With this verse, also, we have a TWO-FOLD REASON:

1. "FOR THEY THEMSELVES ARE KEEPING WATCH OVER YOUR SOULS, AS THOSE WHO WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT," and
2. "FOR THAT WOULD BE OF NO HELP TO YOU."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If former **leaders** were to be remembered and their teachings retained (vv. 7-8), present ones were to be obeyed. Their responsibility before God was to be recognized and their shepherding tasks should not be complicated by disobedience. . . . [this is] "so their accounting [to God for you] may be with joy.")
p. 812

The LEADERS ARE TO BE LIKE SHEPHERDS keeping watch over the souls of their flock.

They are going to be GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF THIS SHEPHERDING.

He gives the PURPOSE following that:

"IN ORDER THAT [POSITIVELY] THEY MAY BE DOING THIS WITH JOY AND [NEGATIVELY] NOT WITH GROANING, FOR THAT WOULD BE OF NO HELP TO YOU."

All the privileges of believers do not release them from the obligation to submit to spiritual oversight.

Wiersbe says the responsibility is to be obeying them:

If they are faithful to care for your soul and teach you the Word, you have the responsibility to obey. A spiritual leader is not a dictator who drives you from behind. He is a shepherd who goes before and leads the way.
p. 822

Wiersbe says further:

When a servant of God is in the will of God, teaching the Word of God, the people of God should submit and obey. This does not mean that pastors should be dictators. "Neither [be] lords over God's heritage" (1 Peter 5:3). Some church members have a flippant attitude toward pastoral authority, and this is dangerous.
p. 151

Phillips says:

This long section on the way of love ends with a word on the ministry of an elder and the obligation of the believer to recognize the elder and his work.
p. 217

(The Hidden Price of Greatness by Ray Beeson & Ranelda Mack Hunsicker)

Steps to Spiritual Greatness

- ◆ Humble yourself before God and accept correction.
- ◆ Honor the diversity of others and God's work in and through them.
- ◆ Hear the pain in others' lives.
- ◆ Help repair damaged relationships and ministries. Do not rejoice in anyone's decline.
- ◆ Hope in God rather than in human ability.

The Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones. . . . And you will be called the repairer of the breach.

(Isa. 58:11-12, NASB)

p. 103

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

It was a fine saying of an old missionary on his deathbed, who died at the age of ninety-six: 'The very best thing that a man can do is to preach the gospel.'

p. 276

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

The biggest problem is not to add years to your life--but life to your years.

The fire of God in your heart will melt the lead in your feet.

When Mark Twain was asked the reason for his success he replied, "I was born excited."

p. 83

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Truth accomplishes no victories without enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is the spark that puts enjoyment into our lives.

If you get on fire for God, you will be too hot for Satan to handle.

Zeal without knowledge is a fire without control.

You cannot kindle a fire in another's heart until it is burning in your own.

None are so old as those who have outlived their enthusiasm.

p. 83

(Exit Interviews by William D. Hendricks)

A thousand mini-popes were strutting around telling
their followers what to believe, how to behave,
whom to marry, and whom not to associate.

Os Guinness

p. 87

(Sacred Honor: A Biography of Colin Powell by David Roth)

Powell learned early that competence and character go a long way
toward building credibility.

p. 127

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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 shall man do to me?"

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

(Not I, But Christ by Stephen F. Olford)

Himself

*Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling, not it is His Word;
Once His gift I wanted, now the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.*

*Once 'twas painful trying, now 'tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation, now the uttermost;
Once 'twas ceaseless holding, now He holds me fast;
Once 'twas constant drifting, now my anchor's cast.*

*Once 'twas busy planning, now 'tis trustful prayer;
Once 'twas anxious caring, now He has the care;
Once 'twas what I wanted, now what Jesus says;
Once 'twas constant asking, now 'tis ceaseless praise.*

*Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him, now He uses me;
Once the pow'r I wanted, now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored, now for Him alone.*

*Once I hop'd in Jesus, now I know He's mine;
Once my lamps were dying, now they brightly shine;
Once for death I waited, now His coming hail;
And my hopes are anchored safe within the veil.*

*All in all forever,
Jesus will I sing;
Ev'rything in Jesus,
And Jesus ev'rything.*

A. B. Simpson

pp. 143-4

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

I'D RATHER HAVE JESUS
Mrs. Rhea F. Miller, 1894-1966

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

The inspiring and challenging words of this hymn, written by Mrs. Rhea Miller, so influenced 23-year-old George Beverly Shea that they determined the direction of his entire life. As he began to compose a melody for these moving lines, he decided to devote his singing talent to God's glory alone.

Growing up with devoted Christian parents, Bev was encouraged to use his fine singing voice often in the services of the Wesleyan Methodist churches of which his father was a minister. Financial needs of the family made it necessary for him to leave college and work in an insurance office. However, he continued singing in churches and for Christian radio programs. Unexpectedly he was offered an audition for a secular singing position in New York City and passed the test. The opportunity for a substantial salary and wide recognition made Bev's decision very difficult.

One Sunday as Bev went to the family piano to prepare a song for the morning service, he found there the poem "I'd Rather Have Jesus." His mother, who collected beautiful quotations and literary selections, had begun to leave some of them around the house for her son to read, hoping to guide him spiritually. Bev was deeply moved with the challenging message of this text. Immediately he began to compose the music for the lines and used the song that same day in his father's church service.

Bev Shea comments: "Over the years, I've not sung any song more than 'I'd Rather Have Jesus,' but I never tire of Mrs. Miller's heartfelt words." As a young man of 23, Bev allowed the message of this text to guide him wisely to a wonderfully productive and worthwhile life of service to Christ as he shared his musical "theme song" with audiences around the world--

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I'd rather be His than have riches untold; I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land; I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand:

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause; I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause; I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame; I'd rather be true to His holy name:

He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He's sweeter than honey from out the comb; He's all that my hungering spirit needs--I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead:

Refrain: Than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin's dread sway! I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.