

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Hebrews - Lesson 13

Here in our final chapter of the book of Hebrews, our writer begins his closing summary by reminding his readers of the key exhortations of their faith. This chapter really addresses **living out** their faith in their **daily lives**.

Prayerfully read all of Hebrews Chapter 13.

Verse 1 begins with the most important exhortation Christ left with us ----- an exhortation to **love**.

1) Look up the following Scripture references: **Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19 & John 13:34**. Obviously, God gave Moses the commandment in Leviticus that we are to love. Why, then, does Jesus say He gives them a **new** commandment? Looking at the verse in Leviticus and the verse in Matthew, record how these verses say we are to love our neighbor.

2) Now, Looking at **John 13:34**, record what Jesus says about the **new commandment** He gives us and **how we are to love** one another.

3) From the following verses record the **differences** you find in the love Jesus commanded us to have from what is natural for our flesh.

Matthew 5:43-44 -

John 15:12-13 -

Romans 12:10, 14 & 15 -

Colossians 3:11-13 -

1 John 3:16 -

4) **John 13:35** gives us the reason why this commandment is so important. What is it?

5) Are we capable of this love in our natural ability? Look up these Scriptures to assist you with your answer: **Romans 5:5; Romans 7:18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.**

“Let brotherly love **continue....**” (Verse 1)

6) We are also exhorted to **abide, stay, remain** in that attitude of love towards one another. The word for love used in this verse is **Philadelphia**. It means **brotherly affection** ----- the bond of affection associated with “**family.**” The commandment Christ gave to us was to bond together in this kind of kinship. Do you feel that sense of “family” with the Body of Christ? Have you experienced this kind of love towards you in the church? Share your thoughts on what brotherly love means to you.

“Do not forget to **entertain strangers...**” (Verse 2)

Hospitality (**verse 2**) once held a position of much greater importance than it does today. We think of it as a nice characteristic to cultivate, but one that many people don't have much time for in the busy pace of our lives. To these Christians, some very poor, some being persecuted, many “on the run,” and traveling on foot, the entertaining of “strangers” was a way of life, and a key to survival amongst the early church.

Though some **have** “entertained angels unaware,” the word for angel really means “messenger” ----- and, as all things in life can speak “messages” from God's heart that He wants us to hear, strangers/guests can often be messengers of blessing sent to us.

7) List what “entertaining strangers/guests” means to you. What do you think this might include?

a. Have you ever entertained a stranger or guest who turned out to be a real “**messenger of God**” sent to you that day?

8) Looking at **verse 3**, this brotherly love/kinship Christ has commanded us to “walk in” includes a genuine and sincere compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We should have this compassion towards all men, but it is a special compassion and empathy we are called to towards others in the Body of Christ, and especially those who are suffering. Have you ever experienced the “**chains**” of someone else’s “**bonds**,” the **heaviness** of their **burden**, or the **pain** of their **suffering**? If you have an experience, please share with the group.

As we come to Hebrews **13:4** we should remember that faithfulness, fidelity, honor, respect, and love should begin **in our homes**. I heard a wonderful statement made once that really spoke to my heart: “**Unbelievers may never have the opportunity to see how we “love” each other in the church, but many of them will see how we treat our spouse.**”

The fact that our author very specifically mentions that the “**marriage bed**” is **undefiled** gives emphasis to the sexual relationship between a man and wife being something good, something wonderful that God created. The sexual relationship really has a **three-fold purpose**. The first was to “propagate” the earth, but that isn’t the **only** purpose. The second was for pleasure, but that, also, is not the **only** purpose. The third, and **most important purpose** was to **bond** the man and wife together, making the two, **one flesh**. It was to create an **intimacy** that was **exclusive**, and that no other earthly relationship could give them. And that intimacy is also a picture of **Christ’s intimacy with His church**.

Because this intimacy is so important, we see the enemy doing everything in his power to pervert and defile it. He does this in **two ways** that can have many different faces. The first is to **encourage** sex **outside** of marriage in every way possible. The second is to **discourage** sex **within** the bonds of the marriage relationship. How important it is for us to be aware of his tactics and not fall prey to them outside our marriage or within our marriage.

9) Take a moment to write down a prayer asking the Lord to cultivate in our marriages the kind of respect and intimacy that will rightly portray His plan and purpose for marriage, and in all of our relationships, the kind of love that will glorify Him.

10) As we read on to **verses 5 & 6**, we come to a very important subject that holds the **key** to experiencing **“the fullness of joy”** that Christ has for us, namely, **contentment with what we have**. Verse 5 is telling us to live a life that is not filled with the “want of things” or “the love of money.” Record what Jesus says about this subject in **Luke 12:15**? Record the reason that **Hebrews 13:5** give for being “content.”

Luke 12:15 -

Hebrews 13:5 -

11) What does **verse 6** tell us we can **“boldly say?”**

a. Are you having difficulty “boldly saying that” in your present circumstances? This verse is a quote from **Psalms 118:6**. Read these other verses from **Psalms 118: verses 5, 8, 9, 14, 15-17**. Pick out and record **which** of these verses **most encourages** your heart today and share why.

12) Verse 7 is an exhortation for us to **remember** those in spiritual leadership over us. Remembering certainly includes **prayer** and **following** the example of those who have instructed us in our faith. When we put **verses 8 and 9** alongside this verse, we get a fuller perspective of this exhortation. As we are **“remembering”** and **“following”** the examples of those God has positioned in spiritual leadership over us, what does **verse 8** tell us to keep our focus on?

13) Why, in **this context** of looking at our spiritual leaders, is **verse 8** so important? Share your thoughts. (For insight, look ahead at the first part of **verse 9** and the warning it gives.)

14) Looking again at **verse 9**, What is the **key doctrine** of our faith and **basis** for our salvation hidden in this verse? (Look for the **one word** that says it all).

b. Looking at the **last portion** of **verse 9**, what are we being told our salvation is **not** based on? What point do you think the author is making with this example?

15) Verses 10-14 remind us our worship is different, as Christians, than any other faith because it is based, not on works but on **grace**. This difference is not only seen as we look at other cults and religions, but it is a difference seen from those under the Old Covenant as well.

As we look around us more and more, we find ourselves, as Christians, bearing “His reproach.” If we have not experienced this much in our lives, we can be assured that as time goes by, we will feel the brunt of it through the sarcastic attitudes in the media, in our co-workers viewpoints at our places of employment, and even in our own homes by our unbelieving family members.

Our salvation tells us that we: **#1**, are **sinners** (in us dwells no good thing), and **#2**, we don't deserve salvation, but have received it by **God's unmerited favor** (because of who **He** is and what **He's** done, not who we are or what we've done). Both these views immediately put us in opposition to the world's view ----- and that of other religions.

a. In what way(s) have you personally had to "**bear His reproach?**"

16) Write down the encouragement of **verse 14** and share how this ministers to your heart.

17) What does **verse 15** tell us our sacrifices should be?

"But to do good and to *communicate* forget not....."

18) **Verse 16** reminds us that our faith must not only be expressed to God through **worship**, but to **others** through our **actions**. To **communicate** really means literally to "***share what you have.***" This includes more than material things, but also what we have received from our worship. Look up and record what **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** tell us we are to share with others.

19) Verse 7 told us to **remember** those in spiritual leadership. As we look at **verse 17**, we're told to **obey** those in spiritual leadership, and to **submit** to their authority. What do you think this means, especially given the **warnings** we received in **verse 9**?

20) What did the believers in **Acts 17:11** do?

a. Do you do this? (Personal reflection)

21) Verse 17 goes on to draw us a picture of a **parent's heart** as it addresses the careful guidance of a true pastor over his flock. He feels the responsibility for the sheep. He knows he will have to give an account of them to the sheep's owner. He rejoices when he sees them doing well and feels grief when he sees them struggling or in rebellion. Take this moment in your study to stop and pray for the pastor the Lord has placed over you.

22) Read **verses 18-21**. What an important emphasis is being placed on prayer! What is the writer asking his recipients to pray for in **verses 18 and 19**?

23) Verses 20-21 are a wonderful example of prayer for us to pray for one another. Write out this prayer below. Then take a moment and lift up each person in your study group, praying that the Lord would perform these things in their lives.

24) Our writer closes his letter with a plea in **verse 22** that they “**suffer**” or **bear with** the exhortations he has given them. He’s asking them to “*listen to what I have to say, don’t turn a deaf ear, hear me out.*” If you feel comfortable, share with the group what the Holy Spirit is speaking to you in **this chapter** of Hebrews that you need to “**hear?**” What’s your take-away?

25) As we end our study in the book of Hebrews, what has made the **greatest impact** on you? What are you coming away with as we close this book that you will ponder in your heart?