

From the Picture to the Person
A Study in the book of Hebrews (1/22/2012 PM)
#24 – Final Exhortations, Part #1 (13:1-14)

In this final chapter of Hebrews the writer gives a series of practical exhortations. Our lifestyle is an evidence of the eternal life we possess.

1. Love Your Fellow Believers (1-3)

Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ

(1) “Let brotherly love continue.”

John teaches in 1 John that Christians love Christians. We are all literally “from the same womb.” The basis of this love is a shared experience of the saving grace of God.

• **Realism not sentimentalism**

What binds us together is the fact that we all have been born again. This is made possible by the indwelling Holy Spirit, John 13:34. This creates a racial and social integration created by the Holy Spirit, Romans 12:9-10.

• **Action not emotion**

(1) “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

In the early church persecution and poverty caused many Christians to move from place to place. The writer recalls Abraham receiving Christ and two angels. We may or may not meet real angels, but some people we help will become messengers of blessing in our lives.

(1) “Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also.”

Many Christians, especially Jewish Christians, were suffering for their faith. To visit them could put oneself in danger, 2 Timothy 1:16-17. To minister to a Christian prisoner in the name of Christ was to minister to Christ Himself, Matthew 25:36 & 40. Think about what you would want someone to do for you if you were in prison?

Ask God for Tangible Ways to Minister to My Fellow Christians?

2. Honor and Uphold Biblical Marriage (5)

The Controversial Issue of Marriage

“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

He is saying in essence that marriage is to be held in high honor by all true Christians. Marriage is a covenant. Our culture is working overtime to devalue marriage. Some joke that monogamy sounds like monotony. It is interesting that even the pagans are beginning to realize that true fulfillment comes only in marriage.

• **The only expression of human sexuality that God blesses is within the bonds of marriage**

The tragedy of the modern evangelical church is that there is little difference between many Christian’s morality and the world’s,

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

Adultery and Immorality Are not Unpardonable Sins but they Are Devastating Sins

3. Resist the Love of Money (5-6)

Contentment vs. Covetousness

Materialism has become the acceptable sin of the church.

Paul equates covetousness with idolatry, Colossians 3:5.

• **We combat covetousness by the awareness of Christ’s presence (5)**

The essence of our lives is not bound up in material things, but rather in Christ’s life being lived out in us, Luke 12:15.

• **We combat covetousness by the awareness of God’s providence (6)**

Contentment is more than just a passive acceptance of the inevitable. It was a great blessing to these early Christians to know that even if men took their goods they were still kept safe in God's hands.

Where I Place My Confidence Is Revealed by the Level of My Contentment

4. Remember Those Who Taught You the Truth (7-9)

Follow the Faithful

The author is admonishing these Jewish Christians not to return to legalism.

- **It is critical that our teaching and our testimony be consistent**, James 3:1-2

Truth does not change, stay true to the faith you have been taught. Beware of false teachers (8-9). We are sanctified by grace, not ceremonial laws and rituals. False teachers will be known by their lifestyles, Ephesians 4:14. Following dietary regulations for spiritual reasons is not biblical.

Never Exchange Grace for Legalism

5. Separate Yourself from Dead Religion (10-14)

His Fellow Jews

The message is primarily to the writer's Jewish brethren, but the principle still applies to us today (10-12). On the Day of Atonement the priests were not allowed to eat the sin offering. The bodies of those animals were taken outside the camp and burned.

- **A call for a believer to separate himself or herself from a false religious system** (12-14)

These Jews were to literally leave the Temple and the sacrificial system. Such separation is costly. 2 Timothy 3:12.

We Are to Follow Christ no Matter What It Costs