
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

Hebrews 13:1-8: *True Love with Jesus!*

General idea: We are called to love and to continue to do so no matter what the circumstances or oppositions. In so doing, we can also show hospitality to both those we know and those we do not know; we may even entertain angels. We are not to forget those who suffer, who are in prison, and the social outcasts, or add to their mistreatment. We are to treat others as Jesus does: feel their pain, have compassion, and do something to help. We are also to give honor to marriage, helping people build their marriages and fight against immorality and adultery. We are not to love money, but regard it only as a tool; we are to be content in Christ, for He will never leave or forsake us. We can have confidence in Christ, for He will help us; we need never be afraid of situations or peoples. We are not in this life alone; we have Christ and one another. And, He gives us all we need to run this race of life and faith successfully. Do not forget to respect your leaders, receive the Word from them, and remember all of the good. Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and tomorrow—forever.

Contexts and Background:

This passage transitions to a close, moving from specific directives to general, essential admonitions. The points here are to *keep the faith—keep it going, hang in there*, and *this is a time to step up and not give up*. In the athletic images that are used in the context of this passage to urge us to draw closer to God's heart and build our faith even when times are harsh or confusing, we are warned that if we do not train, we cannot race and if we cannot race, we miss out on so much. Thus, we are admonished for our apathy and stumbling into sin. This is what it means to live in Christ, practice His presence, and reflect His glory: *He is my life, significance, and identity. I am bearing His Fruit because I am drawing from Him by being near Him*. In so doing, we will not succeed in the world of sin; rather, our success will be in God's economy of Maturity, Character, and Fruit, building His Kingdom first as we know and serve our Lord (John 15; Gal. 4:1-2; Phil. 3: 12-17; 4:10-13)!

Commentary; Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Keep on loving.* Meaning the love of one Christian brother to another. We receive the continual work of the Holy Spirit and keep on responding in order to become a useful Christian by our practical application of faith. This means we live for and in Christ and stay away from lust and selfish desires that distract us from His plan and path. Love is what we receive in Christ. It is a duty and fruit we live and share with others around us. In hard times, Faith requires encouragement to move on to perseverance. This is a prime Christian responsibility (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7).

- *Each other.* A call to come along side one another for the mutual sharing of one's life and faith with others. Live above lust and desires and do not go astray. Lean on and mentor one another, remembering what others who walked in Christ have said and done. Life is not about what we want. It is about seeking and knowing and growing in Christ, understanding what He wants, and putting this into practice in community, for this is what a church, ministry, and a Christian life is supposed to be about (Eph. 4:17-5:2)!
- *As brothers.* Meaning Christianity is a community bond; this also refers to accountability that helps one stay stable and holds back apostasy as well as apathy, which would break those bonds, from affecting the rest of the church. We are not alone in life or faith, so hang on to Christ and one another. Do not venture your life's journey alone; we are meant to be together. When we covet or have jealousy or pride, we do the opposite of this community bonding and just serve as termites to the church.
- *Do not forget.* The Christian life comes with a responsibility, so we are not to allow our desires or dilemma or pressures to distract us from it (Matt. 25:35-36; Rom. 14:23; Phil. 2:3-4; Col. 3:23).
- *Entertain strangers.* Meaning being hospitable. Many Jewish homes were also "bed and breakfasts," a prime means of showing the traveling world God's Way (Gen. 18). We can do this by being encouraging with Christ-like temperament (2 Chron. 32:1-8; Esther 7; Luke 16:22-31; 18:9; Acts 19:8-10; 26:19-23; Rom. 15:14-16; Gal. 6:9; Phil. 1:6; 12-14, 25; 2 Tim. 2:25; James 5:7-12).
- *Entertained angels.* Referring to how Abraham himself did this, and so might we—not as a call, but as an added bonus. This is a prime example of hospitality: an essential call and purpose for an effective, healthy church (Gen. 18-19; Judges 6; 13).
- *Those in prison/in bonds.* A Roman place of detention before punishment or execution. Many Christians were in prison because of their faith. This was considered a virtue by Greek philosophers, and the Early Church was known for caring for prisoners, many under political and religious as well as unfair incarceration. Such a prisoner's only means of survival was caring Christians, which also spread the Word very well. This also demonstrated how important encouragement is (1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Tim. 1:16-18; Heb.10:32-34).
- *As if you were.* A call to be sympathetic and have empathy. In context, this also refers that life and ministry go on with or without us and our participation. God desires us to participate in Him and with others (Matt. 25:35-37; Heb. 10:33; 11:25).
- *Marriage bed.* This means the personal, intimate relationship of a man and wife which adultery, prostitution, and now pornography will defile. The word meant a virgin's bed where no one had sat on until her husband. The Church is called to

teach God's values, not compromise with the world, and to strengthen marriages and families by role modeling, encouragement, and help. (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:22-33).

- *Sexually immoral/whoremongers*. Meaning a fornicator, one who seeks to destroy what God has put together. This is a grievous sin and destroys. This is also a call to guard against lust and whatever else destroys relationships and marriages. Sexual immorality is extremely dangerous. The Roman and Greek civilization was very loose morally, which led to their fall.
- *Love of money/covetousness*. A call to be careful, for while wealth and riches are not evil in and of themselves, they usually will become evil as they become our "god"! The love of money, temptations of gathering wealth, and the desire to be rich has led astray and destroyed countless people over the centuries! We are called to be content with what He provides and not bend to greed or coveting. The point is that our real and true treasures are imperishable and eternal. Thus, our security is who we are in Christ, not what we have or want of money and/or "things." How one handles his finances is a real reflection of his spiritual life (Matt. 6:19-34; 19:16-26; Luke 12:15, 21; Phil. 4:10-13; 1 Tim. 3:3; 6:6-19; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)!
- *Never will I leave you*. A promise of God, meaning we have freedom from fear, as our Lord is our partner in life and faith. This was a great comfort given to a people who were thinking of leaving the Church. Our confidence is in Christ and not our situations (Deut. 31:6-8; Jos. 1:5; 2 Chron. 15:2; Psalm 37:28).
- *The Lord is my helper*. A quote from the Psalms to encourage people not to be afraid, but to put their confidence and trust in the Lord (Deut. 31:6-8; Psalm 56:11; 118:6; Phil. 4:11-12; Heb. 2:15; 4:16; 11:23, 27).
- *Remember your leaders/which have the rule*. Meaning to submit and respect your leaders and pray for them, help them and not conspire against them. Referring to the local church leaders who may have been disrespected so the people went over their heads to this author of Hebrews. This may also include honoring those who have passed away—the deeds they have done in Christ's honor. Also, meaning *imitation*, as a call to have a mentor and a good example to follow. It is imperative that Christian leaders set the tone and lead others where they have been. If not, the followers have no example.
- *Imitate their faith*. We are called to learn and grow and search out good examples for our life and faith as well as be one for others (1 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 5:1-2; 1 Thess. 1:6-7; 2:14; Heb. 6:12; 3 John 11).
- *Jesus Christ is the same*. God is eternal, He is all-present and He never changes. He is the Constant, Changeless One who communes with us and desires us to change from our worse to His better. He anchors Himself to us, and even when we suffer, He is there. If all we know is this, we have all we need. This also means that

we as His instruments and leaders come and go. Our ideas and trends also come and go, But He, Christ the Lord, remains. Thus, ministry is not about what we build; it is Who we honor that lasts and is important! So let us fix our selves, our church, and our vision upon Him. Allow Christ to be Lord of your life and church (Psalm 102:27; Isa. 46:4; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:8-12; 3:7-13; 7:16-28)!

- *Yesterday and today and forever.* This is an early church confession of the Lordship and changelessness of Christ. Meaning Christ is the Anchor and is Transcendent, the all-knowing and powerful God through all time and space and dimensions. *Yesterday* means the age of the Prophets; *Today* is the age of Christ and our life in the here and now, and *tomorrow*—the age to come or eternity.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

This Epistle closes with an exhortation to love. In fact, love is one of the main themes of Hebrews as are hope and faith, all of which make a triad of primary virtues from which all Fruit and character flow. Faith is necessary to be and grow in Christ and love is the synergy that makes this function more easily. Hope gives us the joy. This is a work of the Holy Spirit that we receive and to which we respond. This is the foundation of being personally effective as a Christian with our relationships as well as an effective Church. This is what the practice of the Christian life is to be about. Love is the practical application of Christ setting us free, what He has called, and what it means to be transformed and renewed. This love is what helps us be encouragers and equippers in other's lives as well. Love, Faith, and Hope are also spurred on in community and are mutually shared as we each participate in Christ and contribute to the needs of one another to grow further in our journey of Christian living. In this way, we share Christ by showing Christ and therefore state privately and publicly what it is to know and love our Lord to those who do not know Him, and encourage those who do (1 Cor. 13; Col. 1:4-5; 1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 3:7-19; 10:25; 12:14).

In Christ we have what is most important: deliverance. What we face in trials, frustrations, and life is merely temporary so we have to keep our eye on what is important. He is our Great example of endurance. He is our Forerunner and Lord who urges us that we can do it. Faith is in the promise of Christ. Our hope is in Him not in what we have or want. What God fulfills is up to Him and His timing; even if we do not have it now, we will, even if it is not until eternity. Therefore, we can live for the faith in triumph. However, we have to be aware of the opposite of His call and that is not having hope, faith, and confidence in Him so we cannot live for Him (Rom. 15:4).

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?

5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. In what ways does brotherly love define you? How should it?
2. How do you show love to those who are family members, strangers, or even church members you do not like? Now compare this to God's call. How do they line up? What do you need to do?
3. Why are we called to love and to continue to do so no matter what the circumstance or oppositions? What would your life look like if you did this more? How can you?
4. Do you remember the influence and deeds of others and what they lived for? What do you live for?
5. How have you experienced Christ's love and grace? How can this help you feel His fellowship and empowerment for the future?
6. What does His Good News mean to you? How has He offered His plan to you and how have you responded?
7. How have you observed that how one handles his or her finances is a reflection of one's spiritual life?
8. What does it mean to you that you have freedom from fear with our Lord as your helper? How can this get you through the tough times of life?
9. What does your church leadership need to do to teach and show that our real and true treasures are imperishable and eternal? What would this do to your church's spiritual life and ministry?
10. Are your eyes upon Christ as Lord? Do you have ideas, trends, or personal agendas that are in His way? How does it help to know that God is eternal and that He is all-present and never changing?
11. How and why does the Christian life demand responsibility? What can you do to more fully realize this? How can this help you to be content with what He provides and not bend to greed or coveting?

12. The question is *why do you rarely or perhaps never* draw near to Christ? The point to us is, *are we filled with gratitude for Who and what He has done?* If not, what do you need to do to become grateful and what would this do for your life and relationships?

© 2008 R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* www.intothyword.org