

GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Hebrews: Final Exhortations

Hebrews 13:1-25



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- June 1st TJC Kids Camp (Kids)
- June 6th Gather (Womens)
- June 13th 2nd Saturday (Mens)

Check out the TJC Weekend Recap podcast for a more in-depth look at our sermons each week!

The podcast is available on all streaming platforms!

SERMON NOTES

We have come to the end of the road for the book of Hebrews. This letter, whose author is unknown, is likely written to a church in Rome. He has reached the end of his very in-depth treatise of how Jesus is the fulfillment of everything. He has provided one of the richest theological books in the entire New Testament...which tells you something about the hearers that received it too, doesn't it? These were pretty theologically astute believers even in the first-century AD without most of the benefits we have of learning from church history about doctrines.

He ends his letter with a string of exhortations that are meant to guide the actions of the believers (not just as individuals, but as a community). He's not just giving them ideas "to chew on." He's giving them direction for living.

STORY -- A lot of people like to simply think about things, rather than take action. A lot of people have aspirations that live inside their brains that they never do anything about. When I was a kid, I'd go across the street to our only neighbor for miles. His name was Dee. He was just a year or so younger than me. We'd play football in his yard. The two of us would create plays and name them for our future game with the kids that lived down the road (the Heflin brothers). We'd practice and talk about the game. Now, the Heflin brothers had no idea about us or that we were practicing for them. It was all in our heads. We never played that game. It was an exercise in pretending. It lived in our minds. We never took action to go a few miles down the road and ask them to play.

The Christian life is not an exercise in thinking about ideas or talking about things, but never living it out. The Hebrew writer ends his book with a series of clear exhortations these Christians (and us today) need to live out in our lives. It isn't a theory. It's the direction for action.

Scripture Exegesis: Hebrews 13:1-25

I've broken these exhortations down into four buckets.

I. Family Love & Hospitality (vs 1-3)

They are to exhibit brotherly love. This isn't mere affection or feelings, but family loyalty. The word "let continue" implies it was already present but required active work.

Then he gets into showing hospitality. This isn't just to the household of God, but to those outside as well. He then grounds the call for this in Genesis 18 (Abraham's encounter with the 3 men -- angel of the Lord and two other angels). There is a lot we could unpack here but much of it would be speculation because he doesn't expound on it. But the idea conveyed is kindness and hospitality as a way of life to those in the faith and outside, because you never truly know who you are encountering. There is some sort of implication here that we could interact with angels in this life and have no idea. There are obvious examples of Scripture of humans encountering angels and being terrified because they know it's an angel. But we see here we could interact with angels that appear in human form and not know it.

Then he tells them to remember those in prison. These are likely believers that have been imprisoned for their faith. It's persecution. Some of the readers had suffered confiscation of their property (we know from Heb. 10:34). Now they must stand with others in chains.

Notice the aim and trajectory of this passage is love in action amongst fellow believers and even toward outsiders. This should be a mark of true Christians.

II. Personal Integrity & Contentment (vs 4-6)

Now he turns the focus inward. He begins with saying for them to hold marriage in honor, which includes keeping themselves from sexual impurity. Marriage in the Roman Empire was not treated as holy. There was sexual sin and debauchery then just as there is now. He tells Christians their lives should be markedly different despite cultural pressure.

Then he goes into the subject of money (the only place in Hebrews where this appears). He tells them to keep their life free from the love of money. Greed is a love for money that looks to money to be for you what only God can ultimately be. For example: we all have an unhealthy default ditch we drift into if we don't steer our hearts. We either look for money to be our happiness (stuff, status) or we look for it to be our security (protection, fear). Money can provide you both stuff and security in some measure, but it's when we give our hearts to money in search of those things above God.

American Christians have such a hard time thinking properly about money. Let me rabbit-trail for just a moment. Some Christians ignore the commands of Scripture about stewarding our money, generosity, and not letting it rule your heart and they let love of money rule them. And other Christians treat money like a 4-letter word. They think making money is dirty. They believe having wealth is sin. They think the work of hustling, building things, and making deals is unbecoming of a Christian. Both of these postures are wrong. Then you have biblical stewardship.

So you have 3 options: Love of Money, Fear of Money, Stewardship of Money.

Ditch One: Love of Money

- Motivation: You are driven by accumulation, comparison, and the need to prove yourself. The "hustle" is a symptom of inner anxiety, not joyful stewardship.

- Identity: You subconsciously tie your confidence to your financial success. If you lose money, you feel like a failure. If you make money, you feel superior.

- Contentment: Your peace is always one deal away. Your craving for more stuff will be satisfied when you get that last project done. Others you know have more than you. Yours isn't sufficient now. The goalpost always moves.

- View of Money: Money is a *master*. It dictates your mood, your time, and your loyalties.

Ditch Two: Fear of Money

- **Motivation:** Driven by guilt, avoidance, and suspicion of wealth. You treat money as inherently corrupt, so you disengage from business, planning, or building. You ignore the wisdom of Proverbs and confuse biblical warning against *greed* with a blanket call to "not too much" but that line always seems to be just above where you are financially.
- **Identity:** You measure your spirituality by being middle of pack or less, and how little you think about finances. A growing bank account makes you uneasy, not grateful. You assume that wanting to provide abundantly for your family or fund kingdom work is worldly ambition.
- **Contentment:** You settle for complacency or even laziness and call it "peace." You don't plan, don't invest, and don't work diligently because you're afraid that success will corrupt you. Your lack of effort isn't faith. It's unbelief disguised as humility.
- **View of Money:** Money is a contaminant. You see it as a spiritual hazard rather than a neutral resource that can either enslave you or serve God's purposes.

Biblical Road: Stewardship of Money

- **Motivation:** You are driven by stewardship, creation, and problem-solving. You enjoy using your God-given skills, negotiating, and bringing order out of chaos.
- **Identity:** Your worth is rooted in who you are in Christ, not what your net worth is. A bad quarter doesn't destroy you because your standing with God is secure.
- **Contentment:** You are willing to take risks and work hard, but you are equally at peace if God closes a door or redirects your resources. You hold your wealth with an open hand, remembering 1 Tim. 6:17: "God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth."
- **View of Money:** Money is a *tool* for kingdom impact, family provision, and loving your neighbor.

Notice that contentment is brought up here. Contentment is tied both to the warning against sexual immorality and love of money. Why? Because the heart of discontentment is wanting other people's stuff. It's not being satisfied with what God gives you.

III. Steady Faith (vs 7-15)

This is the theological core of his exhortations. He tells them to remember their leaders. This is likely their past leaders that have gone to be with the Lord. He says to imitate their faith.

Then he says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." This is an incredible theological statement about the eternal nature of Jesus. But why does he say this here? Because look at what is next. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings. He spoke about all these dietary laws and ascetic rituals some had. He contrasts that with the grace that strengthens the heart. Not only should you know be blown around by weird teachings. But you should follow Jesus "outside the camp" and be willing to be marginalized for not conforming.

We have no lasting city on this side of Christ's return. Nothing will ever truly satisfy. But we seek a city to come (New Jerusalem). So what should our response be? Continual praise to God and acknowledgement of His name. We live lives of praise in all things.

IV. Healthy Leadership Dynamics (vs 16-19)

They do not neglect doing good (serving others and helping). They are to share what they have and in doing so this pleases God. (STORY: Eloise dying, dance studio families rallying to help with funeral and expenses left to sister, Sandra).

He exhorts them to obey their leaders and submit to them because they keep watch over their souls. They give an account to God for their leadership. So don't make them groan over having to lead you. I'm so thankful for our church. We truly do not have a griping church. I have pastor friends across the country and it is sadly not the case for all of them. Many, if not most, churches are known for their stiffneck attitudes.

Then he asks for prayer so he can be restored to them. So this is someone who was not currently with them. But the principle of praying for your leaders is so important. I would love your prayers and so would all of our pastors and elders, staff and leaders.

All of these exhortations are given to these Christians. They are not given to be stapled on like fruit to a tree. They are meant to be fruit cultivated from a person submitted to Christ, growing in wisdom, and walking in community with others.

Close:

I want to close in the same way the Hebrew writer does. He gives them a benediction (vs 20-21) and final words (vs 22-25).

The God who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, and Christ the Good Shepherd who shed His blood to redeem us, will equip us for all these things. He will work for us. He's not done with us. He's not one to save and abandon us. He saves and sustains. He redeems and supplies all we need.

PRAY

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of



DISCUSS:

1: Hospitality as a Way of Life – Read: Hebrews 13:2

Question: Hospitality in Scripture is more than entertaining friends. What keeps us from opening our lives to others, and what might change if we viewed hospitality as a normal part of Christian discipleship? For those who struggle, what holds you back from living this way?

Leader Note: Hospitality is not primarily about having the perfect home or meal. It is about creating space for people and demonstrating the love of Christ.

2: Remembering the Suffering Church – Read: Hebrews 13:3

Question: Why is it easy to forget believers who are suffering for their faith when we are comfortable? How can we better identify with and support those who are enduring hardship?

Leader Note: The writer calls believers to remember suffering Christians as though they were suffering alongside them. The church is one body. For us, praying may be the only thing we can do (at times), but this still shows our remembrance of them.

3: Honoring Marriage in a Confused Culture – Read: Hebrews 13:4

Question: What are some current ways our culture seeks to diminish the value of marriage and sexual purity? How can Christians honor marriage whether they are single, dating, engaged, married, widowed, or divorced?

Leader Note: The call to honor marriage belongs to everyone, not just married people. God's design for sexuality reflects His wisdom and goodness.

4: Contentment Versus Covetousness – Read: Hebrews 13:5

Question: Why do you think discontentment often lies beneath both sexual temptation and the love of money? How does contentment help protect us from both?

Leader Note: At the heart of many temptations is the desire for something God has not given us. Contentment trusts God's provision and timing.

5: Love of Money, Fear of Money, or Stewardship? – Read: Hebrews 13:5–6

Question: Which of these ditches do you think Christians are most vulnerable to today: love of money, fear of money, or poor stewardship? Which temptation do you personally find yourself drifting toward?

Leader Note: Poverty & Wealth is not an automated sign of God's blessings. The goal is faithful stewardship where money remains a servant rather than a master.

6: Remember Your Leaders – Read: Hebrews 13:7–8

Question: Why did the writer connect remembering faithful leaders with the statement, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"?

Leader Note: Human leaders come and go, but Christ remains unchanged. Our ultimate confidence is not in leaders but in the Savior they point us to.

8: Guarding Against Strange Teachings – Read: Hebrews 13:8–9

Question: At TJC, we are constantly warning about examples of “strange teachings” or distractions that can pull believers away from the simplicity of Christ and the gospel today. Has there been some recent ones in your life that have impacted people that you know?

Leader Note: False teaching often gains traction by promising something new, secret, or more exciting. The believer's anchor is the unchanging Christ.

9: Leadership, Submission, and Prayer – Read: Hebrews 13:17–19

Question: Why do you think Scripture calls believers not only to follow godly leadership but also to pray for those who lead them? What happens when either side neglects its responsibility? Please spend time praying for our leaders!

Leader Note: Healthy churches require both faithful leaders and faithful members. Leadership is a stewardship before God, and prayer strengthens those entrusted with that responsibility.



- **BUILD UP | SEND OUT**

- **How are you making yourself known at church this week?**
- **How are you growing to know Christ better this week?**
- **How are you making Christ known this week?**

- **PRAYER**

- **Pray over any request from your group members.**
- **Pray for our team:** Braden Benz: Worship & Creative Associate
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
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- **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Browns
- **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>