

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS, Part 1

TEXT: HEBREWS 13:1-8

Introduction:

1. The final chapter of the book of Hebrews contains exhortations regarding the conduct and behaviour of believers.
2. J. Vernon McGee said Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter, Hebrews 12 is the hope chapter, and Hebrews 13 is the love chapter (cf. 13:1).

I. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING BROTHERLY LOVE

II. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING PURITY

III. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING BEING CONTENT

IV. INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT PASTORAL AUTHORITY

I. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING BROTHERLY LOVE (13:1-3)

1. "Let brotherly love continue" (13:1). For brotherly love to "continue," it is assumed that brotherly love already existed.
2. Our Lord said in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
3. First John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."
4. The Greek word translated "brotherly love" is *Philadelphia*.
5. Brotherly love should also extend to strangers (13:2). This apparently is a reference to Abraham, who entertained angels in Genesis 18. One of the angels was the pre-incarnate Christ.
6. And remember what our Lord said in Matthew 25:35, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in."
7. And brotherly love should be shown towards those "that are in bonds" (prison), "and them which suffer adversity" (13:3). This adversity would include family problems, physical problems, financial problems, etc.
8. John Phillips says Christian compassion should be shown to saints, strangers, and sufferers. Many of the sufferers were suffering because of religious persecution (cf. 13:6).
9. Matthew Henry says the phrase, "as being yourselves also in the body," refers not only to the natural body, which is liable to similar sufferings, but also to the mystical body. In other words, we are all part of the same body, and under the same head.

10. First Corinthians 12:26 says, " And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

II. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING PURITY (13:4)

1. Hebrews 13:4 is not being preached much these days.
2. "But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
3. He judged Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. He judged King Solomon.
5. Ironically King Solomon himself wrote some strong warnings regarding sexual immorality (Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:24-35; 7:5-27; 9:13-18).
6. Nehemiah 13:26 says, "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin."
7. This verse not only condemns sexual immorality, it also condemns asceticism. For example, the RCC does not allow their priests and nuns and other workers to get married, but Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled..."
8. First Timothy 3:2 says, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..."
9. First Timothy 4:3 says "forbidding to marry" is a doctrine of devils (I Tim. 4:1).

III. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING BEING CONTENT (13:5, 6).

1. The opposite of covetousness is contentment (13:5).
2. The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17).
3. Our Lord said in Luke 12:15, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
4. Luke 16:14 says the Pharisees were covetous.
5. Mark 7:21, 22; Romans 1:29-31; I Corinthians 5:10, 11; 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5; I Timothy 3:3; II Timothy 3:2-4; and II Peter 2:3, 14, all link the sin of covetousness with horrible sins like evil thoughts, uncleanness, adultery, fornication, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, lasciviousness, murder, theft, wickedness, deceit, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, maliciousness; envy, debate, deceit, malignity; whispering (gossip), backbiting, hating God, being spiteful and proud, boasting, inventing evil things, disobeying parents, extortion, idolatry, railing and brawling, drinking, and being unthankful and unholy.
6. Colossians 3:5 says, covetousness is idolatry.

7. We should learn to be content. Paul said in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
8. "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5; cf. Deuteronomy 31:6).
9. These Hebrew Christians were facing fierce persecution, from both Jews and pagans (13:6). This is a quote from Psalm 118:6, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"

IV. INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT PASTORAL AUTHORITY (13:7, 17).

1. "Them which have the rule over you" (13:7) refers to pastors (cf. 13:17, 24; I Thess. 5:12, 13).
2. There are certain people who will not submit to pastoral authority. God will judge them for their rebelliousness.
3. Some church members criticize the pastor in front of their children, and then later on they wonder why their children have left the church and will never come back.
4. The pastor preaches "the word of God" (13:7). It is the most important work in the world. Christians are to "follow" his leadership.
5. Of course, if the pastor does not preach the Word of God (or if he doesn't practice what he preaches), then Christians should leave the church.
6. But they should leave the right way.

CONCLUSION:

1. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (13:8).
2. This affirms the deity of Christ, for all men change, but God never changes. Immutability is one of God's attributes.
3. Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the LORD, I change not."
4. Men are fickle and are always changing. The same crowd who cried out, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (John 12:13), cried out few days later, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him...We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).
5. But, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (13:8).