

## Hebrews Study #8: Hebrews 13

### Exhortation to Love

**Intro:** Many people claim they are not interested in Christianity because of the hypocritical behavior of believers. To what extent is this a valid excuse or simply a smoke screen?

The world takes its notion of God most of all from those who say they belong to God's family. They read Christians a great deal more than they read the Bible. Unfortunately, throughout the history of the church, the often mean, prejudiced, and immoral lives of professed Christians have given the world a ready excuse to malign the claims of Christ. Perhaps this phenomenon explains the rationale for Hebrews 13.

#### Read Hebrews 13:1-6

**Question #1:** Which commands surprise you? Which ones challenge you? Why?

**Question #2:** Why are each of them an important manifestation of genuine love? How would they be relevant to Hebrew believers?

**Question #3:** Do you have trouble being peacefully content with your level of income and possessions? How is God's presence an antidote for discontentment (vv. 5-6)?

They were also instructed to show respect for the leadership of the church (13:7-17). No doubt such respect was overdue since these Jewish Christians had gone off on their own and were being led away by the heresy of the Judaizers (13:9-15). They are consequently encouraged to get back into the fold (rather than separate in their own house church) and provide for the leaders' needs, as a Christian sacrifice which is pleasing to God (13:15-16).

#### Read Hebrews 13:7-19

**Question #4:** What commands are given to believers regarding submitting to spiritual leadership in the church? Do you try to make your leaders' work joyful and not burdensome?

**Question #5:** In what sense is our praise a sacrifice to God (v. 15)?

Concluding instructions which formally turn this homily into an epistle, are given to the readers (13:20-25).

**Reflection:**

What have you learned from your study of Hebrews that has given you hope, encouragement and strength for your faith race?