

➤ Read Hebrews 13:1–25.

1. In verse 1 the author calls his readers to love one another. Jesus himself said, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (Jn. 13:34b), and the apostle John reminds us, “We love because he first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19).

- a. What has the book of Hebrews shown us of Jesus’ love for his people? (2:9, 14–18)

- b. What ways of showing love for our “brothers and sisters” (v. 1) has Hebrews already highlighted?

3:13

10:24–25

2. Read back through verses 2–5.

- a. What godly forms of love are believers now commanded to practice?

- b. What ungodly forms of love are they commanded to avoid?

“The description *immoral* designates those persons who indulge in sexual relationships outside the marriage bond, both heterosexual and homosexual, while *adulterous* indicates those who are unfaithful to their marriage vows.”¹

3. Commentator Philip Edgcumbe Hughes says, “True hospitality springs from the limitless fountain of the divine love manifested to us while we were still estranged sinners (Rom. 5:8).”² This kind of hospitality stands in contrast to what our culture idealizes (a perfectly set table with a multi-course meal in a spotless, well-appointed home). How is the hospitality mentioned here in verse 2 and described by Jesus in Luke 14 different from this cultural standard? (Lk. 14:12–14)

4. How are the Old Testament quotations in verses 5–6 a remedy for the temptation to love money and be discontented? (📖* For more on contentment versus the love of money, see 1 Tim. 6:6–10.)

5. What reassurance and encouragement do you draw from the simple yet profound statement that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (v. 8)?

6. What connection can you see between verses 8 and 9—between the statement that Jesus does not change and the command not to be “led away by diverse and strange teachings”?

7. Following religious regulations about food does not strengthen believers; grace does (v. 9).
 - a. What do you think it looks like to be strengthened by grace?

 - b. Where has the author told us to turn when we have need of strengthening grace? (Heb. 4:16)

8. Leviticus 16:27 states that on the Day of Atonement, “The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up.” The ground inside the camp was holy; “the ground outside the camp was unholy.”⁶ Our author sees this Old Testament practice as a shadow of Christ’s greater sacrifice “outside the city gate” (v. 12) of the holy city of Jerusalem.
 - a. What does it signify that Christ went outside the camp to be our sacrifice? (Is. 53:3–9; Gal. 3:13)

 - b. In a way that turned people’s notions of holy and unholy upside down, what has Jesus’ disgraceful death outside the camp achieved? (v. 12; Heb. 10:10, 14)

 - c. What do Jesus’ followers need to do—and expect? (v. 13; Mt. 10:24–25, 38,  Heb. 11:24–26)

 - d. What is the reward for going to Jesus in faith and accepting disgrace in the eyes of the world? (v. 14; Heb. 11:10, 16)

“We have an altar...”

The Christian faith stood out from the ancient religions that surrounded it in that it involved “no sacred buildings, no altars, no sacrificing priest.”³ It is possible that unbelievers looked down on Christians as having “no real religion” for this reason.⁴ In verse 10 the writer may be reassuring his readers that they do, indeed, have an altar: Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.⁵

9. Earlier, the author reassured his readers that Christians have a unique altar. Now he tells them that they also have sacrifices. What forms do the “sacrifices” of the Christian believer take? (vv. 15–16;  Rom. 12:1–3)
10. For what reasons are believers to “have confidence” in their leaders and “submit to their authority” (v. 17)? (v. 17)
11. What does the author of Hebrews ask of his “brothers and sisters” (v. 22), his readers? (vv. 18–19, 22, 24a)

“Remember...”

In verse 7 the writer urged his readers to remember their former leaders, those who likely first brought them the gospel message, and who have since died. As Philip Edgcumbe Hughes writes, “The recollection of the victorious witness of these persons... , of their joyful living to the glory of God, and of their untroubled dying in the assured hope of resurrection, should inspire them to follow their lead still and to put away all unworthy thoughts of giving up the struggle.”⁷ Now in verse 17 the author writes about the honor his readers are to give their current leaders.

Although the letter of Hebrews closes with a few personal greetings, the substance of the letter concludes with the benediction in verses 20–21:

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us^[b] that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

12. How is God characterized at the beginning of verse 20?
13. What mighty act of God does verse 20 highlight?

What does this act make possible?

Heb. 4:14–15; 7:24–26;  Heb. 6:19–20

Rom. 6:4–5; 1 Cor. 15:51–57

14. In verse 20 Jesus is given the title “the great shepherd of the sheep.” What does the title “shepherd” say about him and his relationship to his people? (Consider Ezek. 34 and Jn. 10:1–18.)
15. What is the writer asking God to do for the believers he is writing to? (v. 21)
16. What aspects of “his will”—“that which is pleasing in his sight” (v. 21)—has the author of Hebrews emphasized for his readers, including us?
- 2:1
- 3:1
- 3:12–14
- 4:14–16
- 10:19–25
- 10:35–39
- 12:1–3
- 12:14ff
- 12:25–29
17. With all of this in mind, pray the benediction in verses 20–21 first for yourself, and then for your loved ones and the women in your Bible study group.

*📖 For further study

¹ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1977), 566.

² Hughes, 563.

³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 400.

⁴ Irenaeus, quoted in F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 400.

⁵ Bruce, 401.

⁶ Hughes, 579.

⁷ Hughes, 570.