

**"The Practical Application"**

**Hebrews 13:1-25**

**Introduction:** There are many "TOOLS" which Satan uses against God's people to do what he can to keep us from being effective as we pass through this old world. John lists 3 "TOOLS" which the enemy will use.

**1 John 2:15-16**

*<sup>15</sup> Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

Satan will use the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to pull us far away from the will of God. When these 3 temptations are not conquered they then lead the believer away from God and into many sins.

In an attempt to satisfy these 3 temptations people have filled their lives with so many appointments and events that they have no time for God. Others have "MARRIED" their jobs in an attempt to satisfy these desires and therefore they have no time for God. Still others have thrown away all they had at home in an attempt to satisfy these temptations and they have been disqualified for service. There are those who are given over to gathering as much of this world's goods as they can and for that reason God has been pushed to the back burner. These 3 temptations have caused many of God's children to step away from the path which God would have them to walk, into the spiritual briars where they are constantly struggling to find the satisfaction which God offers freely as we walk in His will. They have no rest and they have no peace for these can only be found as we walk in fellowship with our Lord.

There is yet another "TOOL" in Satan's assortment which is often very effective in keeping believers from pressing forward for God and it is FEAR. Fear is the opposite of faith and it can cause us to freeze in our tracks if we allow it to control us. Fear can be used against the believer in many different areas of life.

- ✓ **There is the fear of failure.**

This has kept many believers from serving with the gifts which God has given to them.

- ✓ **There is the fear of not knowing what tomorrow or next week or what next year holds.**

This fear has kept many people from following the will of God and for that reason they have missed out on many blessings.

- ✓ **There is the fear of dying.**

This has caused many believers to live a life completely focused upon themselves in an attempt to slow down the aging process.

- ✓ **There is the fear of people.**

This is the fear that keeps many people from standing firm for God or from moving ahead for God. This fear of people has caused many believers to turn toward sin in order to keep from facing their fear.

In the book of Genesis we that there were 2 times in which Abraham feared man and in both of those times he lied about Sarah being his wife. Abraham lied to Pharaoh and to Abimelech. Now when he was confronted by Abimelech he revealed his fear.

### **Genesis 20:9-13**

*<sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.*

*<sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?*

*<sup>11</sup> And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.*

*<sup>12</sup> And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.*

*<sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.*

Abraham had within him a fear of man and it caused him to get into many difficult situations. Really he suffered great heartache because of his fear for it was in Egypt that he was given Hagar.

Because of the fear of man Peter denied the Lord 3 times. Remember when Jesus stood before Pilate and Pilate desired to release Him? The fear of the people controlled the actions of Pilate.

**John 19:12**

*<sup>12</sup> And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*

The writer of Proverbs sums up the fear of man the best.

**Proverbs 29:25-26**

*<sup>25</sup> The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*

*<sup>26</sup> Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.*

This now brings us to where we are in our study of Hebrews tonight. The Hebrew believers who received this letter were under the threats and the persecution of their fellow man. The writer knew that if they allowed fear to push faith from their hearts then they would turn away from God and they would not advance in their walk. It was the writer's desire to strengthen them against turning away. Not only were they under attack physically but they were also under attack mentally for there were false teachers who had been planted by the enemy with the goal of leading them astray.

**Notice Hebrews 13:5-6**

Here the writer reminded them of the promise that God would never leave them and therefore they could hold on to the Truth that He was their Helper and for that reason they never had to fear what man would do to them.

Now as we continue tonight we will see that the next 2 verses are also for the purpose of defeating fear.

**I. Exhortation #6 - Remember your Leaders**

**Notice Hebrews 13:7**

There is much to be considered from this verse. Let us first of all consider who the writer is referring to in this verse. It is not the present spiritual leaders who are over them.

**Notice Hebrews 13:17**

This is a reference to their present leaders and they were not to REMEMBER them but they were to obey and submit to them. So the RULERS in 13:7 are not those who were currently their spiritual leaders.

**Notice Hebrews 13:7 again.**

The word "conversation" means "conduct, lifestyle, or deportment". The idea here is that whoever the leaders are whom the writer is referencing, by the time this letter was written, had already passed on into eternity. As I look at the verse I see 2 major points about these men who had the rule over them:

1. They taught them the Word of God.
2. They lived by faith.

Now let me give you something else to consider about these men whom the writer mentions. Based upon the fact that the writer uses them for an example tells me they must have been men who faced severe persecution because that is what the Hebrews were facing and for them to be an example they must have faced the same. So who were they?

They had to be the Apostles and the leaders of the church.

**Hebrews 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

<sup>4</sup> *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Here we see the Hebrews had heard the Word through the Apostles. So the writer definitely has in mind the early church leaders. Now let me get back to the 2 major points about these men.

1. They taught the Word of God.
2. They lived by faith.

I just need to pause here for a moment and point out these are the 2 main requirements for the Pastor of the church today. I have said it before and I will say it again. The Pastor's number one job is to study the Word of God and then to teach the

Word to the flock which God has entrusted to his care. He must guard against anything that will distract from this responsibility. His teaching is to take the flock on a journey through the Word in which they will constantly be growing in their knowledge and in their walk. It is also the Pastor's responsibility to show his people what it is to walk by faith. He is to set the example. The Pastor must ALWAYS be growing for he cannot and will not lead the people under him to a higher level than that which he himself has reached.

Now let me get you back to the text. The Hebrew readers were to REMEMBER their leaders/rulers. The idea here is they were to look to those who had been their leaders for a source of encouragement and strength as they faced the persecution. Let me show you 2 of the examples who they were to remember.

#### A. Stephen

##### Acts 6:54-60

<sup>54</sup> *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

<sup>55</sup> *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

<sup>56</sup> *And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

<sup>57</sup> *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

<sup>58</sup> *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

<sup>59</sup> *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

<sup>60</sup> *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

#### B. James

##### Acts 12:1-2

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

<sup>2</sup> And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

These 2 men died for their faith in Christ. The Hebrews were to follow their FAITH. Not just the faith of James and Stephen but all the Apostles and the church leaders. That would mean they were to stand for Jesus Christ even if it meant death. Remember the Words Jesus spoke to the church at Smyrna?

### Revelation 2:10

<sup>10</sup> Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

The Hebrews may have had to suffer even to the point of death and so they could look to Stephen and James as examples as to how to stand firm.

### Notice Hebrews 13:7 again.

The word "FOLLOW" means "to imitate". They were to imitate the faith of their leaders who stood firmly upon the Truth of the Word.

They were also to CONSIDER the end of their conversation. Let me show you the words of J. Owen on this thought.

*"It was not therefore merely an end that is intended; nor doth the word signify a common end, issue or event of things, but an end accompanied with a deliverance from, and so a conquest over, such difficulties, dangers and sufferings, all attempting to stop them in their way, or to turn them out of it. But what did it all amount to, what was the issue of their conflict? It was a blessed deliverance from all troubles, and conquest over them."*

The "end of their conversation" then is a reference to their deliverance from the struggles and the trials of this life and in their case it was a deliverance from the spiritual battle which they fought so faithfully.

Now let me bring this back into the lives of the Hebrews. They were suffering for their faith in Christ and the fact that they turned from Judaism and now the persecution was ramped up and the fear of man was starting to control some of the believers causing them to consider turning away from Jesus Christ. But the writer encourages them by pointing to

the past leaders of the church and how faith sustained them in even the face of death. Then the writer enlightens them and by letting them know that if they were to die their death would actually be a deliverance from the suffering they were facing in their lives at the present time. Now let me show you something absolutely beautiful.

**Notice Hebrews 13:6 again.**

The Lord was their Helper and He promised to never leave them or forsake them. He would be with them just as He was with the church leaders who had already passed on.

Now the response may have been something like this, "We understand that the Lord was with the church fathers but that was different for they needed a special protection as they were the pillars resting on the Foundation of the church. They played a different role because their doctrine was the Word of God. But we are not them. How can we be sure that the Lord will be there with us as we stand firm?"

**Notice Hebrews 13:8**

Here is the answer. Just as Jesus was TRUE to the early church fathers so He would be TRUE to His church. Because He is the same today in His High Priestly position as He was at the start of the church in the same position. He will never change and He will always be True to His promises.

**Conclusion:**

**3 Lessons:**

1. We must not allow the fear of man to intimidate us as we serve the Lord.
2. When we die we are delivered from the trials and the struggles of this life.
3. We can rest in the faithfulness of our Lord for He is the same yesterday, today and forever.