

**"The Practical Application"**

**Part 9**

**Hebrews 13:1-25**

**Introduction:** Tonight as we come back to the book of Hebrews we shall see the final 2 exhortations which are listed in chapter 13. It has been in this chapter that the writer has brought his theological teaching directly into the lives of his readers and he is instructing his readers as to how to live in the midst of a sinful society. Let me give you a quick review of what we have seen in this chapter.

The writer exhorted his readers to:

- ✓ Continue to love each other as well as strangers.
- ✓ Minister to the needs of those who suffered.
- ✓ Live a life of purity.
- ✓ Be content and trust in the Lord.
- ✓ Remember the saints which lived before them.
- ✓ Be steadfast in stand on for the Truth.
- ✓ Live separated lives.
- ✓ Offer the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of helping others, and the sacrifice of sharing with others.

This now brings us to the final 2 exhortations.

**I. Exhortation #10 - Obey and Submit to the Leadership Appointed by God**

**Notice Hebrews 13:17**

This exhortation must be understood with the idea that the spiritual leaders are teaching the Truth of the Word of God. Those who are called by God and who teach the Word of God are placed within the church by God as the spiritual leaders.

**Ephesians 4:11-12**

*<sup>11</sup> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

*<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

God placed gifted men within the church to teach and to lead the church in their new life in Christ. It is the church's responsibility to obey and to submit to the teaching of those whom God has placed within the church as leaders. It is my responsibility to study the Word of God and it is your responsibility to obey and to submit to the teaching. It is not that the church is submitting and obeying the Pastor as a man but the church is obeying and submitting to God as the Pastor teaches the Word of God. Let me show you the Words of Jesus in John 13.

**John 13:30**

*<sup>20</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever **I send** receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

The Pastor that is called by God and placed within the local body is representing God and therefore when the Pastor is resisted and rejected it is the same as rejecting Christ.

Now this does not mean that the Pastor is to operate as a dictator.

**1 Peter 5:1-4**

*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

*<sup>2</sup> Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

*<sup>3</sup> Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.*

*<sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

The Pastor and the spiritual leaders are not to Lord over the flock in an attempt to control every move they make but instead the Pastor and the spiritual leaders are to live and set the EXAMPLE for the flock to follow.

I cannot live in contrary to the Word of God and then tell you to live in obedience to the Word of God. I MUST set the EXAMPLE for this church in the way that I live. I MUST live in obedience to the Bible before I can instruct you to live in obedience to God's Word.

When the spiritual leaders live their lives as a Godly example and the Word of God is taught then it is the responsibility of the body to walk in obedience.

It is also the responsibility of the body of Christ to submit to the authority entrusted to the spiritual leaders. This means that when sin is addressed within the church by the leadership the body must support and submit to them. Let me show you why this is so important.

**Notice Hebrews 13:17 again.**

The writer tells his readers the leadership "watches for their souls".

**1 Peter 5:8**

*<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

We live in what the Bible refers to as the last days and in the last days the enemy is extremely active. He is doing all he can to prepare a people to rebel against God in the coming tribulation period. The Bible is full of warnings for the church in these days which we live in.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2**

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils:*

*<sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

**1 John 2:18**

*<sup>18</sup> Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,*

*<sup>2</sup> That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

*<sup>3</sup> Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

These warnings are given to the church and therefore we live in savage days and so it is the responsibility of the leadership within the church to watch for the souls of the flock.

When the leadership is obeyed and submitted to it brings great joy to the Pastor and those who serve in leadership positions.

**Notice Hebrews 13:17 again.**

When the leadership is obeyed and submitted to then they can serve with joy and not with grief.

The most difficult responsibility of leadership within the church is dealing with sin in the body of Christ. I am reminded of what Paul wrote about his suffering.

**2 Corinthians 11:24-28**

*<sup>24</sup> Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

*<sup>25</sup> Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

*<sup>26</sup> In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

*<sup>27</sup> In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

*<sup>28</sup> Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

I can tell you from experience that when a Pastor sees those who God has entrusted to him grow in their faith and obey the teaching of the Word and submit to the decisions of the leadership, there is a JOY that is unspeakable with his heart.

As a Pastor I have learned that God placed within me a different heart. He has given me a Pastor's heart and there are no words to describe what I felt for the people who are here. When you hurt I hurt. When you rejoice I rejoice. When you struggle I feel your struggles. I remember talking to someone away from here years ago and he was a Pastor and he was going through a time of testing in his ministry. He said something I will never forget. He told me he wished his people could feel what he felt in the midst of the trial

because the burdened he carried was for them. Jeremiah's words may describe it the best.

**Jeremiah 13:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.*

*<sup>16</sup> Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.*

*<sup>17</sup> But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive.*

**Notice Hebrews 13:17 again.**

It is unprofitable for the body of Christ to resist the leadership. The leadership which is led by God and is controlled by the Holy Spirit has the body's best interest in mind as they serve the Lord. It is the leadership's desire to guide the people into a life of spiritual fruitfulness so that when they reach the Judgment Seat of Christ they shall receive rewards. To resist the leadership is to choose a path of spiritual barrenness which is certainly unprofitable.

**II. Exhortation #11 - Pray for the Leadership**

**Notice Hebrews 13:18**

I want you to notice the words of Cole on this verse:

*"We have to take an educated guess at what is behind the author's comment in He 13:18, but it would seem to be something like this: The author has said some difficult things. He has confronted the traditionalists, who wanted to hold onto their Jewish ways, while still trying to follow Christ. He has said,*

*"You can't do that! If you go back to Judaism, or try to blend it with faith in Christ, you will face God's judgment because you have diluted the gospel."*

*The traditionalists were arguing with others in the church,*

*"He's gone too far! He's saying that the ways of our fathers since the time of Moses are no longer valid."*

*The author is saying in effect,*

*"I understand how difficult my teaching has been, and I ask you to pray for me, because I am sure that my conscience is right before God, and that everything I have said has been to promote God's truth and your spiritual welfare."*

*Every pastor who is faithful to God has to say or do some things from time to time that undoubtedly will offend someone in the church. Often, it is the traditionalists:*

*"We've never done it that way before!"*

*They will say that he has no respect for the past. Sometimes they will accuse him of causing disunity. Sometimes, they try to work out a compromise so that they can hold onto their cherished beliefs or practices, even if they compromise biblical truth. Under such pressure, some pastors capitulate and play politics in the church.*

*Pray for your leaders, that they will stand firm and maintain a good conscience before God, who knows the heart."*

When standing for the Truth we all need prayer. The enemy will do all he can to cast doubt in the minds of the leadership when they stand for the Truth of the Word of God.

Spiritual leaders need prayer because as teachers of the Word of God they are on the front lines of the battle. We need prayer that our minds will be fixed upon the Truth and that we will not question the Truth. As a Pastor there are times when teaching the Bible is very difficult because you know what people are going through in their lives. You do not want to use that as a platform to make your point but you do want all who listen to understand the Truth. You know there are certain subjects that some people have their views and they hold tightly to them. There can be times when you feel as Paul did when he stood against the Alexander the coppersmith.

## **2 Timothy 4:14-16a**

*<sup>14</sup> Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:*

*<sup>15</sup> Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.*

*<sup>16</sup> At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:*

It is in times like this that the enemy can cause a man to question what he stands for. The writer of Hebrews had just confronted many Jews who had their roots in Judaism and he was calling them to come out. He needed prayer as he continued to stand for the Truth.

## **Notice Hebrews 13:19**

Here was another reason why they were to pray, and that is because prayer changes things. The writer desired to revisit with those he wrote to and he knew if his readers prayed God could arrange it so he could come sooner. Whatever the situation was it was out of the writer's control. But he knew the power of prayer and so he requested these believers pray for him. He was confident that the prayers of the saints would open the doors which he desired to see opened.

**Application:**

This is not something which we need to spend a great deal of time on but I will remind you prayer does change situations every day.

**James 5:16-18**

*<sup>16</sup> Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*

*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

*<sup>17</sup> Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

*<sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

**Conclusion:**

Next week we will finish this letter as we look at the conclusion which the writer recorded at the end of his letter to the Hebrews.