Verses 1-8 ➢ BROTHERLY LOVE, MANIFESTED IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS, IS TO CONTINUE

[1] Let brotherly love continue.  [2] Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.  [3] Remember the prisoners as if chained with them-- those who are mistreated-- since you yourselves are in the body also.  [4] Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.  [5] Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”  [6] So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”  [7] Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.  [8] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.]

Whereas Hebrews chapter 11 spoke about faith and chapter 12 spoke about hope, this chapter speaks about love. Thus we see that the last three chapters of Hebrews close with the triad of faith, hope and love expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:13.

The book of Hebrews ends with a series of exhortations to practical Christian living centered on the fellowship Jews and Gentile believers share with Jesus Christ. This family relationship was important to maintain in light of Acts 15:1-31; Ephesians 2:11-22 and Galatians 3:7-14.

A practical description of brotherly love is given by Paul in Romans 12:1-21.

We are told to let brotherly love continue. Why is this important? The following passages of scripture help answer this question.

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

[BE FRUITFUL & ABOUND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST & OUR LORD]

1 Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:1-7; Ephesians 1:3-7.
2 John 3:1-5.
3 1 John 5:1-5.
4 Galatians 6:9,10; Ephesians 2:18-22.
5 John 13:34,35.
But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more… – 1 Thessalonians 4:9,10. [ABUNDANTLY OVERFLOW IN BLESSINGS].

We must remember that the distinguishing mark if a true disciple of Jesus is love [agape].

īl new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.Ōū John 13:34,35.

This love leads to each member of the Body of Christ to grow spiritually {Ephesians 4:15,16} and to be mutually encouraged {Colossians 2:1-3}. See also Romans 15:1-13 where we are told that the God of hope will fill us with all joy and peace as we pursue peace and reconciliation with fellow believers. Thus, agape will allow one to philedelphia.

The writer of Hebrews has already told us that this brotherly love is best shown when we meet together as a family to worship and grow in the grace and knowledge of the LORD.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
ī Hebrews 10:24,25.

[Do not forget (NEGLECT) to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.] The first part of this verse is better translated ĩDo not forget to show affection/hospitality to the foreigner, i.e., one who is strange. The second time entertain is translated in this verse it is a different Greek word which means to lodge or host. This is pretty amazing to think that by putting up strangers in our homes we could be showing hospitality to literal angels. At the minimum, we should be showing hospitality to people unfamiliar to us but who are nevertheless God’s messengers of Truth.

The word for angels here is angelos referring to one who brings news/information Ṣ that is a messenger. In the Bible this word is applied to both messengers of the heavenly and human kind.

This is in keeping with God’s care and provision in the Law for the foreigner and stranger in the land {See Exodus 22:21; 23:9,12; Leviticus 19:9,10,33,34; 23:22; 24:22; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 14:29; 16:11,14; 24:17-22; 26:12,13; 27:19; 29:10-13}.

We are not to neglect to show hospitality to those who are different or strange to us for in many such cases we are showing kindness to messengers from God. The classic example of this is Abraham found in Genesis 18:1-22.

So we see that brotherly love is to extend to strangers Ô those unknown and foreign to us. This carries with it the idea of showing hospitality and grace to those who are unfamiliar to us. We are to let our lives and speech be seasoned with grace {Colossians 4:6}.

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6 entertain strangers [5381 philonexia (fil-on-ex-ee'-ah)] from philo + xenos, literally love of the alien that is love for the foreigner. This same word is translated hospitality in Romans 12:13.
In defending himself, Job made a point that he had been hospitable to the stranger {Job 31:31,32}. Note the significance Jesus puts on this in Matthew 25:34-40. Hospitality is considered a sign of mutual honor and respect {Acts 16:13-15}. We are commanded to be given to hospitality {Romans 12:13}. There are even those who are given to show hospitality to the whole church {Romans 12:23}. Showing hospitality to strangers was a sign of righteousness in a widow {1 Timothy 5:9,10}. It is one of the characteristics of an elder {1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7-9}. And finally, we are to be hospitable to one another without grumbling {1 Peter 4:9}.

I think of the couple that has two children of their own, but adopted two more. Additionally, their home is a Foster Care Facility and they have three other children besides. They have rearranged their lives to accommodate this ministry. The wife sold her extensive Barbie collection and knick-knacks and the husband had the house remodeled to make more room. Who knows, one of these children may be an "angel"!

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them-- those who are mistreated-- since you yourselves are in the body also.] When one member of Christ's body suffers we all suffer together {1 Corinthians 12:26}. We need to have an attitude of compassion and show brotherly love even to those who are imprisoned and mistreated, especially fellow believers. James 1:17 tells us that, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Job defended his righteousness regarding the cause of those mistreated {see Job 29:12-14; 31:15-23}.

J. Vernon McGee once got a later from a dear lady when he was going through suffering with cancer. She wrote, "I'm inactive now, and I'm not able to do anything. I prayed to God that I would be able to take your disease upon myself so that you could go on with your ministry."

This is the kind of brotherly love the writer of Hebrews is talking about here. Not the fellowship we enjoy at potluck luncheons or group meetings, but the fellowship of suffering we bear in common with Jesus Christ. We are to consistently remember those saints less fortunate that us who, because of their faith, are suffering either in bonds behind prison doors or in bonds of physical distress. There is a wonderful ministry available to those whose hearts God has touched to show kindness towards those who are prisoners of life's circumstances whether in bonds for their witness or because of disease. See also 1 John 3:16-18.

[Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.] Paul warned that there would come [and probably already were] those who would consider marriage less honorable and less spiritual and actually forbid it {1 Timothy 4:1-3}. Here the writer of Hebrews denounces the error of asceticism the opposite of hedonism. Denying the flesh or indulging the flesh both belief systems are wrong. God made the sexual relationship between a man and a woman something sacred, to be wonderfully enjoyed within the confines of marriage {Genesis 2:18-25}. Jesus graciously performed His first miracle at a wedding {John 2:1-11}.

Marriage is a blessing from God and was intended to continue the family line and so it was protected under the Law {Deuteronomy 25:5-10} as we see in Ruth 4:5,6. Marriage of course is a beautiful picture of the relationship between Jesus Christ, the husband, and His Church, the bride. {See John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:25,32}.

Sexual purity is one of the requirements of being an elder or deacon {1 Timothy 3:2,12; Titus 1:6}. 
On the other hand, Solomon gives us wise counsel gives the reasons for remaining sexually pure and its benefits in Proverbs 5:15-23. The apostle Paul adds that a man who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body {1 Corinthians 6:17-20}. And Solomon, who had divine insights, goes on to tell us the dangers of sexual immorality and that a man who commits adultery lacks understanding and destroys his own soul {Proverbs 6:23-35}.

Paul goes on to say that a sexually impure lifestyle is a distinguishing mark of an unregenerate heart of an unsaved person it is a work of the flesh {1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19}.

It should also be remembered that it is the unsaved person who practices these sins and of course such a person will not inherit the kingdom of Christ and God {1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 22:14,15}.

Fornication and adultery were common practices among the Gentile system of idolatry and these were particularly repugnant to the Jew. It was one of the main issues in the salvation of Gentiles in the eyes of the Jewish Christians as we see in Acts 15:22-29. So here the writer specifically condemns those sins.

In reality, fornication and adultery begin in the heart and for a Christian this means a betrayal of the marriage vows when one says, I do to Jesus. That person has already committed the sin of adultery spiritually against the LORD. The Jewish Christians would already have been familiar with this concept since it sexual immorality was prevalent among the Jews {e.g., Ezekiel 22:9-12} because of their gross idolatry something the LORD condemns as spiritual adultery {e.g., Jeremiah 3:1,2; 5:7}. God severely judged them for it and continues to judge these sins today.

Remember also what the writer says about Esau as a fornicator and profane person in Hebrews 12:14-17.

[Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”] Here godly contentment is commanded which is great gain {1 Timothy 6:6-12}. The apostle Paul tells us that covetousness is in actuality idolatry {Colossians 3:1-7}. Notice that we to not have to strive for the riches of the world since our treasure is in Jesus Christ and He will never leave or forsake us. We can trust Him with our whole heart. Besides, the Bible teaches us that love of the world and love of God are mutually exclusive {Matthew 6:19-24; 1 John 2:15-17}.

[So that we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”] The focus of verse 6 is reminiscent of what Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:22-31. Namely, that God has infinite resources and power to overcome the fears we have in this life. The person who no longer has fear of death because he/she has peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ is the one truly ready to live.

[Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.] Here, the writer of Hebrews is addressing the issue of orderly conduct and respect of leaders in the church. They are to consider the spiritual fruit as evidence in following their leaders' example See for example 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 5:12,13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9.

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7 For example, the worship of one of the ancient goddesses included temple prostitution where a man was expected to have sex with one of the female attendants in honor of the goddess.
Leaders, whether they are teachers or pastors, elders or deacons, are to so faithfully follow Jesus that others will see their godly example\(^8\) and be inspired to imitate it\(^9\). Refer also to Hebrews 13:17,24 in this chapter.

Paul tells the brothers

\[\text{Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.} \]  Philippians 3:17.

The word for pattern or example in this verse literally means a ἁρμονία or ὁδός thus implying a mold.

Also, those elders who rule well are worthy of double honor 1 Timothy 5:17,18 for the scripture says, ἀνάμνησις...those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel\(\text{c}\) (1 Corinthians 9:14).

[Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.] This is a key and unique attribute of God. In the book of Revelation 4:8 we read that; ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος, Κυρίων Θεοῦ Αλμήτης, ὁ οὗτος ἦν καὶ ἐστιν καὶ ἐρχόμενος! James 1:17 tells us that there is ἀνάμνησις...no variation or shadow of turning” with God.

With Jesus Christ you always know what you have and where you stand.

**Verses 9-11 ➤ REMAIN PURE IN DOCTRINE & PRACTICE**

[Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.] These would be artificial rules and regulations regarding truth and practice. It is reminiscent of what Paul tells us in Galatians 1:4-12; 3:1-9 and John’s warning in 1 John 4:1-3.

There were those called Ἰουδαιοικός and they were teaching that to be a faithful Christian the regulations of the Law had to be kept. Paul argues against this powerfully in Colossians 2:1-23.

One of these areas was concerning food. But Paul tells us that, ἀλλὰ τὸ τροφίμῳ οὐκ ἐξαναγγέλλεται ἡμᾶς τῷ Θεῷ; ἀλλὰ γνῶς ὅτι ἐὰν τροφίμῳ εἴσαι ἡμᾶς καλοὶ, ἡμῖν εἰ σο不惜 τροφίμῳ εἴσαι ἡμᾶς κακοὶ [1 Corinthians 8:8].

Under the Old Testament Law, the priests would get a portion of the meat from the sacrifice. But just as Abel’s sacrifice was better, superior to Cain’s {Hebrews 11:4}, so the altar we come to is superior Θὸν τῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς {Hebrews 4:16} where Jesus is seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens {Hebrews 1:3; 8:1}. We also come to the LORD’s Supper, where we enjoy sweet fellowship in remembrance of that infinitely precious sacrifice! [Notice the implication that the Temple sacrificial system was still in operation].

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\(^8\) The qualifications for elders and deacons are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

\(^9\) 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1.
Verses 12-16 ➤ Christians should boldly proclaim their identity with Jesus

[12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.]

Jesus bore reproach and suffered for us, we are to do the same for one another. We are to be giving sacrifices Romans 12:1-2 and offer praise, the fruit of our lips. Note that οὐ to do good and share are acts of faith for they please God [Hebrews 11:6]. This world is not our home we, like Abraham, are looking for a future and eternal home whose builder and maker is God.

Verses 17-19 ➤ Christians are to respect & obey their leaders

[17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. 18 Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. 19 But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.]

Refer to notes on Hebrews 13:7.

The writer requests prayer since it would answer his desire to be come those he is writing to. Never underestimate the power of prayer.

Verses 20,21 ➤ Christians are a work in progress

[20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.]

Here, Jesus, is referred to as ὁ that Great Shepherd that is the only One. See also John 10:1-16; 1 Peter 2:18-25; 5:1-11.

Verses 22 ➤ The conclusion: Heed these words of exhortation

[22 And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words.]

The saints were to bear these words of exhortation in response to the encouragement and truth proclaimed in the previous chapters.

Verses 23-25 ➤ Closing personal remarks

[23 Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. 24 Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. 25 Grace be with you all. Amen.]

The concluding remarks demonstrate the grace and love that the writer had for the saints. He closes with ἀmen let it be so.
The Superiority of Christ's Power

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