



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 13:7-16

I confess that the first twenty or so times that I read our text, it seemed to me to be a disjointed, random bunch of verses. I could not see any unified theme. But the more I meditated on these verses, I came to see that there is a common theme, namely, the danger of false teaching and the true antidote to it, namely, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The author was concerned that his readers would be “carried away by varied and strange teachings” (13:9), including returning to Judaism. So he calls them to remember the godly teachers who had spoken the word of God to them (13:7). Even though these men had now died, Jesus Christ, whom they preached, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8). His grace (13:9) and His sacrificial death on the cross (13:10-12) are at the center of sound doctrine. Jesus and His death on the cross have become our altar, which supersedes and replaces the Jewish altar in the temple. Therefore, we must turn our backs on Judaism and every other religion and hold firmly to Christ and the cross (13:13). If such faith leads to hardship, rejection, persecution, or even death, keep in mind that we are not living for rewards in this life, but for the reward He has promised us in heaven (13:14). That is the flow of thought here, as I understand it. He is saying,

To avoid being carried away by false teaching, imitate the faith of godly leaders and hold firmly to the centrality of Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, and the promise of heaven.

Sound doctrine always is founded on the word of God (13:7). It centers on and exalts the unchanging Christ (13:8). It revels in God’s grace, not in any human works for salvation (13:9). It feeds on the death of Christ on behalf of our sins (13:10-12). It separates from all that do not exalt Christ and it glories in the reproach of the cross (13:13). It puts all its hopes in the rewards of heaven, not of this life (13:14).¹

Watch It Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #23; Heb. 13:7-17 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. What have you found to be a timeless truth in your life? What makes it timeless?

¹ Sermon by Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-54-antidote-false-teaching-hebrews-137-14>

Read it

Hebrews 13:7-16

Explore it

2. What are we to do as we consider our spiritual leaders?
3. What should we not be led away by?
4. Where must we go to find Jesus? What should we bear when we go there?
5. What actions should we take by faith in verses 15-16?

Apply it

The readers are urged to examine or 'scan closely' the lives of such people, paying special attention to the outcome of their lives. That word (ekbasis) may refer to the issue of their testimony, its abiding fruits the 'result of one's way of life'. But it is probably far more natural here to see in this statement a reference to the death of these leaders, possibly even by martyrdom. Even if they did not pay that supreme price, the very way in which they had passed from this life serenely and unafraid was a radiant example in a world terrified by death and an unknown future. Christians of this kind have an abiding influence; the readers are encouraged to imitate their faith.²

6. Who are some of the spiritual leaders in your life or those who have influenced you deeply in your faith? What is it about their faith that you value and appreciate? How can you imitate their faith?

² Brown, Raymond. The Message of Hebrews (The Bible Speaks Today Series) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

- 7. The scriptures call all Christians to make disciples. Who are you leading in the faith? What about your faith would you want them to imitate? What about your faith would you *not* want them to imitate**

The only thing that is sure is change! We humans appear for a little while to laugh and weep and work and play, and then we are gone. This is a melancholy thought at best. Our souls long for something solid. But the great truth is, God does not change, and neither does the Holy Spirit or the Son, Jesus Christ. In fact, the very same Old Testament Scriptures and wording that describe God the Father's immutableness are applied directly to Christ (cf. Psalm 102: 27 and Hebrews 1: 12; Isaiah 48: 12 and Revelation 1: 17). This means that though the Savior has ascended into Heaven and dwells in that splendor, he is the same! ³

- 8. How does the unchanging nature of our God and Savior influence your continued testimony of faith?**

In reality, though, verse 8 grounds the exhortations. Our faith and its teachings do not change. There is no such thing as new and improved Christianity. What we have is the faith "that was delivered to the saints once for all" (Jude 3). Though the letter's readers may have new leaders now and their circumstances will change, their Savior remains the same. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, we should remember the faithfulness of our leaders and not be led astray by anything contrary to the unchanging Christian message. ⁴

- 9. What does the unchanging nature of Jesus tell us about the doctrine of Christianity? What confidence does this give you in the long-held teachings of the church?**

³ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 7907-7912). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Mohler, R. Albert. Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (pp. 226-227). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

10. While the biblical doctrines of the church remain the same throughout time, the Church's treatment of those doctrines at times can be faulty as seen throughout history. How can you be sure the church you are part of is teaching the true gospel and biblical doctrine of Christ?

The author warns, "Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings" (13:9). We live in a day when evangelical Christians minimize the importance of sound doctrine and even speak against it as something that divides us and goes against Christ's commands to love one another. The emphasis today is on coming together where we can agree, rather than dividing over doctrines where we disagree. To say, "I'm right and you're wrong" over doctrinal matters smacks of pride and intolerance. It will earn you the unwelcome labels of "fundamentalist" or "separatist." The concept that any religious teaching may be universally true or false runs counter to the modern mindset.⁵

11. What "diverse and strange teachings" pose threats to the church of America today? To Village Bible Church? How would you confront these false teachings?

⁵ Steven Cole found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-54-antidote-false-teaching-hebrews-137-14>

12. Christianity claims and teaches a universal truth. How can Christians reason with a culture that defines truth as relative?

Following Jesus means joining him outside the camp. The writer's people were tempted to find their identity in Judaism and the old covenant. Instead of "bearing his disgrace" for the sake of Christ, they were looking for safety and security in something other than Jesus. Thus, the author is telling us that we must go outside the camp—even if it means we must suffer—in order to shine forth as his disciples.⁶

13. What things might someone seek safety and security in today? Do you struggle with placing your security in any of those things?

14. What would it mean for you to "go outside the camp" as you live out your faith?

⁶ Mohler, R. Albert. *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary)* (p. 229). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

It is one thing to express one's indebtedness to God; it is quite another to allow other people to know how much he means to us.⁷

15. How do you demonstrate and communicate to others how valuable God is to you? When was the last time you verbally shared your faith with someone? What prevents you from doing that more often?

'Doing good' is an important aspect of the New Testament doctrine of the Christian life. In their understandable fear of 'salvation by works', evangelicals have sometimes minimized this important feature of biblical Christianity. Jesus expected his disciples to do good works and the early Christian people were deeply influenced by this practical aspect of Christ's teaching.

Christians are expected to offer continually the sacrifice of generous giving. They are to share what they have. The fact that this word share (*koinōnias*) is used may suggest that its author is thinking of those monetary offerings ... It is not at all necessary or even wise, however, to restrict this form of sacrifice to 'the collection'. Christians have other opportunities to offer this sacrifice by sharing with others, believers and unbelievers, some of the good things that God has so generously given to them.⁸

16. You'll notice this passage marries sound doctrine (v 7-12) with good works (v 13-16). Explain why faith that doesn't present itself in good works isn't true faith at all. (Read James 2:14-26 for reference if needed.)

17. How can you be generous in sharing what God has given you?

⁷ Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Hebrews* (The Bible Speaks Today Series). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁸ *IBID.*