

LIVE AS OUTSIDERS

(Hebrews 13:1-25)

DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹Keep on loving each other as brothers. ²Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1. *What is a biblical example of entertaining angels without knowing it? Do we still entertain angels today?*
2. *Should we care for all prisoners or are these particular prisoners, Christians who are persecuted?*
3. *How are loving our brothers, entertaining strangers, remembering prisoners, and being faithful in marriage all related?*

DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”

⁶So we say with confidence,

“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?”

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

1. *Can we really be content with what we have? What would that look like?*
2. *What does contentment have to do with God's promise to never forsake us? How does contentment relate to fear?*
3. *Why is it comforting that Jesus is always the same? What does this have to do with remembering leaders who have gone before us? What does it have to do with avoiding strange teachings?*

DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹¹The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the

camp. ¹²And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

¹⁵Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1. *What is the significance of following Jesus outside the camp? Do you feel like an outsider as a Christian? How?*
2. *What are the two sacrifices we make to God? Do churches tend to emphasize one of these over another? Why?*
3. *Are there limits to the obedience we give our leaders? Do you react negatively to the idea of obeying them? Why?*

DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁸Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. ¹⁹I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

²⁰May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus

Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²²Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

²⁴Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

²⁵Grace be with you all.

1. *Why does the writer assure his readers of his honorable intentions?*
2. *If God equips us for doing good and works in us, what part do we have in doing what is pleasing to him?*
3. *How is Hebrews a word of exhortation or encouragement?*

DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *This chapter touches on many subjects. Do you see an overall theme for the chapter?*
2. *What should be the relationship between leaders and the church they lead? What makes this difficult?*
3. *What does Jesus do for us according to this chapter?*

MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 13:1-25

Outsiders. No one wants to be an outsider. Rejected. Scorned. Shamed.

Yet that is precisely what Jesus calls us to be. He calls us to follow him outside the camp, outside the city. There we experience the disgrace he did at his crucifixion.

What does it mean to be an outsider? How does one live outside the camp? What does life look like when it challenges the accepted norms of our culture?

It looks like love. Love for our brothers and sisters. Love for the stranger. Committed love between husbands and wives. This kind of love, costly love that is not always best for us but is best for others, this love challenges the ways of our culture. It is not the love known inside the city, the camp, the world in which we live. It is a supernatural love from God himself through Christ, a love that always gives.

What makes us outsiders? Our attitude toward money. In a world where too much is never enough, we are content with what we have. We trust God, not money, to protect and help us.

In a world where freedom and choice are prized, we honor and submit to our leaders, knowing that they watch out for us. In a time of self-reliance, we depend on the great Shepherd.

No wonder those who received this letter faced persecution. They were a threat to the status quo. Hebrews encourages us boldly to go to Jesus outside the camp, to embrace our identity as outsiders, and to show love to both insiders and outsiders. This is the way of Jesus.

“Jesus, our Shepherd, lead us as your flock outside the camp. Give us the courage to suffer in love as outsiders, as you suffered in shame for us.”