Hebrews 13:1-8 Inductive Bible Study Notes and Discussion Questions

Title: Final reminders about true love (1-8)

Discussion Questions

How does this last chapter fit in with the rest of the book?

Is there a key theme in this passage?

Give some examples of hospitality. Do you normally show hospitality to friends or strangers? What are some ways we can show hospitality to strangers? Should we invite them to our home?

What does verse 2b mean? What can we learn from this verse about angels? And what does this teach us about how God is working in the world?

Should believers minister to prisoners? Why? How?

If the world was to apply this verse, how would it change the culture around us? What does this teach us about God’s design for marriage? Name some of the lies Satan is spreading to try to take away the honor of the institution of marriage. What is the result for those who don’t obey God in this area?

How can you test yourself to evaluate whether you love money or not? How can we train ourselves to NOT love money? What is the correct attitude? What reason does the author give for contentment?

How does verse 6 relate to the last verse?

Cross-References

Angels

Genesis 18:1-19: Angels appearing as men.

Genesis 19 – Angel appearing as men to Lot.

Joshua 5:13-14, Mark 16:5 – Cases of angels that appear as men.

Hebrews 1:14 – Angels are ministering spirits.

Kindness to those in need

Matthew 25:34-46 – What you have done for the least of these you have done also for me.

On marriage

Proverbs 18:22 – He who finds a wife, finds a good thing…

Proverbs 19:14- A prudent wife is from the Lord.
Malachi 2:13-16 – Be faithful to the wife of your youth

Ephesians 5:25,32 – A picture of Christ and the church.

Love of money

1 Timothy 6:10 – The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Matthew 6:24 – No one can serve two masters…

Ecclesiastes 5:10 – He who loves money will not be satisfied with money.

That doesn’t mean we pay no attention to money

Luke 16:11 – Be faithful with wealth so that God will entrust true riches to you.

Proverbs 13:11 – Wealth gained hastily will dwindle

Ezekiel 28:4 – By wisdom and understanding you have made wealth.

Proverbs 13:22 – A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.


**Teaching Points**

In the last couple of chapters the author has been talking about some lofty concepts including faith of Old Testament saints, discipline from God, the old and new covenants, and God’s eternal kingdom. While a number of applications such as Hebrews 12:1-2 have been mixed in, there has been a lot of doctrine and teaching. Now in the last chapter the author seems to put the frosting on the cake. He has built the foundation of the Christian faith, demonstrating that Jesus is superior to everything and everyone else. No he begins hammering home a number of practical applications for believers. Believing in Jesus should affect our daily lives and change how we treat other people, both strangers and those closest to us.

Let love of the brethren continue – Paul said the the greatest three attributes for believers were faith, hope, and love, love being the greatest (see 1 Cor 13). Because of its importance we often see believers exhorted to love one another. This should be the staple of Christian fellowship. If an unbeliever walked into your fellowship or church, would they see this taking place? What are some practical ways you can demonstrate love for the brethren?

The author tells us that we should be hospitable to strangers. This is not a surprising instruction. But his reason is a little bit unexpected. The reason he gives is that by showing hospitality to strangers we might actually be doing it for angels. We can learn many things from this verse:

We learn through implication that angels can appear as people (in the Bible they sometimes appear as men). It means that we might meet angels face to face at anytime and have no idea that we are face to face with an angel.
This shows us that God is actively at work in the world. Sending angels does not appear to be an extremely abnormal occurrence, but something that we might expect to encounter one day. God is not just sitting on His throne watching. When He wants to make sure something is done, He makes it happen, sometimes by sending His messengers/emissaries (angels) to do it.

God may work in supernatural ways without us realizing it. These angels are doing the work of God right among people who had no idea about what was going on. At times we might be tempted to ask, “Where is God? What is He doing?” Perhaps God’s angels are working on His behalf in our circumstances even as we are asking these questions.

Angels are serving God for His sake, not for any credit of their own. They don’t care if they are ever recognized or thanked. They are on a mission.

**Applications** - Take comfort in the fact that God is at work even when we may not see it clearly.

Thank God for caring so much for us that He sends these powerful beings to help us.

Realize God is always watching us. There is no such thing as sinning in secret since God sees everything.

Show hospitality to strangers. Normally we think of showing hospitality to people we know, but here it tells us to do it for people we don’t know. How? Basically we are to be like the Good Samaritan, who helped those who needed it. This could include giving a seat to someone who needs it, helping a beggar, helping an old lady carry a stroller or suitcase, or perhaps even opening our home (discretion should be taken so that one’s family is always safe.)

Verse 3 – We are encouraged to reach out to the lowliest and most desperate people, prisoners. Do they deserve it? What use is it? Aren’t they a hopeless case already? From James 1:27 we learn that true religion is caring for the neediest people, people who have nothing and can give us nothing in return. Prisoners certainly fall into this category. From Jesus’ ministry we can see that these types of people who have lived sinful lives are often very receptive to the gospel. They recognize the mistakes they have made. Whereas a typical person might say, “I believe in myself” it is unlikely to get this answer from a prisoner. God is willing to forgive anyone, no matter what sins they have committed in their past. In the US, there many Christians are involved in various prison ministries. These are often effective in reaching people. Even if their message falls on deaf ears, this outreach can have a profound impact on the believers doing it. It can actively teach them what it means to love those who don’t deserve it. Through this process they can better understand Jesus’ love for us, who didn’t deserve it either. What do you know about prisons in China? Can prisoners be visited? Can Bibles be sent in? Is it possible to do a prison ministry? And those who are ill-treated. Not every prisoner is there because of his crimes. Some are there unfairly. This could specifically refer to believers, who were in prison for their faith. Do other Christians visit the pastors who have been thrown in prison in China just for the “crime” of teaching others about Jesus? They certainly need prayer and face to face encouragement.

Verse 4 – This verse teaches us how we are to view marriage. It is to be honored. It is sacred. Satan has done everything he can to take marriage off of this pedestal. He has spread lies that have no been believed and embraced which tell us that marriage is “unnecessary,” a “burden,” “optional,” “ties people down,” “can be between two men,” “can be ended at any time,” “outdated,” “old-fashioned,” and so on. He knows that strong marriages mean strong families which mean strong societies and strong nations and strong churches. Attacking marriage is just another branch of his attack on the truth.
of God (which goes all the way back to Genesis, “has God really said?”) and the home. He attacks marriage on TV, in movies, in magazines, through pornography, and through modern culture. How can the church stand up to these lies and maintain strong marriages and families? What can we do to help restore the honor of marriage? Remember that marriage is used as a picture of Jesus’ relationship to us. That shows just how holy marriage should be. God chooses this most intimate and personal and joyous relationship to illustrate the depth of Christ’s love for us. Every time marriage is defiled it tarnishes this picture of Christ and the church. What are we going to do about this? Married people? Singles? The verse tells us that those who go outside of marriage to satisfy their sexual appetites will be judged by God. That is not a group you want to be in or keep company with.

This passage hits on some of the biggest temptations that we will ever face, sex, and now money. Money has often been listed as the single greatest cause of divorce. Love of money has started countless wars, split countless homes, caused countless deaths/murders, broken countless relationships, devastated countless lives, and sucked the joy out of countless homes. God wants us to be content, whether we have a lot or a little. What we have has been given to us by God. If God wanted us to have more, He would have given us more. The reason given in this verse for contentment is that God will not abandon us. He WILL take care of you. You have nothing to worry about. Though you might not know where your next day’s food is coming from, God does know where it is coming from. He will not forsake us, but gives us all the help we need. We have learned this principle before. We know God doesn’t want us to love money. But now the hard part. Are you? Are you content? How can we evaluate ourselves in this area? If we often talk about money (or materials), what we have or how we can get more, we probably love it.

If we often think about money (or materials), we probably love it.

If most of our time is spent on accumulating it, we probably love it.

If we try to hold on tight to the money we have, we probably love it.

If we love spending it and buying new things, we probably love it.

8. Instead we should be generous, industrious, and good stewards. The Bible talks a lot about money and there are many verses which tell us positive ways to make or use it. See cross-references. God wants us to be diligent. He wants us to take care of our families. He wants us to be wise in how we use money. Money is a resource that God has entrusted to us for doing good. We should view ourselves as a steward of all the things which we possess, making use of them for serving the Master.

II. Verses 7-8

Discussion Questions

What is the main idea of verse 7? Why do you think Jesus modeled the mentor relationship? Why is this such a powerful tool? What components are necessary to have a truly effective mentoring/discipling relationship with someone? Who should be discipling? What is the difference between teaching someone a Bible lesson and discipling them?

What do we learn about Jesus in verse 8? What impact does this have on us?

What do you need to do based on what we have learned today?