

Christ Above all else

Hebrews 13:17-25

- We are at the end of the book of Hebrews where the writer closes with six things that should be prevalent in the believers life > Love, leadership, sacrifice, obedience, respect, and maturity, all are characteristics that Jesus modeled in His earthly ministry for all of us to see, read, study and copy.
- We've already looked at three of these **1. Love V1-4**- how we should show love to other believers, strangers, prisoners, and our spouses. **2. Leadership V7** - we are to imitate those who have authority over us and observe their Godly lifestyles. **3. Sacrifice V12**- that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice in giving up His life, even dying a death outside of Jerusalem that signified a sacrifice for sin and impurity.

V17-25

- **V17** now we come to the forth characteristic that Jesus so graciously lived out for us > **4. Obedience V17**- this is different from the command in **V7** which said to remember those who left us an example in order for us to follow in their footprints.
- Here we are told to **obey** those who have the authority over you, one is to observe to follow, the other is to submit and follow, one is an example to live by the other is a directive to obey. People have a harder time with **V17** than they do **V7**, as most think **V7** is there to help us make wise decisions, for all would agree we should follow other people's good examples right!
- But when you say we should also obey those who have the spiritual rule or authority over us and be submissive, there is a natural hesitancy that automatically arises. Which is why its not suggestive but a command, this is the example Jesus set for us as He said > **Jn 6:38, 14:31**, and it shows itself in **Math 26:39**- when He says "if it be possible let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt".
- Obedience is trusting God with our spiritual walk and growth, and that means believing that it is God Who chose this church for you, that ministry to serve in, these people to share life with, and yes these leaders to submit to. This doesn't mean that leaders should be dictators > **1Pet 5:3**- we are not to lord over the flock, as we are under shepherds He is The Great Shepherd.

- But we do have a very important charge that cannot be ignored and that is we are called to watch out for your souls, for we will stand before The Lord and give an account, now that's serious folks. Here is a prime reason to pay attention as to why **Jam 3:1** warns people not to rush into trying to be a teacher for they will receive the stricter judgment, its not just talking about our words, but our actions, and our care and concern for the flock, we will be judged whether we glorified Christ or ourselves.
- That's a warning to the leader but for those who are called to submit a warning for resisting this commandment is given as well. Leaders want to enjoy serving the congregation, it should be with joy that they go about their tasks of helping you grow in your faith in The Lord, but there are some who don't make it easy.
- As they resist, fight, disobey, question every step of the way, until sometimes their leaders pull away from them instead of drawing closer to them, and spend more time with those who are more agreeable and are willing listeners, hence its unprofitable for you. **V17** is a very important verse, as it forces us to examine ourselves, as to whether we make it easier or harder to be ministered to?
- **5. Respect V18-** the last verse shows that ministry is twofold, as we need each other to grow spiritually and properly represent The Lord, and here is another example of this, The writer is asking the readers to pray for him to live an honorable, respected, or Godly life, he is praying for them, but he also needs prayer from them, for this and also there were some obstacles hindering him from seeing them.
- **V19** notice he urges them to do this, we should never practice slow-bedience when it comes to prayer but obedience, as that's something the enemy works diligently to cause us to forget to do for someone or something, then when you see them again they say thanks for the prayer it really helped me, although we didn't we act like we did, has that ever happened to you, it has to me, so make prayer an urgent activity.
- **6. Maturity V20-21** after asking them to pray for him he now prays for them, and he shows us Who are prayers should come through "**The God of Peace**" Jehovah Shalom, Who is The Restorer of the dead, The Great Shepherd of The Sheep, The Ratifier of the grace Covenant.

- This is Who he asks to make his readers “**complete**” in the Greek it means **mature**, and not in just some things, but in all things, to do God’s will and be well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever Amen!
- **V22-25** then he tells them to fight the urge to rebel and wander from what they just heard, but to bear or remain under is what this means. Sometimes love, obedience, sacrifice, hurts, and it takes everything you have to remain faithful, but as we see God knows and He will provide all that we need to continue on. He encourages them with some news that Timothy has been set free and he hoped to see soon with them, and he sends greetings from Rome, ending with “**Grace be with you all**”.