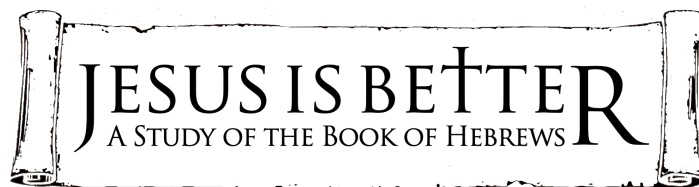


22: Swim Against the Flow (Heb 13:1-5)

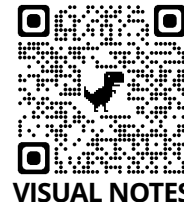
Followers of Jesus are called to swim against the flow, living different than our Christ-less culture. After all, if there's no difference, we won't make one.



teachingnotes

Follow today's teaching notes, Scripture passages & more with your digital device (**wi-fi: Worship Center Guest**).

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* Bible Translation: **CSB** (Christian Standard Bible)

CATCH THE CONTEXT

Last week we saw that followers of Jesus are to be known as those who...

PURSUE PEACE with PEOPLE, and LIVE in the HOLINESS Jesus has given us.

Today we're covering 6 verses reminding followers of Jesus to **Swim Against the Flow** in our Christ-less culture.

Love the Family & Hospitality to All

Hebrews 13:1-2 (CSB)

Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.

Christians are to demonstrate **brotherly love** toward one another. The early Christian gatherings met in homes where **hospitality** was to be shown both to faith family and even to strangers...which could even be **angels** masquerading as people.

- This ancient audience knew the story of Abraham & Sarah showing hospitality to 3 "men" who turned out to be 2 angels (Gen 18:22, 19:1) and Yahweh in skin (Gen 18:2,16). Abraham & Sarah prepared a meal for these *strangers* before they knew exactly who they were. They **welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.**
 - 2 of the "men" are later identified as angels (Gen 18:22, 19:1) whom Lot brings into his home (Gen 19:1-3), while the other "man" turns out to be Yahweh (Gen 18:22-33) 1) foretelling both of the future birth of Isaac and 2) the coming destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah.

The writer of Hebrews makes it sound like *this opportunity to welcome angels as guests might be more than just a 1-time experience in the distant past, but a very real possibility in the present.*

❓ *If I KNEW this stranger was an angel of God, how would that change how I treat him?*

✓ We should **show hospitality** to dear brothers & sisters as well as complete **strangers**.

Showing Brotherly Love

Hebrews 13:3 (CSB)

Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.

1st century prisons were NOT like ours. Prisoners were often totally dependent on family & friends for the basic necessities of life (food, clothing, bedding). Christians were to remember the **suffering** of other Christians - **as though** being **in prison with them** - and make the time to feed them & care for them. Jesus commanded:

Matthew 7:12 (CSB)...whatever you want others to do for you, do **also the same for them**...

- Christians are to show hospitality to all, take care of brothers & sisters in difficult days.

❓ **What if WE ministered to others as if we *could be* ministering to ANGELS...or JESUS?**

Serving Others = Serving Jesus

Matthew 25:35–40 (CSB) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly I tell you, **whatever you did** for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, **you did for me.**”

❓ **What if we REALLY believed that** - that Jesus would reward us for treating others like we would treat HIM?!?!?

The early church was well known for caring for their own. **Lucian**, a pagan writer, authors a satirical drama about a cynic philosopher who takes advantage of Christians by pretending to be a Christian. After he is imprisoned, Lucian notes how the Christian community responds.

...from the very break of day aged widows and orphan children could be seen waiting near the prison, while their officials even slept inside with him after bribing the guards. The elaborate meals were brought in, and sacred books of theirs were read aloud.¹

The Apology of Aristides describes Christians' care for those those thrown in prison.

If they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. If there is among them a man that is poor or needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food.²

FEET2FAITH

Treat those in need as valuable as angels or Jesus Himself!

The Expectation of Sexual Purity

Hebrews 13:4 (CSB)

Marriage is to be honored by all and **the marriage bed kept undefiled**, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.

The marriage bed kept undefiled is language pointing to the *good, GOD-invented*, blessing of sexual intimacy *INSIDE* the **marriage** relationship. Sexual activity *OUTSIDE* of the marriage bed is something **God will judge**. Regardless of what our culture claims, there is NO NEGOTIATION in claiming Christ while also messing around sexually *before marriage* (**sexually immoral**) or *outside of marriage* (**adulterers**), whether in person or on a screen.

✓ **Sexual intimacy is God's invention.** a good and pure gift from God for marriage.

- When sexual intimacy is removed from marriage (place of protection) and moved outside of marriage, it will bring swift destruction - memories, broken relationships, possibility of sexual diseases or unwanted pregnancy - often the precursor for the wicked killing of the unborn in abortion.

✗ Our Christ-less culture encourages sexual immorality both in person and on a screen. Those who give in to sexually suggestive videos, pics, and social media won't suddenly be able to change gears when they get married. **Habits that form now will follow us as we age.**

🔍 There IS hope for spiritual healing from sexual sin, but it's going to take commitment, humility, seeking God's truths in Scripture, prayer, & brothers and sisters who will help you.

FEET2FAITH

Live in sexual purity and enjoy God's gift of marriage!

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE!

¹ The Passing of Peregrinus, 12

² J. Rendel Harris, ed., *The Apology of Aristides*, Vol. 1 of "Texts and Studies," ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: The University Press, 1891), pp. 48, 49.

According to a *Washington Post* article in 2018, the typical American earns 10 times the typical person in the world.³ So compared to the rest of the world, most of us are RICH.

Don't Love Money

Hebrews 13:5 (CSB) Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He himself has said, *I will never leave you or abandon you.* [Deut 31:6, Joshua 1:5]

Money isn't good or bad. It is simply a TOOL that can be used for GOOD or EVIL. But **the love of money** is never good. See these ancient words penned 2000 years ago - just as relevant today as they were then.

1 Timothy 6:7-10 (CSB) For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. If we have food and clothing, **we will be content** with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The love of money has invited **foolish and harmful desires, ruin and destruction**, even causing some who once claimed to be followers of Jesus to **wander away from the faith**. *WHY?* The **love of money** causes people to seek purpose & contentment in *TEMPORARY STUFF* rather than in the *ETERNAL SAVIOR*. And that hunger for more will NEVER be satisfied. And at the end of life, what will it matter?

Luke 12:16-21 (CSB) Then He [Jesus] told them a parable: "A rich man's land was very productive. He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops? I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." But **God said to him, 'You fool!** This very night your life is demanded of you. And **the things you have prepared—whose will they be?** "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

According to Jesus this guy was **a fool** because he exchanged a rich relationship with the ETERNAL GOD that would never end for *EARTHLY TREASURES* that he couldn't take with him.

❓ **Are any of us guilty of that?** *WHAT* or *WHO* are you pursuing? Where is your time and money going - toward things that will last or things that will fade away when you die?

Be Content & Remember God's Promise

Hebrews 13:5 (CSB) Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have. He himself has said, *I will never leave you or abandon you.* [Deut 31:6, Joshua 1:5]

❓ When is the last time you *THANKED GOD* for what you *DO HAVE* instead of complaining about what you *DON'T HAVE*?

- God told the Old Covenant Hebrew people & Joshua that He would **never leave or abandon** them [Deut 31:6, Joshua 1:5].
- The author of Hebrews recognizes that *this promise is certainly true of New Covenant followers of Jesus*, in whom the Holy Spirit *LIVES* & to whom Jesus made this promise:

Matthew 28:19-20 (CSB) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age."

FEET 2 FAITH

Take time every day to THANK GOD for His provision & Presence!

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE!

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/08/23/most-americans-vastly-underestimate-how-rich-they-are-compared-with-the-rest-of-the-world-does-it-matter/>

God is calling US to...

- Love & serve people without expecting something in return by **showing hospitality** to our brothers & sisters in Christ as well as STRANGERS.
- Live in sexual purity while our culture pushes us to swim the other way.
- Live in contentment, trusting HE is WITH US - rather than loving money - an earthly material we attach value to.

Don't Swim Alone!

Hebrews 13:6 (CSB)

Therefore, we may boldly say, ***The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*** [Ps 118:6-7]

This is a loose quote from Psalm 118:6-7. The unnamed author (likely David) is wrestling against enemies who "surrounded me like bees" (Ps 118:12). "*They pushed me hard to make me fall, but Yahweh helped me.*" (Ps 118:13).

✓ In the middle of the *FEAR*, the Psalmist puts his *FAITH* in the One True God and calls us to do the same.

"What can man do to me?" *They could KILL YOU!!!* It's not like the Psalmist, the author of Hebrews, nor Jesus were unaware of that reality. Jesus warned His disciples that persecution and even death were coming.

Seeing through the Right Lenses

Luke 12:4-7 (CSB) I say to you, my friends, don't fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will show you the one to fear: **Fear Him who has authority to throw people into hell after death**. Yes, I say to you, this is the One to fear! Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. **Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**

So...we are told to FEAR God, but then told "**Don't be afraid**". What's *THAT* mean?

- We are NOT to fear other people, but **our reverent fear is in God**...the God who will JUDGE ALL, but also the God who VALUES us more than any other creature!
 - If **not one sparrow is forgotten by God**, and WE are **worth more than many sparrows**, then God is NOT UNAWARE of what is going on in your life. He CARES about you! SEEK HIM & TRUST HIM! Stop living in fear of others...or a virus and TRUST the God who knows how many **hairs** are on your **head**.
- ✓ If we fear (and trust) the Creator who CARES for us the way we should, we won't fear the creation nearly as much. KNOWING that our Gracious God will never leave us, and KNOWING that both our EARTHLY LIFE and our ETERNAL LIFE is in His hands should bring us great hope and deep peace, even in the face of death.

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), Fain & Linda Poppell (850-464-1282), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).