

Hebrews 13:1-7

“Jesus’ Greatness Inspires Great Love”

Pastor Bruce Zachary

Intro. Who do you love? There are so many people that come to mind. Nevertheless, they might not be the ones that God has destined me to love. Have you ever wanted to know, “Lord who are the people that I am destined to love?” The author of the Book of Hebrews has some clues for us.

Subject: Jesus’ greatness inspires great love

Object: Live and love like Jesus

Context: Before I reveal your true love list, it is necessary to briefly recall what the Book of Hebrews is about.

The Book of Hebrews makes a compelling case that Jesus is greater than: angels, prophets, Moses, the sacrificial system, the priesthood, the temple, and His New Covenant is superior to the Old. Jesus’ greatness inspires great love! **Jesus’ followers are to reveal that Jesus is greater than anything else by how they live, and whom they love.**

In difficult times we tend to focus more on our circumstances and selves, instead of focusing on Christ and others. Hebrews is addressed to Jewish Christians who were suffering for their faith in Jesus, and were tempted to abandon Jesus for ritual Judaism. After demonstrating how Jesus is superior, we are then challenged to live like Jesus and love others rather than being self-focused. **In addition to loving Christ supremely, here is a list of your five true loves:**

1. Love other believers: *Let brotherly love continue* [Heb. 13:1]. Love one another like a family. Before it can *continue* it needs to exist. If you are isolated from a true community of other believers you need to seek it and develop it. Once it exists you need to vigorously maintain it. Loving other believers and being loved by them is enriching and transforming. Furthermore, it stirs the world to jealousy.

a. Genuine love among believers is the evidence that we are Christ’s disciples (Jn. 13:35), and that kind of community is so attractive to non-believers.

2. Love those who are unable to benefit you materially: *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.* ³ Remember the

prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also [Heb. 13:2-3].

a. Strangers, prisoners, and the mistreated rarely have much to offer in the material sense.

i. Showing hospitality to strangers and prisoners is often inconvenient, and occasionally frightening. In context, the author of Hebrews was likely thinking of those who were suffering because of their faith in Christ. But the principle has broad application.

b. Be encouraged by the unexpected benefits, *for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.* You never know whom you are blessing. You might entertain an angel like Abraham did (**Gen. 18:1-22**), or simply discover the great value of loving without expectation of any return. Undoubtedly, you will show the type of love that draws people to Jesus, the source of that love.

c. Treat those in need like a fellow human being created in His image, rather than a project.

i. You might be surprised that people are not always “what or who” they appear to be. One time when I was speaking at a conference, I saw a man who appeared “homeless.” I tried to show the love of Christ by approaching and engaging him in conversation. We were talking for quite a while, right up until the host introduced the worship leader for the event, and my new friend excused himself to go on stage.

ii. You just never know, it might be Jesus that you are showing kindness to (**Matt. 25:35-36**).

3. Love your Spouse: *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge [Heb. 13:4].*

a. Marriage is the most noble and blessed relationships between people.

i. There is no other relationship designed by God to forge two distinct people into one (**Gen. 2:24**).

ii. Marriage is to display the love that Christ has for His bride the church (**Eph. 5:32**).

b. Sexual intimacy is reserved for the marriage relationship.

i. It is one of many fringe benefits of marriage (1 Cor. 7:2-5, Song of Solomon).

c. Respecting God’s boundaries will display your love for Christ as well as your love for your spouse.

i. Be faithful and don’t defile your marriage by sexual intimacy prior to marriage (fornication) or sex outside of your marriage (adultery).

ii. That type of love for Christ, and for your future or present spouse is noteworthy, and attracts people to Christ.

4. Love your neighbor: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*⁶ So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" [Heb. 13:5-6].

a. The principle is to be content not covetous, and covetousness is related to our neighbor (Ex. 20:17).

i. Coveting is primarily an attitude, but here the directive relates to behavior, "*Let your conduct be without covetousness ...*" **If I am jealous of my neighbor's house, spouse, kids, wealth, career or other stuff, and long for my neighbor's life (coveting) I have effectively lost the ability to show how great Jesus is.**

How can being content in Christ help you love your neighbor?

On the other hand, ***when I display the reality that Jesus is greater than all my neighbor's stuff, then it is reasonable for my neighbor to be jealous and want what I have – Jesus.*** You are even reminded why

b. Jesus is better than your neighbor's stuff.

i. He will never leave or forsake you [5]. Stuff and people, are always separated from you, but Jesus never will be. **ii. He is ever present to help you so you need not fear [6].**

iii. Real contentment in this life flows from trusting Jesus not things. Jesus brings greater security than stuff. When you are content in Christ, you can love your neighbor.

5. Love your spiritual leaders: *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct* [Heb. 13:7].

a. Those who teach sound doctrine, live sound doctrine, and lead with sound doctrine are a gift from God.

i. Love and respect them and follow them as they follow Christ.

ii. Let them lead with joy and not grief, because ultimately it will be best for you [Heb. 13:17].

Who else are you destined to love? Share your thoughts with us.

Conc: Live and love like Jesus