

Lesson Twenty-five

(13:1-6)

GODLY LIVING

13 Let brotherly love continue.² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.³ Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body.⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you."⁶ Hence we can confidently say,
"The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid;
what can man do to me?"

While some treat this section as sort of an "add-on" to the epistle, as the outline on page ix shows, it seems better to treat it as an integral part of the "duty" section of the book. Our lesson treatment divides up ch. 13 into two sections for convenience of study, not because the chapter is considered less related to the whole discussion than what

immediately precedes it. In fact, if the Christian is to be holy and godly in thought and deed, as the preceding lesson suggested, the various injunctions in this chapter are just as needful as any others that have been given. If we worship God acceptably, 12:28, it will have to be done in the context of things such as are in this text, and the rest of ch. 13. The permanence of the kingdom hinges upon who Jesus is, and 13:8 has something important to say on that point. So we begin this lesson with the thought in mind that God has spoken, 12:25, in his son, and part of that "speech" is here in 13:1-6.

13:1 — **Let . . . continue** — The Greek term is *μενέτω*, a present imperative, indicating both the importance and continuance of the action in mind, in this case, brotherly love.

brotherly love — The Greek term is *φιλαδελφία*, and is seen in our Philadelphia, an exact transliteration. Most people have heard preachers and teachers expound upon the merits of "agape" love, its "god-like" qualities, etc., the highest type of love, etc. While such statements may be good, no New Testament text can be quoted as so stating. What is true is that at least three Greek words for love are found in the New Testament pages, "agape" being one of them. Another is found in Romans 12:10, commonly translated as "love one another." Our particular term also is in 12:10, "brotherly affection." The Greek word in point is *φιλία* in its noun form, and occurs a great number of places in the New Testament scriptures, often in a compound form, as in Philemon, Philippians, etc. (It is in v. 5 of Hebrews 13, which see.) It is used of about every relationship that is to be had in one's Christian living, as well as God's love for people and Jesus, Jesus' love of people (like Lazarus and John). It is not of the frequency of occurrence of agape, but it is used many times in important ways, as in our text. No more important attitude can be maintained than love for one another.

V. 2 — **Do not neglect** — The same root word, *ἐπιλανθάνομαι*, was seen in 6:10 in regard to God, and will be seen in v. 16. It has the idea of forgetting, treating as unimportant. Ref. Mark 8:14; Luke 12:6; Philippians 3; 13; James 1:24; also Hebrews 13:16 for some other uses of it. Lack of hospitality is not to be true of the Christian, but rather the opposite is to be practiced. Consider some parallel texts in Romans 12:13 and Galatians 6:9-10. Abraham hastened to be hospitable and discovered that he had angels for visitors. Others in Bible history were treated in somewhat similar fashion.

V. 3 — **Remember** — The third imperative in a row, and all to be done throughout life. In that day as well as ours, the threat to be imprisoned was always present for Christians somewhere in the world. Hence, one is to remember like he would wish to be remembered (the golden rule, Matthew 7:12). Jesus taught that remembrance for brethren upon such

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occasions was the same as if done to him, Matthew 25:39-40. Recall Hebrews 10:34.

ill-treated — In 11:25, Moses chose such a set of circumstances when he chose by faith. Some of the others in faith's hall-of-fame had been treated thus, 11:37. We in America have been very blessed in this respect, but many others have not been so. Let us not grow either unappreciative or unconcerned!

V. 4 — Marriage is God's basic institution in this life. All through the Bible it has been held up for all to honor and esteem. While it is true that all did not honor it as God wished, it is nevertheless true that God hates divorce, Malachi 2:16. Moreover, the implication of Genesis 2:21-24 as brought out by Jesus in Matthew 19 is that man is to have only one wife, not many. Hence, the polygamy among people of the world, as among those of the Bible, was and is wrong. Those who treat marriage lightly, whoever, whenever, will incur God's wrath. It may be that the church will have to address itself to the problem of the divorced, the homosexual and others of like nature, all of which strikes at the marriage institution, but the church ought never to countenance such things as being anything but deviations from God's plans, and bad ones at that.

V. 5 — **Keep your life free** — The word here translated is *ἀφιλάργυρος*, composed of a negative prefix, the word for love, *φιλία*, and the word for money or silver. The disciplined person is not one who loves money, or the things it will buy. Rather, he depends wholly and solely upon God for what is needed, Matthew 6:19-33, and uses wisely what is placed within his hands. Many scriptures bear on this point, such as Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 12:41-44; Acts 4:32 — 5:11; II Corinthians 8 and 9; Philipians 4:11; I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; etc.

be content — Notice the same command in Luke 3:14; then II Corinthians 9:8; and Philipians 4:11 again. This really implies being satisfied with God though having nothing else. Anything more than God is extra, to be used and appreciated, but not to be cherished or coveted. The reason Christians can be so minded is in God's promise to always be with us, and never to leave us in the lurch. Reread the comments on 10:34 and 11:37, and read I Timothy 6:6-8.

V. 6 — Because God is dependable, the Christian's watchword is expressed in this verse. Confidence in God is the basis of great reward, 10:35. So often in other letters, Paul expressed the same sentiment, as in II Corinthians 4:16; 5:6-8; 6:3-10; Philipians 1:6, 19. The Christian may have to trust God to deliver even when all others fall away or make fun of what is considered "foolish" faith. It will be well to recall Daniel 3 and Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego, or the taunts thrown in Jesus' face as recorded in Matthew 27:41-43. However, if we be found faithful, it may well be with us even in this life as it was with those in Daniel 3,

who trusted a God who was able and had a great king admit that no other god could deliver in such a way, Daniel 3:28-29. Whether or not this takes place, Christians know that faithfulness until death is God's will, leaving it to God to make things right. Jesus set us the example in this area, too, I Peter 2:21-23. For some scriptures on this general topic, see Genesis 28:13-15; Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:1-5; I Chronicles 28:20; Psalms 118:6.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 25:

243. Show the relevance of our lesson text to the Christian life.
244. Have you checked the outline of the whole book to see how this fits in?
245. List the commands contained in these verses (some are in the third person form, "Let . . .," or are passive in form, "be . . .").
246. Would brotherly love perhaps include hospitality and remembrance of prisoners?
247. Besides the church, what is God's basic unit within any society?
248. Have you considered what Paul teaches about marriage in Ephesians 5:21 — 6:4 and Colossians 3:18-21; or the instruction of Peter in I Peter 3:1-7?
249. Why do people flaunt God's instructions regarding marriage? Would it be because of the same reason the Jews did, as pointed out by Jesus in Matthew 19:8?
250. Whom did Jesus call a fool?
251. Does our text tell us how to keep from being a fool?
252. Is being God's child sufficient for you?