

## LIFE Bible Study: Hebrews 13:1-25

**For Discussion:** What are some of your interests and/or hobbies? Aside from when you are directly engaging with these things, where else do they show up in your life? How easily could someone see this side of you by looking at your life?

### Read Hebrews 13:1-25

**For review:** In Hebrews 12:18-29, the author presented again the old and new covenants through the imagery of Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. While Sinai is characterized by the terrifying, unapproachable holiness of God, Zion is characterized by joyful worship and closeness with Him. Both of these realities are true, separated solely by the blood of Christ. The two mountain scenes also depict the current worldly kingdom and the coming heavenly kingdom that will one day supplant it forever. The author concluded the section with an exhortation to his readers to respond to their inheritance of such a precious, everlasting kingdom with offerings of reverent, awe-filled worship (Heb. 12:28). In the final section of his letter, the author delves into specific examples of what it means to live out this calling.

**Following his exhortation to give acceptable worship to God (Heb. 12:28-29), the author goes through several relationships and areas of life where this is to be demonstrated. He begins very practically with an encouragement to continue showing brotherly love to one another (Heb. 6:10, Rom. 12:9-10). How were people to love the needy and vulnerable who were not from their immediate community? How were they to love those from among their people who were facing persecution for their faith?**

**The author then proceeds to address two areas that frequently present challenges to keeping worship rightly focused on God, marriage and money. What attitude does the author encourage his readers to have towards marriage? What are some ways for people in different life stages and with varying relationship statuses to do this? What attitude does the author encourage his readers to have towards money? What is the basis for responding this way (v.5b, 1 Tim. 6:9-10), and how does that help us when we face want or persecution?**

Returning to the topic of relationships, the author points his readers to their leaders. He first instructs them to consider the lives of their former leaders (v.7-9) and later addresses their relationship with their current leaders (v.17). How does the author tell his readers to respond to each group? How is Jesus' unchanging nature relevant in this context (v.8)? What godly habits, disciplines, and/or lifestyle choices do you see in your leaders that would be beneficial for your faith, and how can you begin to practice these?

Following his teaching on marital fidelity, the author includes a section on doctrinal fidelity. There were "diverse and strange teachings" (v.9) circulating among them that placed undue emphasis on special foods. Rather than chase after inconsequential things (Rom. 14:17, 1 Cor. 8:8), the author encourages his readers instead to figuratively go to Jesus outside the camp (v.13). What does the author mean in telling his readers to do this? In what areas have you chosen to distance yourself from Jesus and stand with the world? What would it look like for you to stand instead with your Saviour where He suffered and be willing to bear the reproach that He bore?

### **Reflection and application**

The things that are important to you, that you have dedicated yourself to, will find expression throughout your life. They defy being confined. We naturally bring into other areas of our lives the things we care about the most. This is no different when it comes to our relationship with God. Acceptable worship is first and foremost a state of the heart towards God, but it also includes public acknowledgement and praise of who He is (v.15) and expressions of practical love (i.e., obedience to His will) towards others in every sphere of life (v.16).

The author's emphasis as he closes his letter is to show that an outward-facing love is an integral aspect of what it means to offer God an acceptable sacrifice of worship. In his benediction, he further reveals that it is ultimately God who must equip us and work through what He supplies to enable us to do His will for His pleasure (v.20-21, 2 Cor. 9:8, Phil. 2:12-13). Let us approach life with a focus and desire to please God, turning to Him for His enabling grace and living to honour and learn from the faithful men and women who came before us, with the goal of joining their ranks as people who point to God's greatness and worthiness of our highest praise for those who are to follow.