

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part XXV: Expressing A Godly Practical LOVE In Life"
(Hebrews 13:1-6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A common concern in religious circles as well as in the world is the concern that we be more "loving." However, there are problems in how this "love" is to be translated into action:

(1) John Leo wrote in the U.S. News & World Report of a trend among college students that a 20-year professor, Robert Simon has begun to notice. This trend disturbs him as follows:

Professor Simon has never met a student that denied that the Nazi holocaust of the Jewish people occurred, but he is meeting a new breed of student who will say, "Of course I dislike the Nazis, but who is to say they are **morally wrong?**"

Apparently, it is felt that our love is to be so great that we let the Nazis off lightly in spite of the holocaust as "love" demands we view their actions *tolerantly!*

(2) In the same article, Kay Haugaard who teaches creative writing at Pasadena City College in California is cited on hearing a student in her class react to an assigned reading on human sacrifice. This student, who passionately wrote of saving the whales, the rain forests and the rescue and gentle care of a stray dog felt that human sacrifice might be permissible if it was part of a long-standing religion!

Is our "love" of others to be totally nonjudgmental on an ethical and moral level as some think today?

(3) Here is a scenario that represents what has actually happened in regards to this issue in Evangelical circles:

Mr. "A" and Miss "B" wanted to get married, but Pastor "C" felt he could not Biblically condone the union because Mr. "A" was divorced. So Mr. "A" and Miss "B" consulted a group of ministers in an association who felt it was acceptable for them to marry. Thus, the couple was wed by a minister in that consenting association.

Now, **after** the wedding, that association has decided not let Mr. "A" minister in a pastorate because of his marital record and complications arising out of his first union! Disillusioned, Mr. "A" and the former Miss "B" (now Mrs. "A") wonder what is next for them!

Was it unloving for Pastor "C" NOT to condone the wedding as he wanted to remain consistently honest with Mr. "A" and the initial Miss "C"! WHY?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "People I know sense the need for more 'love' in our world, but the **EXPRESSION** of love often comes out in the form of greed, loose morals, apathy for others who hurt and corrupt social unions. Does the Bible define godly **LOVE** for practical living?!"

- I. **Having described the need to move beyond the dead ritualism of unbiblical Judaism and mature in one's faith in Christ, the author of Hebrews defined in Hebrews 13:1-6 a vibrant, Christian love in living, Ryrie Study Bible, King James Version, p. 1747.**
- II. **That LOVE sets DIRECTION and BOUNDARIES for CORRECT love expressions as follows, Hebrews 13:1-6:**
 - A. The godly Christian's love should be **widespread** in scope, 13:1-3:
 1. The godly Christian should let his love for fellow Christians stay vibrantly alive, Hebrews 13:1.
 2. The godly Christian should let his love for fellow Christians reach out to minister in hospitality to newcomer believers, or to visiting ministers or missionaries, Hebrews 13:2.
 3. The godly Christian should let his love reach out to identify with and to minister compassionately to disadvantaged believers, 13:3:
 - a. To those who are confined in prison for their faith, the believer must reach out and encourage, Hebrews 13:3a.
 - b. To those who are experiencing physical abuse for their faith the believer must reach out and encourage with compassion, 13:3b.
 - B. **However**, the **godly** Christian's **love** should **strictly respect MORAL boundaries** as he extends his love out to others, Hebrews 13:4-6:
 1. The godly Christian's love respects boundaries of physical intimacy:
 - a. Though Christians are to love fellow believers, that **love** must necessarily hold **marital** unions in deep respect, Hebrews 13:4a.
 - b. In particular, it must never tolerate the expression of love in terms of sexual immorality, whether it be by way of fornication or adultery or any other licentious expression, 13:4b implied.
 2. The godly Christian's love respects boundaries of handling money:

- a. Though Christians are to love, they must not love money, Hebrews 13:5a and "*aphilarguros* = not loving money", UBS Greek N.T., p. 776; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex., p. 126.
- b. Rather, godly Christians are to be content with such things as they already possess, Hebrews 13:b.
- c. Just **HOW** that correct adjustment to money is **workable** in view of the **practical need** the Christian has for money in living is described by examining the contexts of passages cited here: (a) The author of Hebrews said the believer could relax concerning his need for money so as not to be greedy for it in view of God's Deuteronomy 31:6-8 promise never to leave or to forsake His people, Heb. 13:5b. (b) Well, the author used an old style of Greek in the Attic expression for "hath said" in verse 5b [UBS Grk. N.T., p. 776 with Zondervan Anal. Grk. Lex., p. 118 and Machan, N.T. Grk. For Beginners, p. 3] Thus, he wanted to get his Hebrew readers feeling **secure** like we do when we say "God **hath** said" in old English rather than simply "God said," and that security is built on a familiar Old Testament passage. (c) That passage in particular was Moses' end-of-life admonition to Israel to enter Canaan and boldly take the land and its possessions amidst battles with Canaanites as God in faith would provide for their every need, cf. Dt. 31:6-8! (d) Also, the author of Hebrews quoted Psalm 118:6 which recalls God's deliverance from enemies. These readers needed this passage in view of their confiscation of property by Hebrew countrymen, cf. Heb. 13:6; Ps. 118:6 in light of Heb. 10:32-34. (e) **In summary, the readers were able to avoid greed for money as they saw in GOD all they needed as their SOURCE of living, being equipped then to live and function in serving in God's will.**

Application: *To be equipped to love RIGHTLY, we must (1) believe on Christ as personal Savior from sin to be forgiven and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:9. (2) Then, we (a) confess any sins we have done as believers (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely upon the Holy Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23) to love as God wants us to love, 1 Jn. 3:14a. (3) In particular, that godly love will show up in (a) its BROAD application to addressing the needs of others, particularly those of believers, Rom. 13:8a; Heb. 13:1-3. (b) Yet, IN that expression, it will STRICTLY respect moral boundaries so that sexual conduct is always pure and the handling of money will show a dependence on God rather than money itself to meet life's needs!*

Lesson: *The godly Christian is to express love toward other needy people in a wide sweeping RANGE, but in WAYS that STRICTLY respect moral boundaries in his relationships and handling of money. In this way, he lives a TRULY LOVING life that exemplifies God's love to the world.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

In one of his articles in his newsletter, The Berean Call, Dave Hunt was accosted by a critic for his treatment of Promise Keeper's doctrinal statement change on the gospel.

The former reading had said salvation came by "accepting through faith alone, God's gift of salvation" where the revised statement, in concert with Roman Catholic elements in PK had written the statement as follows: "Only through faith, trusting in Christ alone for salvation" is one saved [November 1997 issue of The Berean Call.]

The critic wrote, complaining to Dave that "I don't see how changing . . . [Promise Keeper's statement of faith] changes anything -- or that either statement is wrong . . ."

Dave Hunt responded by stating that Roman Catholicism will teach that salvation is through **Christ alone**, but **not** through **FAITH ALONE!** The change in the statement left open the door to tolerate a **faith-plus-sacraments** salvation in the Promise Keepers movement in direct violation of Ephesians 2:8-9 and Galatians 1:8-9!

In reality, Dave Hunt is very LOVING by giving the BOUNDARIES of Christian love that depict a CORRECT GOSPEL so that people in Promise Keepers can be truly SAVED! Nowhere in his letters does Dave "rave" in spite against people, but he is concerned that we express our love RIGHTLY as GOD expects us to express it! Dave only dares to tell the truth!

Accordingly, YES, we are to love in a WIDE-RANGING arc, but we are to do so with the BOUNDARIES of ACTION and DOCTRINE that represent the holiness of our loving God! Only then can we enjoy His blessing!

(1 John 2:5 NIV - "But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him.")