



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Stability in Life

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RON J. BIGALKE, PASTOR/MISSIONARY, CAPITOL COMMISSION, 912.659.4212

Ron J. Bigalke, PhD / PO Box 244, Rincon, GA 31326-0244 / www.capitolcom.org / ron.bigalke@capitolcom.org

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY monthly (interim) schedule

*** 1st Tuesday of the month ***

(Capitol Commission Bible Studies will be
every Tuesday during the legislative session)

TUESDAY, 7 JANUARY @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission (Interim) Bible Study
is
Tuesday, 7 January 2014

Hebrews 13 – “Stability in Life”

History records that Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, once captured a prince and his family. When they appeared before the king, Cyrus asked the prince, “What will you give me if I release you?” The prince replied, “The half of my wealth.” Cyrus then asked, “What if I release your children?” “Everything I possess” was the response. Cyrus asked a final question: “What will you give me for your wife to be released?” The prince replied, “Your Majesty, I will give myself.” The prince inspired Cyrus to such a degree that the king decreed all the family to be released. As the family returned home, the prince asked his wife, “Cyrus was truly a handsome man!” With a look of intense love for her husband, the prince’s wife remarked, “I did not notice. I could only keep my eyes affixed upon you—the one who was willing to give himself for me.”

Sacrifice is a primary emphasis of Hebrews 13. Scripture reveals what are the sacrifices that are pleasing to God. The consecrated life is a subject that C. S. Lewis wisely addressed.

If you are thinking of becoming a Christian, I warn you[,] you are embarking on something which is going to take the whole of you, brains and all. But, fortunately, it works the other way round. Anyone who is honestly trying to be a Christian will soon find his intelligence being sharpened: one of the reasons why it needs no special education to be a Christian is that Christianity is an education itself [Mere Christianity, rev. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1952) 75].

The wonder of biblical sacrifice is that in giving, one finds true identity. The book of Hebrews concludes with admonitions for living in a manner that is consecrated to God, and thus receives his pleasure.

The book of Hebrews concludes with instruction for living the Christian life. The final chapter teaches how to demonstrate love to other believers who have particular needs. Hebrews 13 also communicates how to live morally, how to have a godly attitude toward money, how to offer God-pleasing sacrifices, how to joyfully follow leaders, how to pray for other believers, and how to be attentive to the words of Scripture.

STABILITY WITH THOSE OF LIKE FAITH

(Heb 13:1-3) Hebrews 13 is perhaps one of the more magnificent of final chapters in Scripture because much help and instruction is given. There are a variety of admonitions, with the first being to be certain that love toward fellow believers continues. In times of confusion, some people will say one thing and others will speak something entirely contrary. The result will be strife, and thus concern for others will diminish. Consequently, it is important to emphasize the need to maintain Christian love.

Verses 2-3 provide two actions that demonstrate special love toward fellow believers: hospitality and helping those in need. Hospitality is an important basis for proving friendship, and is a required characteristic for all Christian leaders (1 Tim 3:2). Being a recipient of the richness of God’s grace means having actions that are consistent with the goodness of God. Those who are stingy refrain from those practices that bring happiness into life. Compassion for those in need is to be as if we were the victims of that suffering.

STABILITY IN FAMILY LIFE

(Heb 13:4-6) Christians are to have an outlook toward marriage that is honorable and pure (Heb 13:4). Christians are to honor marriage as instituted by God, and to regard sex as a normal and healthy component of the marriage relationship. Sex is beautiful and holy because God created it. Those who are married are to maintain moral purity. Others may laud those who violate God’s command, yet Christians are not to be deceived “with empty words” (Eph 5:6).

Materialism is a primary threat to family stability. Scripture provides two perspectives to control materialism: (1) renounce “love of money,” and, (2) be “content with what you have” (13:5). Wealth itself was initially created as a component of God’s creation over which humanity was given dominion (Gen 1:26). Although the dominion mandate remained after the Fall, sin greatly tainted the process (9:1-3). Wealth is a component of God’s creation, and is rightly considered “good” even though it may be abused for evil purposes. Wise stewardship of wealth is the result of one’s character (Luke 16:10).

Jesus certainly condemned neurotic “devotion to the pursuit of wealth,” but never did he condemn wealth *per se*. Scripture does not



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Capitol Commission (Interim) Bible Study

1st Tuesdays (monthly) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

(lunch will be provided by Capitol Commission donors)

Georgia

Stability in Life

teach that money and wealth are evil (1 Tim 6:10). The proper use of money is emphasized throughout the Bible. Jesus did not condemn private property or economic goods. The acquisition of riches as the purpose of life is the snare against which Scripture warns.

Luke 16:10 – “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”

GOD'S PRESENCE BANISHES WORRY...

Anxiety is another threat to stability in family life. Psalm 118:6-7 reminds believers that God's presence banishes worry concerning personal needs. God helps his people (Heb 13:6; cf. Mark 9:22; 2 Cor 6:2). With the true presence of God, no event or individual should cause believers to wander from their foundation (cf. Heb 2:1-4).

STABILITY WITH THOSE WHO LEAD

(Heb 13:7-9) Believers are to “imitate” the faith of their spiritual leaders and to avoid “varied and strange teachings.” A very unfortunate discrepancy can exist between those who lead and those who follow. Some may reject personal (experiential) holiness and spiritual maturity in their lives because they are not a leader, and thus as merely “simple” believers in Jesus Christ do not regard themselves as having special ability or holiness.

Spiritual leaders are not extraordinary. What such leaders accomplish (presuming their lives are worthy to imitate) is exactly what even the “simple” believer can achieve. The reason is that Jesus Christ, who “is the same yesterday and today and forever,” ultimately accomplishes anything worthwhile in anyone's life (Heb 13:8).

STABILITY WITH GOD

(Heb 13:10-16) Verse 10 contains much symbolism to contrast the privileges of those who are believers with those who are not. Mere ritual provides no access to the benefits that Christ makes available. Faith in Jesus Christ provides a relationship with God from which unbelief separates. Believers have contact with Christ himself and thus live with daily experience of his benefits.

Christians do enjoy spiritual access to the offering that Jesus presented on their behalf (Heb 13:11). Verses 12-13 further explain the knowledge that Jesus died outside the walls of Jerusalem (John 19:20). Jesus died “that He might sanctify the people through His own blood.” God grants eternal rewards to those who bear the “reproach” of Jesus.

Commitment to Christ is evident in two aspects: (1) living with an eternal perspective; and, (2) living in enjoyment of togetherness (Heb 13:14). The sacrifice that believers offer today is

that of song and praise (13:15). God finds much pleasure in those who seek to do “good” and share, in contrast to actions and attitudes that are earthly, material, and physical. God is concerned with how his people conduct themselves with others (13:16).

STABILITY WITH THOSE WHO LEAD, 2.0

(Heb 13:17-19) Leadership is again mentioned (13:17, 24), thus indicating its merit. Submitting to those called to lead enables them to serve with joy (13:17). Leaders are to maintain a constant attitude of watchfulness over those they lead, recognizing they will give an account of their work (13:18-19). Leadership has many responsibilities, and is not characterized merely by privileges.

STABILITY WITH THOSE OF LIFE FAITH, 2.0

(Heb 13:20-25) “Now the God of peace” is He who promotes peace among those who trust in Him (13:20). Jesus leads believers through any circumstances that may threaten peace because He is the “great Shepherd of the sheep” (13:21). The complete potential of each believer is to do “every good thing” in accordance with God's will, and to produce in his/her life only “that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (13:21).

LEADERSHIP HAS MANY RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IS NOT CHARACTERIZED MERELY BY PRIVILEGES.

The book of Hebrews concludes with two comments that distinguish the entire letter (13:22-25). *First*, it is a “word of exhortation;” and, *second*, it was written “briefly” (at least, in comparison to all that could be said; see 5:11 and 9:5). Hebrews contains many warnings intended to be encouragement. The methods and subjects for providing this encouragement were many and varied, and could be read again in an hour or two.

The message for us is to demonstrate those actions, attitudes, lifestyles, and sacrifices that are pleasing to God. We are wise to do so because such stability of life guides us in the present time and will culminate in eternal reward when we behold God face-to-face.

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact us by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers teach ongoing verse-by-verse Bible studies for the entire Capitol community, and also meet personally with many government leaders to proclaim God's grace in salvation, to encourage our leaders, pray with them, and provide biblical counsel.

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**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY @ 7:30AM in 123 CAP
and again @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB**