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# Christian Behavior: Towards God Part 2

Hebrews 13:7-17

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*“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

*8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

*9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

*10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.*

*12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

*15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

*17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must*

*give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”*

## INTRODUCTION:

## ILLUSTRATION:

*When Queen Victoria was a child, she didn't know she was in line for the throne of England. Her instructors, trying to prepare her for the future, were frustrated because they couldn't motivate her. She just didn't take her studies seriously. Finally, her teachers decided to tell her that one day she would become the queen of England. Upon hearing this, Victoria quietly said, "Then I will be good." The realization that she had inherited this high calling gave her a sense of responsibility that profoundly affected her conduct from then on.*

## **CIT: How Are Christians Supposed to Live Their Lives Before God?**

**I. Christians are to be Steadfast in Their Faith (vs. 7-9)**—*“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

*8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

*9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”*

### A. Purity of Doctrine

1. Paul tells the Hebrews that they need to keep in Memory what they have been given

a. He tells them to **Remember Them** that communicated to them the Word of God

i. And it's NOT necessarily to set their focus on **Those Who did the communicating**—as much as it is to set their focus on **the Faith** that was **communicated** to them

*“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the **word of God**: whose **faith** follow, considering the **end** of their conversation.”*

- These communicators were the **living examples** of what genuine saving faith looks like
- And Paul tells them to remember those who gave them the Gospel—and **model their lives after their lives**

**NOTE: My personal desire to be like some of the men of God that he has put in my life—Sam Davison, Dave Hardy, John MacArthur**

- **Paul told the Corinthians the same thing:**

**1 Corinthians 4:15-16**—“*For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus **I have begotten you through the gospel.***  
*16 Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.***”

- **And it wasn't just following Paul—to be like Paul**
- **It is following Paul to be like Christ**

**1 Corinthians 11:1**—“*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*”

- **Paul made the point clear to Timothy**
- **If he was to be a leader that other believers were to follow—then...**

**1 Timothy 4:12**—“*Let no man despise thy youth; **but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.***”

b. God wants the Believers' Faith to be Steadfast faith

- i. A faith that doesn't just start and then stop right after it begins
- ii. It isn't to be a faith that **wavers**—tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine
- iii. It is to be a faith that is active and **real**
- iv. It is to be a faith that is **consistent**—no matter what may come

c. That's why Paul pointed these Hebrews to model their lives after the faith of those who gave them the Gospel

- i. So that their faith would be consistent, steadfast faith
- ii. In the midst of all the opposition that would come

2. The Ultimate Model for Steadfast Faith—is not the Pastor...but Christ

**Vs. 8**—“*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*”

- a. The ultimate reason to be steadfast—is Jesus is steadfast
- b. Jesus will always be faithful—even when those that you most trust become faulty

**B. Rejection of Legalism (vs. 9)**—“*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*”

- 1. He tells them that they are not be “*carried about with divers and strange doctrines*”
- 2. The right kind of Grounding

**Vs. 9**—“*For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*”

a. Paul, at this point, is referring to Jewish legalism

i. So Paul warns them not to get pulled away into this nonsense

- Eating certain types of food—or forbidding certain types of food does not make a person more right with God
- There is nothing a person can do—religiously—that will make a person more right with God

ii. Paul tells them that their heart needs to be properly grounded

b. They were to have their hearts **established with Grace**—not with meats

i. That means that they were to **continually remind their hearts where their right standing with God really came from**

- It wasn't because of Jewish ceremonialism

- It wasn't because they eat certain meats—and forbid other kinds of food
- It wasn't because they went to church
- It wasn't because gave money
- It wasn't because of anything they did

ii. Their right standing with God—was because of HIS GRACE

## I. Christians are to be Steadfast in Their Faith

### II. Christians are to be Willing to Suffer (vs. 10-14)—

*“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”*

**A. The Type (vs. 10-11)**—*“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”*

### 1. “We have an altar”

- a. Paul is pointing to the Jewish sacrificial system
- b. And more importantly he is pointing to one of the most important holy days on the Jewish calendar—Yom Kippur
  - i. It was also called the Day of Atonement
  - ii. It was the day in which the High Priest would make Atonement for the whole nation of Israel

### 2. “We have an altar, whereof *they have no right to eat* which serve the tabernacle”

- a. The priests on any other day had the special privilege of being able to eat part of the sacrifices that were offered
- b. But on the Day of Atonement—these sacrifices were not to be eaten by the priests
- c. They were to be taken outside of the city walls and burned

**vs. 11**—*“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”*

**B. The Christological Fulfillment (vs. 12)**—*“Wherefore Jesus **also**, that he might sanctify the*

*people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”*

1. Jesus is the real sacrifice

- a. As we learned previously—that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin
- b. All they did is picture the One True Sacrifice—Jesus Christ

2. The fulfillment of the picture

- a. Just as the Sacrifices that were used to provide Atonement, were taken outside of the camp and burned
- b. So was Christ, taken outside of the city—and crucified to make Atonement for the sins of the whole world

**C. The Christian Application (vs. 13-14)**—*“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”*

- 1. Just as Christ suffered without the camp
- 2. We also should expect such treatment

- a. Instead of trying to hide from hardship/persecution—we should embrace it

b. It is one of the greatest ways that Christians identify with Christ

3. The Difficulty of the Hebrews

- a. The fear of persecution was one of the biggest reasons why many of these Jewish people were having trouble moving forward in their faith
- b. But Paul was challenging them that **it was time to embrace** this hardship that comes for being a Christian—with great joy

- i. Be willing to identify with your Savior—and suffer willingly with him
- ii. For most people, it is this element of Christianity that becomes the greatest stumbling block for their faith to be genuine

*“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach”*

c. The Christian’s Motivation to Suffer

**vs. 14**—*“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”*

- i. The promise that Christians have—is a World to Come
- ii. This world is passing away

- iii. And one day it will be destroyed under God's judgment
- iv. So don't cling so tightly to this world!

## I. Christians are to be Steadfast in Their Faith

## II. Christians are to be Willing to Suffer

**III. Christians are to be Sacrificial** (vs. 15-16)—“*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”

**NOTE:** To the Hebrews who had been saved, there would have been a natural question arise: “*If Jesus is the ONE TRUE SACRIFICE, that takes away all my sin, and makes me right with God, do I need to be continually offering any more sacrifices unto God?*”

I want you to think about how many times in a lifetime the average Jew would have offered sacrifices to God.

### A. The Prescribed Sacrifices of the Jewish People

1. The Sacrificial System of the Old Testament was Ordained by God
  - a. The Jews were continually sacrificing
    - i. There were prescribed sacrifices—that God told the Jews

they were to offer continually throughout the year

- Burnt offerings
  - Which were offerings that were to be completely consumed by fire
  - This sacrifice was offered both to atone for the sins of the people—and also acted as a dedication of one's self to God
  - Neither the priest nor the offerer got to partake of this sacrifice
- The Meal/Meat/Grain Offering
  - This offering often accompanied the burnt offering
  - It was an offering of flour, oil, frankincense
  - Often-times it was made into a cake and then it was burned upon the altar

- And what it signified was one's homage and thanksgiving to God
- A portion of this offering would go to the priest—to be eaten in the court of the Temple
- The Peace Offering
  - There were 3 different types of this offering:
    - **The Thank Offering**—given to express gratitude for some blessing or deliverance from God
    - **Votive Offering**—that was given to express gratitude for a blessing or deliverance when a vow had

accompanied the petition

- **Freewill Offering**—to express gratitude to God without regard to any specific blessing

- The purpose of the peace offering is to express Thanksgiving
- An animal sacrifice was often given for this sacrifice
- Part of the Sacrifice was to be burned
- Part was to be given to the priest
- And part was to be eaten by the Offerer and his family
- It acted as a meal of peace between God and the offerer

- Sin Offering

- This was an offering given for sins that

were unknowingly committed

- Often, because of lack of knowledge of God's expectations
- However, the sin offering was not acceptable for sins committed in defiant rebellion
- This sacrifice consisted of an animal offering—according to position and to wealth
- Part of the sacrifice would be burned
- And the rest would be given to the priest to consume
- The Trespass Offering
  - This offering is similar to the sin offering—but it deals primarily with sins that required restitution

- The offering would offer his sacrifice to the Lord—then he would make restitution with whomever he offended
- + 1/5 extra
- Part of the sacrifice was to be offered to God—being burnt on the altar
- And the other part would be given to the priest

**ii.** These sacrifices never stopped  
**iii.** In fact, every day—an evening and a morning sacrifice were to be offered in the Temple  
**iv.** At special feast days the sacrifices were even more abundant

- Josephus—an ancient Jewish historian—said that at the time of the Passover, **a 1/4 of a million lambs were sacrificed and consumed by the people**

**b.** And because these sacrifices were ordained by God—it made it that much more difficult—to turn away from it to become a Christian

- i.** If you remember, we’ve been pointing out that all these sacrifices that the Jews continually offered pointed to the ONE TRUE SACRIFICE—the Lord Jesus Christ
- ii.** Paul previously stated that it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should ever take away sins
- iii.** They just served as mere pictures of the ONE that could

**2.** So now that some of these Hebrews were becoming Christians—did the sacrificial system having any focus on them?

## **B. The Two Ways Christians Sacrifice to God**

**\*Christians are offer Sacrifices to God in their Words**

**\*And they offer Sacrifices in their Actions**

*(vs. 15-16)—“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”*

### **1. The Sacrifice of Our Words**

**a.** God doesn’t expect animal or grain offerings—but He DOES EXPECT offerings of praise and thanksgiving to be coming from our lips

**b.** And those offerings are not to be given only in church—but in everything we do

- i.** Whether it be in the church
- ii.** Or it be on the job
- iii.** Or it be in the car
- iv.** Or it be in the family
- v.** Christians are to be continually given over to praise and thanksgiving towards God

**c.** And God is not looking for hypocritical praise, and hypocritical thanksgiving

- i.** It is easy to say “thanks” with our lips—and still have our heart far from those words
- ii.** It is easy to sing a song of praise that you’ve heard hundreds of times—and still have your heart far from the words of the song
- iii.** Jesus said that the people who were shouting out “Hallelujahs” as he was riding on the back of a donkey coming into Jerusalem—were drawing near to Him with

their lips—but their heart was far from Him

- By the way—those people who shouted Hallelujah—later in the week would shout for Christ’s crucifixion
- “Let him be crucified!”

**iv.** God doesn’t want empty and shallow words

**v.** God wants our hearts to be behind such words

**d.** We were not saved to be unthankful and miserable people

**i.** He saved us to make a true worshippers of God—offering sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving continually unto Him

**ii.** God often describes people who are unsaved as “unthankful” and “miserable”

- They are self-centered
- Not able to see all that God has done for them

**iii.** And when we, as Christians, find ourselves falling into the trap of griping and complaining—we

need to quickly remember what we were saved to do

- To praise God
- And thank God forever
- Whether the things we are going through are good or bad
- God is the One Who is working all things together for Good

**2.** The Sacrifice of Action (vs. 16)—“*But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”

**a.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of our sacrificial life to God—is that of doing good to others

**i.** We were saved not only to be thankful—but to do good unto others—by giving our lives to them

**ii.** The word that sums all that up is LOVE

- Loving people is not just emotion or feeling or nice words being spoken
- True Godly love manifests itself in a willingness to lay down our lives for one another

- It's self-sacrificing
- It's putting others before yourself
- It's seeing the needs of others and giving to meet those needs—whether the people deserve it or not
- And our religion is not to keep us from doing so
  - James warned the Jews of his day to use their faith in Christ to show respect of persons
    - Favoring one person over another— simply because of their financial status
  - Jesus told the religious Jews of his day that they were neglecting their responsibility to honor father and mother—by giving their money to the temple, when they should have given it

to their parents who needed it

- They were using their religion to neglect their responsibility of love
- God through the prophet Isaiah said something similar
  - The Jews were fasting and afflicting their soul
  - And yet God refused to take knowledge of what they were doing
  - So when they asked why— God said this...

**Isaiah 58:6-7**—“*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when*

*thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”*

- They were using their religion to neglect the weightier matters of Love for others

- b. God expects His people to offer sacrifices of praise, and thanksgiving and offer sacrifices of good works
- c. Are you characterized by these sacrifices?

### **I. Christians are to be Steadfast in Their Faith**

### **II. Christians are to be Willing to Suffer**

### **III. Christians are to be Sacrificial**

### **IV. Christians are to be Submissive to Their Authorities**

*(vs. 17)—“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”*

**QUESTION:** *“Why did God give to churches Spiritual Leaders?”*

- They represent Him

- They are undershepherds
  - Shepherds that under the Great Shepherd
  - And their responsibility is to feed the sheep with the Word of God
  - And protect the sheep from enemies that would want to destroy them
- These Spiritual Leaders Represent the Great Shepherd—Jesus Christ
- And their responsibility is to rule as He would rule
  - Not as tyrants
  - But... *“feed[ing] the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”*
  - They are to lead not with a whip, but with the Word of God, and with a transformed life

#### **A. Spiritual Leaders Represent God**

1. So Paul tells the Hebrews that they are to obey them that have been given that rule over them

- a. Just as the Pastor is to lead with love and humility—*those under his leadership are to submit in love and humility*

b. Paul in another passage of Scripture tells the church that it is to “*esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake*”

i. The church is to highly honor those who teach the Word of God to them

**1 Thessalonians 5:17**—“*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*”

2. Why?

a. It is because they have been put into the position of shepherd—modeling and representing the Great Shepherd for you  
b. And the way you respond to their leadership—is ultimately the way you respond to the Great Shepherd—the Lord Jesus Christ

**John 13:20**—“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*”

3. So Paul’s instructions to the Hebrews—is for them to Obey the Spiritual Leaders God puts in their lives

**NOTE:** And Paul gives some practical reasons why the church is to obey those who have the rule over them.

**B. Submit because Spiritual Leaders Are Accountable to God**—“*for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account*”

1. The Sobering Responsibility of a Pastor is that he will have to give **an account of the welfare of the congregation he leads to God**

a. Before God he will have to give an account of how he taught the Word of God to the church

b. He will have to give an account of how he APPLIED the Word of God to the church

c. He will give an account of his faithfulness before the church

i. Did he live out what he taught his people?

ii. Did he stay faithful to the Word of God even when it was difficult to do so?

iii. Was he consistent with all people when it came to applying the Word of God

d. He will have to give an account of what he allowed into the church—and what he kept out of the church

i. Did he allow false and bad teaching to come into the church—

and influence the church contrary to God's Will

- ii. Did he allow the sinful influences of the culture to come in and pull people from the truth
- iii. Did he keep out things that should have been in the church

- Holiness
- Love

**NOTE:** Some churches go to one extreme or the other; showing too much love and neglecting holiness, or being so holy that love gets shrouded out.

e. Did he encourage his people to live out their faith in the world?

- i. Did he teach them how to give the gospel?
- ii. Did he provide opportunities for them to do so?
- iii. Did he teach to love world-wide missions—the spreading of the gospel to every creature?

2. So Paul tells them—Submit to their Leadership—because they watch for you—and they will have to give an account for you

a. I will give an account for every single person that is in this room (and for many who aren't)

- b. I won't have to give an account for every decision they made
- c. But I will give an account for how I influenced them as a pastor
- d. So Paul says—submit because of that very reason

**C. Submit Because it Brings Joy to Spiritual Leaders**—*“that they may do it with joy, and not with grief”*

1. Serving in the ministry can be one of the greatest places of Joy and Satisfaction in the world

- a. When you see God changing lives through your ministry to others
- b. When you preach a message and you think you flopped it—and then someone responds to it you never thought possible
- c. When you see someone get saved that you've been working with for a while
- d. When you see people start making decisions to honor God—rather than to please themselves or the world
- e. When you see people being real with God

**3 John 4**—*“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”*

- It's the pastor's great joy to see God do great things in the life of his people

**NOTE:** I'm convinced that part of grandeur of heaven will be getting to see how God used you for His honor and glory.

**2.** But it can also be one of the greatest places of grief

**a.** What grieves a pastor's heart is when he preaches his heart out—

**i.** and the people ignore it,

**ii.** or respond apathetically to it,

**iii.** or treat it only as a form of entertainment,

**iv.** or treat the whole thing like it's their religious duty

**b.** It grieves a pastor's heart when pastor's heart when people sit years in the church and are never changed

**i.** Never being drawn closer to God

**ii.** Never being made more like Christ

**iii.** Never stepping out in obedience to new area—simply because God's Word said to do so

**c.** It grieves the pastor's heart when people who know they are lost never get saved

**i.** They just continue to harden themselves more and more against the gospel calls of Christ

**d.** It grieves the pastor's heart when people allow sin and selfishness to control their lives

**i.** Instead of dealing with sin—by repenting of it

**ii.** They hold on it

**iii.** And they allow it to destroy them, their family, and their church

**3.** Paul said that you are to Obey—for the simple reason—that they may have joy and not grief

**D. Submit to Their Leadership Because it is Profitable for You—***“for that is unprofitable for you”*

**1.** When you obey the spiritual leadership of the Man of God—then it brings profit to you

**a.** Both in this life and in the life to come

**2.** But if you spend all your time resisting the leadership that God has put in your life—then it will become unprofitable to you

- a. Both in this life
  - b. And in the life to come
- 3. And it not only becomes unprofitable for you—but for those you influence, and for the church you are part of
  - a. It hurts everybody that you are connected to

## ILLUSTRATION:

*Consider this story told by Bernard L. Brown, Jr., president of the Kennestone Regional Health Care System in the state of Georgia.*

*Brown once worked in a hospital where a patient knocked over a cup of water, which spilled on the floor beside the patient's bed. The patient was afraid he might slip on the water if he got out of the bed, so he asked a nurse's aide to mop it up. The patient didn't know it, but the hospital policy said that small spills were the responsibility of the nurse's aides while large spills were to be mopped up by the hospital's housekeeping group.*

*The nurse's aide decided the spill was a large one and she called the housekeeping department. A housekeeper arrived and declared the spill a small one. An argument followed.*

*"It's not my responsibility," said the nurse's aide, "because it's a large puddle." The housekeeper did not agree. "Well, it's not mine," she said, "the puddle is too small."*

*The exasperated patient listened for a time, then took a pitcher of water from his night table and poured the whole thing on the floor. "Is that a big enough puddle now for you two to decide?" he asked. It was, and that was the end of the argument.*

## What Are the Responsibilities that Christians Have Before God?

### I. Christians are to be Steadfast in Their Faith

### II. Christians are to be Willing to Suffer

### III. Christians are to be Sacrificial

### IV. Christians are to be Submissive to Their Authorities

## CONCLUSION: