

A few months back I was looking into an IG fitness coach to help me lose some weight and get more muscle. When I was looking through the before and after pictures of his clients (all male btw), I had this thought:
“the before and after pictures..... look the same”

The whole book so far has been one dense theological banquet, but what good is knowing so much, while being transformed so little; what good is great doctrine with poor application?

The bible doesn't just inform, the Bible transforms (it informs in order to transform)

James 1:21-25 (NLT) ²¹ So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. ²² **But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says.** Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

Be honest in your self-reflection with this question:

Q: When was the last time you can remember the Bible impacting you so profoundly that it triggered change in your life? (small or big)

As the book of Hebrews draws to a close, it's as if the author is saying,
“I've given you much to think about, now here's how you're to live it out”

This chapter is like drinking out of the fire hose; *it's a lot and quickly*

6 charges to the disciples of Jesus, as it relates to:

The brethren, the strangers, the mistreated, marriage, materialism, church leadership

Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

✘ **philadelphia** – from the Greek words *Philo* & *Adelphos* (love and brother)

the 1st century church was a hodge podge of people from all walks of life; people who wouldn't normally associate with one another are uniting to care for each other, because they considered the bond between each other stronger than the bond of their blood relatives

Colossians 3:14 Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

A Let us endeavor to make the love *between believers* our most defining characteristic

There should be something so culturally unnatural about Christian love, so radically different from what the world is used to seeing, even in fraternal circles, so **tangibly visible** (not just happy invisible feelings) that it makes us stand out as disciples of Jesus!

According to Jesus it's our strongest distinguishing factor:

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

How else can people from different races, different classes, different generations, different backgrounds, different strengths and weaknesses, different political views, different tastes in music, different styles, and different interests, come together and genuinely care sacrificially for one another...if not for God bringing us together?

Patrick Morley- *"People will decide whether Christianity is true based on how we love one another"*

The sad reality is that, what many people associate Christians with, is not our *love*, but our *divisions* and even hate
All the more reason to: **"Let brotherly love continue."**

Be unoffendable, outdo one another in honor

Romans 12:10 Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another.

"BUT WHAT ABOUT...?" STOP! Are they followers of Jesus? Yes? Then love them.

I understand it can be difficult, some of us are hard to love!

But we must love the church because she is the bride of Christ; Jesus loves that Christian you can't stand; His heart is stirred towards them...and then here you come gossiping about them

John 13:34 "I give you a new command: Love one another. **Just as I have loved you**, you are also to love one another.

You cannot love too much. (*"Just I have"*)

One last thing on this because I know some may be thinking- *"I just can't love so-and-so"*-
not loving, is NOT an option

1 john 4:7-8 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸**The one who does not love does not know God**, because God is love.

If you don't have much love for other believers, you don't have as much love for God as you think you do

It's not Christians who **know** a lot, but those who **love** a lot, who will change the world

²**Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.**

✘ (V.1) Brotherly Love= **philadelphia** (love your brother/sister)

(V.2) Hospitality=**philoxenias** =love for strangers

Some scholars point out that the 'strangers' here refer to other Christians who may be passing by your city.

The context does show support for this: **"for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests";**

This statement brings to mind the events of **Genesis 18** and **19** where Abraham and then Lot spoke with, and even ate with, angels

Certainly, scripture commands us to show hospitality to other believers-

Romans 12:13 Share with the saints in their needs; **pursue hospitality**. (*Care Offering)

1 Peter 4:9 Be **hospitable to one another** without complaining.

But I also truly believe that it's safe to say that this command is intended to be extended to strangers outside of the body of Christ also; (**philoxenias**)

- Jesus gave a parable of a stranger caring for a stranger in **Luke 10**
- **Leviticus 19:34** You will regard the alien who resides with you as the native-born among you. You are to love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt...
- **Luke 14:12-14** ...“When you give a lunch or a dinner, don’t invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors, because they might invite you back, and you would be repaid. ¹³On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame, or blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
- One of the requirements for an Elder (pastor) is that they be hospitable (**1 Timothy 3:2**)

A Show love to the brother/sister AND to the stranger

Let us leverage what God has given us as launching pads for the gospel

“Our hospitality is probably our most persuasive apologetic!” – JD Gear

It’s this area that I see as being one of the weakest in the church in the West.

We value our privacy more than our ministry and our comfort more than our calling

Emperor Julian (a persecutor of Christians), said in his famous letter to Arsacius,

“Nothing has contributed to the progress of the superstition of the Christians as their charity to strangers... these godless Galileans provide for not only their own poor but ours as well.”

Q: What would our community look like if we built more bridges and less fences?

I’m not saying answer the door at 3 am to the creepy guy with no shirt on!

What I’m saying is *leverage* where you live; work; go to the gym, where you shop; get creative-

-water at street fair yesterday; garage gym during covid

-buy groceries for your struggling neighbor; mow the lawn of your elderly neighbor

-invite the other moms @ your children’s schools for a playdate

-Pray for your coworker going through a divorce

-make a meal, listen intently, meet the needs you see in the strangers you encounter

³Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.

- X** In their context it was referring to *imprisoned Christians* who were left forgotten (Pliny the Younger, a roman governor, bragged of doing this)

In the 1st century, prisons were not meant meant to hold you for long periods of time. You were held while you waited for a trial or came up with enough money to repay your debt

In the meantime, you relied on others to bring you food and supplies (still the case in 3rd world)

A **Let us be empathetic towards those innocently suffering and being oppressed**

- There is a great number of Christians around the world oppressed and suffering because of their faith
- Closer to home, there’s also those harassed and disregarded by their families for their faith

- There are old faithful saints in hospitals and home-ridden suffering alone
- There are innocent children being sold in the slave trade (Here in California!)
- There's a mass genocide against unborn babies who cannot raise a voice for themselves

“Remember those in prison, as though YOU WERE IN PRISON WITH THEM, and the mistreated, as though YOU YOURSELVES WERE SUFFERING BODILY.”

This isn't a distant “*I feel sorry for them*”. This is getting in there with them

If you slam the door on your thumb, your brain doesn't look and say, “*Wow... that's too bad... I bet that hurts. I wish the best. Hashtag: I'll be praying for you.*” ...it says “*AHHHHHH!*”

That's how we have to respond when we think of these truly marginalized and innocently suffering groups.

NOTE: Do not let the abusive adulteration by some groups of real social issues, prevent you from seeing the true present need that gospel driven disciples are called to attend to

4 Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.

WARNING: This is going to get a little PG-13 for a moment:

✘ “Sexually immoral and adulterous” seems redundant,

“**adulterous**”= to be married and have sex outside of your covenant bond;

“**sexually immoral**” is the Greek word *porneia* =referring to unmarried that indulge sexually (it also includes anything short of God's design for sex)

This doesn't mean that God wants to steal all the joy and fun out of life; remember HE INVENTED SEX FOR US TO ENJOY!

But to misuse the power of sex outside of His design is *dangerous* and *stupid*-

Dangerous because God takes this seriously (the verse states He'll judge this).

WHY so serious about it?

To dishonor marriage is to dishonor God's picture of redemption (Eph. 5)

Stupid because you're using it wrong!

It's been proven over and over that the happiest most fulfilled sex lives are those within a lovingly committed marriage

This is written from a father to his son, but the principle well applies to the ladies as well:

Proverbs 5:15-18, 21-23 (NLT) Drink water from your own well— share your love only with your wife. ¹⁶Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with just anyone? ¹⁷You should reserve it for yourselves. Never share it with strangers. ¹⁸Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth.

²¹For the Lord sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes. ²²An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. ²³He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

▲ Let us protect sexual morality from the corruptions of society and of self

Now more than ever God-honoring marriages are under attack-

Men honor your wives; Wives honor your husbands;

single people approach the prospect of marriage with reverence

⁵Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, **I will never leave you or abandon you.** ⁶Therefore, we may boldly say, **The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?**

- ✘ Again, the context is important- some of these people had their property taken, they saw rich people who hated God thrive, while they were losing because of their devotion to God
It would have been far too easy to be tempted to think, “if only I had **more**; if only I had **that**”

Notice the 2 motivations to not become materialistic:

- 1- God will be with us always
(The Greek reads: *never not you will I leave nor never not you will I forsake*; Never ever ever)
- 2- God will help us despite what man may do

⚠ Let us never make masters and gods of material goods

Money is like fire; it can keep you warm and cook your food and purify your water...
or it can burn you up and everything you own

If you are not satisfied with what you have, a little more will never be enough

John D. Rockefeller, the world's first billionaire, was asked, “*How much (money) is enough?*”
He answered, “*Just a little bit more*”

1 timothy 6:9-10 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Money is a great servant but a terrible master

⁷Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- ✘ Although this is true of all leaders God has placed over us (**Romans 13:1-2**) within this context the idea is leaders in the church.

Spiritual Leaders are not just supposed to point the way; they’re meant to walk it in front of you.

Disclaimer: We don’t always walk perfectly (only Jesus did)
but even when we stumble, it’s meant to serve as an example of repentance and of grace;
watch how your spiritual leaders handle falling short
(this is not to say there aren’t disqualifying sins- there are...higher standard).

Let us submit to good leaders who have God at heart and our good in mind

- ✘ In v17 the word ‘Obey’ is Greek= *be persuaded* of what is *trustworthy*

⚠ Let their lives persuade you, and if you are so inclined to be persuaded by their example, then you can submit to their leadership

BUT WATCH US FIRST! Don’t just submit to abusive or immoral leadership

Its perplexing to say “I’ll submit to God” but then be unwilling to submit to those He has put to guide you.

Ok, we're through that; I know it was a lot.

Just in case you think that what you got going on is too much to try to live this out, remember the context- the original readers were being persecuted for their faith, imprisoned, their belongings taken away, and yet our author still saw it fit to give them this charge:

- Let us endeavor to make the love between believers our most defining characteristic
- Let us leverage what God has given us as launching pads for the gospel
- Let us be empathetic towards those innocently suffering and being oppressed
- Let us protect sexual morality from the corruptions of society and of self
- Let us never make masters and gods of material goods
- Let us submit to good leaders who have God at heart and our good in mind

**Final Thought: God's commands point us in the right direction
but only the grace of the gospel can get us to our destination**

If, and when you fail, allow those failures to motivate you even more so towards Christ.
Fall forward

JD Gear- ***"The commands of God are like railroad tracks that point you in the direction to go,
but the gospel is the only engine that can move you along the tracks"***

*******CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

I Want to borrow an illustration from Pastor Ricky of Hope LV, who asked a persuasive question:

Q: What's the furthest distance in this room?

From the floor to the ceiling? From the back wall to the front?
18 inches is the average distance from the brain to the heart

- 18 inches between knowing what God said, and letting it transform you
- 18 inches between heaven and hell- knowing about salvation and surrendering your heart

Challenge: Memorize and make your prayer

PSALM 143:10

**Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.**

**May your gracious Spirit
lead me on level ground.**

Bullpen-

What does pursuing holiness look like? Like these verses

Church decline stats

Ch 12 and 13 are one thought. Essentially, as we said last week-

Our conduct on earth should reflect our citizenship in heaven

we were created for community and connection centered on Christ

Augustine, “The City of God”- said that Christians don’t fit well in this world because they have a completely different attitude toward sex and money than the world (which are two of the most important things to people in the world)

Non-Christians are promiscuous with their beds and stingy with their money;

Christians are stingy with their beds but promiscuous with their money

Step 1 Studying the Text:

- **What does it say?**
- **What does it mean?**
- **How is the Gospel related to this text?**
- **How does it apply to life today?**

Step 2 Unify the Redemptive Theme:

- **Main Point of the Text:**
- **Main Point of the Sermon:**
- **Title that reflects the MPS:**

Step 3 & 4 Outline the text & Develop Functional Elements:

- **Point 1- Regarding fellow believers, love them**
 - Explanation:

- Application:
- Illustration:
- Point 2- **Regarding your home, leverage it**
 - Explanation:
 - Application:
 - Illustration:
- Point 3- **Regarding the unfortunate, help them**
 - Explanation:
 - Application:
 - Illustration:
- Point 4- **Regarding marriage, protect it**
 - Explanation:
 - Application:
 - Illustration:
- Point 5- **Regarding money, use it don't love it**
 - Explanation:
 - Application:
 - Illustration:
- Point 6- **Regarding your leaders, follow them**
 - Explanation:
 - Application:
 - Illustration:

Step 5 Intro & Outro:

- Intro:
- Outro: