

Fact Sheet for **“Five Instructions”**  
**Hebrews 13:1-6**

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The book of Hebrews now ends with several instructions for life. They were designed for the readers of this letter, but they are also very appropriate for us today.

1.

ESV <sup>1</sup> ¶ **Let brotherly love continue.**

“brotherly love” – Philadelphia (φιλαδελφία)

“continue” – remain or abide

This is a common theme in other NT letters (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:5-7). In fact Jesus had similar words for his disciples at the last supper (John 13:35).

The application of this instruction can either be easy or challenging, but it still is a command (imperative).

Easy – when you don’t have a problem with other Christians

Challenging – when you are having a rough time with other Christians

Is it possible to have genuine brotherly love for an ornery Christian, or a Christian who has wronged you? Yes! Does this mean that you need to overlook their sin and character flaws? No. Can you obey the command of Hebrews 13:1 and nurse a grudge? Absolutely not. You still need to be right in your own attitudes toward them, and you need to desire God’s best for them.

2.

<sup>2</sup> **Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

To brotherly love the author of this book adds “hospitality”, literally the “love of strangers” (φιλοξενία philoxeni’a). One commentator writes...

“The writer is not advocating hospitality on the off chance that one might happen to receive an angel as a guest but rather because God is pleased when believers are hospitable. Sometimes unexpectedly happy results follow acts of hospitality. It was highly esteemed in the ancient world and was certainly very important for Christians. Accommodation at inns was expensive, and in any case inns had a bad reputation. But as Christian preachers traveled around, believers gave them lodging and so facilitated their mission. Without hospitality in Christian homes, the spread of the faith would have been much more difficult.”<sup>1</sup>

A good application of this is hosting visiting missionaries when they come to town. A very challenging application of this is knowing which strangers to help who are just passing through town and are in need.

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<sup>1</sup> The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 12, p. 146.

3.

**<sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.**

The author of Hebrews here mentions “since you are in the body”, an indication that he is speaking about other Christians who are in prison and/or mistreated. Consider what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:26. These Christians may have been unjustly imprisoned, like Paul and Silas in Acts 16, or wrongly mistreated. And Roman punishment was harsh.

4.

**<sup>4</sup> Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.**

The single word translated “sexual immorality” is where we get our word “porn” from, but the biblical word covers everything that is sexually immoral. Sexual immorality was rampant in the Roman world. It is in ours also. And the more our culture moves away from the Bible the more prevalent sexual immorality will become. Christians who follow the biblical injunctions will more and more looked on as prudish and out of touch with society. Is marriage just a piece of paper like we have heard so often? No! This is God's will, and it comes with a caution... God will judge! The Apostle Paul also wrote very strongly on this subject (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

Now we all live in the present, we can't change the past, but we can make decisions that will serve us well in the future. If you've made wrong decisions in the past... repent of them. Are you making wrong decisions now? Stop! As you look toward the future... commit yourself to following God in this matter. Is it easy to change if you've gone down the wrong path? ? No, but it is possible. But this battle is not for the fainthearted or the uncommitted.

5.

**<sup>5</sup> Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."<sup>2</sup> <sup>6</sup> So we can confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR; WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"<sup>3</sup>**

This warning too is very appropriate for our culture. The first quote is from Deuteronomy 31 and Joshua 1. It was an encouragement given to Joshua, first by Moses and then by the Lord. Read those words. But the author of Hebrews sees a principle here that goes beyond Joshua. God will never leave us or forsake us in all that we need. The second quote is from Psalm 118 and invites us to enter into the psalmist's plea.

What can we take away from these two verses? God will never leave us or forsake us financially. He is our helper, so there is no need to fear tomorrow. We may not see very far ahead, but be assured that God will provide what we need when we need it.

We serve a loving God. His desires for us are for good.  
Where do you stand with Jesus Christ? Is he your savior? If not, ask him to be today.

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<sup>2</sup> From Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 and Joshua 1:5.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 118:6.