

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 8 - Number 26

The Week of May 21, 2023

Live Small

Honoring Leadership

Hebrews 13:7, 17-19

For thousands of years, God has used imperfect people to bring leadership to His church. We live in a fallen world, full of fallen leaders, but God brings even the flaws of leaders under His rule as the mission of the church moves on throughout centuries. The author of Hebrews writes about this in Hebrews 13 and brings us to a needed teaching of leadership, lordship, submission, and the power of the gospel in the verses we will look at today. Let's study together as we ALL follow Christ.

READING AND OBSERVING HEBREWS 13:7, 17-19

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹ I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

- Underline each verb that calls the readers of this letter to action.
- Circle each reference to the word "leader."
- Double underline the phrase "keeping watch."

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE TOGETHER

1. Who are the leaders that the writer of Hebrews is referring the church to? What offices of church leadership does the New Testament specify in the earliest manifestation of the church? (Read Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-5 for more)

2. Verse 17 calls the church to obedience and submission to the leaders of the church. These are powerful terms that carry significance to them. According to the words that follow this call, what qualifies a leader to earn this calling?

3. How are we to discern obedience and submission to our leaders in light of the flawed state of ALL leaders? Is the writer of Hebrews calling us to unconditional obedience and submission? How are we to practically apply this teaching?

4. Verse 17 also informs us that part of the role of the leader is “keeping watch over your souls.” The Hebrew word translated “watchman” means “one who looks out,” “one who spies,” or “one who watches.” Sometimes watchmen were scouts who looked out for approaching friends as well as enemies. Examine the following scriptures and discuss more of the context of what is being referred to here: Isaiah 5:1,2, 21:11,12; Matthew 21:33; Ezekiel 33:1-7; Hosea 9:8.

5. The second half of verse 17 speaks to letting the leaders of the church give an account of their leadership “with joy and not with groaning...” Why did the writer of Hebrews include this part of the verse? What causes leaders to give an account with groaning and what can the church do to prevent against that from happening?

6. Verse 18 is a call to prayer for the church. Why specifically is the calling to pray for our church leadership to be taken so seriously?

7. How can we best protect the unity of His church given this text today and also Ephesians 4:11-16? Why is it important to do so and in OUR local context, how can we best live this out as a church?

PRAY

Lord, thank you for the gift of your church and the power of the gospel to change lives. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit who uses ordinary, flawed people to accomplish extraordinary things through the leadership You guide us into. Thank you that it is not through our strength but Yours that the mission of Your church continues throughout the generations. We pray for our leaders as You call us to do. Be with them and their families; watch over them as they watch over us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

