

One In Christ, Inc **NEWSLETTER**

13820 NW 172nd Avenue, Alachua, Florida 32615

Ph: 386-418-0913

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<http://www.stevepettitmessages.com>

Consider Jesus: Noticeable Evidence (Part 1) Hebrews 13:1-25

Many readers of Hebrews would be prone to say when arriving at the last chapter, "Finally - some practical expressions!" (As if chapters 1-12 were "impractical"!) There is nothing more practical than "considering Jesus" as life's supreme concern. That is enough to affect every "practice" of our life. In closing, the author is reminding us of some natural expressions, practical consequences - noticeable evidences - of what "considering Jesus" might look like. The imperative mood in this last chapter simply calls for conscious, intentional choices to abide in and abandon to the very practical character of Christ in us.

For example, we are to consistently maintain brotherly love (13:1). Such loving gestures are an ongoing choice - daily, hourly, person to person. We continue to love not only the ones we might choose, but the ones God chooses and sends to us. This love is the "glue" that holds together the family of God. When we give ourselves to one another as Christ did for us - in personal, up close, concretized expressions for all - we preach the gospel loudly and clearly (Jo 13:34-35).

We are reminded to graciously show hospitality (13:2). Love of the brethren is not to the neglect of the love of strangers. The church that considers Jesus first and foremost ought to be the least "xenophobic" place on the planet. Such love toward "strangers" means we are able to be open and welcoming , gracious and receptive... to anyone not like us! We offer the simple gift of a "place" -open hearts, ears, arms, tables, homes - a place to be safely welcomed and loved on. Be ready for surprises! There will be unexpected blessings ("angels unaware" - 13:2) and unexpected costs ("without complaint" - I Pet 4:9), yet the rarity of true hospitality makes for powerful opportunities to influence others to "consider Jesus."

We are also to actively care for the mistreated (13:3). While brotherly love and gracious hospitality may be mostly about those God sends our way, caring for the ill-treated and oppressed usually means searching for those "outside the camp" (13:3). Love does not neglect or forget about the oppressed. We go to the imprisoned, enslaved, persecuted, afflicted, abused. We go with more than cognitive awareness, we go with active identification ("as though in prison with them") - concretized expressions of Christ's love. This is "Golden Rule" time, plain and simple. This is getting outside our comfort zones. This is taking our God-given supply and joining it to the world's needs. This is what we call mission and ministry. It is the noticeable evidence of "considering Jesus!"

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Greetings

Eternal life is not extended life. Eternal life is not enlightened life. Eternal life is Jesus' life! Nothing more, nothing less. To borrow a phrase from Anne Lamott, eternal life is always "Jesusy" - a rather simple, but profound way of declaring the central idea of Christianity.

There is no Christianity—no substance behind the things hoped for—unless Jesus Christ is the central figure. There is only a Jesus-centered justification, a Jesus-centered sanctification, a Jesus-centered hope of glory.

Perhaps the abundant life promised to us by Jesus (Jo 10:10) so easily escapes our experience because something other than Jesus has become our current fascination (II Cor 11:3). Something novel, something secretive, something temporary, maybe something even religious (but not "Jesusy")!

Too many of us think we are beyond such a reminder, but every now and then each of us probably needs to sit quietly before God and contemplate on I Jo 5:21, "Little children, guard yourself from idols." What's an "idol?" Anything that you might think will deliver you... that is not "Jesusy"!

I pray you have a "Jesusy" June!

JUNE

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