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# Words of Truth

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## Hebrews 13:1-2

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”* (Hebrews 13:1-2). Brotherly love is a clearly taught point in the Scriptures. Jesus said: *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:34-35). Jesus made it clear how far that love is to go: *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”* (John 15:12-13). Paul later wrote this: *“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another”* (Romans 12:9-10).

Love amongst the saints is of great importance (I Corinthians 12:14-27, Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:19-30, I Thessalonians 4:9, Philemon 1:1-25, I Peter 1:22, I Peter 2:17, I Peter 3:8, and I John 3:7-18). There is not an end to it. Our relationships with one another matters. It matters so much that it impacts our ability to approach God. The following quote from Jesus uses terminology those familiar with the “Old Testament” would understand (Genesis 8:20, Exodus 20:22-26, Leviticus 22:18-25, II Chronicles 1:6, etc.). The point is one we should all be able to understand. Think about this: *“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift”* (Matthew 5:22-24).

Besides that, the Scriptures also teach that we cannot love God if we do not love our brethren. Notice: *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us... If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments”* (I John 4:11-12; 4:20-5:2).

So, how does the continued love for brethren work in with not forgetting to entertain strangers? The wording “entertain strangers” (KJV) is from the Greek word “φιλοξενία” which is defined as: “Hospitality: — entertain stranger, hospitality. Love to strangers, hospitality” (Strong’s # 5381). In dealing with being hospitable, we should know the following Scriptures: *“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality... And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”* (Romans 12:13 and I Peter 4:8-10). That part of our study is pretty easy. Where people get a little hung up is on the aspect of entertaining strangers.

Those reading this letter were undoubtedly familiar with the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses taught Jews this: *“But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God... Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”* (Leviticus 19:34 and Deuteronomy 10:19). In the New Testament we read: *“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth”* (III John 1:5-8). One of the qualifications of a “widow indeed” is that she entertained strangers (I Timothy 5:9-10).

Think about how that played out right from the establishment of the body of Christ in the New Testament. Jews from all over had come to Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-13). After the preaching of the truth by the Apostles, about three thousand had been converted (Acts 2:14-41). Among that number, there were those by implication of the text that were not from Jerusalem. They had no where to live or work whereby they could support themselves. They were strangers that then needed daily provisions, a place to live, etc. The saints shared everything and some even sold their possessions to support those who had moved there (Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37).

To further draw upon a principle of old, it was brought forth that some had entertained angels unawares [without knowing]. One’s mind is drawn back to Abraham and even Lot with their hospitality towards angels (Genesis 18:1-21 and Genesis 19:1-2). Samson’s parents did similarly (Judges 13:1-25). Now, I have heard some in the past say that we should entertain strangers for that one might be an angel. If you read Hebrews 13:2 again, the text does not say that would happen then or now. It is about what had happened in the past. Be cautious not to turn that into something more than what is said. It is of great importance that we rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:14-18). We do not want to be guilty of twisting the word of God (II Peter 3:15-17). So, we shall leave this context at what it says and nothing more!