

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 21

U is for Unchanging

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids that neither God nor His Word ever change.

Key Verses

Hebrews 13:1-9—Main Teaching Passage

Malachi 3:6

James 1:17

Isaiah 40:8

Psalm 119:89

Memory Verse - Psalm 145:3 (June Memory Verse)

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable."

Hook

Tell the students about how the world has changed since you were their age. Tell them about some of the biggest differences you see.

Ask the students some of the ways they have changed. Are there foods they didn't use to like that now they like? Ways they have matured?

Finally ask, "Does God change?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Hebrews 13 is full of wonderful challenges to continue to do good works: love one another, love strangers, pray for prisoners, don't covet, don't be afraid, and be content with what you have. After urging us to do all of these things, Hebrews 13:8-9 tells us the reason for doing them: neither Jesus Christ nor His Word have changed. The author of Hebrews here is simply retelling us things that Christ already commanded us to do. Christ wants us to love one another, Christ has not changed, therefore love one another. The Bible tells us not to be afraid for the Lord is with us, the Bible has not changed, therefore do not be afraid.

These verses are crucial to us in this day and age. The promises that we stand upon in Scripture cannot change. They are fixed in the heavens (Psalm 119:89), so even if the whole world around us tells us that things that the Bible condemns as sin are now okay, we can stand firm on God and His Word, which do not change. James 1:17 tells us that there isn't even the slightest hint or shadow of change when it comes to God.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Last week we looked at a wonderful attribute of God, namely, that He cannot lie. This week, we look at another thing that God cannot do, which is that God cannot change. Not only can God not change, but His Word, the Bible, is also fixed in place. In Hebrews 13:8-9, we see two important truths. First, it says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Second, verse 9 tells us not to believe unhelpful things, but rather to think about and believe the Word of God.

There are so many things around us that change. In fact, just about everything changes. People change their hair styles, change their minds, and grow old and start to look different. Even something enormous like the Grand Canyon changes. The river slowly washes away at the rock, and over time, it starts to look different. But God never changes, and that is crucial. If God was able to change, then we wouldn't be able to trust that what He says will always be true. Because He is the same forever, we can believe the incredible things that He tells us. We can believe that God will never flood the earth like He did in the days of Noah because, even though Noah lived thousands of years ago, the God who made that promise is the same God we believe in today. We can believe that Jesus loves us because, even though Jesus lived almost 2000 years ago, the Jesus that died on a cross for us is the same Jesus we believe in today.

LOOK (Continued)

Isaiah 40:8 tells us, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” In other words, unlike flowers that after a week sitting in a vase on your table start to wilt and die, God’s Word will never change. If God’s Word never changes, that means that like it says in Hebrews 13 and Joshua 1, we don’t have to be afraid because God promised to be with us always. It also means that we have a great hope set before us. Jesus is going to return to the earth and gather all of His people to be with Him around His throne in Heaven. Lastly, because we know that God and His Word never change, we can always know right from wrong. Lying and stealing will always be a sin, because the Bible says so and the Bible never changes.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class, “Does God ever change? Why is that important? Does God’s word ever change? Why is that important?”

Pray: Thank the Lord that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Praise Him that we can trust His Word at all times, and thank Him for giving it to us.

Parent Question: Do God or the Bible ever change?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Hebrews 13:1-9 by David Guzik

Hebrews 13 - Living A Positive Christian Life

A. Instructions for body life.

1. (1-3) Express brotherly love.

Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them; those who are mistreated; since you yourselves are in the body also.

a. **Let brotherly love continue:** The writer to the Hebrews used the ancient Greek word *philadelphia* here. He *assumed* there was **brotherly love** among Christians. He simply asked that it would **continue** among them.

i. In the ancient Greek language of the New Testament, there were four words at hand that we might translate *love*.

- *Eros* was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, *erotic* love, referring to sexual love.
- *Storge* was a second word for love. It referred to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child or between family members in general.
- *Agape* was another word for love. It is the most powerful word for *love* in the New Testament, and was often used to describe God's love towards us. It is a love that loves without changing. It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment. It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing. It is love that loves even when it is rejected. *Agape* love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given - it gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive. *Agape* love isn't about *feelings*; it is about *decisions*.

ii. But the word for **love** used in Hebrews 13:1 is *philadelphia*, coming from the root *philia*. This ancient Greek word spoke of brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. There should always be plenty of this kind of love among Christians, and it should **continue**.

b. **Do not forget to entertain strangers:** Hospitality is an important virtue and often it is commanded of Christians and leaders (Romans 12:10-13, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7-8, 1 Peter 4:9). In the ancient world, where "motels" did exist, they were notorious for immorality. It was important for traveling Christians to find open homes from other Christians. This was simply a practical way to **let brotherly love continue**.

i. Because of the free offer of hospitality, Christians had to watch out for people just masquerading as Christians so they could leech off the generosity of God's people. As time went on, Christian leaders taught their people how to recognize these deceivers.

ii. The Didache was an early church "ministry manual," written perhaps somewhere between 90 and 110 A.D. It had this to say about how to tell if a false prophet abused the hospitality of those in the church:

*Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread . . . but if he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this one sin shall not be forgiven. But not everyone that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the true prophet be known. (From *The Ante-Nicean Fathers*, Volume 7, page 380)*

- c. **Strangers:** The point is that we do this for other Christians who are **strangers** to us. If you invite your best friends over for lunch, that is wonderful - but it doesn't fulfill this command. A wonderful way to fulfill this command is to meet and befriend **strangers** at church and to **entertain** them with hospitality.
- i. The ancient Greek word for *hospitality* (used in passages like Romans 12:13) is literally translated, "love for strangers." **Brotherly love** means love for all our brothers and sisters in Jesus, not just those who are currently our friends.
- d. **For by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels:** When we are hospitable to others, we really welcome Jesus (Matthew 25:35), and perhaps angels. Abraham (Genesis 18:1-22) and Lot (Genesis 19:1-3) are examples of those who **unwittingly entertained angels**.
- e. **Remember the prisoners as if chained with them: Prisoners** here probably has first reference to those imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel. But it can also be extended to all who are in prison. This is just another way to **let brotherly love continue**.

2. (4) Honor marital love.

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

- a. **The bed undefiled:** The Bible strictly condemns sex outside of the marriage commitment (**fornicators and adulterers God will judge**). But the Bible celebrates sexual love within the commitment of marriage, as indicated in The Song of Solomon.
 - i. "Fornication and adultery are not synonymous in the New Testament: adultery implies unfaithfulness by either party to the marriage vow, while the word translated 'fornication' covers a wide range of sexual irregularities." (Bruce)
 - b. **Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled:** Perhaps through a past of sexual sin many find it difficult to believe that the marriage **bed is undefiled**. Guilt and sexual hang-ups are appropriate to extra-marital sex, but not in marital sex. Yet this is where the guilt and sexual hang-ups often exist and where they most frequently cause trouble.
 - i. The enemy of our souls wants to do everything he can to encourage sex *outside* of the marriage **bed** and he wants to do everything he can to discourage sex *inside* the marriage **bed**. Christians must recognize this strategy and not give it a foothold.
 - ii. Though God allows great freedom in the variety of sexual expression in marriage, all must be done with a concern for the needs of their spouse and in love (1 Corinthians 7:2-5 and Ephesians 5:21-33).

3. (5-6) Learn contentment over covetousness.

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I

will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

a. **Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content:** **Covetousness** is the opposite of *contentment*. Often **covetousness** and greed are excused or even admired in today's culture, and are simply called "ambition."

b. **Be content with such things as you have:** Contentment has much more to do with what you *are* on the inside rather than what you *have*. The Apostle Paul had the right idea in Philippians 4:11-13: *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

i. Someone asked millionaire Bernard Baruch, "How much money does it take for a rich man to be satisfied?" Baruch answered, "Just a million more than he has."

c. **I will never leave you nor forsake you:** "You that are familiar with the Greek text know that there are five negatives here. We cannot manage five negatives in English, but the Greeks find them not too large a handful. Here the negatives have a fivefold force. It is as though it said, 'I will not, not leave thee; I will never, no never, forsake thee.' " (Spurgeon)

i. "Here it is - 'For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' This is the reason why we must not be covetous. There is no room to be covetous, no excuse for being covetous, for God hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' We ought to be content. If we are not content, we are acting insanely, seeing the Lord has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' " (Spurgeon)

ii. "I cannot under the influence of this grand text find room for doubt or fear. I cannot stand here and be miserable to-night. I am not going to attempt such a thing; but I cannot be despondent with such a text as this, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' I defy the devil himself to mention circumstances under which I ought to be miserable if this text is true. Child of God, nothing ought to make you unhappy when you can realize this precious text." (Spurgeon)

d. **So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper."** Real contentment comes only when we trust in God to meet our needs and to be our security. Strangely we are often more likely to put security and find contentment in things far less reliable and secure than God Himself.

4. (7) Follow your leaders.

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.

a. **Remember those who rule over you:** We are told to recognize and follow godly leadership in the body of Christ, leadership shown to be legitimate by faithfulness to the **word of God** and by godly **conduct**.

i. Paul advised Timothy along the same lines: *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you* (1 Timothy 4:16).

b. **Whose faith follow:** Such leaders should be recognized (**remember those**) and followed. Just as much as a church needs godly leaders, it also needs godly *followers*.

B. Instructions in worship.

1. (8) The enduring principle: the unchanging nature of Jesus.

Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

a. **Jesus Christ is the same:** The unchanging nature (which theologians call *immutability*) of Jesus Christ could be inferred from His deity, even if it were not explicitly stated. God doesn't change over the ages, so neither does Jesus, who is God.

b. **Yesterday, today, and forever:** His unchanging nature provides a measure for all Christian conduct, particularly in the word and in worship. We should not expect something completely "new" as if it were from a "new Jesus." The nature of Jesus as it is revealed in the Bible is the same nature of Jesus that should be seen in the church today.