

Maturity - cont.

Marital Purity (13:4)

The author wrote: "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." When Christians stay faithful in their marriage, they typically stay faithful to the Lord.

Paul wrote that sexual immorality is wrong:

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness" (Galatians 5:19)

How well are you practicing marital purity and fidelity, those of you who are marred? We must avoid two extremes: asceticism and sexual immorality.

Contentment (13:5-6)

The author wrote: "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" When Christians

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remain content with their material possessions, they typically stay faithful.

Paul wrote in favor of contentment:

But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

How well do you practice contentment? We must not constantly strive for more and more of the physical things of this life.

- Chris Reeves -

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Marks of Christian Maturity - Part I

The author of the book of Hebrews wrote to Christians who were in danger of falling away from Christ (2:1; 3:12; 6:6). In trying to keep these brethren from falling away, the author tried different approaches to keep them faithful. One approach was to talk about how Jesus is better than all others. Another approach was to encourage them to stay active.

The author wrote to exhort them not to apostatize (13:22):

But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation: for I have written unto you in few words.

In Chapter 13 of the book of Hebrews, the author wrote about the practical, daily Christianity that would keep these Christians faithful. He lists several things, that if they would do them, they would stay faithful to the Lord. Note the transition in 12:1 (“therefore”) and 12:28 (“wherefore”). With these two transitions, the author moved from a doctrinal emphasis to a practical emphasis. Let us consider the practical marks of Christian maturity from this great chapter.

Brotherly Love (13:1)

The author wrote: “Let love of the brethren continue.” When Christian love their brethren, they typically stay faithful.

Paul wrote to love our brethren:

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another (Romans 12:10).

Peter wrote to love our brethren:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently (1 Peter 1:22).

How well do you love (sacrifice for and serve) your brethren? We must avoid two extremes: unsympathetic criticism of our brethren and becoming soft to allow sin in our brethren.

Hospitality (13:2)

The author wrote: “Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” When Christians practice hospitality toward other Christians or non-Christians, they typically stay faithful.

Peter wrote to practice hospitality:

using hospitality one to another without murmuring (1 Peter 4:9).

How well do you practice hospitality toward others? First century living conditions demanded that love be shown in hospitality. Today, we can still share with others.

Compassion (13:3)

The author wrote: “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body.” When Christians have compassion toward their fellow-brethren who are suffering, they typically stay faithful.

Jesus said that we need to show compassion:

for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; ³⁶naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me (Matthew 25:35-36). See also Luke 10:33.

How well do you show compassion to the suffering? First century persecution demanded it then, and present-day challenges demand it today. - *continued*