

In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews

“Let Brotherly Love Continue”

Lesson #13 for March 26, 2022

Scriptures: Hebrews 2:9; 4:16; 13; Romans 12:13; Ephesians 5:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Galatians 2:20.

1. Consider these comments from the Bible study guide regarding Hebrews 13.

Paul concludes his letter with several admonitions for his audience to “let mutual love continue” (*Heb. 13:1, NRSV*), to “show hospitality to strangers” (*Heb. 13:2, NRSV*), and to “remember those who are in prison . . . [and] those who are being tortured” (*Heb. 13:3, NRSV*). Paul also admonishes his readers to ensure that “marriage be held in honor” (*Heb. 13:4, NRSV*), to “keep your lives free from the love of money” (*Heb. 13:5, NRSV*), to “obey your leaders and submit to them” (*Heb. 13:17, NRSV*), and to “pray for us” (*Heb. 13:18, NRSV*). Throughout the letter, Paul repeatedly calls on his audience to “exhort one another every day” (*Heb. 3:13, NRSV*), “to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together” (*Heb. 10:24, 25, NRSV*), and to see “that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled” (*Heb. 12:15, NRSV*). The letter, as a whole, is a “word of exhortation” (*Heb. 13:22, NRSV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 171.^{†§} [Note that the brackets and the content in brackets in the paragraph above are in the Bible study guide.][‡]

2. What did Paul mean when he said, “Let brotherly love continue” (*RSV**)? We are not only to develop a relationship between ourselves and Jesus Christ, but also we should combine as a group to work together as a church to conclude the work that needs to be done to finish the gospel. We should be proud of our brothers and sisters in the faith and help them in every way we can. We should do for them what Jesus has done for us.
3. How well are we doing today at hospitality, visiting, supporting prisoners and those who have been mistreated, honoring marriage, avoiding covetousness, remembering and obeying the leaders of the church, and praying for the author himself? (Hebrews 3:2-19; 10:24-25; 12:15-17)

Hebrews 13:2-9,17-19: ²Remember to **welcome strangers** in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it.

³Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are. [Is it safe to welcome strangers into your home in our day?]

⁴ **Marriage is to be honoured by all**, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

⁵ **Keep your lives free from the love of money**, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.” ⁶Let us be bold, then, and say:

“The Lord is my helper,
I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?”

⁷ **Remember your former leaders**, who spoke God’s message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ

is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. [sic] ⁹**Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way.** It is good to receive inner strength from God's grace, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them....

¹⁷ **Obey your leaders and follow their orders.** They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness, and that would be of no help to you.

¹⁸ **Keep on praying for us.** We are sure we have a clear conscience, because we want to do the right thing at all times. ¹⁹And I beg you even more earnestly to pray that God will send me back to you soon.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Hebrews 13:2-9,17-19). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡} [We will read much of this section of Hebrews 13 again and discuss it, later.][‡]

4. We do not hear very much these days about loving brothers and sisters in the faith. While we need to reach out to those around us who are unbelievers or who do not understand Christianity fully, **what is our special responsibility to other church members?** Do we make serious efforts at determining the needs of fellow Christians and fellow Adventists and helping them with their needs? Unfortunately, today we have government programs to cover almost every contingency. Thus, people feel that they do not need to take responsibility for their neighbors.
5. Early Christianity was a real movement. Think of all the traveling that Paul did. Paul did a lot of traveling that we do not even know about. But, others moved around as well. Paul instructed us to remember to show hospitality even to strangers.
6. Review **Genesis 18:2-15**. This is the story of Abraham and Sarah, welcoming three strangers who turned out to be Jesus and two angels and then Sarah, laughing in response to their prediction of her pregnancy! Did Sarah make it into the chapter on faith because she laughed at God's prediction and then lied about it? This story of Abraham welcoming Jesus and two angels is a stark reminder about what could happen if we fail to welcome strangers to our homes.
7. Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer when He came to this earth? If Jesus had lived a very comfortable life, and died a simple, uncomplicated death, would we think that He was not really like one of us? Instead, God planned for Jesus to live a life like ours and harder. And He could have mentioned that Satan and all his evil angels did everything they possibly could to make the life of Jesus difficult, even impossible!
8. What should be the proper relationship of members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to **those who are in prison?** In our day, people do not go to prison because of failure to pay their debts. Nevertheless, there are clear stories about people who were condemned to lifetime imprisonment for murdering who became faithful Christians, even Seventh-day Adventists, because someone ministered to them in prison. Paul was aware that his audience had suffered loss of possessions and had even been threatened with death.
9. There are wonderful prison ministries in some parts of the world that have brought many people to the Lord. But, it is not easy in the United States these days to visit people in prison. Still, should we be taking the necessary steps to visit prisoners in our day? Was it Paul's intention that every church member should try to visit prisoners? If not, who specifically should attempt to do that?

10. Paul was writing to a group of young men probably some or all of whom had come out of a very pagan and sexually promiscuous environment. So, as part of his concluding remarks, **he admonished them to keep sacred their Christian marriage.** (Hebrews 13:4-5)
11. Paul recognized that illicit sexual relationships and greed are two great threats to brotherly love.

In addition, Greco-Roman society was lax in regard to sexual ethics. A double standard was common: this allowed men license in their sexual relationships as long as they were discreet. Paul warns, however, that God will judge adulterers. Believers should not let social conventions establish their own ethical standards.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, March 21.

12. Are we ever inclined to let social conventions influence us? Could this be one of Satan's most successful temptations? In our day, it is so easy to bring all kinds of very unchristian influences into our homes through television and the Internet. What kind of standards should we maintain with reference to these persistent evils?
13. **However, in this context, Paul recognized an important fact.**

1 Corinthians 5:9-11: ⁹In the letter that I wrote you I told you not to associate with immoral people. ¹⁰Now **I did not mean pagans who are immoral or greedy or are thieves or who worship idols. To avoid them you would have to get out of the world completely.** ¹¹**What I meant was that you should not associate with a person who calls himself a believer but is immoral or greedy or worships idols or is a slanderer or a drunkard or a thief.** Don't even sit down to eat with such a person.—*Good News Bible.*†*

14. One of the issues that is touched on in this lesson that could raise a lot of questions in our day is the question of **homosexuality**. How should we relate to homosexuality in light of the following verses?

1 Corinthians 6:9-10: ⁹Surely you know that the wicked will not possess God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral or who worship idols or are adulterers or homosexual perverts ¹⁰or who steal or are greedy or are drunkards or who slander others or are thieves—none of these will possess God's Kingdom.—*Good News Bible.**

Ephesians 5:5: You may be sure that **no one who is immoral, indecent, or greedy** (for greed is a form of idolatry) **will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.**—*Good News Bible.*†*

1 Timothy 1:9-10: ⁹It must be remembered, of course, that laws are made, not for good people, but for lawbreakers and criminals, for the godless and sinful, for those who are not religious or spiritual, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰for the immoral, for sexual perverts, for kidnappers, for those who lie and give false testimony or who do anything else contrary to sound doctrine.—*Good News Bible.**

Revelation 21:8: [God ("the one who sits on the throne") said:] "But cowards, traitors, perverts, murderers, the immoral, those who practise magic, those who worship idols, **and all liars**—the place for them is the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."—*Good News Bible.*††*

Revelation 22:15: But outside the city are the perverts and those who practise magic, the immoral and the murderers, those who worship idols and those who are liars both in words and deeds.—*Good News Bible*.*

15. The other major problem that Paul recognized was **the “love of money.”**

1 Timothy 6:10: ¹⁰For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.—*Good News Bible*.*†

16. So, what did Paul suggest in his many writings about how we should relate to the love of money? First of all, we should be content with what we have. However, more than that we should embrace God’s promise that He will “never leave us or forsake us.” (Hebrews 13:5) **Where should we draw the line between being prepared for emergencies that might come in our lives or even preparation for retirement versus hoarding money?**

17. Should Seventh-day Adventists feel that they do not need to prepare financially for retirement? Or, prepare for family emergencies?

2 Corinthians 9:8: And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause.—*Good News Bible*.*

Philippians 4:11-12: ¹¹And I am not saying this because I feel neglected, for I have learnt to be satisfied with what I have. ¹²I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learnt this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little.—*Good News Bible*.*

18. In light of this advice from Paul, it is interesting to realize that if one pays close attention to the work of the advertising agencies which dominate our Western world, one would think that sex and money are the main attractions in life!

19. **There is an interesting contrast between instructions given to Moses to be passed on to Joshua and what the people themselves later said to Joshua.**

Deuteronomy 31:6-8: [Moses, speaking to the people of Israel said:] ⁶ “Be determined and confident. Do not be afraid of them. Your God, the LORD himself, will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you.”

⁷ Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the presence of all the people of Israel, “Be determined and confident; you are the one who will lead these people to occupy the land that the LORD promised to their ancestors. ⁸The LORD himself will lead you and be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you, so do not lose courage or be afraid.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Joshua 1:5: [God said:] “Joshua, no one will be able to defeat you as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will always be with you; I will never abandon you.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Joshua 1:16-18: ¹⁶ They answered Joshua, “We will do everything you have told us and will go wherever you send us. ¹⁷**We will obey you, just as we always obeyed Moses,** [For more than a short time, did the people really obey Moses? Or, Joshua? Or, God?] and may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses! ¹⁸Whoever questions your authority or disobeys any of your orders will be put to death. Be determined and confident!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

20. **Paul addressed a question about how we should relate to church leadership.**

Reading from Hebrews 13, some of which we read earlier:

Hebrews 13:7-17: ⁷ **Remember your former leaders, who spoke God’s message to you.** Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith.

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. [*sic*] ⁹ Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. It is good to receive inner strength from God’s grace, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them....

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness, and that would be of no help to you.—*Good News Bible*. *†‡

21. What could we, as individual Seventh-day Adventist Christians, do to strengthen and improve the leader-membership relationship in our congregations and denomination throughout the world? **Who are the church leaders that we need to be following? Is it all of them?**

22. Have they set a standard that is worth emulating?

For Paul, the greatest act of remembrance and praise is emulation. In this way, **Paul has added the founding leaders of the congregation to the list of faithful heroes whom believers should carefully consider.** This list includes the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11, and Jesus, the consummate Example of faith, in Hebrews 12. The author further notes that Jesus is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (*Heb. 13:8, ESV*). He stands in stark contrast to false teachers who change with time and whose teachings become “various” and “strange” (*Heb. 13:9, NKJV*).

The call to remember the leaders in Hebrews 13:7 is restated in more forceful terms at the end of the section. Believers are exhorted to obey the leaders, because they watch out for their souls. The leaders are described here as pastors who are in charge of the spiritual well-being of the congregation, their flock, and who will give an account to God for their spiritual state (*see also 1 Pet. 5:1–4, 1 Corinthians 3:10–15*). Certainly, too, the idea should apply to all our church leaders, as well as at all levels of the denomination today.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 22.†§

23. **Paul warned against strange and diverse teachings.** Reading again:

Hebrews 13:9: Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you from the right way. It is good to receive inner strength from God’s grace, and not by obeying rules about foods; those who obey these rules have not been helped by them.—*Good News Bible*.*

24. What do you think Paul was referring to when he talked about strange and diverse teachings? Some have suggested that he was perhaps speaking about the differences between clean and unclean meats. There are several reasons to believe that that was NOT his main subject.

25. In order to understand what was going on at that “general conference” meeting in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15, we need to understand that the conference was called because Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and others from Antioch going westward **had felt free to convert and invite non-Jewish believers into the church.** The question then became:

Should those non-Jewish believers be required to practice circumcision and follow all the other traditional Jewish requirements before they could become Christians?

The very legally-oriented church leaders from Jerusalem felt that was an absolute necessity. Paul, recognizing the truth and having worked with people from other parts of the world, insisted that following those Jewish practices was not necessary. So, the purpose of the conference was to determine whether or not Gentile Christians could be welcomed into church fellowship with former-Jews who still had scruples about their Jewish practices.

Acts 15:7-11: ⁷After a long debate Peter stood up and said, “My brothers and sisters, you know that a long time ago God chose me from among you to preach the Good News to the Gentiles, so that they could hear and believe. ⁸And **God, who knows the thoughts of everyone, showed his approval of the Gentiles by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he had to us** [with the “tongues of fire” at Pentecost]. ⁹He made no difference between us and them; he forgave their sins because they believed. ¹⁰So then, **why do you now want to put God to the test by laying a load on the backs of the believers** [all the ceremonial laws including circumcision] **which neither our ancestors nor we ourselves were able to carry?** ¹¹No! We believe and are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are.”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

Acts 15:19-20: ¹⁹“It is my opinion,” James went on, “that we should not trouble the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead, **we should write a letter telling them not to eat any food that is ritually unclean because it has been offered to idols; to keep themselves from sexual immorality; and not to eat any animal that has been strangled, or any blood.**”—*Good News Bible*.*† [Are these the beliefs by which one is saved? Certainly not! These are the minimal requirements to follow so that the former-Jews would be willing to sit next to a Gentile convert in church and not be repulsed.]‡

26. How should we understand Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8&10 in this context?

Romans 14:1-10: ¹**Welcome those who are weak in faith, but do not argue with them about their personal opinions.** ²**Some people’s faith allows them to eat anything, but the person who is weak in the faith eats only vegetables.** ³**Those who will eat anything are not to despise those who don’t; while those who eat only vegetables are not to pass judgement on those who will eat anything; for God has accepted them.** ⁴Who are you to judge someone else’s servants? It is their own Master who will decide whether they succeed or fail. And they will succeed, because the Lord is able to make them succeed. **[Meat and wine that was taken to the marketplace was often offered to a pagan god before being sold. It was believed that eating or drinking those items that had been offered to those gods meant that one was worshiping those idols. Paul insisted that those idols could not affect the food in any way!]**

⁵ **Some people think that a certain day is more important than other days, while others think that all days are the same. We should each firmly make up our own minds.** ⁶Those who think highly of a certain day do so in honour of the Lord; those who will eat anything do so in honour of

the Lord, because they give thanks to God for the food. Those who refuse to eat certain things do so in honour of the Lord, and they give thanks to God. ⁷None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only. ⁸If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For Christ died and rose to life in order to be the Lord of the living and of the dead. ¹⁰**You then, who eat only vegetables** [which had not been offered to idols]—**why do you pass judgement on others? And you who eat anything** [knowing that the idols to which the meat had been offered have no power over us or over the meat]—**why do you despise other believers? All of us will stand before God to be judged by him.**—*Good News Bible*.*††

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1: ²³ “We are allowed to do anything,” so they say. That is true, **but not everything is good. “We are allowed to do anything”—but not everything is helpful.** ²⁴None of you should be looking to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

²⁵ You are free to eat anything sold in the meat market, without asking any questions because of your conscience. ²⁶For, as the scripture says, “The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.”

²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you decide to go, **eat what is set before you, without asking any questions because of your conscience.** ²⁸But if someone says to you, “This food was offered to idols,” then do not eat that food, for the sake of the one who told you and for conscience’ sake— ²⁹that is, not your own conscience, but the other person’s conscience.

“Well, then,” someone asks, “why should my freedom to act be limited by another person’s conscience? ³⁰If I thank God for my food, why should anyone criticize me about food for which I give thanks?”

³¹ Well, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God’s glory.

³²Live in such a way as to cause no trouble either to Jews or Gentiles or to the church of God. ³³Just do as I do; I try to please everyone in all that I do, not thinking of my own good, but of the good of all, so that they might be saved.

^{11:1} **Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

27. Reading more broadly in the New Testament, it is very clear that following what Jesus said as recorded in John 6, we can set aside all the formerly-Jewish rituals and customs because grace comes directly from God; we can approach Him at His throne in heaven as if we are priests. Jesus, our faithful High Priest, has led the way into the throne room of God Himself. This will protect us from being led astray by strange teachings.

Hebrews 6:19-20: We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary. ²⁰On our behalf **Jesus has gone in there before us, and has become a high priest for ever, [sic] in the priestly order of Melchizedek.**—*Good News Bible*.*††

Reading more from Hebrews 13:

Hebrews 13:10-14: ¹⁰ The priests who serve in the Jewish place of worship have no right to eat any of the sacrifice on our altar. ¹¹The Jewish High Priest brings the blood of the animals into the Most Holy Place to offer it as a sacrifice for sins; but **the bodies of the animals are burnt outside the camp.** ¹²**For this reason Jesus also died outside the city, in order to purify the people from sin with his own blood.** ¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp and share his shame. ¹⁴For there is no permanent city for us here on earth; **we are looking for the city which is to come.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

28. It is well known that **Jesus was crucified outside the city wall**. Bible writers compared that experience with the admonitions in Old Testament times that anything defiling should be done outside the camp. What is the reason for this admonition?

The place outside the gate was the most impure of the whole camp. The carcasses of the sacrificial animals were burned there (*Lev. 4:12*). Lepers also were excluded from the camp (*Lev. 13:46*), and blasphemers and other criminals were executed there (*Lev. 24:10–16, 23; 1 Kings 21:13; Acts 7:58*). **These regulations presupposed that the presence of God was within the camp.** Anything that was impure was cast outside because God was unwilling to see any “unclean” or “indecent” thing in it (*Num. 5:3, Deut. 23:14*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 24.^{†§} [The place outside the camp where everything was burned was later called *Gehenna* from which some people get their ideas of hell.][‡]

29. Are we prepared to suffer shame because of our beliefs? Are we embarrassed to be known as Seventh-day Adventists? What do we say when people ask us if we are Adventists?
30. It is interesting to remember that back in the days just after the exodus from Egypt, God chose to have His sanctuary placed in the very center of the Hebrew encampment.

Paradoxically, however, Hebrews suggests that God’s presence is now outside the camp. The action of following Jesus outside the camp means not only “bearing His reproach,” or shame, but also going “forth to Him” (*Heb. 13:13, NKJV*) just as those Israelites who “sought the Lord” went “outside the camp” in the desert when Moses removed God’s tent from the camp after the golden-calf controversy (*Exod. 33:7, NKJV*). This account **suggests that the rejection of Jesus by unbelievers also implied the rejection of God, as Israel did in the golden-calf apostasy** (*Exodus 32, Exodus 33*). Thus, the path of suffering and shame also is the path to God.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 24.^{†§}

31. As Christians, we are admonished to leave behind the corrupting influences of the world in which we live.

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, ... [believers] rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth’s sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. **By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts....**

But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors. **They lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss.** They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in darkness.

John, realizing that brotherly love was waning in the church, urged upon believers the constant need of this love. His letters to the church are full of this thought. **“Beloved, let us love one another,” he writes; “for love is of God;** and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins [“and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven” (GNB*)]. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” [1 John 4:7-11, KJV*]—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 547.3-548.2.†

32. What is our responsibility to other church members? Is our relationship to Jesus Christ the only thing that matters in our Christianity? Or, **do we have a responsibility to other members in the church?** What are the implications of “brotherly love”?
33. It was a common belief among the formerly-Jewish Christians that doing certain ritual things such as eating ceremonial meals, or even getting circumcised, etc. was a way to improve your relationship with God. Even though he was a former “Pharisee of the Pharisees,” Paul said that all such approaches to God are merely fleeting and have no permanence. **The grace that God offers is the only permanent way to a right relationship with God.**
34. As Paul found out very distinctly, arguments over what one can or cannot eat led to many divisions in the church. And those differences were over different things. For example, the ceremonial meals employed by some former-Jews, eating food offered to idols, or even eating clean or unclean meats were some of the disagreements in the early church.
35. In places like Corinth and Rome, it was very commonly the practice that meat and especially wine brought into the marketplace was first offered to pagan deities at the temples near the entrance to the city; it would be assumed that if one ate or drank anything that had been offered to a pagan deity, s/he was worshiping that deity. Paul assured his Christian friends that whatever those pagan deities were supposed to represent, they could not affect the food in any way!
36. **How should we understand Paul’s advice about submitting to leaders?**
Within democratic or representative political systems of governance, an exhortation to obey and to submit to the leaders sounds rather authoritarian. Should a claim like that be made today? If so, how should we as members of a worldwide church respond to it?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 173.

37. The clear instruction in Hebrews 13 seems to **suggest that leaders should be followed when they, in turn, are clearly following the example of Jesus.**

1 Corinthians 11:1: Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.—*Good News Bible.**

38. We live in a world where political leadership is highly varied from kings to presidents to dictators, etc. How should we as Christians living in these different environments relate to government leaders? How should that impact our relationship to church leaders?

39. Should leadership be followed only if a person agrees with the leader?

40. Think of Paul's response to the decisions made at the conference recorded in Acts 15. See Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8&10. Paul, who understood the conditions under which his converts were living, advised them to think through the issues involved and be wise in their actions rather than blindly following the directions given by church leaders who were unfamiliar with their circumstances.

41. Are we free to practice situation ethics like that?

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