

The Focus of the Saints #1

Lyall Johnston—August 23, 2025

Let's turn Heb. 13. What we have already looked at was the fact that the main focus for us is first loving God with all our heart, all our mind, all our being, and everything that is within us, **and seeking first constantly the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, the righteousness of God!**

Here's another factor in Heb. 11, which is to be a focus of the children of God. Now, if God loves you and me, does that mean you and I have to love our brothers and sisters and those whom God is calling into the Body of Christ, which is the Church?

Are we not to love them as we love God? Is that not what God is teaching us? We can read in many of the epistles where a lot of the love of God was not being exhibited because people were not following the Word of God.

- there were dissensions
- there were divisions
- there was hatred

And in one case, the third Epistle of John, there was one man in the Church that John was going to deal with, because he was actually denying the visiting elders, John himself even, to visit the Church. And those who wanted to follow John and his ways and the Truth, this man Diotrephes was putting them out of the Church.

Is that love? Now, that's not to say that some people need to be put out of the Church in order for their own salvation, and that is made so plain and clear in 1-Cor. 5, where there was a man actually committing adultery with his stepmother, and the brethren were going along with it. They were quite happy to have him in the midst, and Paul said, when you do that, **you are being leavened!** In other words, you've got **spiritual leaven**; you're part of his sin.

He says, 'You, brethren, must put him out of the Church. Why? *So that he could repent!* The man eventually did, and that's a beautiful story, the man was brought back into the Church. But even there, perhaps the brethren were just so self-righteous, the man was wanting to come back, and they wouldn't let him come back. And Paul says, look, the man's repented. Bring him back in. Otherwise, he will become discouraged.

That was the work of Paul and his care for the brethren. All of us as elders learn so much from his teaching, to follow it **because it comes directly from Jesus Christ, because Christ taught Paul all he knew!** Paul knew a lot of the Scriptures before that, but Christ was able to give him the Truth of what He knew and what He understood based on the spiritual

knowledge, just not the physical knowledge, **which he had before his conversion!**

Let's have a look at Heb. 13; here is another focus of the children of God, of all saints. If you're watching into these programs, then, of course, you are either a saint or you desire to become a saint. And by that, as we know, the term saint is the designation that **God gives to all those who have been converted and have and possess the Holy Spirit within them**, the mind of the mind of the Father and the mind of the Son.

No man, as we have seen previously as any authority to say this man or this woman is a saint. **That's a lie! That's not the Truth!** What they're doing is denying the knowledge that **those who are converted, in fact, are the saints of God the Father and the brothers and sisters of our elder Brother, Christ Jesus!**

Hebrews 13:1: "Let brotherly love be present among you continually."

There it goes. That's a focus. **That's a major focus!** Because **IF** we love God, we are also **THEN**, with that love, to love our brothers and sisters. In fact, that's just the beginning.

IF we are to be kings and priests in God's Family, in His Kingdom, are we not to have the same love for the world that the Father has? **That love is that everyone will come into His Family and that none will perish!** Now, some will, that's clearly evident from the Scriptures, but they don't have to. We don't have to. So many others don't have to.

Brotherly love is so important. By brotherly love, not only can we encourage and help, but we can actually help each other walk toward the Kingdom of God.

When we see a brother or sister going astray, we can help them to see that, to assist them, to bring them back from the fire. Would you, would I not want somebody, if they saw me walking in a different path to the Word of God, would we not want them to show us the right way, **the straight and narrow way** that Jesus talks about in Matthew? **The narrow gate, which leads all the way right through to the very Kingdom of God!** In our new bodies, to see God as He is in all His power and His glory.

Brotherly love is a key factor in this pursuit, in this goal, in this focus!

Verse 1: "Let brotherly love be present among you continually"—day-by-day, every day.

Verse 2: "Do not forget to show

hospitality...”

Now, some may not be able to do that, **but we need a hospitable spirit!** Different people may be coming into a Church Fellowship that we haven’t met before:

- to offer them hospitality
- to offer them that brotherly love

Not:

- Who’s this?
- Who’s this person coming in here with long hair?
- Who’s this person coming in here that doesn’t have decent clothing on?

We know the example in Scripture where **Jesus condemned those with such an attitude!**

Jesus Himself, I’m absolutely positive, would have gone up to that person and probably rather than shake his hand, would engage with him. Maybe, who knows, even giving him that friendly hug. Then, talk to him, share information, get to know him. You don’t know if that person is converted or not.

Are we not called to take the Gospel to the whole world? If a stranger comes into our midst, and it’s appropriate to give that person full attention, to get to know them, to help them, as the case may be.

“...for by this some have **unknowingly welcomed angels as guests**” (v 2).

I don’t know whether Lot knew whether the two angels came to rescue him from the hellfire, whether they were or not. But he was very hospitable, and he took them into his home to protect them from the degenerate perverts that God was about to have his angels destroy.

Verse 3: “**Be mindful of prisoners...**” Paul was a prisoner, Timothy and others were prisoners. All the apostles at one stage were cast into prison. But there are brothers and sisters that are in prison. I had the privilege of visiting one man in a maximum security prison many years ago. He’s still in prison, but we were moved, and I was not able to visit with him any longer. But I have communicated to him with mail, and he says, by writing letters, and he says that the most important day in his life was the day that he was baptized.

And that was such a glorious privilege. In fact, I was able to baptize him in the prison because they actually had a baptismal font in the prison. Had he been called several years later, I would not have even been able to get into the prison to visit him because they just clamped down, and eventually he was moved, and he’s now in another minimum security prison. He has a lot of privileges, but he will never get out. In fact, he wouldn’t be able to cope in the outside world.

But a lovely man, little man, that was in there for something that, yes, he did was serious, but there were a number of people who just simply did not want to see him free again. But he was converted, and it was always a pleasure to visit with him.

So again, be mindful of prisoners. That doesn’t mean to say that we have to go down to the prisons and visit all the prisoners, but when there is a prisoner who desires to know the Truth, then yes, elders will have the opportunity. Anyone actually could do that to go and visit somebody who is a saint in prison. But do this

“...**as if you were imprisoned** with *them*...” (v 3). **So put yourself in his shoes!**

Think about what it’s like for him or her to be in prison.

“...**as if you were imprisoned** with *them*; and think of those who are suffering afflictions...” (v 3).

Now, take this next statement and think about it. As if you yourselves were in their body. Now, today:

- How many people are suffering?
- How many saints are suffering?
- How many family members and friends?
- How many prayer requests do we keep getting?
- Are we able to do what Paul says here?

As he says, “...and think of those who are suffering afflictions, **as if you yourselves were in their body**” (v 3). Isn’t that interesting? *That you were there in their body suffering:*

- maybe a stroke
- maybe a heart attack
- maybe a serious injury

whatever it is! And there are some terrible health issues that a number of our brethren are suffering right now.

So, as we pray for them, this is what we can do. Again, I’ll repeat it. **Be mindful of them “...as if you yourselves were in their body” (v 3).** Isn’t that interesting? Paul clearly did!

Verse 4: “*Let marriage be held* honorable by all, and the marital union *be undefiled*; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.”

A big problem in the churches, the Gentile churches, just like it became a big problem in the Church of God in our day.

Verse 5: “*Do not allow the* love of money to influence your behavior, *but be* satisfied with what you have; for He has said, ‘**In no way will I ever**

leave you; no, I will never forsake you in any way.”

- Are you going through hardships?
- Are you going through problems?

Here is your focus! Here is my focus! Not have the love of money, but the fact that God has said, through Christ, that He will never leave us.

Verse 6: “So then, let us boldly say, **‘The Lord is my Helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’**”

- Are any of you facing oppression?
- Are any of you facing tribulation from somebody at work
 - ✓ causing you problems
 - ✓ causing you difficulties
- Are any of you facing problems with neighbors
- Are any of you facing problems within the household that you’re living within?

The focus is; God says in:

Verse 5: “...**‘In no way will I ever leave you; no, I will never forsake you in any way.’** So then, let us boldly say, **‘The Lord is my Helper...’**” (vs 5-6).

- What problems, what struggles are you going through?
- Can you say this ***and really mean it and be focused on it*** so that this is the forefront of your mind?

The Lord is my helper and I will not be afraid to say that with confidence. That confidence comes from Christ from the Father to you.

- **IF** you seek it
- **IF** you ask it
- **IF** your focus is on Him really being there for you

*It may look to you like it’s absolutely totally impossible, but only **IF** you don’t see your focus ***that God will never leave you nor forsake you!*** Don’t become afraid, **trust in God, He will deliver!***

He feeds the sparrows, He feeds all the incredible living creatures; He’s provided them all with food, even the little ants, and the little bugs and those little mites that you can hardly see in the air, ***He’s provided food for them all!***

- Is He not providing food for us?
- Is he not providing safety and protection?

Absolutely He is!

Verse 6: “So then, **let us boldly say...** [meaning it with absolute total confidence that comes

through God’s Spirit] ...**‘The Lord is my Helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’** Remember your leaders... [the Church leaders] ...who have spoken the Word of God to you, considering the outcome of *their* conduct; *and* imitate *their* faith. **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever**” (vs 6-8).

So, ***if we look and focus on what Christ has done for His Church in the first century, how He delivered many of His saints*** going back to the Old Testament, David and Daniel and his friends, and so many He delivered.

- Can He not do the same for us?
- What does it say here? ***He’s never changes!***

What He’s done for those in the past He can do for us. These are all for us our focus, ***and our focus is solidly planted and placed in the Word of God!***

Verse 9: “**Do not be carried about by all kinds of strange doctrines...** [Focus! Watch out for strange doctrines!] ...For *it is good for* the heart to be confirmed by grace *and* not *by* foods, which have brought no *spiritual* benefit to those who have been preoccupied *with them*.”

A lot of people on television there’s always these baking, these food programs that people just get absorbed in.

- What is more important?
- Food or grace?
- ***The grace of God!***

God’s going to supply us with our food, but we need to concentrate on His grace, His love toward us, everything He does for us!

And be thankful and grateful, praise His name and thank Him over and over again to the point where it just burst forth from us:

- because we are grateful
- because we are thankful to Him
- because we see with our *inner eyes* what He’s doing for us

*Next verse is interesting, v 10: “We have an altar from which those who are serving the *present earthly* tabernacle do not have authority to eat.”*

The altar that we have to eat from is the altar before God’s Throne in heaven. There was a physical altar in the days of the tabernacle and the days of the temple where there were sacrifices offered,

But our altar is different! The altar we have is before God’s throne where the blood of Christ was presented. All those animals in the Old Testament, all the blood which represented the sin sacrifice the blood was taken and presented to God, and the

carcasses were burned outside the city, and that represented Jesus Christ. That pictured the blood of Christ being taken by Himself to the Father before His Throne in heaven. His blood was sprinkled on the altar before God's Throne, which the physical altar pictured, and therefore, **focus for us is that is why, that is how, our sins are forgiven!** So, the benefits that we have from

- our God and Father
- our elder brother Jesus Christ
 - ✓ our Savior
 - ✓ our Lord and Master
 - ✓ our High Priest
 - ✓ our coming King

are so incredibly vast!

That that's where God wants us to have our focus, and as we read these Scriptures, as we see them, what we're doing is we're focusing our mind on the mind of Christ. As we read, as we absorb, as we take this in, **we are letting the mind of Christ dwell within us,** and **we are pursuing that road of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ!**

*That's what God wants, because in that way, **God is perfecting us!*** So our focus is very clear,

- it's the Word of God
- it's the Scriptures
 - ✓ it's not on physical food
 - ✓ it's not on physical activities

But our focus is on the Kingdom of God, and that focus is given to us in the Word of God, on our knees, and as we pray and fast and come close to our Father in heaven!

Scriptural References:

Hebrews 13:1-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 11
- 1-Corinthians 5

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