

Why Don't We Love Better?

[Hebrews 13:1-3](#)

Hebrews, Day 50

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

- Hebrews 13:1-3, ESV

We could all make a list of things we wish we did better than we do. I wish I was a better husband and father, more consistently loving and leading my wife and children. I wish I had more self-control in my diet, resisting the urge to stress-eat junk food. I wish I was more disciplined with my exercise program.

So, why am I not better at these things? Well, almost always, some other desire or drive overpowers my desires to be better in these areas of my life. My desire to be productive and work hard takes away from my time with my family. My desire to scratch the itch of stress by eating junk outweighs my desire to continue to get healthier. My felt need to be busy doing other things keeps me from exercise.

I'm sure you can probably relate to my experiences, although your list may be different than mine. People make New Year's Resolutions and break them by January 5th every year for a reason. But one thing should be at the very top of our lists and should get our undivided attention as believers: Why don't we love better than we do?

Hebrews 13 is a practical application chapter, giving a list of everyday ways that the Gospel should change the lives of believers in matters of marriage, money, leadership, worship, hospitality, suffering, and perseverance. The chapter is introduced with a short and direct exhortation: "Let brotherly love continue."

It may seem strange for an exhortation to brotherly love to follow right after the words "consuming fire," but the call to love is the first outworking of the closing call of Hebrews 12: "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Let brotherly love continue." Let us be grateful and let us worship acceptably. How can we show our gratitude and our right worship in our daily lives? By loving one another well.

We need to actually love the brothers and sisters who are fellow citizens with us in God's heavenly kingdom and fellow worshipers of the same holy God. One practical way we can show that is through hospitality, even sacrificial hospitality that would entertain strangers, travelling Christians in need of a place to stay and a good meal to eat.

We all know we should love each other better in the body of Christ, but we don't really. Why not? I think many factors are involved: busyness, selfishness, laziness, worldliness, etc. However, one key factor I think we often overlook: We're not very good at loving one another because we're too busy fearing one another.

Why would we hesitate to open up our home to a travelling brother or sister in Christ? Maybe we're afraid they'll turn out to be some crazy person who could hurt us. Why don't we invite others into our homes more often? Maybe we're afraid they'll see our mess and judge us or reject us as inadequate, disorganized failures. We're afraid of being seen, rejected or harmed by others, and so we play it safe by locking our doors and keeping the world out.

Paul Tripp explores these ideas very effectively in *When People Are Big and God is Small*. If we find our fears and insecurities outweighing our desire to love our brothers and sisters, we need to replace those fears and anxieties with the fear of the Lord and love others out of gratitude for the love of God.

That's exactly what Hebrews 12:28-13:3 calls us to do: Fear the Lord. Be grateful that He has given us an unshakable kingdom instead of condemnation. Worship Him with reverence and awe. Love one another. Only a God-shaped and God-empowered love will be big enough and strong enough to overcome our fear of man. So, let's worship Him with trembling gratitude, and let's love one another, risking rejection because we're unshakable in Him.