

HEBREWS 13:17-21 **WOW!**

¹⁷ *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

¹⁸ *Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.* ¹⁹ *I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.*

²⁰ *May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,* ²¹ *equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

²² *Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.*

²³ *I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.*

²⁴ *Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.*

²⁵ *Grace be with you all.*

Our author urges not a blind submission to persons in positions of community leadership, but rather a discerning submission to those whose authority is derived from their submission to the One over them. These leaders demonstrate a loving concern for the members of the community through their servant attitude and willingness to sacrifice for the good of the community. What they are doing is un-natural in the eyes of the world and our fallen nature, therefore the community members are urged not to make it even more difficult by opposing or ignoring them. Indeed, the connectedness of the community with its leaders is seen in the exhortation to pray for the leaders, that they might be obedient to the call of the One to whom they will need make account.

Then as a leader, our author demonstrates the heart of a true Christian leader by praying this magnificent prayer for the community.

²⁰ May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This prayer is also a wonderfully succinct summary of the entire letter. Reconciliation with God through the sacrifice of Jesus, which fulfilled the curse of the broken covenant and was made present for us through the raising of Jesus as the first fruits of the new creation, is received and expressed through our living in obedience to his will by the power of that same Jesus.

Wow!

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip [me] with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in [me] what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.