

Introduction:

In the book, *Angels, God's Secret Agents* the Late Evangelist Billy Graham says, "I am convinced that these heavenly beings exist and that they provide unseen aid on our behalf. There was a time that great interests thrive about these angelic creatures. The 1990's saw an explosion of interest and fascination with angels. The TV series "Touched by an Angel" was ranked in the top ten from 1996-2000 that is how popular the subject was. News Week and Time magazine both ran articles concerning the fascination of Angels. However According to Barna Research- as of 2008, only 55 percent of all Americans believe they are protected by guardian angels. Interest today is more into vampires sad to say; that don't exist. The writer of *Hebrews* mentions to be hospitable to strangers, if we are to prove our love for others than sometime we need to be their angel.

As the writer of *Hebrews* brings this letter to a close, he has some powerful exhortations for us. That's because our beliefs determine how we behave. God loves us and he does have angels watching over else. This chapter has three essentials for living the Christian life. The first is that we...

I. Persist in Love (13:1).

1. The author puts it like this: Let brotherly love continue (13:1). We all have a tenacity to become complacent and even stop that which we know to be good for our walk with the Lord and to encourage others. Paul noted that truth to the Galatians in chapter 6:9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2. The word translated brotherly love is the Greek word *PHILADELPHIA*. The Greek NT reveals four words indiscriminately translate into our English word love. They however carry different meaning. Eros is erotic love or sexual love. Storge (store/gay) is the kind of love you have for a family member and parents. These two do not expressly appear in the Bible. Agape love is sacrificial and the greatest of all love. The ancient Greek word "Phileo" spoke of brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. Brotherly love is not mere sentiment or superficial affection, but a deep, compassionate concern for others. This is how we are to care for one another and those that serve the Lord...

3. There should always be this kind of love among Christians, and it should *continue*. In 1 John 3:17 says, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels [of compassion] from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? You see if we have material resources, or money, but lack compassion for a brother or sister in need then are we loving as God loves us? The church should be the first to aid the victims of Hurricane Dorian.

4. As we get to know each other better, our flaws become apparent. However, in spite of our flaws and the difficulty we are to let brotherly love continue. Someone has written "To dwell above with saints we love, that will be grace and glory. To dwell below with saints we know; now, that's another story." Brotherly love also includes hospitality.

## II Love Shows Hospitality & Generosity (13:2-3).

1. *Therefore, we must not forget to entertain strangers because by so doing some have unknowingly entertained angels* (13:2). This is a reference to Abraham who entertained three angels, one of whom turned out to be God Himself (Gen. 18:1-10). You never know why God sends certain people your way or to your church. Maybe you can be an angel to them. God loves you and he has provided special care for you and your love ones. Angels are all around us and they do God's bidding. They are God ministers as per Hebrews 1:7.

2. Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians, who had a very high view of angels. Most Jews believed angels were beings second only to God. So, to keep these Jewish believers from drifting away from their newly found faith and lapsing back into Judaism, they had to be convinced Jesus Christ is superior to angels. Jewish tradition assigned a prominent place to angels, particularly in the revelation of the Mosaic Law. So he draws on this special reverence to call them to hospitality.

3. Angels are by nature invisible but that does not mean they don't exist. There are tiny creatures we can't see but we know they exist! The microscopic world refers to things humans can't see with the naked eye. But thanks to microscopes, scientists have the tools to visualize the detailed structures and dynamic processes inside living cells. Today's microscopes can reveal everything from the secretion of insulin in pancreatic cells to the chemical crossfire in slices of living brain tissue.

4. Angels do exist and we need no further proof than the Bible. It is full of stories of these angelic beings who serve mankind as ministering spirits. Remember Peter (Act's 12:5-11) who was freed from prison by an angel. Guardian angels are mentioned in the bible. Down through the centuries there have been stories of people who believed they encounter an angel. The mandate is to beware you just may be getting a test from God.

a) **Joan Wester Anderson** is one of the most prolific American authors on the subject of human experiences with angels. She tells the story of two pilots in a very small plane flying in fog, and unable to land. A voice came over the speaker and talked them down into a small airport, where they landed safely. They discovered as they got out of the plane that the airport was closed, and no one was on duty. Further, they were so off course that no other airport could have contacted them. In yet another true angel encounter, two women were in a basement cleaning out the belongings of a deceased friend. A brightly lit, white figure appeared in the middle of the basement, pointed toward a door and told them to get out! When they returned, the basement had fallen in. She also wrote about a mom's encounter with angels.

Many years ago, I was driving some children, along with my daughter, to school. As I pulled up across the street from the entrance (as so many cars were pulling in the driveway), I got out and helped them all across the street, not realizing I had closed and locked my door. Frantic, I

tried every door, but to no avail. I ran into the school to get a coat hanger and ran out to the car, which by now was idling very fast. I remember saying, "Oh, dear God, help me please!"

In that split second, a man dressed in what looked like 19th century clothes approached and said, "Looks like you need some help." He didn't talk anymore, but in a minute he had the lock popped with the coat hanger. I was so happy I said, "Thank you so much!" and reached into my car to give him some money, which took all of a second, and when I looked up he was gone! I looked all around in every direction. He had to be seen walking away somehow because it was very open and he couldn't have disappeared that fast.

Other people have told me the same thing on encountering an angel; they just disappear, some never saying a word and whether it's a rescue from a life threatening situation or just a comforting spirit in a time of need, angels are often there right when you need them. But, you may not always see them, an angel could just simply be that soft voice in the back of your mind, you know, that little voice we'd rather call intuition!

5. Where there is true Christian love, there will be hospitality. All Christians are commanded to be given to hospitality as found in Romans 12:13: Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. The word translated hospitality means "lover of strangers." The most important places to be hospitable are at church and worship services. Every church thinks it's hospitable and friendly, but most are not. In most churches, members sit by the same people every Sunday, shake the same hands, and visit with the same people. That's friendly but that it is not hospitality, because hospitality means "lover of strangers, it means you shake hands with visitors and strangers, sit by them, and talk with them. The number one reason visitors return to a church is not the music or the preaching, but because the church was hospitable and they felt welcome.

6. Another way we continue in brotherly love is to remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body (13:3). In other words, don't forget those who are hurting or suffering. There are Christians in prison in other countries whose only "crime" is loving the Lord Jesus and who need our prayers and help ([1 Corinthians 12:26](#)). There are so many ways that we can minister love to our neighbors if we will take the time and let God's love flow through us. Jenny met Mike while ministering to prisoners.

### Conclusion:

Every Sunday, look for strangers or visitors to whom you can show hospitality by shaking their hands and greeting them. Show real interest in them by asking basic questions, such as: "What's your name?"