

Hebrews 13:17-19 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Hebrews 13:1](#)
[Hebrews 13:2](#)
[Hebrews 13:3](#)
[Hebrews 13:4](#)
[Hebrews 13:5](#)
[Hebrews 13:6](#)
[Hebrews 13:7](#)
[Hebrews 13:8](#)
[Hebrews 13:9](#)
[Hebrews 13:10](#)
[Hebrews 13:11](#)
[Hebrews 13:12](#)
[Hebrews 13:13](#)
[Hebrews 13:14](#)
[Hebrews 13:15](#)
[Hebrews 13:16](#)
[Hebrews 13:17](#)
[Hebrews 13:18](#)
[Hebrews 13:19](#)
[Hebrews 13:20](#)
[Hebrews 13:21](#)
[Hebrews 13:22](#)
[Hebrews 13:23](#)
[Hebrews 13:24](#)
[Hebrews 13:25](#)

CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

The Epistle to the Hebrews

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY

DATE WRITTEN:

ca. 64-68AD

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 13:17 **Obey** your **leaders** and **submit** to them, for they **keep watch over** your **souls** as those who will **give** an **account**. Let them **do this** with **joy** and not with **grief**, for **this** would be **unprofitable** for you ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Peithesthe](#) (2PPPM) [tois](#) [egoumenois](#) (PMPMPD) [umon](#) [kai](#) [hupeikete](#), (2PPAM) [autoi](#) [gar](#) [agrupnousin](#) (3SPA) [uper](#) [ton](#) [yuchon](#) [umon](#) [os](#) [logon](#) [apodosontes](#), (FAPMPN) [ina](#) [meta](#) [charas](#) [touto](#) [poiosin](#) (3PPAS) [kai](#) [me](#) [stenazontes](#), (PAPMPN) [alusiteles](#) [gar](#) [umin](#) [touto](#).

Amplified: Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

NET: Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.

NLT: Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NIV: 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.

Phillips: Obey your rulers and recognise their authority. They are like men standing guard over your spiritual good, and they have great responsibility. Try to make their work a pleasure and not a burden - by so doing you will help not only them but yourselves. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Keep constantly obeying your rulers, and constantly be submitting to them; for they themselves are constantly keeping watch over your souls, knowing that they are to give account, that they may do this with joy, not with lamentation, for this would be profitless to you.

Young's Literal: Be obedient to those leading you, and be subject, for these do watch for your souls, as about to give account, that with joy they may do this, and not sighing, for this is unprofitable to you.

OBEY YOUR LEADERS: Peithesthe (2PPPM) tois hegoumenois (PMPMPD) humon:

- He 13:7. 1Sa 8:19. 15:19, 20. Pr 5:13. Ph 2:12, 29. 1Th 5:12, 13. 2Th 3:14. 1Ti 5:17
- **Leaders:** He 13:7, 24. 1Chr 9:29. 2Chr 34:12, 13. Ne 11:16. Da 11:33. 2Co 1:24, 10:8. 1Th 5:12, 13
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Henry Alford - Having already in Heb 13:7 spoken of their deceased leaders in the church, and thereby been reminded of their steadfastness in the faith, he has taken occasion in the intervening verses to admonish them respecting the danger of apostasy to Judaism, and to exhort them to come fearlessly out of it to Christ. Now he returns to their duty to their leaders....(commenting on the use of the verb **peitho**) **Obey**, in the regular course of your habits, guided by them, persuaded that their rule is right. ([The New Testament for English readers](#))

Obey (as Alford says the idea is convinced that the rule of the leaders is right) [3982](#)(**peitho**) means literally to persuade or induce by words to believe and conveys nuances such as confidence and reliance. In short, the writer is saying when your leaders speak on

the authority of God's word, they do have a right to expect obedience. The obedience of course is to God and not to men (see following discussion).

This verse, along with [1Th 5:12] has been widely misunderstood because of the faulty translation of the **KJV**, ("*Obey them that have the rule over you*") **NIV** ("*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority*") and other versions. The words **obey** (twice here) and **submit** and the phrase from [1Th 5:12] "*are over you in the Lord*" have led to an improper approach to leadership that has turned some pastors into autocrats who rule like monarchs over their congregations treating the flock as if they were their personal "fiefdom".

David Guzik writes "Sadly, many have taken the idea of submission to leaders in the church much too far; the '**Shepherding Movement**' was a clear example of this kind of abuse (which many seem to welcome, wanting someone else to be responsible for their lives). 'A teacher should teach us to submit to God, not to himself.'" (Chuck Smith)

Comment in Wikipedia: "The movement gained a reputation for controlling and abusive behaviour, with a great deal of emphasis placed upon the importance of obedience to one's own shepherd. In many cases, disobeying one's shepherd was tantamount to disobeying God. A few of these criticisms were exaggerated, but many lives were damaged. One such testimony can be found in the book *Damaged Disciples* by Ron and Vicki Burks. Noted Baptist evangelist Bailey Smith, for example, in his work "*Real Evangelism*" mentions having collected a very large number of testimonies of people he had encountered who were damaged by Shepherding teachings. The movement was denounced by many charismatic leaders such as Pat Robertson and Demos Shakarian, and a 1975 meeting (known as "the shoot-out at the Curtis Hotel") to resolve the dispute achieved little. The Fort Lauderdale Five eventually parted company. Derek Prince and Bob Mumford both publicly distanced themselves from the teachings. Derek Prince withdrew in 1983, stating his belief that "we were guilty of the Galatian error: having begun in the Spirit, we quickly degenerated into the flesh."^[3] Bob Mumford issued a "Formal Repentance Statement to the Body of Christ" in November 1989 and was quoted as saying, "I repent. I ask forgiveness." He also acknowledged abuses that had occurred because of his teaching on submission. This emphasis resulted in "perverse and unbiblical obedience" to leaders. He also admitted that families had been severely disrupted and lives turned upside down."^[4]^[5]^[6] ([Shepherding Movement - Wikipedia](#))

Jesus condemned such autocratic rule by leaders declaring "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whoever would be great among you must be your servant (Mk10:42,43, 45).

Steven Cole writes that...

"**Obey your leaders and submit to them,**" is a difficult text to speak on because of our culture and because we are Baptists. Our culture is anti-authoritarian and postmodern, and both ideas militate against obedience or submission. Anglican preacher, John Stott, wrote (*Between Two Worlds* [Eerdmans, 1982], p. 51),

"Seldom if ever in its long history has the world witnessed such a self-conscious revolt against authority."

To prove Stott's statement, I ask, when you hear the words, authority or submission, what comes to mind? Do you welcome them as pleasant words, or do you bristle and put up your guard? Our nation was founded on a rebellion against authority, and one of our early mottoes was,

"Don't tread on me!"

We have a defiant national spirit that exalts individual rights. The concept of submission to authority seems wimpy to us!

Our culture is also influenced by **postmodernism**, which holds that there is **no absolute truth** and that each person is free to make up or interpret "truth" as he sees fit. Thus, your "truth" is fine for you, but I have my own "truth," and I would never feel obligated to submit to your "truth." You can believe as you like, but you must also let me believe as I like. Truth is not authoritative. I am the authority over my life, and I use "truth" for my own ends.

Then, add to that the Baptist idea of congregational church government, where each member has an equal vote, and our text becomes especially problematic! Baptist church government is notoriously political. Baptists have divided from other Baptists over relatively minor issues. There is even a joke about the Baptist who was stranded on a desert island. When rescuers finally found him, they saw three buildings on the island. They asked, "What's that building?" "That's my house," the Baptist answered. "Well, what's that second building?" "That's my church," he said. "But, then what's that third building?" "Oh, that's where I used to go to church." If

Baptists don't like a church, they wouldn't think of submitting. They just start or join a new church!

But against all of these powerful influences, we come to Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them...."

As a part of God's inspired Word, these commands are profitable for us (2Ti 3:16-note), and so we must grapple with them. Our verses are directed at church members, but they also implicitly contain some duties for church leaders...

You should obey godly leaders because they keep watch over your souls as those who are accountable to God.

God has constituted various levels of authority under His ultimate authority. The purpose for all authority is to protect and bless those under authority. God establishes the authority of civil governments to protect and bless law-abiding citizens from those that would harm or take advantage of them. When the government does its job, criminals are punished, foreign invaders are kept at bay, and the people can dwell in peace. To the extent that government leaders are corrupt or negligent, the citizens suffer.

In the family, God appoints husbands to have authority under Christ in order to protect and bless their wives and children. The husband is to provide for his family (1Ti 5:8), to protect his family from physical and spiritual danger, and to bless his family by leading them in the ways of God. An ungodly husband who uses authority for his own selfish ends is abusing the authority that God has entrusted to him, and will answer to God for his sins.

In the church, God has appointed elders or pastors (shepherds) to oversee the flock (Acts 20:28; 1Pe 5:1, 2, 3, 4-note). They are not to lord it over the church, but rather to be examples to the flock (1Pe 5:3-note; 2Co 1:24). On every level, those in authority are never in absolute authority. Every leader will give an account to God!

In our text, **leaders** is plural. The New Testament is clear that there is to be a plurality of elders over the local church (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5-note). Plural leadership is a safeguard against the abuse of authority. When all of the elders in a local church have wrestled through an issue biblically and in prayer, and they all agree, they are not infallible, but there is a fair chance that they are right. There should always be room for biblically-based discussion of issues (Acts 15), but when the elders come to a consensus, the church should follow their leadership, unless it is clearly against Scripture on a major point of doctrine.

The text is clear that the church should submit to godly church leaders. Abusive leaders should be confronted and removed from office (1Ti 5:19, 20, 21). John Calvin (Calvin's Commentaries [Baker], on He 13:17, pp. 352-353) observed,

"the Apostle speaks only of those who faithfully performed their office; for they who have nothing but the title, nay, who use the title of pastors for the purpose of destroying the Church, deserve but little reverence and still less confidence."

Before we leave the subject of obedience and submission to leaders, let me be more specific on what it does not mean and what it means. First, it does not mean blindly following leaders without question. I doubt if this is a problem for most people, but the Jim Jones mass suicide incident of the 1970's shows that it can be a problem when an evil leader deceives people. Even in a church that is seeking to follow the Bible, it is not wrong and is right to examine the Scriptures to see if the teaching is sound (as the Bereans did with Paul's teaching, Acts 17:11-note). I welcome interacting with any-one about my sermons, as long as you are seeking to be faithful and submissive to what the Bible teaches. I am not infallible!

When is the church responsible to obey and submit? Obviously, when the leaders teach God's truth, especially on the essential doctrines and commands of the faith, we all must submit. It is not the elders' authority, but God's, that we must submit to. If it is an area where godly Christians may differ, we must give grace to one another to disagree. But submission to godly leadership would require that if you disagree with me on a secondary matter, you would be disobeying God to lead a faction against me. There needs to be a respect shown toward the office of those who teach God's Word. Paul wrote to Titus 2:15-note,

"These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority [lit., commandment]. Let no one disregard you."

To disregard Titus would have been to disregard God, whose word Titus preached.

I have seen two specific situations where church members should submit, even though it may be difficult. In one instance in my ministry in California, a very popular author was coming to our small town to speak. The

problem was, this man had left his wife for another woman. The church he attended had disciplined him, but he told them that they couldn't do that, and he kept on with his popular ministry. We told our people that as elders, we did not want them to attend his talk, because to attend it was to give endorsement of his sin. Later I was grieved to hear that several of our members went anyway. I think that they disobeyed Hebrews 13:17.

Another situation involved disciplining a widow in the church who married an unbeliever. She knew that this was sin, and since she had been the leader of our prayer ministry, her sin wrongly could have tempted other single women to follow her example. But when the elders put her out of the fellowship, some of the women in the church continued to fellowship with her, in disobedience to 1 Corinthians 5, and in disobedience to the elders.

Church discipline is a difficult matter, because there are always those in the church who have emotional ties to the one being disciplined. Some always feel sorry for the person and urge others in the church to show grace and mercy, not judgment. But to be effective, discipline has to be uniformly enforced. If some members continue to fellowship with the person under discipline, then the penalty of being put out of the fellowship is undermined. It's the same thing as when parents do not stand together in disciplining their children. The children quickly recognize that they can do as they please, without any penalty, because dad and mom don't agree. So obedience to church leadership is especially important if the church has to discipline a sinning member. ([Hebrews 13:17-19, 22-25 Your Duties Toward Church Leaders](#))

Steven Cole quotes...

D. E. Hoste, who was a missionary leader with the China In-land Mission, wrote (cited in D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, by Iain Murray [Banner of Truth], 2:423),

What is the essential difference between spurious and true Christian leadership? When a man, in virtue of an official position in the church, demands obedience of another, irrespective of the latter's reason and conscience, this is the spirit of tyranny.

When, on the other hand, by the exercise of tact and sympathy, by prayer, spiritual power and sound wisdom, one Christian worker is able to influence and enlighten another, so that the latter, through the medium of his own reason and conscience, is led to alter one course and adopt another, this is true spiritual leadership.

(Cole continues) Before all of our elders (including me!) resign and run for their lives, and no others ever aspire to the office of elder, I conclude by reminding you of Paul's words regarding the ministry. After asking, rhetorically,

"Who is adequate for these things?" he stated, **"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"** (2 Cor. 2:16; 3:5, 6).

The responsibility of church leadership is impossible, but with God's strength, all things are possible! As leaders, we join the author of Hebrews in asking you, "Pray for us." ([Hebrews 13:7, 17-19, 22-2 The Responsibilities of Church Leaders - Read this Entire Sermon for an Excellent Summary of What Constitutes Godly Leadership](#))

AND SUBMIT TO THEM: kai hupeikete (2PPAM), autoi:

- Ge 16:9. 1Co 16:16. Ep 5:21. Jas 4:7 1Pe 5:5
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Wuest - Expositor's note on this verse is so illuminating, that we quote it in its entirety. "Having exhorted the Hebrews to keep in mind their former rulers and adhere to their teaching, the writer now admonishes them, probably in view of a certain mutinous and separatist spirit, (Heb 10:25) encouraged by their reception of strange doctrines, to obey their present leaders, and yield themselves trustfully (hupeikete) to their teaching—an admonition which, as Weiss remarks, shows that these teachers held the same views as the writer. The reasonableness of this injunction is confirmed by the responsibility of the rulers and their anxious discharge of it. They watch, like wakeful shepherds (agrupnousin), or those who are nursing a critical case, in the interest of your souls (huper ton psuchon humon) to which they may sometimes seem to sacrifice your other interests. They do this under the constant pressure of a consciousness that they must one day render to the Chief Shepherd (Heb 13:20) an account of the care they have taken of His sheep (hos logon apodosontes). Obey them, then, that they may discharge their responsibility and perform these kindly offices for you (touto) referring not to logon apodosontes...but to agrupnousin) joyfully and not with groaning (stenazontes, the groaning with which one resumes a thankless task, and with which he contemplates unappreciated and even opposed work). And even for your

own sakes you should make the work of your rulers easy and joyful, for otherwise it cannot profit you. Your unwillingness to listen to them means that you are out of sympathy with their teaching and that it can do you no good (alusiteles gar humin touto)." ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Submit - The **present imperative** calls for the readers to continually yield to the authority and admonition of their leaders. As he explains it's a matter of the health and integrity of the body ("souls" is plural which seems to direct this primarily at the whole body).

As **Alford** says submit "where that rule interferes with your own will".

Submit (5226) (**hupeiko** - This is the only Biblical use) means to resist no longer, but to give up or yield as was literally applied to combatants. Figuratively as used in the present context **hupeiko** means to yield or surrender to authority of the leaders and to any admonition they might (especially as it relates to potential danger to their souls). This verb presents an poignant picture (and raises a pertinent question) - **Are you resisting your God appointed leaders?** Effective leadership (and "holistic health" of the body) requires effective following.

Steven Cole feels that **hupeiko** "involves an attitude. You can obey outwardly while seething with anger on the inside, but you aren't submitting. Submission implies a sweet spirit of cooperation that stems from trust. You trust that the leaders have your best interests at heart, and so you go along with them. ([Hebrews 13:17-19, 22-25 Your Duties Toward Church Leaders](#))

Obviously these commands do not call for obedience in situations where the leader is not leading Biblically. We saw this kind of blind obedience to [Jim Jones](#) who orchestrated the murder 909 followers by ordering them to commit mass suicide by drinking poisoned Flavor-Aid. Neither does this passage provide any justification for authoritarian churches, like some of the contemporary house-churches whose members submit virtually every decision of their lives to their elders.

ROAST PREACHER - People who have "roast preacher" for Sunday dinner need a change of diet. And a pastor who "chews out" his congregation needs to look again at his mission. A caring preacher will build up his church, and a caring church will build up its preacher.

In Hebrews 13:17, church leaders are called to watch over their flock as those who must give account before God. That's a tall order, but it's what God appoints them to do. And in the same verse, members of the congregation are reminded of their responsibility to their leaders. They are to be submissive to them and open to their correction. Their leaders will then have joy rather than grief as they seek to be faithful in carrying out their God-appointed duties.

How tragic that many church members have never learned this! All week long they criticize their pastor, and on Sunday they listen negatively as he preaches his heart out. Then they go home and have their favorite Sunday dinner—not fried chicken, but roast preacher.

Whatever our place in the body of Christ, let's build others up through mutual caring. Then instead of devouring one another, we will find joy in seeing pastors and their people being nourished and fed by one another. —Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The faithful pastor leads with love—
He serves the church for God above;
So may our criticism die,
And then his joy will multiply.
—Branon

**Pastors who preach God's Word
need a good word from God's people.**

GETTING RID OF THE PASTOR - A Christian leader told about some church members who came to him for advice. They wanted to know of a way to get rid of their pastor. Sensing that they were not being fair, he gave them these suggestions:

Look your pastor straight in the eye while he is preaching and say "Amen!" once in a while. He'll preach himself to death.

Pat him on the back and tell him his good points. He'll work himself to death.

Rededicate your life to Christ and ask your minister for a job to do. He'll die of heart failure.

Get the church to pray for him. Soon he'll become so effective that a larger church will take him off your hands.

If your pastor faithfully preaches God's Word and tries to live an exemplary life, do all you can to support and encourage him. Of

course, no pastor is perfect, and sometimes a loving rebuke may be needed (1Ti 5:20). But a pastor carries a big responsibility (Hebrews 13:17), and a faithful man of God is worthy of respect and generous financial support (1Ti 3:1; 5:17, 18).

By the way, when did you last say to your pastor, "I'm grateful for you and all you've done for me"? — by Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**A pastor leads best
when his people get behind him.**

FOR THEY KEEP WATCH OVER YOUR SOULS AS THOSE WHO WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT: gar agrupnousin (3SPAI) huper ton psuchon humon os logon apodosontes (FAPMPN):

- **Keep watch:** Ezek 3:17, 18, 19, 20, 21 Ezek 33:2,7, 8, 9 Acts 20:24, 25, 26, 27,28 1Co 4:1,2 1Pe 5:2,3)
- **Give account:** Lk 16:2 Ro 14:12 2Co 5:10,11
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SOUL WATCHING

For (term of explanation = always pause and ponder what is being explained) - On their part. Explains why it is reasonable to submit to Spirit filled, godly leaders - it's for your own "spiritual safety"!

Spurgeon - The Lord will ever continue to give pastors after His own heart to feed His people, and all attempts made by the flock to dispense with these pastors will lead to leanness and poverty of soul. The outcry against the "one man ministry" does not come from God, but from proud self-conceit, of men who are not content to learn although they have no power to teach. It is the tendency of human nature to exalt itself that has raised up these disturbers of the peace of God's Israel, for they will not endure to submit themselves to the authorities that God has himself appointed.

Keep watch (69) (**agrupneo** from **a** = without + **hupnos** = sleep; cp **agrupnia** - 2Co 6:5, 11:27) literally means to abstain completely from sleep, pass sleepless nights, to be sleepless, to lie awake and think about (Liddell Scott) to stay alert, and then figuratively to stay alert, to remain vigilant and fully aware of threatening peril, "to be alertly concerned about" (BDAG).

The figurative picture is one who is spiritually alert and wide awake to spiritual intrusions (Mk 13:33, Lk 21:36, Ep 6:18).

Wuest adds that **agrupneo** "is the opposite of listlessness, expressing alertness." ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

In sum, **agrupneo** expresses wakefulness and watchfulness, for the latter could hardly transpire without the former.

Aggrupneo is in the **present tense** which pictures (and calls for) the shepherd's continual watchcare over the sheep (which are prone to wander, cp Is 53:6).

Vincent offers a slightly different derivation stating of **agrupneo**, stating that...

The word is derived from **agreuo**, to hunt, and **hupnos**, sleep. The picture is of one in pursuit of sleep, and therefore wakeful, restless. Wycliffe's rendering of the whole passage is striking: See! wake ye and pray ye!

TDNT says to the ancient Greeks **agrupneo** means "to sleep in the open," then "to watch." ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Expositor's Bible - There is the imagery of the leaders keeping awake nights in their concern for their people. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Why is it so needful to continually keep watch over our souls? The Christian has not just one enemy but three incessant, inveterate foes, the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**, each irrevocably, intractably determined to bring harm to our soul. They cannot keep a believer out of heaven, but they can impede the progressive incursion of "heaven" into our souls while we still exist on earth.

Note the associations of **agrupneo** and prayer (Lk 21:36, Ep 6:18-note)

Thayer writes that **agrupneo** "may be taken to express simply ... absence of sleep, and, pointedly, the absence of it when due to nature, and thence a wakeful frame of mind as opposed to listlessness, while **gregoreuo** [word study] (the offspring of **egreiro** = to

waken, rouse from sleep) represents a waking state as the effect of some arousing effort ... i.e. a more stirring image than the former. The group of synonyms is completed by **nepho [word study]**, which signifies a state untouched by any slumberous or beclouding influences, and thence, one that is guarded against advances of drowsiness or bewilderment. Thus it becomes a term for wariness against spiritual dangers and beguilements."

Vine adds that in Heb 13:17 we find...

a description of genuine overseers. **Agrupneo** signifies to be wakeful, suggestive of the watchful care of shepherds. The overseer must ever carry on his work in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ, where he will give account of his service, its motives and methods. See Ro 14:12-note and 1Pe 4:5-note (**See related resource: The Judgment Seat of Christ [2Cor 5:10] - How to live with a "Bema Seat" Mindset**).

Agrupneo - 4x in 4v in the NT...

Mark 13:33 **Take heed** (blepo = beware, be careful to observe, pay attention) ,**keep on the alert** (agrupneo = **present imperative** = command to do this continually. **Why?**); for you do not know when the appointed time will come.

Luke 21:36-note (**Context** = Lk 21:34, 35 = Return of the Lord = see Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming) "But **keep on the alert** (**agrupneo** = **present imperative** = command to do this continually. **When? Why?**) at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Ephesians 6:18-note With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, **be on the alert** (present tense = continually) with all perseverance and petition for all the saints

Comment: Prayer in the time of spiritual war necessitates a continual state of wakefulness, not sleepiness. Prayer is not passive. We need to remain actively engaged for the enemies of our soul are continually strategizing against us to lay traps and render us ineffective for the King and His Kingdom work. Don't get caught asleep at the post. The fort will fall when the sentry falls asleep as happened to the seemingly impregnable city of Sardis. A little carelessness was shown in Sardis, and either a watchman was wanting at the necessary point or a sentinel slept at his post for an hour; and the greatest power on the earth was hurled to destruction.

Agrupneo in this verse refers to being "strategic in prayer to enable one to know what to pray at the right time and not be asleep at the switch. The person praying is to keep this alert vigil "with all perseverance" (Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry)

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Steven Cole writes that...

Godly church leaders help church members by **keeping watch over their souls** (Heb 13:17). The Greek word translated "**keeping watch**" (**agrupneo**) means "to keep oneself awake," and thus, "to keep watch, guard, or care for" (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Walter Bauer, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich [University of Chicago Press], Second Edition, p. 14).

The image was drawn from shepherds keeping watch over their flocks (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament ([Harper & Brothers], 1887, p. 9). Shepherds had to stay alert in order to guard their flocks from predators. They had to know the sheep and observe them carefully enough to know when a sheep was sick or missing. They had to go after the strays and try to restore them to the flock. They had to lead them to pasture and clean water (see Ezek. 34:1-16).

These tasks require the discernment to know where people are at spiritually and when they are heading toward spiritual danger. Leaders must love God and people enough to have the courage to confront those who are drifting. While you can only lead those who are willing to be led, godly leaders must always make the effort. The task is more difficult in our day when there are many different churches in town. If people get upset at one church, or if the leaders there try to confront some sin in their lives, they just move down the road to another church that welcomes them. Sadly, they usually carry their problems with them.

"**Keeping watch over souls**" is an overwhelming task, and the responsibility for it does not fall only on church leaders. Every spiritually mature believer is responsible to help restore those who are caught in any trespass and to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1,2). If you know of someone in the church who is straying from the Lord, but you don't know what to do, go to one of the elders for counsel. We do our best to keep watch over the flock, but often we are not even aware when someone is in need. We all need to work together to care for one another spiritually. ([Hebrews 13:7, 17-19, 22-2 The Responsibilities of Church Leaders](#))

AGRUPNEO ILLUSTRATED

BY EXCUBITORS AND SHRIKES

The word **excubitor** is referenced in the definition of *agrupneo* in **Liddell-Scott's lexicon** and is also part of the taxonomic name of a little bird named the Great Grey Shrike = *Lanius excubitor* and was also the name of a palace guard corps. Liddell Scott adds that *excubitor* was a Latin word for a soldier of the imperial guard. Both the **shrike** and the **imperial guard** constitute an interesting picture of the meaning of the Greek word **agrupneo** as discussed below.

The Excubitors (*excubitores*) were a palace guard corps, organized by the Emperor Leo to counterbalance the influence of Germans in the imperial army. Although the imperial guard is not well understood, the excubitors are significant because it is through them (indirectly) that the important emperor Justinian was able to come to power. Emperor Justin and the Excubitores - Justinian's uncle Justin (and two other Illyrians from Macedonia) migrated to Constantinople where they were enrolled by Justin in the Excubitors. Under the emperor Anastasius, Justin rose through the ranks to become the commander of the Excubitors. When Anastasius died childless, Justin was able to take over as emperor. (About.com)

Shrike System - The ancient sport of falconry used trained hawks or falcons in the pursuit of wild game. When the "educated predator" was allowed to fly, however, it often rose too high for human eyes to see. So a hunter often carried a small caged bird called a **shrike**. By watching the antics of the little bird, the man could always tell where his hawk was, for the shrike instinctively feared the predator and cocked its head to keep it in view.

All leaders and for that matter every believer desperately needs to remain on "high alert" just as did the tiny shrike ever alert to the presence of their mortal enemy the falcon. Our adversary, Satan, "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pe 5:8-note). Our responsibility, according to the apostle Peter, is to be sober and vigilant. In other words, we're to be always on the alert.

It would be nice if God had giant sirens to warn us of an attack by the devil. But He doesn't operate that way. Instead, we must read the Bible regularly, meditate on its truths, maintain a prayerful attitude throughout the day, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only then will we be sensitive to an imminent assault by the evil one, and be armed by grace to meet it. —Mart De Haan. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Agрупneo is used 8x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**...

2 Samuel 12:21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept (**Lxx adds "and watched"** = *agrupneo*); but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

Ezra 8:29 "**Watch** (Command in Hebrew and Greek - Heb = *shaqad* - to watch or stay awake; **Lxx = agrupneo** in the **present imperative** = command to do this continually) and **keep** them until you weigh them before the leading priests, the Levites and the heads of the fathers' households of Israel at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD."

Psalms 102:7-[note](#) I **lie awake** (**Lxx = agrupneo**), I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop.

Psalms 127:1-[note](#) A Song of Ascents, of Solomon. Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The **watchman** (**Lxx = agrupneo**) keeps awake in vain.

Proverbs 8:32 Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways. 34 "Blessed is the man who listens to me, **Watching** (**Lxx = agrupneo**) daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.

Song 5:2 "I was asleep but my heart was **awake** (**Lxx = agrupneo**). A voice! My beloved was knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of the night.'

Job 21:32 "While he is carried to the grave, Men will keep **watch** (**Lxx = agrupneo**) over his tomb.

Daniel 9:14-note "Therefore the LORD **has kept** (Heb = *shaqad* = watched; **Lxx = agrupneo**) the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

Leaders are to be alert, watchful, trustworthy and are not to use their position in an authoritarian manner. Their office is a function **within** the church, not **over** it. The church is under the headship of Christ (Ep 4:15-note, Ep 5:23-note, cp Ep 1:22, 23-note, 1Co 11:3) and is to be controlled only by the Spirit.

The writer pictures leaders as "excubitores" or "**watchmen**" (Ezek 3:17; 35:7; cf. Isa 21:8; Hab 2:1) over their flock. **Dear pastor, are you serving well as a watchman over your flock such that you are assured you will hear 'Well done'?** You will be held accountable for your guiding and guarding the sheep, as the writer is quick to add.

Leaders should be stirred up to diligence, remembering the gravity of their responsibility (to be good stewards).

Peter offers an excellent parallel to the Hebrews passage...

Therefore, I exhort (**parakaleo [word study]** in **present tense**) the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (cp "give an account" - see **Bema Seat - Judgment Seat**). (1Pe 5:1, 2, 3, 4-**see notes**)

Paul in his last words of encouragement to the Ephesian elders also gave them a solemn warning which all leaders need to completely **hear** and carefully **heed**...

And when they (Ephesian elders) had come to him, he said to them,

"You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (**Where has the teaching of repentance gone in our day?** This verse is quite clear about the call to repent and believe. Cp our Lord's two commands in Mk 1:15, see also Acts 26:20, Mt 3:2, Acts 3:19, Acts 5:31 [a gift!], Acts 8:22, 17:30, 2Ti 2:25-note). "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and **the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus** (The phrase describes every God ordained leader), to testify solemnly of the **gospel of the grace of God**. And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

Be on guard (**present imperative** = command to do this continually) for yourselves (Leaders first need to watch their own conduct) and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (Think "Stewardship" see Lk 16:1-13, 1Co 4:1, 2, 1Co 9:17, Ep 3:2-note, Col 1:25-note, see especially Titus 1:7-note, 1Pe 4:10-note), to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you (**Where will the false teachers and leaders come from?**), not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

(**How can a leader "survive" and "succeed"? Paul gives the answer**)

And now I **commend** (paratithemi = used in Greek meaning to give someone something in trust and so to "deposit" with another. It conveys the picture of a precious treasure being deposited as a trust into the hands of other persons. Those to be entrusted with the message must be "faithful" persons, reliable and trustworthy men "who will not swerve aside because of fear or favor, who will not compromise with the spirit of the age through which they are passing.") you (the elders) to God (note the order - #1 To God) and to the Word of His grace (**How do leaders preach grace [power to transform] that their sheep might grow it grace** - 2Pe 3:18-note?), which (**Note** - Growth comes only from the supernatural living and active Word [1Pe 2:2, 1Th 2:13], not from funny stories, cute illustrations, etc. That's why Paul said "Preach the Word" 2Ti 4:2-note) is **able** (dunamai in the **present tense** = speaks of continual inherent ability or power of the Word of God) to build you up (edify, equip, produce growth in Christlikeness) and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32)

Guzik commenting on "give an account" reminds us that...

this does not relieve individual responsibility, but it puts an additional accountability and responsibility to leaders.

LET THEM DO THIS WITH JOY AND NOT WITH GRIEF FOR THIS WOULD BE UNPROFITABLE FOR YOU: hina meta charas

- **With joy:** Php 1:4-note Php 2:16-note Php 4:1-note 1Th 2:19, 20-note 1Th 3:9,10-note
- **Grief:** Ex 32:31 Jer 13:17 Php 3:18-note
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Let them do this with joy - That is, lead with **joy**! Just try to do this in your own strength! You can't naturally! You can (only) supernaturally! **Joy** is an integral component of the fruit of the Spirit filled leader's life (**Leaders, are you allowing Him to control you?**) (Eph 5:18-note Gal 5:16-note; , Gal 5:17-note, Gal 5:22-note), clearly necessitating the leader's continual dependence on the Spirit (cp Gal 5:25-note where **live** and **walk** are both **present tense** = continuous action ~ continual dependence) and God's grace to function effectively in his role. For the leaders to lead with joy indicates that the sheep are willingly submitting to their leaders.

W E Vine writes "that is, that they may hereafter render their account with joy, and not lamenting (**present** participle of **stenazo**), joy because of obedience to their admonitions and the spiritual progress of these whom they have guided." ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Steven Cole writes that "Godly church leaders help church members by aiming at their **joy** and spiritual profit (He 13:17)....This refers first to the leaders' **joy**, but it obviously extends to the **joy** and spiritual profit of all of the members. Those who are walking in obedience to Christ will know His joy (John 15:10,11). Godly leaders rejoice to see those in the flock walking in the truth (3John 1:4). ([Hebrews 13:7, 17-19, 22-2 The Responsibilities of Church Leaders](#))

Not with grief - All who have been in leadership (if they are honest) would readily acknowledge that being a lead can be a thankless, even grievous task. In context they would have grief over sheep that are going astray (disobedience). And so this passage ("with joy and not with grief") speaks to the congregation. They need to be submitting to their leaders, responding to the Word which is being preached (to not do so would be a cause of grief for the leaders) and not continually criticizing, complaining and bickering which would be grievous to the leaders. This does not mean you have to be a body of "yes" men and women but that you still follow their leadership.

Not with grief - Literally = "not a (**present tense** = continually) groaning."

Grief ([4727](#)) (**stenazo** [word study] from **stenos** = narrow, contracted - figuratively as when one is squeezed or pressed by circumstances) is a poignantly picturesque word which literally describes an internal squeezing and denotes a feeling of sorrow which is internal. **Stenazo** means to express grief by inarticulate or semi-articulate sounds. The idea is to bemoan or lament over (Lxx of Nah 3:7 for "grieve"). A **groan** is an audible expression of anguish due to physical, emotional, or spiritual pain (Lxx of Is 21:2 where the prophet "groans" because of the harsh vision God has revealed to him). **Stenazo** has a slightly different nuance in Jas 5:9 **Mounce** stating that here it means "to give vent to querulous or censorious feelings."

Stenazo refers to the utterances of a person who is caught in a dreadful situation and has no immediate prospect of deliverance **As a leader this aspect of stenazo may "hit too close to home"!** **Stenazo** is used by Luke in its noun form, **stenagmos**, to describe the desperate utterances of the Israelites during their oppressive bondage in Egypt...

'I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT, AND HAVE HEARD THEIR **GROANS** (**stenagmos**), AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.' (Acts 7:34 cp Ex 2:24, 25) (**Note:** **Stenagmos** is also used in Ro 8:26-note of Spirit's prayers expressed to God inarticulately)

Stenazo - 19x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**, mainly in the Major Prophets -Job 9:27; 18:20; 24:12; 30:25; 31:38; Isa. 19:8; 21:2; 24:7; 30:15; 46:8; 59:10; Jer. 31:19; Lam. 1:8, 21; Ezek. 21:6f; 26:15f; Nah. 3:7. Below is an example in which Jerusalem is personified as a woman groaning because of her sinfulness...

Jerusalem sinned greatly, Therefore she has become an unclean thing. All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness. Even she (the city Jerusalem personified) herself **groans** (Hebrew = 'anach = groan in pain or grief; **Lxx** = **stenazo**) and turns away. (Lam 1:8)

Moses surely groaned over the disobedience of his people when after the Exodus he brought them to Rephidim where, being out of water and supplies, they began to rebel (cf. Ex17:1-7). But forty years later when the same thing happened at Kadesh so that the people seemed to be lip-syncing their earlier rebellion—"Why did you bring the Lord's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here?" (Nu 20:4)—his old bones must have really groaned!

This would be unprofitable - Refers to the leader's having to grieve or lament over the readers (for their disobedience).

Unprofitable ([255](#)) (**alusiteles** from **a** = without + **lusiteles** = paying for expenses, profitable) is that which does not pay, that which

is unprofitable.

Vine feels that...

To render an account with grief because of the lack of obedient response to their ministry would mean eternal loss for those who had thus failed to submit to them and follow them. That is the meaning of “unprofitable for you.” ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Steven Cole adds that...

You should obey godly leaders because if you cause them grief, you cause yourself grief.

Hebrews 13:17 states that obedience to godly church leaders is for your benefit. Disobedience to them **would be unprofitable for you.** God designed authority to protect and bless. If you disobey godly church leaders who proclaim God’s Word to you, you are really disobeying God, which always has serious consequences (Gal 6:7, 8). Again, it is implicit that these leaders are conscientious men who are walking with God.

Spiritual children, like our natural children, can be the source of immense **joy** or of immense **grief** (which, literally, is “groaning”). Every pastor has had frequent occasion both for joy and for groaning over people in the flock. The apostle Paul told the Thessalonians, (1Th 3:9-note),

“For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account?” (See also, 1Th 2:19, 20-note)

The apostle John wrote (3John 1:4),

“I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

But Paul agonized over the Galatians’ defection from the truth (Ga 1:6; 4:19). He wrote to the Corinthians “out of much affliction and anguish of heart ... with many tears” (2Co 2:4; see also, Php 4:19-note). Paul was not concerned about his own welfare or reputation, but about their welfare and God’s glory. If you cause your pastors to groan, it’s because they know that your disobedience will damage both you and the name of Christ.

Thus, you should obey godly leaders because they keep watch over your souls and because if you cause them grief, you are causing yourself grief. ([Hebrews 13:17-19, 22-25 Your Duties Toward Church Leaders](#))

Hebrews 13:18 **Pray** for us, for we are **sure** that we **have** a **good conscience**, **desiring** to **conduct** ourselves **honorably** in **all things** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: **Proseuchesthe** (2PPMM) **peri emon, peithometha** (1PPPI) **gar oti kalen suneidesin echomen,** (1PPAI) **en pasin kalos thelontes** (PAPMPN) **anastrephesthai.** (PPN)

Amplified: Keep praying for us, for we are convinced that we have a good (clear) conscience, that we want to walk uprightly and live a noble life, acting honorably and in complete honesty in all things. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Phillips: Pray for us. Our conscience is clear before God, and our great desire is to lead a life that is completely honest. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Be praying for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to be conducting ourselves in a seemly manner. Moreover, I beg of you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you more quickly.

Young's Literal: Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to behave well,

PRAY FOR US: Proseuchesthe (2PPMM) peri hemon:

- **Pray for us:** Ro 15:30 Eph 6:19,20 Col 4:3 1Th 5:25 2Th 3:1
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Spurgeon - The movements of God's servants may be controlled by prayer. You cannot tell how much blessing will come to your own souls through the ministry, if you are in the habit of praying about it. The man who comes up to God's house having prayed for God to bless the preacher is not likely to go away unprofited.

Wuest - Expositor's has an illuminating note on this verse: "Both the next clause and the next verse seem to indicate that by hemon (**us**) the writer chiefly, if not exclusively, meant himself; the next clause, for he could not vouch for the conscience of any other person; the next verse because one principal object or result of their prayer was his restoration to them. Request for prayer is common in the Epistles, 1Th 5:25; 2Th 3:1; Ro 15:30; Eph 6:18; Col. 4:3. . The reason here annexed is peculiar. 'The allusion to his purity of conduct, and strong assertion of his consciousness of it, in regard to them and all things, when he is petitioning for their prayers, implies that some suspicions may have attached to him in the minds of some of them. These suspicions would naturally refer to his great freedom in regard to Jewish practices' (Davidson). But notwithstanding verse 23 it may be that he was under arrest and shortly to be tried and naturally adds to his request for prayer a protestation of his innocence of all civil offence ... The writer was conscious of a readiness and purpose to live and conduct himself rightly in all circumstances. This gives him confidence and will lend confidence to their prayers. He is more urgent in this request ... because he is desirous to be quickly restored to them; implying that he in some sense belonged to them and that the termination of his present exile from them would be acceptable to them as well as to him." ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Pray - A command to keep on praying (just try to do this without dependence on the enabling power of the Spirit!) for us with the implication that they had already been praying.

Pray (4336) (**proseuchomai** [word study] from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun **proseuche**).

Proseuchomai encompasses all the aspects of prayer -- submission, confession, petition, supplication (may concern one's own need), intercession (concerned with the needs of others), praise, and thanksgiving.

Vine says that **proseuchomai** carries with it a notion of **worship** (but see the Greek word for worship = **proskuneo**) which is not present in the other words for prayer (eg, aiteo, deomai, both of which involve spoken supplication)

Wuest adds that the prefixed preposition **pros** (see note after Wuest) "gives (**proseuchomai**) the idea of definiteness and directness in prayer, with the consciousness on the part of the one praying that he is talking face to face with God...(thus **proseuchomai**) speaks also of the consciousness on the part of the one who prays, of the fact of God's presence and His listening ear. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Comment on the preposition "pros" - Expresses direction, predominantly signifying motion toward, on the side of, in the direction of. **Pros** can serve as a marker of closeness of relation or proximity. It is interesting to note that the word for prostrating oneself before another in adoration and worship begins with the preposition **pros** (**proskuneo**). **Marvin Vincent** (Word Studies in the NT) adds that "The preposition **pros**, with the accusative case (as in Eph 3:14-note), denotes motion towards, or direction and is also often used in the New Testament in the sense of with; and that not merely as being near or beside, **but as a living union and communion; implying the active notion of intercourse.** (Ed: Think of this latter sense as it might relate to the act of prayer!)"

Steven Cole writes that...

your duty is to pray for godly church leaders. '**Pray for us...**' (He 13:18).

It is instructive that the apostle Paul frequently asked for prayer.

In Ro 15:30, 31-note, he asked his readers to strive together with him in their prayers for him, that he would be rescued from those who are disobedient, that his ministry would prove acceptable to the saints, and that he could come to visit them in joy by the will of God.

In Ep 6:19-note, he asks for prayer so that he could open his mouth and boldly proclaim the gospel. I would not think that he needed prayer for that, but he did!

In Col 4:3, 4-note, he asks for prayer that God would open up a door for the word, and that he could make it clear (again, I wouldn't think that Paul had a problem making the gospel clear!).

In 1Th 5:25-note, he simply asks, "Brethren, pray for us!"

In 2Th 3:1, he asks for prayer that the word of God will spread rapidly and be glorified, and that he would be rescued from perverse and evil men.

In Philemon 1:22, he hopes that through Philemon's prayers, he would be able to visit him soon.

If the apostle Paul was that aware of his need for prayer, how much more the rest of us who attempt to serve the Lord!

As Paul exclaimed, "Who is adequate for these things?" (2Co 2:16). In our text, the author mentions two areas for prayer for leaders:

Pray for leaders in the battle to maintain a good conscience in all things We have to take an educated guess at what is behind the author's comment in He 13:18, but it would seem to be something like this: The author has said some difficult things. He has confronted the traditionalists, who wanted to hold onto their Jewish ways, while still trying to follow Christ. He has said,

"You can't do that! If you go back to Judaism, or try to blend it with faith in Christ, you will face God's judgment because you have diluted the gospel."

The traditionalists were arguing with others in the church,

"He's gone too far! He's saying that the ways of our fathers since the time of Moses are no longer valid."

The author is saying in effect,

"I understand how difficult my teaching has been, and I ask you to pray for me, because I am sure that my conscience is right before God, and that everything I have said has been to promote God's truth and your spiritual welfare."

Every pastor who is faithful to God has to say or do some things from time to time that undoubtedly will offend someone in the church. Often, it is the traditionalists:

"We've never done it that way before!"

They will say that he has no respect for the past. Sometimes they will accuse him of causing disunity. Sometimes, they try to work out a compromise so that they can hold onto their cherished beliefs or practices, even if they compromise biblical truth. Under such pressure, some pastors capitulate and play politics in the church.

Pray for your leaders, that they will stand firm and maintain a good conscience before God, who knows the heart (1Th 2:3, 4, 5).

Pray for leaders to be delivered from circumstances or difficulties beyond their control.

Conclusion -I hope many of you will take to heart two simple applications. First, prepare your heart for church by taking some time during the week, perhaps on Saturday evenings, to pray for me (or whoever is preaching). Pray that your heart would be open and submissive to God's Word. Spend a few minutes reading the text in its context and meditating on it. Pray for the effectiveness of the printed and audio sermons and the sermons on the web site.

Second, pray for me to maintain a good conscience before God and to preach His truth without compromise. Pray for me while I'm preaching, that the seed of the Word would find fertile soil in hearts. Pray against distractions that arise. Pray for individuals you know of who are struggling with sin.

On one of his visits to the Continent, Charles Spurgeon met an American minister who said, "I have long wished to see you, Mr. Spurgeon, and to put one or two simple questions to you. In our country there are many opinions as to the secret of your great influence. Would you be good enough to give me your own point of view?" After a moment's pause, Spurgeon replied, **"My people pray for me"**(in Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon [Banner of Truth], p. 44). Although I will never have Spurgeon's gifts or power, I would ask the same, that you pray for me! ([Hebrews 13:17-19, 22-25 Your Duties Toward Church Leaders](#))

FOR WE ARE SURE THAT WE HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE DESIRING TO CONDUCT OURSELVES HONORABLY IN ALL THINGS: peithometha (1PPPI) gar hoti kalen suneidesin echomen (1PPAI) en pasin kalos thelontes (PAPMPN) anastrephesthai (PPN):

- Cp Acts 24:16, 2Ti 1:3
- **We have a good conscience:** Ac 23:1 24:16 2Co 1:12 1Ti 1:5 1Pe 3:16,21
- **In all things:** Ro 12:17 13:13 Php 4:8 1Th 4:12 1Pe 2:12
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - term of explanation

Desiring to conduct ourselves honorably - That is to live without giving offense or scandal.

We are sure (convinced, persuaded) ([3982](#))(**peitho [word study]**) means literally to persuade or induce by words to believe (Acts 19:26, Mt 27:20, Ro 14:14) and conveys nuances such as confidence, reliance, and hope. The writer is convinced he has conducted himself in a God honoring way.

Good ([2570](#))(**kalos [word study]**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good).

We have a good conscience - **Vine** remarks that "Requests for prayer can only rightly be made where the conscience of the requester is clear before God. The writer had no doubt of this in his own case."

Conscience ([4893](#))(**suneidesis [word study]** from **sun** = with + **eido** = know) literally means a "knowing with", a co-knowledge with oneself or a being of one's own witness in the sense that one's own conscience "takes the stand" as the chief witness, testifying either to one's innocence or guilt. It describes the witness borne to one's conduct by that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God. ([Click here](#) for more notes on on this website on **conscience**)

The **conscience** is a **key word** in the epistle to the Hebrews...

Hebrews 9:9 (note) which (the outer tabernacle) is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in **conscience**,

Hebrews 9:14 (note) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your **conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:22 (note) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil **conscience** and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 13:18 (note) Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good **conscience**, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

For the first time in their lives as Jews who worshiped Jehovah the guilt was completely gone, and their conscience could rest easy. This refers to the positional truth because of the cleansing provided by the blood of Christ. But there is also a practical (daily practice or sanctification) aspect to the conscience for Paul writes...

I thank God, whom I serve (present tense = continually) with a **clear conscience** the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, (2Ti 1:3-note)

Webster defines "**conscience**" as the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good.

The Greek noun **suneidesis** is the exact counterpart of the Latin **con-science**, "a knowing with," a shared or joint knowledge. It is our awareness of ourselves in all the relationships of life, especially ethical relationships. We have ideas of right and wrong; and when we perceive their truth and claims on us, and will not obey, our souls are at war with themselves and with the law of God

Suneidesis is that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former and avoid the latter.

To have a "**clear conscience**" does not mean that we have never sinned or do not commit acts of sin. Rather, it means that the underlying direction and motive of life is to obey and please God, so that acts of sin are habitually recognized as such and faced before God ([1Jn 1:9](#))

A "**clear conscience**" consists in being able to say that there is no one (God or man) whom I have knowingly offended and not tried to make it right (either by asking forgiveness or restoration or both). Paul wanted Timothy to have no doubt that he endured his present physical afflictions, as he had countless others, because of his unswerving faithfulness to the Lord, not as a consequence of unfaithful, ungodly living. So as Paul neared his death, he could testify that his conscience did not accuse or condemn him. His guilt was forgiven, and his devotion was undivided. To continually reject God's truth causes the conscience to become progressively less

sensitive to sin, as if covered with layers of unspiritual scar tissue. Paul's conscience was clear, sensitive, & responsive to its convicting voice. Click on the books below to study the NT picture of conscience.

Desiring (2309) (**thelo**) expresses the set of one's will, not merely a wish and thus the writer expresses a firm determination (rather than a wish) to live in the way indicated. The present tense indicates this not a passing fancy but a continual setting of his will.

Conduct (390) (**anastrepho** from **aná** = again, back + **strepho** = turn) literally means to turn down or back, to wheel about and hence, to move about in a place or to sojourn.

Another meaning of **anastrepho** is to turn back or to return to a place (Acts 5:22, 15:16-return here alludes to **Second Coming**).

Anastrepho conveys the idea of "turning" back and forth in a place and so to spend time there (Mt 17:22). In secular Greek **anastrophe** meant turning back and forth in a place or dawdling around and lingering.

Finally, the figurative meaning of **anastrepho** describes one's **whole** manner of life, behavior, conduct or deportment (Ep 2:3-note = "lived", 2Cor 1:12, 1Ti 3:15 = "behave" speaking of moral/ethical behavior in the household of God; 2Pe 2:18-note). And so **anastrepho** describes the general ordering of one's conduct in relation to others.

In the present context **anastrepho** specifically refers to their **conduct** in the sphere ("atmosphere") of godly fear.

Wuest - In classical Greek, the verb (**anastrepho**) meant among other things "to turn one's self about, to turn back, round, or about, to dwell in a place," the noun, "a turning back or about, occupation in a thing, a mode of life, behaviour." One can see that the ideas of "a mode of life" and "one's behaviour" are derived from the fact of one's activity. (**Anastrepho** means) to conduct or behave one's self, to walk," the latter meaning not referring here to the physical act of walking but to the act of determining our course of conduct and the carrying out of that determined course of action. The noun (**anastrophe**) means "one's walk, manner of life, conduct." In the biblical use of the word, the moral and spiritual aspect of one's manner of life is in view. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Honorably (2570)(**kalos** [word study]) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good).

NEWSPAPER HONESTY - As a schoolboy, I worked with my father during the summer months. Each morning we stopped to pick up the early edition of the newspaper at a small grocery store.

One morning when we got to work, my father found that by mistake he had taken two newspapers instead of one. He first thought of paying the man the extra price the next morning, but then after a moment's consideration he said, "I had better go back with this paper. I don't want the man at the store to think I'm dishonest." He got in his car, drove back to the store, and returned the paper.

About a week later, someone stole money from the grocery store. When police pinpointed the time it occurred, the grocer remembered only two people being in the store at the time—and one was my father. The grocer immediately dismissed my father as a suspect, saying, "That man is really honest. He came all the way back here just to return a newspaper he took by mistake." The police then focused their investigation on the other man, who soon made a full confession. My father's honesty made a big impression on that non-Christian storeowner, and on me.

Does your Christian walk square with your Christian talk? Is your honesty above question?— by Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

When others view our lives today,
Our honesty is on display;
Lord, help us point the way to You
By doing what is right and true. —Branon

**Your life is like a newspaper;
do people read honesty in you?**

MORE ON CONSCIENCE

Kenneth Osbeck writes that...

The **conscience** has been described as the “rudder of the soul” or the believer’s “principle within.” One of the prime responsibilities of Christian living is to keep the conscience clear as to the things of God so that we might live worthy lives before our fellowmen. But the conscience must be continually enlightened and developed by an exposure to God’s Word if it is to serve as a reliable guide for our lives. A conscience that is allowed to become hardened and insensitive to sin will ultimately lead to spiritual and moral disaster. We must allow God to develop our consciences and then our consciences are able to develop us. ([Osbeck, K. W. Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions. Kregel Publications](#))

I Want a Principle Within

by Charles Wesley ([Play hymn](#))

I want a principle within of watchful, Godly fear,
A sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.
Help me the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire,
To catch the wand’ring of my will and quench the Spirit’s fire.

From Thee that I no more may stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.
Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul when sin is nigh and keep it still awake.

Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy pow’r impart;
The burden from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.
O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,
And drive me to that grace again which makes the wounded whole.

Conscience is the judgment which we pronounce on our own conduct by putting ourselves in the place of a bystander. (Adam Smith.)

Conscience is a dainty, delicate creature, a rare piece of workmanship of the Maker. Keep it whole without a crack, for if there be but one hole so that it break, it will with difficulty mend again. (S. Rutherford.)

The Christian can never find a “more faithful adviser, a more active accuser, a severer witness, a more impartial judge, a sweeter comforter, or a more inexorable enemy.” (Bp. Sanderson.)

Conscience in everything: — Trust that man in nothing who has not a conscience in everything. (Sterne.)

Conscience makes cowards of us; but conscience makes saints and heroes too. (J. Lightfoot.)

Conscience is a marvelous gift from God, the window that lets in the light of His truth. If we sin against Him deliberately, that window becomes dirty, and not as much truth can filter through. Eventually, the window becomes so dirty that it no longer lets in the light. The Bible calls this a defiled, seared conscience...Do you keep a clean conscience? It is a part of your inner being that responds to God’s truth. When you sin, the window of your conscience becomes dirty and filters out truth. Avoid sin in your life and live with a clean conscience. Every day feed yourself truth from the Word of God. (Wiersbe, W: Prayer, Praise and Promises: Ps 51:3-6)

Hurt not your **conscience** with any known sin. (S. Rutherford.)

“**Conscience** is that faculty in me which attaches itself to the highest that I know, and tells me what the highest I know demands that I do.”

“When there is any debate, quit. There is no debate possible when **conscience** speaks.”

Once we assuage our **conscience** by calling something a “necessary evil,” it begins to look more and more necessary and less and less evil. - Sidney J. Harris

As someone else has said, "She won't listen to her conscience. She doesn't want to take advice from a total stranger." Bob Goddard

The antagonism between life and conscience may be removed in two ways: By a change of life or by a change of conscience. Leo Tolstoy.

The trouble with the advice, "Follow your conscience" is that most people follow it like someone following a wheelbarrow--they direct it wherever they want it to go, and then follow behind.

Did you know that ever since 1811 (when someone who had defrauded the government anonymously sent \$5 to Washington D.C.) the U.S. Treasury has operated a Conscience Fund? Since that time almost \$3.5 million has been received from guilt-ridden citizens. (Chuck Swindoll, The Quest For Character)

Conscience is God's spy and man's overseer. (John Trapp)

A good **conscience** and a good confidence go together. (Thomas Brooks)

Franklin P. Jones wrote that

"**Conscience** is a small, still voice that makes minority reports."

Someone added

"**Conscience** is also what makes a boy tell his mother before his sister does."

H. C. Trumbull wrote that...

Conscience tells us that we ought to do right, but it does not tell us what right is--that we are taught by God's word.

Christopher Morley said about conscience

Pop used to say about the Presbyterians, 'It don't prevent them committing all the sins there are, but it keeps them from getting any fun but of it.'

The late **General Omar Bradley** was more serious in commenting on conscience

"The world has achieved brilliance without conscience," he conceded. "Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

On the subject of conscience **Martin Luther** declared before the court of the Roman Empire at Worms in 1521

"My conscience is captive to the Word of God. ... I am more afraid of my own heart than of the pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great pope, Self."

When a person comes to faith in Christ, his conscience becomes acutely sensitive to sin. No longer as a Christian can he sin with impunity. The story is told about an old Indian chief who was converted. Later a missionary asked him:

"Chief, how are you doing spiritually? Are you experiencing victory over the devil?"

"It's like this," the chief replied. "I have two dogs inside me: a good dog and a bad dog. They are constantly fighting with each other."

"Which dog wins?" asked the puzzled missionary.

"Whichever one I feed the most," retorted the wise old man. His conscience was being shaped by the Scriptures.

Billy Graham set out the importance of a clear conscience

"To have a guilty conscience is a feeling. Psychologists may define it as a guilt complex, and may seek to rationalize away the sense of guilt, but once it has been awakened through the application of the law of God, no explanation will quiet the insistent voice of conscience."

C H Spurgeon spoke frequently about **conscience** as seen in the following quite pithy quotations...beloved if you are contemplating sinning as you read this or are caught in the web of some sin, may the Holy Spirit of the Living God convict you of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come, not only for your sake of your Christian life but even more so for the sake of His name...

Conscience may tell me that something is wrong, but how wrong it is conscience itself does not know. Did any man's conscience, unenlightened by the Spirit, ever tell him that his sins deserved damnation? Did it ever lead any man to feel an abhorrence of sin as sin? Did conscience ever bring a man to such self-renunciation that he totally abhorred himself and all his works and came to Christ?

A man sees his enemy before him. By the light of his candle, he marks the insidious approach. His enemy is seeking his life. The man puts out the candle and then exclaims, "I am now quite at peace." That is what you do. Conscience is the candle of the Lord. It shows you your enemy. You try to put it out by saying, "Peace,

peace! Put the enemy out!" God give you grace to thrust sin out!

Conscience is like a magnetic needle, which, if once turned aside from its pole, will never cease trembling. You can never make it still until it is permitted to return to its proper place.

I recollect the time when I thought that if I had to live on bread and water all my life and be chained in a dungeon, I would cheerfully submit to that if I might but get rid of my sins. When sin haunted and burdened my spirit, I am sure I would have counted the martyr's death preferable to a life under the lash of a guilty conscience

O believe me, guilt upon the conscience is worse than the body on the rack. Even the flames of the stake may be cheerfully endured, but the burnings of a conscience tormented by God are beyond all measure unendurable.

This side of hell, what can be worse than the tortures of an awakened conscience?

He was a fool who killed the watchdog because it alarmed him when thieves were breaking into his house. If conscience upbraids you, feel its upbraiding and heed its rebuke. It is your best friend.

Give me into the power of a roaring lion, but never let me come under the power of an awakened, guilty conscience. Shut me up in a dark dungeon, among all manner of loathsome creatures—snakes and reptiles of all kinds—but, oh, give me not over to my own thoughts when I am consciously guilty before God!

Fire such as martyrs felt at the stake were but a plaything compared with the flames of a burning conscience. Thunderbolts and tornadoes are nothing in force compared with the charges of a guilty conscience.

When a swarm of bees gets about a man, they are above, beneath, around, everywhere stinging, every one stinging, until he seems to be stung in every part of his body. So, when conscience wakes up the whole hive of our sins, we find ourselves compassed about with innumerable evils: sins at the board and sins on the bed, sins at the task and sins in the pew, sins in the street and sins in the shop, sins on the land and sins at sea, sins of body, soul, and spirit, sins of eye, of lip, of hand, of foot, sins everywhere. It is a horrible discovery when it seems to a man as if sin had become as omnipresent with him as God is.

The conscience of man, when he is really quickened and awakened by the Holy Spirit, speaks the truth. It rings the great alarm bell. And if he turns over in his bed, that great alarm bell rings out again and again, "The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! "

Nothing can be more horrible, out of hell, than to have an awakened conscience but not a reconciled God—to see sin, yet not see the Savior—to behold the deadly disease in all its loathsomeness, but not trust the good Physician, and so to have no hope of ever being healed of our malady.

I would bear any affliction rather than be burdened with a guilty conscience.

It is a blessed thing to have a conscience that will shiver when the very ghost of a sin goes by—a conscience that is not like our great steamships at sea that do not yield to every wave, but, like a cork on the water, goes up and down with every ripple, sensitive in a moment to the very approach of sin. May God the Holy Spirit make us so! This sensitiveness the Christian endeavors to have, for he knows that if he has it not, he will never be purified from his sin.

There are thousands of people in this country who would be greatly troubled in their minds if they did not go to church twice on Sundays. And they get comfort in this because their conscience is dead. If their conscience were really awakened, they would understand that there is no connection between conscience and outward forms.

When Sgt. Ray Baarz of the Midvale, Utah, police department opened his wallet, he noticed his driver's license had expired. Embarrassed at having caught himself red-handed, he had no alternative. He calmly and deliberately pulled out his ticket book and wrote himself a citation. Then Baarz took the ticket to the city judge who fined him five dollars. "How could I give a ticket to anyone else for an expired license in the future if I didn't cite myself?" Baarz asked.

In a number of languages it would be entirely misleading to speak of 'a guilty conscience,' for this would seem to imply that there is something sinful about the conscience itself. In reality, it is the conscience that says that a person is guilty, and therefore it may be necessary to translate Heb10:22 as 'with hearts that have been purified from a condition in which their conscience has said that they are guilty.'

There is a treasure you can own
That's greater than a crown or throne;
This treasure is a conscience clear
That brings the sweetest peace and cheer. --Isenhour

See 1Pe 3:19 where Peter is encouraging the believers who are suffering (or will soon go thru a fiery trial) with the doctrinal truth that "baptism now saves you" and he equates this "baptism" not with water baptism of Christianity or ritual Jewish baptismal washing for "purification" but with the obtaining of a "good conscience". And in these verses in Hebrews we see the only way one can obtain a clean conscience is by having one's heart sprinkled (with the blood of Jesus) (1Pe1:2) representing the blood of the New Covenant in which the unregenerate person is born from above and receives a new heart (with a new conscience).

A Clear Conscience - In 1971 he killed a man. Even though he was the prime suspect in the murder, no one could prove it and the case was abandoned. So, he got away with it. Or did he? Nearly three decades later, in failing health and living in a nursing home, he confessed to the crime. A detective who headed the original investigation said, "He was looking over his shoulder for the last 26 years, not only for the law, but for his Maker. I think he wants to clear his conscience before he meets his Maker--or try to at least."

How's your conscience today? Clear or clouded? What would it take to be ready to meet your Maker? How can you be made clean? It may seem strange to speak of blood as a cleansing agent, but that's how the Bible connects the death of Jesus on the cross to our standing before God (Heb. 10:19). Christ shed His blood so that we might be forgiven and made clean inside. Because of what He has done, we can have a clear conscience and "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (v.22). No matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus Christ can give you a clear conscience. Why not confess your sin and make things right with your Maker today. --D C McCasland

Now in His mercy He waits to impart
Peace to the conscience and joy to the heart,
Waits to be gracious, to pardon and heal
All who their guilt and their sinfulness feel. --Anon.

A clear conscience is a soft pillow.

The 50-Year Desire -- Years ago I was standing by the deathbed of an old minister down in Alabama. The old man had been a preacher for fifty years. I saw his son, who also was a minister, kneel by his father's bed. "Father, you have preached for fifty years, and have done more good than any man I know." The old man, with feeble but distinct voice, said: "Don't tell me about that, son. Tell me about the blood of Jesus. Nothing but the blood of Jesus will do for a dying man." If a man who had preached for fifty years and who had lived a pure, straight life, in his dying hour had to rely upon the blood of Jesus Christ, don't you ever think there is any hope for you aside from this atoning blood?

Example of conscience that cannot be cleansed: Albert Speer was once interviewed about his last book on ABC's "Good Morning, America." Speer was the Hitler confidant whose technological genius was credited with keeping Nazi factories humming throughout World War II. In another era he might have been one of the world's industrial giants. He was the only one of twenty-four war criminals tried in Nuremberg who admitted his guilt. Speer spent twenty years in Spandau prison. The interviewer referred to a passage in one of Speer's earlier writings: "You have said the guilt can never be forgiven, or shouldn't be. Do you still feel that way?" The look of pathos on Speer's face was wrenching as he responded, "I served a sentence of twenty years, and I could say, 'I'm a free man, my conscience has been cleared by serving the whole time as punishment.' But I can't do that. I still carry the burden of what happened to millions of people during Hitler's lifetime, and I can't get rid of it. This new book is part of my atoning, of clearing my conscience." The interviewer pressed the point. "You really don't think you'll be able to clear it totally?" Speer shook his head. "I don't think it will be possible." For thirty-five years Speer had accepted complete responsibility for his crime. His writings were filled with contrition and warnings to others to avoid his moral sin. He desperately sought expiation. All to no avail.

Hebrews 13:19 And I [urge](#) you [all](#) the [more](#) to [do this](#), [so](#) that I may be [restored](#) to you the [sooner](#) (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: [perissoteros de parakalo](#) (1SPA) [touto poiesai](#) (AAN) [ina tachion apokatastatho](#) (1SAPS) [umin](#).

Amplified: And I beg of you [to pray for us] the more earnestly, in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Phillips: Please pray earnestly that I may be restored to you the sooner. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Be praying for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to be conducting ourselves in a seemly manner. Moreover, I beg of you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you more quickly.

Young's Literal: and more abundantly do I call upon you to do this, that more quickly I may be restored to you.

AND I URGE YOU ALL THE MORE TO DO THIS, THAT I MAY BE RESTORED TO YOU THE SOONER: perissoteros de parakalo (1SPA1) touto poiesai (AAN) hina tachion apokatastatho (1SAPS) humin:

- Ro 1:10, 1, 12 15:31,32 Philemon 1:22
- Hebrews 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Urge ([3870](#)) (**parakaleo** [word study] from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** [word study] = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry.

The **present tense** pictures this urging as continual and suggest the writer's sensitivity to his continual need for the prayers of the saints. May his tribe increase! **If you are a leader, do not hesitate to ask for the prayers of those you are leading. Surely you will both benefit therefrom.**

Kent Hughes illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example - I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside **encouraging**....[exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use. ([R. Kent Hughes Hebrews- An Anchor for the Soul, Volume 2](#))

Encourage one another - Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative

Because a person can be called alongside for many purposes, **parakaleo** has a wide range of meanings as determined by the context -- to entreat, to appeal to, to summon, to comfort, to exhort, or to encourage. Despite the fact that **parakaleo** can convey a wide range of meanings most Bible versions translate this verb with either **exhort** or **urge**.

In English **exhort** (from Latin *exhortari* from *ex-* = thoroughly + *hortari* = to excite, encourage, urge) means to urge or persuade someone earnestly; advise strongly. To give warnings or advice. To make urgent appeals.

In English to **urge** (from Latin *urgere* = to press or drive) means to strongly recommend, to entreat earnestly to do something, to encourage someone to continue. To advocate or recommend earnestly and persistently; plead or insist. To press or impel to action, effort, or speed. Synonyms include egg (on), exhort, goad, prick, prod, prompt, propel, sic, spur.

The idea of **encourage** is also present in the verb **parakaleo**. Note that the English word "encourage" means "with heart" or to hearten (to spur on, to stimulate). To encourage in a sense is to give them new heart. Shallow sympathy makes people feel worse but true spiritual encouragement brings out the best in people and spurs them onward which is what Paul sought to do in this verse.

In classic Greek **parakaleo** was used to exhort troops about to go into battle which is apropos as Paul proceeds in the following verses with a call to sexual purity! No one reading this has ever "battled" with this enemy I'm sure! I'm being sarcastic. A Greek historian recorded the struggle of a military regiment which had lost heart and was utterly dejected. The general sent a leader to come alongside these downcast troops in such a way that their courage was reborn and a body of dispirited men became fit for heroic action! So if you have been defeated in the area of sexual purity, don't give up but allow the apostle's timeless words come alongside your spirit and lift you up to fight the good fight of faith.

All the more ([4053](#)) (**perissos** from **peri** = around) means first that which encircles a thing and then that which is in excess or over and above. And thus perissos means more than enough, superabundant (in quantity), superior (in quality). It can convey the idea of that which is not ordinarily encountered.

To do this - Pray for the writer. **Vine** adds that "this demonstrates faith in the power of prayer to hasten matters where, humanly

speaking, the circumstances may seem to prevent the possibility."

That I may be restored to you soon - The fact that the writer wants to be restored indicates that he had once worked among them.

That ([hina](#)) - Always pause and ponder this strategic **term of purpose or result**.

Restored ([600](#))(**apokathistemi** from **apo** = from + **kathistemi** = to set in order, appoint) means literally to restore to an earlier condition. Meanings include to restore, to give or bring back, to reinstate. To return to a former condition, place or position. **Apokathistemi** in secular Greek was a medical technical term for restoring to health (to cure) (Mt 12:13, Mk 3:5, 8:5, Lk 6:10) In Mt 17:11 and Mk 9:12 Jesus told His disciples that "Elijah is coming and will restore all things." (see comments below).

BDAG - (1). to change to an earlier good state or condition = restore, reestablish. (2) to return someone to a former place or relationship = bring back, give back, restore (Heb 13:19).

TDNT - "To restore," then **1.** "to return" (e.g., something borrowed), **2.** "to restore" **a.** buildings etc., **b.** middle "to heal," e.g., lepers in Ex. 4:7, **c.** "to renew the world," **d.** "to reconstitute," e.g., a kingdom. The Biblical and Messianic usage derives from **2d** (and **2c**). The term is used for God's restoring of Israel to its land (Jer. 16:15; Hos. 11:11). This comes to be understood **Messianically** and **eschatologically**, but inner restitution is also required (Am. 5:15), (Mal 4:6 is) effected by the returning Elijah (Mal. 4:5). From the Aramaic for effecting a turn, or returning, the Samaritan Messiah derives the name Taheb. The originally political sense of the term may be seen in the disciples' question in Acts 1:6. The answer accepts the expectation but denies its political significance. Elsewhere in the NT the verb relates to the forerunner (the Baptist) rather than the Messiah (cf. Mk. 9:12; 8:28; Mt. 11:10; Jn. 1:21). The "all things" of Mk. 9:12 is to be interpreted in terms of the Baptist's mission.

In Ge 29:3 **apokathistemi** is used literally to "put the stone ("restore" it) back in its place. Of Nebuchadnezzar's reason being restored (Da 4:36). Of Pharaoh **restoring** Joseph to his office (Ge 40:13, 41:13). In Ex 4:7 **apokathistemi** refers to Moses leprosy hand "**restored** like the rest of his flesh." (cf similar sense in Lev 13:16) In Ex 14:26-27 **apokathistemi** refers to the Red Sea returning (being restored) to its normal state in symphony with Moses outstretched hand. In Nu 35:25 **apokathistemi** refers to **restoration** of the manslayer "to his city of refuge to which he fled." David promised Mephibosheth he would **restore** to you all the land of your grandfather Saul." (2Sa 9:7) In Job 5:18 it means to restore a man after afflicting him with pain. In Mal 4:6 the phrase "He will **restore** (**apokathistemi**) the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" conveys the idea that he is encouraging both the younger and older generations of sinful society to repent and return to the LORD.

Apokathistemi is an important word in the Lxx where it functions as a technical term for the restoration of Israel and is used with that meaning by the disciples in Acts 1:6. **Constable** explains that "In the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, the term "**restoration**" (Gr. **apokathistemi**) technically refers to God's political restoration of Israel (Ps 16:5; Jer 15:19; Jer 16:15; Jer 23:8; 24:6, Ezek 16:55; Ezek 17:23; Hosea 11:11). [Note: J. Carroll, Response to the End of History, p. 146, footnote 124.] The Gentiles had taken the Jews' kingdom from them dating from Nebuchadnezzar's conquest in 586 B.C. Clearly the messianic kingdom is in view here. [Note: See Darrell L. Bock, "Evidence from Acts," in A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus, pp. 187-88; and Ladd, p. 1125.] "In the book of Acts, both Israel and the church exist simultaneously. The term **Israel** is used twenty times and ekklesia (church) nineteen times, yet the two groups are always kept **distinct**." ([Acts 1 Commentary](#))

Apokathistemi - 8x in 8v - NAS Usage: restore(2), restored(5), restoring(1).

Matthew 12:13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was **restored** to normal, like the other.

Matthew 17:11 And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will **restore** all things (Context - read Mt 17:12);

Warren Wiersbe: As Jesus and His three disciples came down from the mountaintop, He cautioned them not to reveal what they had seen (Transfiguration), not even to the other nine disciples. But the three men were still perplexed. They had been taught that **Elijah** would come first to prepare for the establishing of the kingdom. Was the presence of **Elijah** on the mountain the fulfillment of this prophecy? (Mal. 4:5–6 **note**) Jesus gave a twofold answer to their question. Yes, **Elijah** would come as Malachi 4:5–6 promised. But spiritually speaking, **Elijah** already came in the person of **John the Baptist** (see Mt. 11:10–15; Lk 1:17). The nation permitted John to be killed, and would ask for Jesus to be slain. Yet God's program would be fulfilled in spite of the deeds of sinful leaders. **When will Elijah come to restore all things?** Some people believe that Elijah will be one of the "**two witnesses**" whose ministry is described in Revelation 11:3-**note (includes detailed chart analysis)** Others believe that the prophecy was fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist so that there will be no future coming of Elijah.

Mark 3:5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man,

"Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was **restored**.

Mark 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was **restored**, and began to see everything clearly.

Mark 9:12 And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and **restore** all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Luke 6:10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was **restored**.

Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are **restoring** the kingdom to Israel?"

ESV Study Bible Note: The place of the disciples' assembly was the **Mount of Olives** (Acts 1:12), at the foot of which lay Bethany (Luke 24:50). The disciples asked Jesus when he would restore the kingdom to Israel because they concluded from his resurrection and the promise of the Spirit that the **Messianic era** had dawned and the final salvation of Israel was imminent. However, they were probably still expecting the restoration of a military and political kingdom that would drive out the Roman armies and restore national sovereignty to Israel, as had happened numerous times in the OT. Jesus corrected them, not by rejecting the question, but by telling them (Acts 1:8-note) that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, not in order to triumph over Roman armies but to spread the good news of the gospel throughout the world. In other words, the return is in God's timing; in the meantime, there are other key things believers are to do.

Hebrews 13:19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be **restored** to you the sooner.

Apokathistemi - 32 verses in Septuagint -

Genesis 23:16 Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard.

Genesis 29:3 When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

Genesis 40:13 within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer.

21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand;

Genesis 41:13 "And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him."

Exodus 4:7 Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

Exodus 14:26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen."

27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Leviticus 13:16 "Or if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest,

Numbers 35:25 "The congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the blood avenger, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

2 Samuel 9:7 David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly."

Job 5:18 "For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.

Job 8:6 If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate.

Job 22:28 "You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways.

Job 33:25 Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor;

Psalms 16:5 The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot (LXE = "thou art he that **restores** my inheritance to me.").

Psalms 35:17 Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, My only life from the lions.

Isaiah 23:17 It will come about at the end of seventy years that the LORD will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

Jeremiah 15:19 Therefore, thus says the LORD, "If you return, then I **will restore** you (Ed: This will happen at the end of the age when Messiah returns all Ro 11:26-27 is fulfilled, where "all Israel" = all that believe!)- Before Me you will stand; And if you extract the precious from the worthless, You will become My spokesman. They for their part may turn to you, But as for you, you must not turn to them.

Jeremiah 16:15 but, 'As the LORD lives (Ed: Notice that Jehovah bases the sure fulfillment on His eternity!), who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.' For I **will restore** them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.

Jeremiah 23:8 but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own soil (LXE = "and has **restored** them into their own land.')

Jeremiah 24:6 'For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land (LXE = "and I **will restore** them into this land for good"); and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.

Jeremiah 47:6 "Ah, sword of the LORD, How long will you not be quiet? Withdraw into your sheath; Be at rest and stay still.

Jeremiah 50:19 'And I will bring Israel back to his pasture (LXE = I **will restore** Israel to his pasture,) and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.

Ezekiel 16:55 "Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state (LXE: shall be **restored** as they were at the beginning), and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.

Ezekiel 17:23 "On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a stately cedar. And birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches (LXE = its branches shall be **restored**.).

Daniel 4:1-note Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!

36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.

Hosea 2:3 Or I will strip her naked And expose her as on the day when she was born (LXE = and **make her again** as she was at the day of her birth:). I will also make her like a wilderness, Make her like desert land And slay her with thirst.

Hosea 11:11 They will come trembling like birds from Egypt And like doves from the land of Assyria; And I will settle them in their houses, declares the LORD (LXE = I **will restore** them to their houses, saith the Lord).

Amos 5:15 Hate evil, love good, And establish justice in the gate! Perhaps the LORD God of hosts May be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Malachi 4:6-note "He **will restore** the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Ed: The idea is he encourages both the younger and older generations of sinful society to repent and return to the LORD), so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Spurgeon - We may, indeed, even with tears appeal to you who are our brothers in Christ, and entreat you to be earnest in your supplications to God on our behalf. What can we do without your prayers? They link us with the omnipotence of God. Like the lightning rod, they pierce the clouds and bring down the mighty and mysterious power from on high.

Guzik makes an interesting point writing that "As far as the writer to the Hebrews is concerned, their prayers will determine if and when he is reunited with them. This shows how seriously he regarded their prayers for him. ([Hebrews 13 Commentary](#))

Steven Cole writes that "The author asks them to pray **all the more**, so that he **may be restored** to them **the sooner** (He 13:19). We don't know what the situation was that kept him from visiting them, but it was beyond his control. It could have been a health problem, or something else. Perhaps his critics in the Hebrew church were saying, "If he really cared about you, he would have visited here personally by now!" I find that critics often judge the because he does not have the gift of omnipresence! But the author's heart was to visit them, and so he asks them to pray. His request shows that God is bigger than any circumstance we face, and that prayer is our means of laying hold of God's power. Prayer is not just a polite gesture that shows brotherly concern. God has ordained prayer as one of the ways that He pours out His power and blessing on His people. Prayer shows us that we are not competent people who just need a little boost from God now and then. We are totally inadequate, unless He works, and He has chosen to work through our prayers. If more people prayed more regularly for their pastors, maybe there would be fewer church splits and fewer people leaving churches over petty matters. ([Hebrews 13:17-19, 22-25 Your Duties Toward Church Leaders](#))