



## Discussion Guide for April 9th – Pursuing The Best In Life

**Read Hebrews 13. Listen to the April 9th Parkside Sermon if you have not had opportunity to hear it. The author of this letter sums things up with very practical commands as to what pursuing God's purpose looks like in everyday life.**

### Hebrews 13

*Let love of the brethren continue. <sup>2</sup>Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*

How often do you host people, other than your family, in your home? Do you have a favorite "hosting" technique? Favorite food to serve? What room in your home is best for entertaining guests? Have you ever had an unexpected blessing come from opening your home to someone you know – or perhaps to someone who was unknown to you?

*<sup>3</sup>Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.*

(CNN)The year 2015 was the most violent for Christians in modern history, rising to "a level akin to ethnic cleansing," according to a new report by [Open Doors USA](http://www.opendoorsusa.org), a watchdog group that advocates for Christians. Over 7,100 Christians were killed for faith-related reasons. Take some moments to pray for the plight of persecuted Christians around the world.

*<sup>4</sup>Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.* The Pew Research Center recently found that about 40 percent of unmarried adults believe that marriage is becoming obsolete. While marriage is in decline, unmarried cohabitation is on the rise. Fifteen times the number of couples today live together outside of marriage than in 1960. Almost half of cohabiting households include children. [http://uvamagazine.org/articles/the\\_marriage\\_crisis](http://uvamagazine.org/articles/the_marriage_crisis) If you are married, what are some insights you have gained as to how to protect and nurture your relationship with your spouse? If you aren't married, but would like to be some day, what hopes, dreams or concerns do you have about that in light of what God says here? What advice concerning marital longevity would you give to young married couples just starting out?

*<sup>5</sup>Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," <sup>6</sup>so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"* Where do you fall on a "contentment scale", 1 being dissatisfied, and 10 being totally okay with financial circumstances. Do you find it hard to trust God in the area of your finances? Are there times when you have trusted Him, and found him worthy of that trust?

*<sup>7</sup>Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup>Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and*

today and forever. Who is the Christian role model that you look to most as your example of what it looks like to follow Christ?

*<sup>11</sup>For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup>Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. <sup>13</sup>So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. <sup>14</sup>For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.*

As we approach the weekend that marks the time of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, we see that the author points out the location of Christ's sacrifice – "outside the camp." As any common criminal of that day would have been, Christ was crucified outside the city gates of Jerusalem, and buried there as well. Christ is obviously no common criminal, but he was willing to suffer the fate of one in order to save us from the guilt of our sin. Share among yourselves what the death of Christ on your behalf has come to mean to you.

*<sup>15</sup>Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. As you consider your thoughts related to Christ's death, perhaps they prompt some words of praise that you would like to express in a time of prayer together – or perhaps a song.*

And this then can lead to the very fitting benediction that the author offers at the close of his letter. Perhaps you could read this together in unison to close your time of sharing.

*<sup>20</sup>Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, <sup>21</sup>equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*