Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Hebrews 13:7

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

> *“Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.”*
> *(Hebrews 13:7)*

Near the end of his letter, Paul gave the Hebrew Christians some final counsel about life in the congregation. The main point is that Jehovah guides his people through faithful men who take the lead, and we benefit when we appreciate them, follow their direction, and copy their faith. The day’s text shows that this has always been Jehovah’s way: in the first century, congregations that obeyed the direction from the elders in Jerus-

alem “continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.” (Acts 16:5)

1 “Remember”: More Than a Passing Thought (*μνημονεύω, mnemoneuo*)

The Greek word μνημονεύω (*mnemoneuo*) means to remember, to be mindful of, or to keep someone in mind. Paul was not asking for a quick thought now and then. He wanted the Hebrew Christians to think deeply about the faithful men who worked hard for them, and that kind of remembering leads to action.

Paul said something similar to the Thessalonians: “We request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working

hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you." (1 Thessalonians 5:12)

- Remembering the elders means noticing their hard work, thanking them, and supporting them.

2 "Taking the Lead": Shepherds, Not Bosses (*ἡγέομαι, hegeomai*)

The verb ἡγέομαι (*hegeomai*) can mean to go before, to guide, or to lead the way. The New World Translation renders it "those who are taking the lead" rather than "your leaders," because Christian elders are not meant to dominate others. Jesus used the same word when he said: "Let the one who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one taking the lead as the one ministering." (Luke 22:26)

That is why Jehovah's organization runs in an orderly way, "for God is a God not of disorder but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33) In the first century, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each congregation, and the apostles and elders in Jerusalem made decisions that all the congregations followed. (Acts 14:23; 16:4)

- Those taking the lead are humble servants, and following their direction brings order and peace.

3 "Contemplate": Look Closely, Then Imitate (*ἀναθεωρέω, anatheoreo*)

The word ἀναθεωρέω (*anatheoreo*) means to look at something carefully, to examine it and give it careful thought. Paul wanted the Christians to study how faithful men lived and how their lives turned out. Their faithful course proved that their faith was real and worth copying.

Notice that Paul said to imitate “their faith,” not their personalities. Paul himself said: “Become imitators of me, just as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1) Even the best elders are imperfect, but their trust in Jehovah, their endurance, and their zeal are qualities we can copy.

- Watching the faith of others can strengthen our own faith and help us keep going.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Showing Appreciation:** When did I last thank an elder for his hard work, and how could I make his load lighter this week? (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17)
- **Following Direction:** When I receive direction from Jehovah’s organization, do I follow it willingly, trusting that Jehovah is guiding his people? (Acts 16:4, 5)

- **Imitating Faith:** Whose faith in my congregation do I admire, and what is one thing I can copy from that person's example? (1 Corinthians 11:1)