

Hebrews 13:15-16

The primary focus of the book of Hebrews is not primarily the believer's justification, rather it is the Christian being brought into the joyful community who are worshipping and praising God, Christ, Himself, leading this worship.

Consequently, in the light of all that author of Hebrews has said about the person and work of Jesus, he concludes: **Heb 10:19–22** “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain . . . and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”

The Christian life is all about drawing near to God “through Jesus” and living sacrificially unto Him, offering a sacrifice of praise (**Heb 13:15a**).

It is for this that believers are saved, to live sacrificially unto him, to offer a lifestyle of worship, for the glory of his name and for the blessing of others.

All of life is religious, involving the worship of one god or another (**Col 3:17**).

Summary

In Hebrews 13:15-16, the author exhorts believers, “through Jesus then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,” applying this to our words and practical deeds.

1. Manner of Speech vs. 15b

When Paul spoke to the Romans of the lives of Christians being offered as living sacrifices, he went on to make the general statement that we are to live in a godly rather than a worldly manner (**Rom. 12:2**). The author of Hebrews focuses this specifically on the way Christians speak (**Heb. 13:15b**).

We are to praise God and profess the Christian faith with our lips.

This includes our whole manner of speaking.

Through our speech, our whole attitude is revealed (**Matt. 12:34; Rom. 3:13-14**).

Some of the worst sins committed against God are committed by the tongue.

Some of the greatest harm done to other people is done by the tongue (**James 3:6, 8**).

Heb 13:15 uses the expression “the fruit of lips” (c.f. **Hosea 14:2**).

The obvious reference is to sacrificial offerings, and our lips are seen as altars upon which our hearts give worship to the Lord.

2. Goodness of Sharing vs. 16

Heb 13:16 turns to practical deeds of love and kindness, and especially to generosity with our material wealth.

This includes an eagerness to act kindly toward others, and to work for the spiritual and temporal benefit of other people. It especially speaks of a readiness to show generosity to those in need, to give freely of our wealth because we know that this pleases and glorifies God, and because we love others more than our money.

False religion is always exposed by its attitude toward possessions (**Matt. 6:24; James 1:27**).

This is not works-righteousness, but the true and spiritual worship that God demands all through the Bible.

The prophet Micah also dealt with this contrast between external religion and true religion. Micah asked, “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?” To this the prophet replied, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (**Mic. 6:6–8**).

We see from this how practical true spiritual worship is.

“Money is an area that tests the authenticity of our devotion to God. The heart that is too close to the back pocket is out of place and grows numb to the good gifts and provisions of God. [Our use of money] provides an arena in which great spiritual vitality can be grown and demonstrated.”

It is only when the heart has been weaned from the world and drawn close to God that we can use our money as an instrument of sacrificial worship and service.

Ultimately, it is for God that we seek to live like this, since such true spiritual worship will often go unnoticed and unheralded in the world and even in the church.

It is God we serve when we minister to others, and put their well-being ahead of our own financial gain.

In the context of financial pressures and temptations our godly use of money will teach our families what it is to trust the Lord, whilst also revealing to God the fervency of our own trust and devotion.

We cannot do any of this in our own strength.

It can only be done through Christ (**Heb 13:16-16; Rom 6:3-4; 12-14**).