

A sermon "Love in Action"
From Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Preached at Plymouth Presbyterian Church
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If you could win an Olympic medal, which would you prefer—silver or bronze? The answer seems obvious. Silver is higher than bronze. But psychologists discovered something surprising: bronze medalists are usually happier than silver medalists. The bronze winner is simply grateful to be on the podium at all. The silver winner feels the sting of missing first.

Kent Crockett, in his book *I Once Was Blind but Now I Squint* (2004) sums it up: "What happens to you isn't nearly as important as how you perceive what happens to you."

That's the wisdom of Hebrews 13. It gives us a formula for a winning life—three simple steps: keep loving, keep living, keep trusting.

1. Keep Loving

"Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:1-2)

Love is more than sentiment—it's action. It's hospitality, compassion, care. It's seeing people not as problems but as neighbors.

I think of Jack, a businessman who treated CEOs and convenience store clerks with equal dignity. He mentored young people, volunteered with the homeless, and never spoke a harsh word. When he died, the church overflowed because he had touched so many lives. Jack kept on loving.

The Bible points to Abraham, who welcomed three strangers into his tent, only to discover they were God's messengers. His kindness led to blessing. Love in action has a way of multiplying like that.

2. Keep Living

The Hebrews 13 adds: "Marriage should be honored by all... Keep your lives free from the love of money." (13:4-5) In other words: live with integrity.

Society often excuses shortcuts. A mother once defended her son's cheating at school: "Everyone does it. If he doesn't cheat, he won't get into a good college." But would you trust the surgeon who cheated through medical school? Or the contractor who cut corners on the bridge you drive across?

God's commands aren't arbitrary rules. They keep us grounded, trustworthy, fully human. A winning life is one lived with integrity.

3. Keep Trusting

Finally: “Be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (vs. 5b)

Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe tells of a man shipwrecked for 28 years. Alone and despairing, he opened a battered Bible and read those words: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Crusoe realized that even in isolation he was not abandoned.

Faith is our parachute. Without it, life feels like free fall. With it, we can face hardship, loss, even fear—because God will not let us go.

Conclusion So there is a formula for life at its best:

Keep on loving—friends, neighbors, strangers, even enemies.

Keep on living—with integrity, in step with God’s commands.

Keep on trusting—for Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That’s love in action. That, my friends, is gold in God’s eyes.