

Hebrews 13:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. The author requests prayer, demonstrating humility and interdependence in Christ's body. 'Pray for us' (proseuchesthe peri hēmōn, προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν) acknowledges that even mature Christian leaders need others' prayers. No believer is self-sufficient; we all depend on corporate intercession and divine grace. This models appropriate pastoral humility rather than spiritual pride.

The motivation, 'we trust we have a good conscience' (peithometha gar hoti kalēn syneidēsin echomen), indicates the author's confidence in ministerial integrity. A 'good conscience' means clear awareness of right standing before God through faithful conduct. The phrase 'willing to live honestly' (en pasin kalōs thelontes anastrephesthai, 'in all things desiring to conduct ourselves honorably') affirms commitment to ethical living in all areas, not merely religious matters.

This teaches that ministry effectiveness requires both clear conscience and intercessory support. Leaders must maintain integrity before God and people, living honorably in all circumstances. But even with good conscience, they need others' prayers. Reformed theology rejects both pastoral authoritarianism (leaders lording over flock) and individualism (leaders functioning independently). Healthy churches feature mutual interdependence—members supporting leaders through prayer, leaders serving members through teaching and example. Paul similarly requested prayer (Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25).

Historical Context

The author's request for prayer and assertion of good conscience suggests possible misunderstanding, opposition, or separation from readers. Perhaps the author was imprisoned, traveling, or facing criticism. Early Christian leaders often faced opposition from both external persecutors and internal critics. Maintaining good conscience amid false accusations was crucial. Paul frequently defended his ministry integrity (2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:10). The emphasis on 'honest' living reflects Christian communities' need to maintain reputation amid pagan society quick to criticize. Leaders' conduct directly affected church testimony. First-century context lacked modern communication, making intercessory prayer vital for distant leaders facing trials. The request for prayer fostered spiritual unity despite physical separation.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How faithfully are you praying for Christian leaders, recognizing their dependence on corporate intercession?
2. What does 'good conscience' mean for your own life and ministry, and how do you maintain integrity in all areas?
3. In what ways do you balance confidence in your integrity with humble dependence on others' prayer support?

Interlinear Text

Προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν· πεποίθαμεν γὰρ ὅτι καλὴν

Pray for us we trust for G3754 a good
G4336 G4012 G2257 G3982 G1063 G2570

συνείδησιν ἔχομεν ἐν πᾶσιν καλῶς θέλοντες

conscience we have in all things honestly willing
G4893 G2192 G1722 G3956 G2573 G2309

ἀναστρέφεσθαι

to live

G390

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 5:25 (Prayer): Brethren, pray for us.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 (Prayer): Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

Colossians 4:3 (Prayer): Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

Romans 15:30 (Prayer): Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

1 Timothy 1:5 (Faith): Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

Acts 24:16 (Parallel theme): And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Acts 23:1 (Good): And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

1 Thessalonians 4:12 (Parallel theme): That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

1 Peter 3:16 (Good): Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

1 Peter 3:21 (Good): The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

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