

Philadelphia (Brotherly Kindness)
Welcome to Harvest Community Church
Series: Epic Faith
Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7, 1 Peter 2:17

In the divine process of growth what comes next after we add to our faith godliness is brotherly kindness or brotherly love. The mark of a true disciple is not just the love we have for the world in general but the love we have for each other in the family of God. **John 13:34-35** Loving those within the faith, and the way we demonstrate our love to them is an essential part of our growth process.

In our text verse in 1 Peter the word for love is the Greek word “phileo”. This word speaks to the type of pure love that is shown to family and close friends. Phileo love is not a lesser love than agape it is agape applied in close relationship. There is a special love that we have for our immediate family and that is the kind of love that we are to have for fellow Christians because as children of God we are family. Do you realize that other Christians are truly family? Do you love your fellow believers? The Bible calls God our Father and we are known as brothers and sisters in Christ. Until you become Godly you cannot add brotherly love or kindness to your faith.

Brotherly love / brotherly kindness involves three ideas:

- Our feelings of fondness and affection for our brothers and sisters in Christ. There is not room for indifference here.
- The way we treat our spiritual family. Kindness, honor, respect, preference.
- Our devotion and loyalty to those that we love. **Romans 12:9-17**
One of the best examples of this type of love is the affection that David had for Jonathan.
1 Samuel 18:1, 20:17

Like many families, this type of love does not come easy. Sometimes it seems that it is easier to love people in the world than it is to love people in the church. The reason for that is we have higher expectations of family. They should know better. As members of the body of Christ we have to love each other genuinely. We do this not just for other people’s sake but for our own as well. If we want to experience the divine growth process then we can’t do it by ourselves. As a matter of fact there are over thirty commands in the Bible that we cannot obey by ourselves. There are 59 "one another" scriptures in the Bible. We are better together.

God uses our natural family and our spiritual family to bring out our best and to deal with our worst. We celebrate together, grow together, fail together, get back up together, struggle together, learn together and encourage one another. **Proverbs 27:17** We cannot effectively love the world unless we fully learn to love the family of God. It is within the realm of family that we learn what love is and how to express it. It is also how we know that we love God and that His love is in us.

1 John 4:7-8, 12, 20-21

Insights to brotherly love:

- We are to love others like we love ourselves. **Mark 12:30-31**
Jonathan loved David like he was his own soul. If we do not love ourselves we probably do not really love others. This will clearly be seen in family and can be healed in the context of family.
- We are to treat others like we would like to be treated. **Matthew 7:12**
- Realize that what most people desire is kindness. **Proverbs 19:22, Colossians 3:12-13**
- Like Jesus we are to be moved with compassion for people and not annoyed at their brokenness.
Matthew 9:36, 1 Peter 3:8-9

- We are to treat people tenderly and be forgiving. **Ephesians 4:31-32**
- We are to love those that are hard to love. **Matt. 5:46-48, Luke 6:32-36, Rom. 12:19-21**
- Move beyond selfishness. **Philippians 2:4**

Three ways to grow in our love for others:

- 1) Develop an abundance mentality. There are two ways to view people. The first is with a scarcity (lack) mentality the other is with the abundance mentality.
The scarcity mentality looks at life this way: If something good happens to someone else, it takes something away from me. There are only so many pieces of the pie and if your slice is bigger, then mine is smaller. When someone does well or gets a promotion, receives recognition or has a significant blessing happen in their life we are to truly be happy for them instead of feeling jealousy, defeat or anger. When we see someone going through a difficult time brotherly kindness doesn't think "better than me", it comes along side to encourage, uphold and console.

Jesus doesn't live in scarcity but abundance. The abundance mentality is the truth that with God there is more than enough to go around. Someone else's more does not mean that we are less. This allows us to truly do life together as family should. **Rom. 12:15-17** It is impossible to live and love the way that Jesus does when you are worried that there isn't enough to go around. This creates an attitude of competition, this does not breed love. Trying to have the upper hand doesn't look anything like Jesus. In order to love each other well we must believe that there is enough love, grace, blessing and opportunity to go around. God isn't busy spoiling other children while allowing our prayers to go unanswered. Someone else's abundance does not mean our lack.
- 2) Develop an appreciation for unity. This runs counter to our culture that is all about the individual. The Kingdom of God is family centered and Kingdom minded.
John 17:11 & 20-23, 1 Cor. 12:1-14,18-20,26-27 Unity was and is still important to Jesus.

One of the things that make for unity is keeping truth the truth and refusing to be divided over opinions and preferences. (This includes political leanings that are not clear in scripture) It is fine to have opinions but we must never elevate our opinions to sacred truth. Too often we are butting heads over things that really don't matter and brotherly kindness becomes an afterthought. **Acts 15:1-29**
We need to be clear on things that really matter, our sacred truths, instead of making enemies and being divided on things that don't matter.

We need to focus on our common calling to follow Christ., All of us have gifts, talents abilities and quirks that make us unique. ,Instead of idolizing our differences let's recognize what we all have in common. Without an appreciation for unity, we will have no motivation for unity because it does not come naturally.
- 3) We must experience the love of Christ fully. In order to love each other we need a revelation of the love of God. The connection between His love for us and our love for each other is tether that binds us together. **John 13:34-35** The commandment to love one another means nothing apart from the phrase "as I have loved you". Until we have experienced God's love first, we cannot share it with someone else. The love of God is not a nice philosophy but true reality. How deeply have you let the sacrificial, undeserved, extravagant love of God infiltrate your heart and soul?

Our health and spiritual growth are dependent on our ability to relate to one another in love. It is not a matter of working harder and being nicer to each other. God teaches us to love and how to show kindness in a way that impacts each of our lives. **1 Thess. 4:9**