

Brotherly Love

Introduction:

1. In our study of I Corinthians 1:1-18 this morning, we encountered Paul's exhortation to unity (I Cor 1:10).
 2. In my recent time away to seek the Lord's face, I was convicted that this subject must be taught again.
 3. We have entered into a church covenant for 2004, in which we have committed to enhance our relationships.
 4. The religion of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament, stresses loving the brethren above all else.
 5. What began as the second great commandment is followed with many dozens of texts in the New Testament.
 6. But this particular study will be short and succinct, for God is able to bless a concise reminder as well.
 7. The power of the Holy Spirit in our church and our usefulness to God depends on love of one another.
 8. A church has a variety of members, all sinners, who must modify conduct and forgive in order to get along.
 9. Much has been preached on this subject, so there is an abundance of further study material for any seeking it.
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1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of loving the brethren in Jesus Christ (I Thess 4:9-10).
 - A. Love is taught by God in the work of regeneration, which gives us a new man in righteousness.
 - B. Though the Thessalonians were proficient at it, the apostle urged them on to more and more.
 2. Loving and forgiving one another in Christian charity is the bond of perfectness (Col 3:12-15).
 - A. The elect of God are to put on this bond of perfectness more than anything else in context.
 - B. Consider the wonderful nouns and adjectives used here to describe our treatment of others.
 - C. Here is a marvelous text, plainly and powerfully stating our duty, which we all must put on.
 3. The more excellent way of serving Jesus is charity toward each other (I Cor 12:31 – 13:13; 16:14).
 - A. After ranking the gifts in the church, Paul says there is a better way to serve Christ (12:28-31).
 - B. Charity toward fellow believers is superior to being an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ! Glory!
 4. The growth and prosperity of our church depends on loving one another (Eph 4:1-3,15-16,31-32).
 - A. Here is a holy endeavor that deserves our diligent attention and effort as saints (4:1-3).
 - B. The growth of a church is by that love that each member contributes to the whole (4:15-16).
 - C. The apostle condemns destructive elements and commends constructive elements (4:31-32).
 5. The good life awaits those individuals who will mercifully love others (I Peter 3:8-12).
 - A. You can inherit a blessing by having compassionate care of your brethren in Christ (3:8-9).
 - B. The good life depends on being a righteous peacemaker and peace seeker (3:10-11).
 - C. The holy and just God will turn His face against those who persist in bitter conduct (3:12).
 6. Hatred of your brother is murder, and you prove that you do not have eternal life (I John 3:14-15).
 - A. The greatest evidence of eternal life is the transformation from hatred to love of brethren.
 - B. Hating your brother is not a small matter – it is murder in the sight of God and proof of death.
 7. Great men in the earth can rule their spirits and overlook offences (Pr 16:32; 10:12; 17:9; 19:11).
 - A. A man who can overrule his spirit and not get angry is greater than taking a city himself!
 - B. Great men find glory in deferring their anger (putting it away) and passing over transgressions.
 - C. Hatred is what keeps fights and quarrels going, but love covers all those personal offences.
 8. Do not deceive yourselves – bitter envying and strife in your heart is from the devil (Jas 3:14-16).
 - A. It is easy to justify your anger or envy against another, but you should not lie to yourself.
 - B. Bitterness and envy is from hell, and it is the source of confusion and every evil work.

9. True love includes loving those you think or may actually be your enemies (Matt 5:43-48).
 - A. It is a heresy of Pharisaism that says to love your friends and hate your enemies!
 - B. Your enemies are those persons who have offended you personally. Love them!
 - C. The true children of God manifest themselves here by doing good to their enemies.

10. Paul wrote the excellent church at Philippi and told brothers to settle their differences (Phil 4:2).
 - A. Here is a personal rebuke and exhortation for two individual brothers to settle their differences.
 - B. This shows the importance of the matter, and it shows the need to purify each relationship.

11. Paul told the saints at Corinth that suffering yourself to be defrauded is Christian (I Cor 6:1-8).
 - A. This foolish, carnal church was going to court about matters, rather than letting the church rule.
 - B. But Paul's solution was even simpler – simply suffer the wrong or the defrauding! Ignore it!
 - C. Moses once caught two Israelites fighting, and his solution was the same as Paul's (Acts 7:26).

12. Every member must be fully committed to warning and cutting off backbiting tongues (Pro 25:23).
 - A. It is the duty of each church member to warn the unruly, especially in backbiting and hatred.
 - B. Every member should help every other member be kind and loving to one another. Glory!

Conclusion:

1. For the glory of God and the growth and peace of this church, let us make 2004 a blessed year of charity.
2. We have not yet seen the fullest blessings of God on our church, which await our greater affection and unity.
3. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ bless us with His Spirit to know and do these things, as we ought.