

## **GROWING IN BROTHERLY AFFECTION**

**2 Peter 1:5-7**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The title of this sermon is “Growing in Brotherly Affection.” For the past few weeks we’ve been studying the list of eight virtues in 2 Peter 1:5-7. And today we’re going to study the Christian virtue of brotherly affection.

**2 Peter 1:5-7** “For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with... brotherly affection....”

### **WHAT IS BROTHERLY AFFECTION**

Here’s the definition I want you to remember. **Be especially loving to fellow believers.** The Greek word for “brotherly affection” is *philadelphia*, meaning “love of the Christian brotherhood.” So by brotherly affection the text means show a special love to your Christian family, your brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Bible commands us to love everyone (Matthew 22:39). That’s the very next virtue in this list. But it also commands us to show special love to certain people. Children are to honor their parents (Eph 6:1-3). Parents are to love their children and bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4; Titus 2:4). Husbands are to love, care for, and provide for their wives just as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25-33). Wives are to submit to, and respect, and love their husbands just as the church submits to Christ (Eph 5:22-33; Titus 2:4). I am commanded to love all parents, but I must show a special love to my parents. I am commanded to love all children, but I must show a special love to my own children. I am commanded to love all wives, but I must show a special love to my wife. I must love all people, but I have a special love obligation, a special love responsibility, a special love calling to certain people.

Christians must show special love to fellow believers. **John Calvin** says “brotherly kindness is mutual affection among the children of God.” **Constable** wrote that Philadelphia means “thoughtful consideration of fellow believers. Overt acts of kindness manifest this characteristic (Constable, Thomas. DD. "Commentary on 2 Peter 1:4". "Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable").”

### **WHY SHOW SPECIAL LOVE TO FELLOW BELIEVERS?**

- 1. To adorn the gospel.**

We are called to be God's witnesses, to persuade everyone to believe in Jesus Christ. To make our message more persuasive, must love each other. **John 13:35** "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jesus wants us to be known by our love for one another. That's the reputation He wants us to have. Why? Because when people see how much love one another, they will want to join our family.

## **2. To show love to God.**

The most important commandment in the Bible is to love God. This is our purpose in life. And the best way to love a father is to show kindness to His children.

In John 21 Jesus asked Peter three times in a row, "Do you love me Peter?" Peter answered, "Of course! Of course! Of course!" And Jesus replied, "Then feed my lambs" (John 21:25). Jesus said told Peter that the best way to love God is to love His children.

**1 John 4:21** "And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister."

## **3. To serve God.**

Christians are called to be God's servants. But how do we serve God? By loving His children. God loves His children and promises to care for them (Mt 6:33; Phil 4:19; 1 Peter 5:7). How does God care for His children? His method are His people. When God wants to love His people, He sends His people.

## **4. To inspire others to love us.**

Don't you want other believers to care for you, especially in your time of need? Then you need to love others. Just as David was attracted to Bathsheba because she was very beautiful (2 Sam 11:2), the beauty of your brotherly love will attract others and inspire them to love you in your time of need.

Why do we love God? Because He first loved us. **1 John 4:19** "We love because he first loved us." God's love motivates us to love Him back. When you love others, it will inspire them to return the favor.

## **5. To imitate God.**

As Christians we are called to imitate God in everything we do (Eph 5:1). **1 John 4:8** "God is love." God loves His children. If you want to be godlike, then love His children.

## **6. To confirm that we are saved.**

How can be you sure that you are saved? That your salvation is genuine? One way is by loving fellow believers. That's a mark of true salvation. **1 John 3:14** "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in death."

## **7. Because of their value.**

Consider who our Christian siblings are. They are image bearers of almighty God (Gen 1:27); they are immortal souls that will live for all eternity (Eccl 3:11); they are the objects of God's affection (John 3:16); they are the beneficiaries of the ultimate sacrifice (John 15:13); and as sons and daughters of the King of kings, they are royalty (1 Jn 3:1).

## **8. To foster unity in the church.**

The church is God's vessel to fulfill His mission of reconciling the world to Himself. It's very important that the church function at the highest level. And that means we need to be unified. If we can't get along, then we can't get things done. What is the key to unity? Brotherly love. Love one another. **Colossians 3:14** "Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." **1 Peter 4:8** "Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." The most important ingredient in the casserole of unity is the spice of love. The fire of unity is kept alive by the fuel of love.

## **9. To be obedient.**

As children of God, we must be obedient. We must do what our Father says. And that means we must show brotherly affection to one another. **2 Peter 1:5-7** "For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with... brotherly affection...."

## **10. Because we have so much in common.**

Finally, we should show special love to fellow believers because we have so much in common. We have more in common with fellow believers than with our own family, unless your family members are also believers. Consider the following: We have the same creator (Gen 1:27). We have the same ancestors – Noah and his sons (Gen 9:10). We live by the same code – the Bible (Josh 1:8). We are family. Brotherly affection is not just the pretension of family; we actually are family. Jesus called His followers "brothers and sisters" (Mt 28:10; Heb 2:11). In the New Testament, Christians are often referred to not merely as Christians, disciples, believers, or saints, but as "brothers and sisters" (Acts 1:15). We have the same goal – to love

God and others (Mt 22:37-40). We have the same mission – the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20). We share the same blood – the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Remember the old saying, “Blood is thicker than water.” We have the same Father (Romans 1:7). We belong to the same body of Christ (Rom 12:5). We belong to each other (Rom 12:5, NLT). We share the same Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). We have the same master (1 Cor 6:19). We live in the same household – the church (Gal 6:10). The Greek word for “household” is *oikos*, meaning immediate family. We share the same baptism (Eph 4:4-6). We share the same husband – we are the bride of Christ (Eph 5:25). We are headed to the same destination – heaven (Phil 3:20). We have the same Savior (2 Tim 1:10). We are citizens of the same kingdom (Eph 2:19). We have the same enemy – Satan (1 Peter 5:8). We share the same struggles – persecution, and God’s fatherly discipline (2 Tim 3:12). We have the same faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 12:2). We have more affinity (similarity of characteristics) with other believers than with anyone else in life.

## HOW TO DISPLAY BROTHERLY AFFECTION

### 1. Love other believers as Christ loved us.

**John 13:34-35** “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” We learn how to love other believers by studying and imitating the character of Christ.

Notice that “love one another” is a new command. What is new about it? It is found in the Old Testament. **Leviticus 19:18** “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **Zechariah 7:9** “The Lord of Armies says this: ‘Make fair decisions. Show faithful love and compassion to one another.’” It is new because Jesus gives us a new standard – we are to love each other the same way that Christ loves us. And it is new because Jesus gives us a new object to love – fellow believers.

### 2. Love other believers sacrificially.

**John 15:12-13** “12 “This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” In other words, love each other painfully. We must be willing to sacrifice for our brothers and sisters. Don’t just love others when it is easy, comfortable, convenient; love them even when it hurts. Be willing to suffer for the good of fellow believers. Brotherly love is fall-on-a-grenade-for-each-other kind of love. We must be willing to love so others can gain.

### 3. Love each other deeply.

**Romans 12:10** “Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor.” In other words, love each other intensely, greatly, enormously, extremely, very much,

to a great extent/degree. Brotherly affection is not supposed to be little, small, light, insignificant, inconsequential. It is to be deep, heavy, robust, impactful. Brotherly love is jaw-dropping love, tear-jerking love, heart-wrenching love.

#### **4. Love each other like family.**

**Romans 12:10** “Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters.” The AMP says, “Be devoted to one another with [authentic] brotherly affection [as members of one family].” The CEB says, “Love each other like the members of your family.” The ERV says, “Love each other in a way that makes you feel close like brothers and sisters.” The GTW says, “Be devoted to each other like a loving family.” The HCSB says, “Show family affection to one another.” The Phillips says, “Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers.” Remember, we are not to pretend to be family; are family. We just have to embrace it, and act the part.

#### **5. Love one another especially.**

**Galatians 6:10** “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.” We are called to love everyone, but especially fellow believers. We are to love other believers with a special kind of love. A different kind of love. It is a love that is greater, extra, more, particular, partial.

#### **6. Love one another as we opportunity.**

**Galatians 6:10** “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.” If you will keep your eyes open, you will notice many opportunities to love your fellow believers. Don’t miss those opportunities. Don’t pass up those opportunities. Don’t wait for the perfect opportunity. Just go for it.

#### **7. Love one another by working for the good of other believers.**

**Galatians 6:10** “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.” The way to love your fellow believer is by working for their good. Do what is good for them. Do what is best for them. In other words, love is not doing what makes them feel good, or what makes them look good. Love is not necessarily doing what they want. Love is working for their good. Do what is good and best for them. The AMP translates Gal 6:10, “especially [be a blessing] to those of the household of faith (born-again believers).”

#### **8. Love one another continuously.**

**Hebrews 13:1** “Let brotherly love continue.” The AMPC says, “Let love for your fellow believers continue and be a fixed practice with you [never let it fail].” Don’t just get excited about brotherly love this week because of the sermon. Let it be a fixed practice. Never let it fail. Do not backslide. Keep at it.

#### **9. Love each other by sharing with believers who are in need.**

**Hebrews 13:1-2** “Let brotherly love continue. Don’t neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.” Hospitality means allowing other believers to stay at your house if they are in need of a place to stay. In the first century, many Christians were facing severe persecution, and found themselves refugees and homeless. It was important for other believers to open their homes to one another and help each other.

A more modern application of hospitality is simply to share your material goods with fellow believers who are in need. **Romans 12:1** “Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality.” **1 John 3:17** “If anyone has this world’s goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God’s love reside in him?”

#### **10. Love each other by helping believers who are suffering persecution.**

**Hebrews 13:1, 3** “Let brotherly love continue.... Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.” This is why it is a good thing for our church to partner with Alliance Defending Freedom to help Christians like Jack Phillips, the Christian baker, and Baronelle Stutzman, the Christian florist, who are both suffering persecution.

#### **11. Love each other by helping believers who are being mistreated.**

**Hebrews 13:1, 3** “Let brotherly love continue.... Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.” The world has some very evil, wicked, violent, heartless, people in it. Anytime you see a fellow believer being mistreated, for any reason, go to their aid. Support them. Encourage them. Help them.

#### **12. Love each other by honoring marriage.**

**Hebrews 13:1, 4** “Let brotherly love continue.... Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.” Adultery is a form of murder – marriage murder. But to commit adultery with the spouse of a fellow believer is even worse. To have pre-marital sex is a serious sin, but to have pre-marital

sex with a fellow believer, or with the son or daughter of a fellow believer, is even worse. We must honor each other's marriages.

### **13. Love one another sincerely.**

**1 Peter 1:22 (AMP)** "Since by your obedience to the truth you have purified yourselves for a sincere love of the believers..." The Greek word for "sincere" is *anypokritos*, meaning unfeigned, real, sincere (Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament). In other words, love one another truly, genuinely, not faked; not just in their presence, but in their absence. **1 John 3:18** "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action..." How easy is it to say "I love you"? But our love must be not merely with words, but with actions. Love is a verb. We have to show it.

### **14. Love one another with a pure heart.**

**1 Peter 1:22** "Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly," What does it mean to have a pure heart? It means that not only are your actions pure, but your heart is pure – your thoughts, your motives, and your attitude. We must love other believers with our thoughts. We must not lust after them, or think of ways to hurt them, or cheat them, or get back at them. We must love other believers with our motives. We must not love them to make ourselves look good, or to get something from them. That is what Ananias and Sapphira did. They sold a piece of their property and gave the money to the church not out of love, but because they wanted to be seen as loving. And we must love other believers with our attitude. We must not hate them, or despise them, or envy them, or be angry with them, or be bitter against them.

### **15. Love each other constantly.**

**1 Peter 1:22** "Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly," We must love other believers during the day, and at night; at church and at work; at school and at home; when we are walking, and when we are driving. We are to love fellow believers all year long, not just on special days. Not just on Sunday, but all week long. Not just when we are gathered together, but even when we go our separate ways. We are not to be like the absent father whose only display of love are gifts on birthdays and Christmas. Our love is to be constant, year round.

### **16. Love one another by obeying God's word.**

**1 John 5:2** “This is how we know that we love God’s children: when we love God and obey his commands.” One of the most obvious and easy ways to love other believers is to obey God’s word. Stay away from sin. Pursue holiness, and cultivate the virtues. The most elementary act of love for your fellow believer is to simply obey the Ten Commandments. Honor your parents, avoid adultery, murder, stealing, lying, and coveting. And to get better and better at love, cultivate the virtues – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

### **17. Love one another in truth.**

**1 John 3:18** “Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.” We must not make up our own definition of love. We must not treat people how we want to and call it love. Our love must be true love. Just because you say you love someone, or feel love for someone, does not mean you are actually showing them love. How do we know what love is? From the character and word of God. God is love (1 John 4:8). We love by acting like Him, and by treating people according to the principles and commands in His word.

### **18. Love other believers by one-anothering.**

The New Testament is filled with “one anothers” and “each others” that apply specifically to the relationships between believers. To really get specific about how to love other believers, we need to pay special attention to them. We are commanded to wash one another’s feet (Jn 13:14); love one another (Jn 13:34); honor one another (Rm 12:10); live in harmony with one another (Rm 12:16); build up one another (Rom 14:19); accept one another (1 Cor 12:25); have concern for each other (1 Cor 12:25); Show physical affection to one another. (Romans 16:16 “Greet one another with a holy kiss.”) We must serve one another (Gal 5:13); carry one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2); bear with one another (Eph 4:2); be kind to one another (Eph 4:32); be compassionate to one another (Eph 4:32); forgive one another (Eph 4:32); sing with one another (Eph 5:19); submit to one another (Eph 5:21); teach one another (Col 3:16); admonish one another (Col 3:16); encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11); always pursue what is good for one another (1 Thess 5:15); watch out for one another to provoke love and good works (Heb 10:14); confess your sins to one another (Jas 5:16); pray for one another (Jas 5:16); be hospitable to one another (1 Pet 4:9); and clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (1 Pet 5:5).

We must NOT trample one another (Lk 12:1); betray one another (Mt 24:10); hate one another (Mt 24:10); argue with one another (Mk 9:34); judge one another (Rm 14:13); have legal disputes against one another (1 Cor 6:7); bite and devour one another (Gal 5:15); provoke one another (Gal 5:26); envy one another (Gal 5:26); lie to one another (Col 3:9); detest one another (Titus 3:3); criticize one another (Jas 4:11); or complain about one another (Jas 4:11).



## **HINDRANCES TO BROTHERLY AFFECTION**

The last thing we must do is point out those hindrances to brotherly affection.

### **1. Neglecting church involvement.**

The bible commands us not to neglect gathering with other believers (Heb 10:24-25). Why? Because you cannot meet a need if you cannot see a need. And if you are not regularly gathering and rubbing shoulders with other believers, then you will not be able to see their needs. You will not be able to see all of the opportunities to do good for each other.

### **2. Self-centeredness.**

Self-centeredness and selfishness differ. Selfishness is doing what you want regardless of the negative impact it has on others. "I'm going to do what I want to do, and I don't care what anybody says." But Christians typically are not selfish. However many Christians are self-centered. Self-centeredness is self-absorption. It is when you are so focused on yourself that you don't see the needs of others; you don't even think about others. Samson was so focused on Delilah's beauty that he did not notice her treachery. If we are not careful, we can get so focused on our own goals that we forget God's goals for us. We can get so focused on our desires, that we don't notice the needs of others. Remember that life is not about you; it is about God. And God's purpose is not just for you to be happy, but to love Him, and to love other believers.

### **3. Over-commitment.**

How can you give someone a hand if your hands are full? If you are too busy, then you will not be good at brotherly affection. Love takes time. If you are not being wise with your finances, you are living paycheck to paycheck, with no financial margin, spending more than you make, living beyond your means, then you are not going to be much help to others.

### **4. Lack of self-care.**

If you don't love yourself, you can't love others. If you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to take care of others. If you have no strength, you will not be able to support others. If you don't take care of your physical and emotional health, then you won't be much help to anybody else. Many Christians cannot help others because they are drowning and in need of rescue themselves due to their lack of self-care. Taking care of your health is not unspiritual. The better you feel, the better you can serve God. Taking care of your health is not selfish. The healthier you are, the more helpful you can be.

## **5. Sinful discrimination.**

When we show favoritism and partiality to other Christians based on things like race, economics, education, appearance, politics, age, etc., it is a hindrance to brotherly affection.

## **6. Bitterness.**

When we treat people the way that they've treated us, or according to what we think they deserve because of their bad behavior, it is a hindrance to brotherly love. We are not just to love other believers in the way they have loved us, or to the degree that they have loved us, or if they have loved us. We are to love them as God loves us – unconditionally.

## **7. An unbiblical view of possessions.**

A last hindrance to brotherly affection is an unbiblical view of possessions. If you believe that your possessions are yours rather than God's, then you will struggle with brotherly affection. But if you see that everything you have belongs to God, and you are just a steward, then God can use you to minister to others. We see an example of this in the first church in Jerusalem. **Acts 4:32-35** "32 Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. 33 With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. 34 For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need." The first church was the perfect example of brotherly love. What did they do? They generously shared their possessions with those in need. Why? Because "no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own."

## **CONCLUSION**

The local church should be the most beautiful place on earth. It should be a club that everyone wants to join. How? Not by attracting them with entertainment, or by watering down the message, but by wowing them with our special love for one another.