

## Additions to Faith

### "Brotherly Kindness"

#### 2 Peter 1:7

## Introduction

Over the past few weeks, we've talked about the Apostle Peter's seven additions to your faith found in 2 Peter 1:1-11.

Peter says that Christ's divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness and that He has called us to glory and virtue and given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these we may be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

Verse 5 says, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;" (2 Peter 1:5-10)

So far, we have examined virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and godliness. The last two additions to faith come from a well-known subject to the Apostle Peter. Before developing a genuine concern and passion for those who do not know Christ, we must learn to love and respect our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Christ, we are a Christian family. We are brothers and sisters in the Lord. We are united together as the heirs of the grace of life. We are the sons and daughters of the Almighty God. The Apostle Paul says that we are members of one body and are brothers and sisters united in Christ to be the whole family of God in heaven and earth. It is a strong and spiritual family that sticks together.

1 Corinthians 12:26 says that in a family, "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*." (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Brotherly kindness responds without partiality or distinction. Colossians 3:11 says that in Christ, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all." (Colossians 3:11)

Of course, we still have our individual distinctions, yet we all possess the unifying characteristics of being made in the likeness of God. This means we should demonstrate an attitude of true Christ-likeness. It is the image of God that makes us all fit together.

Where there is a family likeness, there is also a basis for family love. A healthy family allows and embraces the powerful reflection of the individual relationship of each family member. No matter what someone else's place in the family of God is – there is still a place for you, and your place is special and unique to you! No one else can take your place in the family.

Brotherly Kindness provides an atmosphere of Love and respect for each member of the family. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, by your love one to another." We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. The Apostle John writes, "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

The person who says they love God should see that they also love their brothers and sister in Christ. That is why we must "Add to our faith" – what? Brotherly Kindness.

## **I. A Tender Affection**

Brotherly kindness demonstrates a tender affection. The original Greek term that Peter uses here is "Philadelphia." The Greek word "phileo" is Love expressed with tender affection. It is a more emotional expression than the word agape, which is used to describe divine Love. The word agape expresses the esteemed value and worth of others, but phileo reaches out with tenderness and feeling.

We all have to learn how to get along with people. But in a family, you must also learn how to like them. And in the family of God, we have to learn not only how to get along with people but how to like them because they're part of the body of Christ.

Some people won't participate in the family because they don't want to risk getting hurt. Sadly, some people have gotten their feelings hurt in the church and won't fellowship anymore with other Christians. Hurt feelings can lead a person into isolation and withdrawal from life in the body of Christ.

God has called us to fellowship and relationship! Sights and misunderstandings, and hurts will inevitably occur in every family. It's part of living in an imperfect world with imperfect people. Christians are not perfect. But withdrawal from the family is not an option! Running away from your family directly contradicts this important trait that God wants us to develop! Our relationships with each other are a statement to the world about how God values His family.

We don't have any problem relating to people we can change, and we don't have trouble loving people who see things my way! As a Christian, we are to accept people the way God accepts us! How does God accept us, church? Just as we are! He doesn't require us to be perfect, wealthy, or well-connected. God takes us with all our hang-ups, shortcomings, and failures, no matter how hard we try to hide them from others. God accepts you just the way you are!

We must learn to accept people for what they are and for who they are and let the Holy Spirit do the changing while we learn to do the accepting. That is proof that we truly believe God accepts us!

## II. A Touch That Heals

Brother Kindness demonstrates a healing touch.

One of the problems that we face as a body of believers is that many churches are made up of more spectators than participators. Some people only want to experience and observe family life but don't want to participate or contribute to it. Some want the benefits of family life without having to get personally involved. We can't effectively fulfill God's plan without one another in the body of Christ. A healthy family cooperates and works together to achieve their goals.

In Romans Chapter 12, Paul gives us instructions for working with one another. He writes, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. *Let Love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."

(Romans 12:4-9)

Verse 10 says, "*Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;" (Romans 12:10)

Brotherly kindness is the child of godliness. One writer says the river of charity springs from the fountain of piety. It is encouraged throughout the New Testament. Romans 12:10 "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor."

Colossians 3:12 " Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ." (Colossians 3:12)

1 Corinthians 13:4 " Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;" (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Ephesians 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

One thing that impacted people during the earthly ministry of Jesus was His healing touch. He reached out to people from various backgrounds of life, from every economic and social level. It made no difference to Jesus whether you were a member of the Sanhedrin like Nicodemus or a tax collector like Zaccheus.

Jesus was willing to reach out to all who needed it with kindness, a healing word, or a healing touch. Believers who add godliness to their Christian walk find it easier to go to the next level and add brotherly kindness to their faith life. Brotherly Kindness causes you to recognize when a healing touch is needed and share Christ's healing touch with others.

### **III. A Tie That Binds**

Brotherly Kindness binds us together in relationship. There are many examples in scripture of those who reached out with a healing touch and a helping hand. Brotherly Kindness causes you to recognize and reach out to meet a person's need. It also helps you connect with others in a way that binds you together as family.

The Bible gives many examples of how Brotherly Kindness builds strong family relationships. In the book of Ruth, Boaz shows kindness to Ruth when He instructs his worker to "purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

In 2 Samuel 9, King David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

In Genesis 50, Joseph tells his brothers, "Do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."

In Exodus 2, when the women came to water their flocks, it says, "The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock."

In Acts 16, the Philippian jailer showed kindness to Paul and Barnabus when "he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household."

In Luke 10, the good Samaritan found a man beaten and lying by the side of the road, "and he came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him."

There are a lot of lonely and hurting people in this world. People have become isolated and introspective and yet are so starved for an authentic relationship that they've resorted to internet "chat rooms" and "blogs" and "avatars" looking for a quality relationship.

Many people are looking for Love in all the wrong places, and consequently, they suffer even more emotional and physiological damage. But Love is something you learn in a family or at least something you should learn in a family. In a family, you learn to make personal sacrifices for the sake of others. In the family, you learn to prefer others above yourself. You learn how to encourage and help others. You learn how to accept and get along with personalities that are different from your own. You learn how to connect to others in powerful alliances and relationships.

Obviously, not every family is healthy. In some families, the members are very destructive. They major in criticizing and complaining. Some are in constant competition with one another. They can be jealous and put each other down and mock any achievement one of them makes. Others are always offending, guilt tripping, or other destructive behavior common among dysfunctional families.

Peter, however, says maturity loves! Christian maturity loves in a healthy way, with brotherly (or sisterly) kindness. It's true in the family, and it's true in the church. Those who only think of themselves and constantly offend others are very selfish and probably very immature.

Those who pursue brotherly kindness think about how their behavior and attitudes affect others. They consider the impact on others before they speak and do things. People are this world's most incredible resource. We spend fortunes on machinery and material possessions but feel uncomfortable if asked to support missionaries or help someone in need.

Brotherly Kindness reaches out to people with the Love of Christ. Brotherly Kindness is about tending the garden of God and being our brother's keeper. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:20, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." ([1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV](#))

You can't fake family or personal happiness! The first step to becoming a healthy person is to realize you aren't one! The second step is to get involved with those who are. Each of us has unique gifts and talents that God has given us. You may not have as many talents as others, and your gifts may be different from theirs, but your gifts are your gifts! Thank God for them. Embrace them. Develop them.

It is Brotherly Kindness to use your gifts for the benefit of others.

## **Conclusion**

The Bible says that whatever we do in word or deed, we should do it in the name of the Lord, recognizing God blesses us to be a blessing to others.

It's an awesome thing when a family pulls together. But when they don't, it can be a disaster! Families should be known for their diversity and uniqueness, but they should also be known for their unity and community. Christian maturity requires us to look after the interest and welfare of others. Life is not about what you want. It's about what God wants to do through you.

We are all equally important in the eyes of God. We may have different abilities and gifts, but God does not place value based on talent. He values us based on relationship. So don't try to change people to act like you and think like you; point them to Christ. Then they can become who God created them to be, not what you want them to be.

Those with Brotherly Kindness have the same character and goodness that Jesus demonstrated to others. It will cause the world to sit up and take notice and say, "My,

how they love the brethren." Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples." What was it? "If you have love one for another." So add to your faith what? Brotherly Kindness.