
Words of Truth

Growing In Love Toward One Another

By: Brian A. Yeager

The congregation in Thessalonica had a reputation for showing brotherly love. When you read about this congregation, you find that even though they were practicing brotherly love they still had some growth in such ahead of them. Notice: *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints... But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”* (I Thessalonians 3:12-13 and I Thessalonians 4:9-10).

We should all be well aware of the instructions of our Lord to have love toward one another (John 13:34-35, John 15:12-17, Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:13-14, Colossians 4:7-9, Hebrews 13:1, and I John 4:7-5:3). We should also understand that brotherly love is not a sentiment or an emotion. Brotherly love is the action whereby we treat one another in a loving manner (Proverbs 27:5-6, James 2:14-17, and I John 3:14-18).

Brotherly love is not a natural occurrence. Brotherly love is part of the growth process we as saints live through in the faith. Notice: *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (II Peter 1:3-11). I would like to take this brief study and make us think about the why and how of growing in brotherly love. Sometimes people read the instructions, but do not understand the process towards such or even the purpose behind those instructions. Let’s do some thinking here.

Think About Why Our Relationship Needs To Be Brotherly

When Jesus returns to judge everyone will meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). This world will come to an end (II Peter 3:9-14). There will be a separation and judgment given for all whom have ever lived in this world (Matthew 25:31-46). If you and I are among the saved, we will spend eternity in Heaven. That is, the place that will have been prepared for us by our Lord (John 14:1-3). At that time Jesus will take His headship over the kingdom that He currently has (Colossians 1:12-18) and give that back to our Father in Heaven (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

At the time the kingdom changes hands from the Son to our Father, our relationship with Christ will change. Notice: *“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”* (Romans 8:17). Do you think Jesus will give you a place with Himself, as His brother or sister, if you cannot get along with your brethren in this life? Do you think Jesus wants an eternal relationship, in His house, with people that cannot love each other now? Think about that!

Who does Jesus call His brethren? We know this answer. Look at it and ponder it: *“There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother”* (Mark 3:31-35). Now, as you can see the practicality in the instruction for brotherly love, let’s consider how we can grow in it.

How To Grow In Brotherly Love

The faithful will spend eternity together. Cohabitation with people can be difficult. Therefore, Jesus has given us instructions to apply in this life that will equip us for eternity. Think about it. Why do we have to be able to bear with one another (Ephesians 4:1-3)? Why do we have to be hospitable towards one another (Romans 12:13 and I Peter 4:9)? Why do we have to support one another (I Thessalonians 5:11-14)? Why do we assemble with one another (Hebrews 10:25)? Why do we have to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)? Applications to matters such as the questions above, is how we can grow in brotherly love.

Conclusion

Our lives together as brethren, if done right, will prepare us to spend eternity together. Brotherly love is the bond that will make that happen. Read I Peter 1:1-25. Tie those lessons together in your mind. Grow in your love for the saints. If you can’t, you won’t make it!