

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

BENEFITS OF BROTHERLY LOVE

Brotherly love is a blessing of those in Christ. Like other blessings of faith, love of the brethren brings many side benefits. This Christian attribute (2 Peter 1:7) is also a requirement of the faithful. When brotherly love is absent, various soul-stealing, church-killing problems arise. Sadly, the root problem, that is, lack of brotherly love, is rarely recognized. Elders, preachers, and brethren wrestle with varied problems, seeking scriptural solutions, often without their considering the real problem—lack of love for the brethren—which may be manifested in so many ways.

Brotherly love brings a Change in Attitude

Paul, inspired apostle, wrote to the saints in Rome these words found in the "Christian's Manual" (Romans 12). "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love: in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). The attitude enjoined is that of love of the kind which a parent would have for a child and esteem which is selfless and without envy. Christians are to exhibit such pure affection and desire for uplifting of their beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. Jealousy, envy, pride, backbiting, malice, anger, wrath, evil surmising, and whispering would be eliminated as they ought.

Again, Paul write, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Brotherly love brings "Service With A Smile!" Christians are motivated to serve, not by coercion, manipulation, or injunction, but by love. Such love makes the unpleasant tasks bearable and daily service beautiful.

John, the "Apostle of Love," wrote in 1 John 3:17, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Brotherly love brings concern about a brother's need, compassion for that one in need, and is shown by care of the brother's need. Sleep is sweet for the saint, who has opened his heart and shared his goods with a brother in need.

Imagine the change in attitude in the average congregation if all the brethren were motivated by pure affection to be selfless sharing servants. Brotherly love brings a change of attitude.

Brotherly Love Keeps Good Company

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 6:23). When brethren dwell together in peace, the situation is good and pleasant (Psalm 133:1). Many congregations lack peace and are fraught with painful with painful disturbances when the real problem is not a lack of peace, but a lack of brotherly love. Brethren who love the Lord and one another will seek peace (1 Peter 3:18-22).

"For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (Philemon 7). Brotherly love brings great joy, consolation, and refreshing. Dedicated followers of the Lord do not serve long without opposition from Satan and his servants. Often, the way is hard and lonely, but God's chosen have great cause for rejoicing in the knowledge that there **are** faithful brethren all over the world, who, some even having never seen them, love them, and who would lay down their lives for them (1 John 3:16).

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). Unity, pity, courtesy, and compassion, needed but often lacking characteristics, are companions of brotherly love. Life, spiri-

GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD

Text: _____

I. True Thanksgiving is _____

Notes:

II. True Thanksgiving is _____

Notes:

III. True Thanksgiving is _____

Notes:

GOT WISDOM?

Text: _____

I. _____ It

Notes:

II. _____ It

Notes:

III. _____ It

Notes:

tual life, is also evidenced by love of the brethren. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14).

Brotherly Love Is Commanded

Peter by inspiration, writes to Christians, “...see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22). John says, “And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:21). Love of brethren is as important as any other command of God for one will be lost if he fails to observe this divine decree. 1 John 4:20 shows the absolute necessity of pure, fervent love for those of like precious faith, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

Brotherly love does not make sinners saints, not followers of error “our brethren.” It does not condone sin by open acceptance nor sinful silence. It does not substitute carnal lust for Christian love. It does not replace Bible knowledge, worship in spirit and truth, or faithful service. It is not simply emotional (though the emotions are involved), or silly. It is an often overlooked Christian characteristic with boundless benefits, here and in eternity.

“Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1).

-Bobby Liddell

HOW'S YOUR INTERIOR DECORATING?

One man relates that one day he was scanning the shelves of a bookstore in Cincinnati, Ohio, when he discovered a volume out of place. It was in the ‘Religion’ section, but the title of the book was The Art of Interior Decorating. He started to remove the book, but then it dawned on him that the volume was just where it belonged. For, after all, isn't that what the Christian faith is all about—interior decorating?

“I can't think of a better description of the Christian life than ‘interior decorating,’” he commented. “You see, the Bible emphasizes the fact that each of us has an ‘inner man’ - the real person down inside. The body may change and decay and even die, but the ‘real you’ down inside will live forever.

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

COME, LET US GIVE THANKS

The psalmist wrote: "I will give thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people" (Psalm 35:18). A spirit of thanksgiving ought to exist in the heart of the Christian every day. A child may pray: "God is great, God is good, Let us thank Him for our food." We express how sweet and simple is the prayer. Yet the child could not have stated a more profound truth. God is great and God is good. He is the sustainer of our lives and we ought to give thanks. Again, from the Psalms we read, "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not see the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). Did you know we have a tendency to pray for the Lord to deliver us from trouble, rather than for keeping us from trouble? How long has it been since you prayed and did not ask God for anything? You did not make one request. All you did was thank Him for His blessings.

Consider the Lord's Day and the opportunity we have to come into the presence of God and give thanks as His people. Nothing would be wrong with calling that special day of worship "Thanksgiving Day." Reflect for a moment about the acts of worship that God has authorized and consider how we express our thanks through that worship.

We can express thanks through song. "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing" (Psalm 100:2). "I will praise the name of God with song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving" (Psalm 69:30). Christians love to sing. Gospel singings ought to be encouraged throughout our brotherhood. Think how the greatest news ever received was accompanied by singing (Luke 2:13-14). Since our Lord has commanded us to sing (Colossians 3:16), why not moisten our lips and fill our hearts with such hymns of thanksgiving as "The Lord has Been Mindful of Me" and "Count Your Blessings."

We can express our thanks through prayer. Paul, the prayer warrior, wrote, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). Whenever the early church met they spent quality time in prayer (Acts 12:12) and so often, as instructed, they offered prayers of thankfulness (Hebrews 13:15).

We can express our thanks through the Lord's Supper. Jesus established a memorial feast and as oft as we partake (1 Corinthians 11:26), we give thanks. What does your mind dwell upon when you partake of the Lord's Supper? Again, hear the apostle Paul, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, **before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?**" (Galatians 3:1, emp. BMG). While we feast we remember how unworthy we are of such a great sacrifice, as our hearts overflow with thanksgiving.

We can express our thanks through giving. Opposite of giving is taking. Such reflects a covetous heart and that is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). But we are worshippers of God. What does God love? A cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). With an attitude of gratitude "upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay be him in store" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

We can express thanks through the message. The gospel preacher desires that his message will help one move from thanksgiving to thanksgiving (Romans 1:1-2). Those who have sinned and have been forgiven are thankful (Luke 7:36). As a result, upon hearing a message from God's Word, we should desire to put the principles we have learned into practice that we might be like Christ (Philippians 2:5).

One day Jesus will say to the faithful, "Come ye blessed of my Father" (Matthew 25:34). What a wonderful day that will be! But how will we express ourselves? Have you ever received a marvelous gift, so marvelous you did not know what to say or do? All you could say is "thank you." That will be sufficient when this life is over. Remember, however, you could wait too late. On occasion you may have received a gift and failed to acknowledge such a gift until so much time elapsed you were too embarrassed to say "thank you." If we refuse to accept God's offer of pardon now, it will do us no good to say "thank you" on the Day of Judgment. However, for those of us who are in Christ Jesus, let us always remember the blessings we have received, and come before our God with thanksgiving.