



"Being cared about is something so desperately needed in this depersonalized world that people will crawl across a thousand miles of desert to get it."

—Wilber Sutherland

**08-Jun-18**

## **'Let Brotherly Love Continue'**

The author of Hebrews writes in [Hebrews 13:1](#), "Let brotherly [love](#) continue." Brotherly love should be a significant part of a Christian's life, and the Bible instructs us how we can show this love for one another. The term "brotherly love" is translated from one Greek word, *philadelphia*, which is a compound of two ancient Greek words, *philé?*, which means "I love," and *adelphós*, "brother."

Acronyms are a great way to get a point across, making the focus of the instruction easy to remember, so we will use *philé?* in this way. Besides learning a little Greek, understanding this word's meaning can also help us to remember how to love our brothers and sisters with godly affection.

**P:** Have [patience](#) with one another. In [Ephesians 4:2](#) (*New International Version*, Paul writes, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Our perfect example is our heavenly Father, who shows extreme patience with us throughout our conversion. On the contrary, none of us is perfect; and we are all at different stages of spiritual growth, so we need to leave the spiritual correction of our brethren to Him. Instead, we

must bear with each other in the love of [God](#). Our Father, being patient, can take a situation that we think looks hopeless and make it turn out for good.

**H:** Be *hospitable*. In [Romans 12:13](#) (*English Standard Version* [ESV]), Paul tells us to "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." To be hospitable means to be friendly and generous, to be welcoming, warm, courteous, kind, and neighborly. The apostle instructs in [Galatians 6:9-10](#), "[L]et us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of [faith](#)."

**I:** Be an *inspiration*. [Hebrews 10:24](#) (ESV) says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Faithfully setting a good example motivates others to do the same.

David Miller, in a blog post, "[10 lessons from nature to inspire our everyday lives](#)," made some interesting observations. First, he wrote, "Everything in nature is always moving, always working. Even when animals and plants are in dormant phases, this rest is a kind of active measure for conserving energy." Second, he reflected that the harder something struggles, the stronger it becomes: "The oldest known organism on Earth is the bristlecone pine, which can live over 5,000 years. Gnarled and stunted-looking, grotesquely wind-flagged and seemingly half-alive, they grow near treeline (*sic*) in the super harsh alpine environments of the Rockies and Sierra[s], with extreme conditions almost year round." He concluded, "Struggle isn't a bad thing; it's the foundation of vitality."

We must work hard, persevere, and overcome our sins and trials. We need to show faith, relying on the power of God, and never, ever give up! If we do this, we will be an inspiration to other Christians.

**L:** *Love* as brethren. We need to love each other as brothers and sisters—as members of the same spiritual Family. This means we are to love each other in an exceptional and unique way, even more than members of our own physical families! As John Piper, founder of [desiringGod.org](#), puts it, "We share the same spiritual DNA."

The apostle Peter teaches, "Finally, all of you must live in harmony, be sympathetic, love as brothers, and be compassionate and humble" ([1 Peter 3:8](#), *International Standard Version*). In addition to calling us to brotherly love, Peter also tells us to have compassion for one another. *Compassion* means "to suffer or feel pain together." It could be defined as "co-suffering."

As individual members of the Body of Christ, we are in a special category. Those of us who are related by His Spirit in us are His true brothers and sisters. [1 Corinthians 12:26](#) tells us, "[I]f one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." When we truly love someone, we share everything with him or her whether good or bad. We must come to love our brethren with that same love.

**E:** Be a source of *encouragement*. Paul writes in [1 Thessalonians 5:11](#) (ESV), "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." In a blog post at [jamesriver.org](http://jamesriver.org), Savannah Lindell writes:

We all battle moments of self-doubt, insecurity, and discouragement; where we feel like giving up rather than going on. And most often, all a person needs is a little encouragement to continue. . . . When we encourage someone, we are imparting courage to them. . . . The truth is that if you're living and breathing, you need encouragement! **No matter a person's age, position or stature, as human beings, we are wired with the innate desire and need for encouragement.** . . . Encouragement is a gift that we all have the ability and resource to give. **There is no I.Q. requirement or special talent needed to be an encourager.** All you have to do is have a desire to use your life and your words to encourage the people positioned around you.

**O:** *Outdo* others in doing good. Notice [Hebrews 10:24](#) from *The Living Bible* : "In response to all [Christ] has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good." The Greek word underlying "outdo" means "to encourage," "to motivate," and even "to provoke." It is not a competition, but we are to seek to outdo each other by

setting the very best examples in expressing God's love to one another in word and in deed. If everyone did this, it is hard to imagine how great a church we would be!

We have all heard of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" (see [Matthew 7:12](#); [Luke 6:31](#)). We all desire to be treated with brotherly love, especially within the fellowship of the church of God. Therefore, *philé?*, "the love for our brethren," should be the minimum that we do toward others.

The apostle Peter admonishes us in [1 Peter 1:22](#) (ESV), "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love (*philadelphia*), love (*agapa?*) one another earnestly from a [pure heart](#)," showing that as Christians we must go above and beyond and have God's love (*agape*) dwelling in us. [Jesus](#) says in [John 15:13](#), "Greater love (*agap?*) has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends." Let us love and serve each other with our whole hearts and become a church of brotherly love.

- John Reiss

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Friendship Within the Church](#)

by Mark Schindler

William Jennings Bryant (and Senator John McCain) used the term "my friends" and biblical allusions to evoke a bond of intimacy and unity for the sake of political expediency. The effusiveness in Bryant's "Cross of Gold," depicting a friend of the entirety of the world, is not a substitute for real sincere friendship, one that has a greater bond than a natural brother. This kind of friendship ought to be practiced throughout the body of Christ, emulating Christ as in John 15:12. The bond formed by Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan exemplifies this kind of love, as Sullivan wrote letters into her hand, awakening her to the miracle of language and a world of feelings, enabling her to feel remorse, repentance, and joy. We need to be as

responsive to God as He communicates to us. We will be judged on this responsiveness and our subsequent friendship with our brethren, a friendship that goes through the grave for all eternity.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Is the Love of Many Growing Cold?](#)**

by David C. Grabbe

Among the best-known signs of the end of the age is Jesus' declaration in Matthew 24:12 that "the love of many will grow cold." However, David Grabbe advises caution in judging that such a state exists in others, in a church group, or in the church as a whole. Could love be there but just not as we might expect it?

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