



"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

—Mark Twain

**31-May-19**

## **Each Other (Part Two)**

The [book of Hebrews](#), written to mature, long-time members of the church, does not concern itself a great deal with [sin](#). The author's emphasis is elsewhere—particularly on the superiority of [Christ](#) and the New Covenant to any of the heroes of [Old Testament](#) times and the Old Covenant. However, the epistle contains strong, negative language regarding the recipients' dire spiritual state (see, for instance, [Hebrews 2:1-4](#); [3:12](#); [4:1](#); [5:12-14](#); etc.) and two powerful warnings against willful sin ([Hebrews 6:4-8](#); [10:26-31](#)).

As Part One concluded, the focus shifted to [Hebrews 10:24-25](#), the last sentence before the second of the author's thunderous warnings against willful sin:

And let us consider one another in order to stir up [love](#) and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

As a guard against relapsing to the point of willful sin, the author exhorts the Hebrews to focus on the "big three" virtues: [faith](#), hope, and love in verses

19-25. We will concentrate on the final virtue, as so many in today's church find withdrawing from fellowship easier to do than assembling with brethren whom they consider weak and hypocritical, despite the Bible's frequent calls for unity and brotherly love.

Before focusing on the command to "consider one another," it will help to be reminded of other New Testament instructions that relate to the individual and the group. Paul exhorts in [Romans 15:1](#), "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®*, ESV® Text Edition: 2016, Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.). His instruction is only relevant if those who are strong in the faith are in regular contact with weak brethren. It has hardly any application to one who has separated himself.

The same apostle writes in [Colossians 3:16](#), "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all [wisdom](#), teaching and admonishing one another." Again, an individual can teach and admonish only if he is in fellowship with others in the Body of Christ. In the human body, a severed toe or finger begins to die quickly. In like manner, contrary to those who claim their independence to have made them stronger, a member who willingly separates from the spiritual Body begins to die spiritually.

[Galatians 6:1](#) contains another example: "If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." Paul implies that those who are spiritual or spiritually mature are already in fellowship with the man overtaken by sin. The spiritual man is not off being "spiritual" all by himself.

[Hebrews 3:13](#) urges us to "exhort one another daily," suggesting close and regular fellowship. The list of such appeals for fellowship is a lengthy one. If we are willing to look for God's intention that we be connected to the rest of the Body, we will see it everywhere. Granted, the church is so scattered right now that, in some cases, regular fellowship is impossible except at the Feast. In many cases these days, not out of preference but out of circumstance, a "congregation" is simply a family. Yet [God](#) knows how to bring those in

such a situation to completion even amid isolation. The key, though, is to let the Good Shepherd direct the sheep where He wants them to be, rather than the sheep directing themselves.

The author's exhortation in [Hebrews 10:19-31](#) presents two different paths, and the way God's people can ensure they will stay off the path that leads to willful sin is to attend wholeheartedly to the three actions he sets out, the last of which is to "consider one another." This recommendation cannot be followed effectively if church members have separated themselves from the Body. If we neglect this last instruction, the three-fold cord of faith, hope, and love begins to unravel.

[Hebrews 10:24](#) instructs us to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works." This command suggests giving attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, not in the sense of being a manager or overseer, but of looking out for the other's good. The Greek implies that we should think deeply about how we can motivate and encourage love and good works in others. It is not just about our own growth in love and producing good works. As we become spiritually mature, the time comes to quit focusing on everything as it relates to us and begin focusing on how we can help others in their walk.

To get an idea of the Hebrews' level of understanding, notice how the author elucidates the basic doctrinal material:

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of [repentance](#) from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of [resurrection of the dead](#), and of eternal judgment. ([Hebrews 6:1-2](#))

The foundation that is described is not that difficult for someone who has been converted even for a fairly short time. Even though there will always be more to learn, once we have a good grasp of these essential doctrines, it is time to "go on to perfection." It is time to perfect our faith, our hope, and our love—and part of that love is helping others who are walking this same narrow path.

Next time, we will see some practical steps we can take to help our brethren during these tough times.

- David C. Grabbe

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Love God, Love Neighbor](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Popular music trumpets the theme of romantic love as the answer to all the world's ills, yet the composers of these lyrics have no idea as to what love really is. The fuzzy definition of love is responsible for tolerance of sin, deviancy and liberal, multi-cultural mis-evaluations. We should have a more mature understanding of love for God and love for neighbor. The outgoing concern toward other beings begins with God the Father to Jesus Christ to us. Without godly love, real love does not exist. Real love does not exist in isolation; another being must always be the object of real love. God's plan involving the reciprocal sharing of love among members of God's Family began well before the foundations of the world, at which time a possible sacrifice for sin had to be factored in. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The love of God, through the mechanism of His Holy Spirit, works on our inner beings (our mind and spirit), making us like Him, demonstrating the love of God, loving God with all our minds (keeping His commandments) and our neighbors (including our enemies) as ourselves. The extent that we love our brethren may be an accurate gauge as to how much we love God.

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

### **[Learning to Love One Another](#)**

by Geoff Preston

We may look around the church of God and wonder why so many are not being healed. Geoff Preston, suffering a chronic illness himself, uses his

experiences to assure us that God is working out even these matters for our good.

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