

One Another – Prefer

Text : **Romans 12 : 1-10**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. We're in the midst of a series of lessons considering the “One Another” passages.**
1. The relationship between Christians is one of the most strongly emphasized concepts in the N.T.
 2. There are approaching sixty (60) “One Another” commands in the N.T.
 3. Since God views it with such great importance, we must do likewise.
- B. As we studied some of the fifteen “Love One Another” commands, we came to understand them as the most important and the foundational commands.**
1. **Heb. 13: 1 – Let love of the brethren continue.**
 - a. Love for the brethren is a way of life for Christians.
 - b. We must put forth the effort to keep this special relationship healthy.
 2. **I Pet. 1: 22 – Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,**
 - a. Purified from sin for loving the brethren (so that ... *Love is uniquely Christian*)
 - b. Sincere love for fellow Christians (*real ... Not just words, but active, applied in life*)
 - c. To fervently love fellow Christians requires that it be a strong commitment.
 - d. Unlike “agape”, love that is from the heart is has an emotional component.
 3. **I Pet. 2: 17 – Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.**
 - a. Our love must include all of the brethren, not just those with whom we are close.
 - b. “Brotherhood” includes other congregation, even those in other countries.
 - c. When traveling we experience an immediate closeness with other Christians.
 4. **I Pet. 4: 8 – Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**
 - a. Above all indicates that love is indeed to most important one another command.
 - b. Keep fervent teaches that love must be maintained and it must be intense.
 - c. Love covers reaffirms that love is the basis of Christian unity.
 5. **I Thes. 4: 9-10 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another ¹⁰ for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,**
 - a. The Thessalonians were among the most loving of all the brethren.

- b. They had a loving relationship with all the area congregations.
 - c. The Apostle urged them to continue improving, expanding their capacity to love.
– *No matter how much we love the brethren, we can always improve.*
- 6. **John 13: 34-35** – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
 - a. A new commandment Jesus gave his disciple a new and different code of conduct.
 - b. As I have loved you, was an **awesome** challenge. Jesus died for His brethren.
 - c. all men will know this new command was to be the hallmark of His followers.
- C. **Though commanded, encouraging one another is a natural expression of love.**
 - 1. **I Thes. 5: 11** – Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
 - 2. When we feel a strong brotherly tie with brethren, we're concerned for their welfare.
 - a. If a brother or sister in Christ is down, it will affect us.
 - b. **Rom. 12: 15** – Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
- D. **Because Christians love each other, they are able to put up with each other.**
 - 1. Tolerance for each other is fundamental to Christianity.
Eph. 4: 1-2 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,
 - 2. Each of us realizes that we are not always easy to love so we forbear the defects and the mistakes of others.
 - a. **Col. 3: 13** – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
 - b. **I Pet. 4: 8** – “... love covers a multitude of sins ...”

With this lesson we want to explore the concept of preferring one another in honor.

Rom. 12: 10 – Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

I. The love between Christians is different from love in a generic sense.**A. The English word “love” translates several different Greek words.**

1. Eros : Sensual desire for another person, lust, passion, root of word “erotic”
2. Agape : An unconditional love, not dependent upon desire, used of one’s spouse
3. Philia : Strong bond that includes affection, but not lust; loyalty to *friends* & family
4. Storge : Natural affection, almost exclusively for relationships within a family

B. The Greek language is often much more precise than other languages.

1. People from different cultures think differently so they need different words.
 - a. For example : *Men and women think differently so they describe things differently.*
 - b. Some languages are very precise, but others communicate broad concepts.
 - c. These differences strongly affect how one language is translated to another.

*** One must consider this when selecting which translation of the bible to use.**

2. Because Americans use the same word to describe their favorite food as they do their feelings for their wife, they misunderstand things that are clear in the original.
 - a. I love my dog. ... I love Mac & Cheese. ... I love football. ... I love my wife.
 - b. We love our enemies. We the lost. ... We love the brethren.
3. We have to dig deeper into the text to come to understand what it meant.

C. In this text, the Apostle makes a compound word :

1. “*philostorge*”
 - a. *philia* : Affectionate love between friends
 - b. *storge* : Tender affection between family members
2. The use of “*philostorge*” tells us that the relationships between Christians must involve intimacy, understanding, and acceptance.

D. This kind of love will manifest itself in our lives in some very practical ways.

1. We’ve already seen that it will cause us to be alert to encourage each other.
2. It will motivate us to put up with each other even when we are not so lovable.
3. Our text teaches us that when one has *philostorge* for a brother in Christ :
 - a. He will prefer to be with him than with people of the world.
 - b. That’s why Christians feel a bond with other Christians that they don’t even know.
 - c. It explains why a Christian would rather give honor to their brethren than anyone.
 - d. Christians give preferential treatment to their brethren above all others.

II. The scriptures forbid treating others poorly, commands treating brethren special.

A. James explains that a Christian can never give deference based on externals.

1. **James 2: 1-4** My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. ² For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, ³ and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?
2. Vs. 9 – But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
3. All men are created in the image of God, we cannot lift one above another.
4. The command to love our neighbor excludes no one, **not even our enemies**.

B. The love the Christian is to have for his neighbor is “agapao.”

1. *Agapao* a decision of the will, an intentional response to promote well-being
2. This love can involve feelings, but such is not required. (*Love one’s enemy, wife*)
3. There is no preference in our *agapao* toward others, we owe it to all men.

C. The relationship between Christians requires a feeling of closeness and loyalty.

1. Christians start off with mutual “*agape*.”
 - a. They are intellectually committed each to the other’s welfare.
 - b. As Christians work and serve the Lord together, they must develop closeness.
2. The love between Christians is much more intimate than *agape*.
 - a. Our text requires that we “**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.**” **Rom 12:10**
 - b. Mutual devotion is not required when we love our enemies or even our neighbors.
3. **Remember** : Jesus said that our relationship should distinguish us from others.

D. What will be the natural expression of loving devotion for another ?

1. When one is devoted to another, he will seek to be with the object of his devotion.
2. People who are devoted to their brethren will look forward to being with them.
3. Given a choice, one will naturally choose to be with the one to whom he is devoted.
4. Thus, we **prefer** to be with one another.

III. The N.T. stresses that the church is a family.

A. In the N.T. the Apostles and others use familial terms to refer to each other

1. Christians are referred to as “Brethren” 190 times.
2. An individual is called “Brother” or “Sister” more than 50 times.
3. It was not a term that was taken lightly.

B. During the great Roman persecution of the church, Christians were falsely accused of incest.

1. They called each other “Brother” and “Sister.”
 - a. When two people married in the church, Bro. X married Sis. Y.
 - b. Malicious gossip called this incest.
2. They greeted one another with a “Holy Kiss.” This furthered gossip.

C. These practices were not the social norm.

1. Today many have begun dropping the title of “**Brother**” & “**Sister**” because they are not commonly used in our culture.
2. Christians are supposed to be different ... **not** chameleons.
3. Our Christian forefathers were not afraid to be different, even though it sometimes cost them their lives.

D. The point is : Christians treat each other differently than they treat others.

1. **John 13: 34-35** ... This difference is what Jesus wanted for us.
2. If this difference is not apparent to the world, it does not exist.

IV. Christians are commanded to “Honor All Men.”

A. **I Pet. 2: 17** – Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

1. We must honor our own body ... **I Thes. 4: 4**
2. We must honor our parents. ... **Eph. 6: 2**
3. We must honor our spouse. ... **I Pet. 3: 7**
4. We must honor widows. ... **I Tim. 5: 3**
5. We must give honor to everyone to who honor is due. ... **ALL MEN**

Rom. 13: 7 – **Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.**

B. Thought we honor all men and some in a special way, our brothers and sisters in Christ are to be honored above all others

1. **Rom. 12.10** – Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
2. The relationship between Christians is like no other on earth.
3. Those who do not develop it are the lesser for not having done so.
4. The relationship with our physical family and our friends is temporary, but the relationship between Christians is eternal.

C. God has taught us that when we honor a brother, we honor ourselves, we are one.

1. **I Cor. 12: 24-27** ... But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵ so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
2. **Remember :** There is “one body” so that body is not a congregation.
3. The honor we bestow on other brethren includes all brethren **wherever they may be.**

CONCLUSION :

A. The church is one body.

1. All of the parts function to the good of the body ... not for self.
2. No body part functions separately from the rest of the body.
3. All body parts are given live by the same blood, **the blood of Jesus the Christ.**

B. The church is one family ... the household of God.

1. **I Pet. 4: 17 , I Tim. 3: 15**
2. As brothers and sister of the same Father, we have a special bond.

C. The special bond between Christians leads us to treat each other as special.

1. **Gal. 6: 10** – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
2. **Rom. 12.10** – Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

D. If you're not in Christ, you're missing out on a very special relationship.

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :**Romans 12: 1-10**

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. **4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.* **10** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*