

Add Brotherly Kindness

Have you ever heard the expression “friendly fire?” Soldiers are hit with “friendly fire” when accidentally wounded (and in some cases even killed) in combat by an ally. Sadly, this same thing also occurs among soldiers in the army of God.

Christians are often hit by “friendly fire.” They experience fellow Christians being rude, ugly, snarky, negative, and giving them unfair criticism. This is a problem among God’s people that we can read about in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Philippians 4:2; Acts 5:1-11; Galatians 2:11-14; III John 9-11).

This relates to where we are in Peter’s “ingredients for spiritual growth” (2 Peter 1:7). Now that we have added to our faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and godliness, we need to talk about the next ingredient – which is “brotherly kindness.”

Brotherly kindness comes from the Greek word “Philadelphia.” It has to do with how we treat one another as a spiritual family. While we are to love and treat all people right, we have a special relationship as members of God’s family. We are to be friends and genuinely care about one another.

This term is found in several New Testament passages (1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1). God has high expectations for how Christians treat one another.

What brotherly kindness doesn’t involve:

- Hatred – We should never harbor hatred for a brother. We should never be bitter, jealous, and resentful (1 John 3:10-15).
- Betrayal – We should never betray the trust of our brother. David had an affair with the wife of one of his mighty men (2 Samuel 11:1-5; 23:39). Uriah was loyal to David, but David wasn’t loyal to him. David took Uriah’s wife and set him up to be killed in battle.
- Forsaking – We should never turn against our brother and abandon him when he begins facing difficult times (2 Timothy 4:10).
- Selfishness – We should never use and take advantage of our brother. Judas pretended to be Jesus’s friend to gain money (Matthew 26:14-16).

What brotherly kindness involves:

- Kindness – We should consider the feelings of our brother. We should be benevolent, gentle and rejoice with them over their successes (Ephesians 4:2, 32).
- Sympathy – We must be merciful and compassionate. We must have a heart for the struggles of our brother. We must pray about their struggle. We must comfort our brother when he is hurting and weep with those who weep (John 11:35; Romans 12:15).
- Humility – We must strip ourselves of pride and sacrifice for our brother (Ephesians 4:2). We must sacrifice our time and resources for our brother. We must be willing to bear with our brother, even though his personality may be different, and we have very little in common.
- Connecting – We must be committed to our brother and spend time with him. The early Christians formed strong relationships (Acts 2:42-47). We must open our homes to one another, share our struggles, and always be there for one another.

Conclusion:

May we always value and seek to treat God’s children with brotherly kindness (1 John 4:19-21).

- Shawn Jeffries