

Brotherly Love

**Additional contributions to supplement Brother Ken's Introduction
25th March 2021**

Thanks to Brother Ken for a full and informative introduction. Our brother Ken made reference to verse 10, and talked about the honour to be shown to each other, preferring one another. He referred us to I Corinthians 13, which describes the very essence of the right attitude towards fellow brothers and sisters. The word used for love in that chapter as we know is agape, whereas the word for love in Romans 12:10 brotherly love is philadelphia, However in 2 Peter 1:7, we see how the Apostle Peter shows that this agape is to be the ultimate aim, ...2 Peter 1:7 *And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.* Charity = Gr agape.. So our Brother Ken is right to point out that taken as a whole Romans 12 shows this practical how-to guide to achieve this charity, this agape, which in Greek is the idea of benevolence, but is used in the New Testament to speak of love which originates from God, love which just keeps giving, the love which is willing to sacrifice for others. Thus in this 10th verse, we see a good example of this, where brotherly love in the ecclesia should be a given, the baseline as it were, - even though we, as humans, need reminding - *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;* but the Apostle adds: *in honour preferring one another;* This is the next step.. building upon philadelphia to achieve agape An example of where brotherly love existed was in the peaceful coexistence of Abram and Lot, but where we see Abram showing respect, - and more, agape – to his brother in the Faith. Genesis 13:9 *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.* He gave him first choice, he had no reason to fall out with his brother, the problem was with their work force, the

herd-men, and to ease the situation, Abram was prepared to make a loss, sacrifice, for the sake of peace, and for the sake of his brother. That is the attitude required amongst brothers and sisters in Christ – the willingness to go the extra mile, to go out of our way, to suffer loss, if necessary, for the sake of a fellow pilgrim.

Verses 11 and 12, are included in this mini study of brotherly love, and yet these two verses relate to individual behaviour and attitude. It is true we can be active in business together, fervent in the spirit together, and serve the Lord together as well as rejoice in hope together, but it doesn't say that. These are all descriptions of an individual attitude of mind, how we should be in our demeanour facing each new day – by our self, alone first of all, it's easy to be positive and godly when around likeminded people, but when crawling out of bed with aches and pains, and grumpy from a bad night's sleep it isn't always so easy. Positive, eager, enthusiastic, - keen to be a useful worker and labourer in the Lord, getting involved, finding a niche, if not creating one, grateful that unlike the world around us, who are all rushing in their life to accumulate to themselves pointless riches, pointless experiences, and pointless enjoyments, as they stampede madly to the edge of the cliff like the swine of Gergasa (Matthew 8) that we instead have a target, a point in life – a HOPE, which gives direction, reason and purpose, and this makes everything so much more worthwhile, *so rejoicing in hope*, of course we can understand the reason for *tribulation*, so we are *patient* in it, and with this mindset knowing that God is in everything, and is in control, we can be *instant in prayer*, knowing that He is ready to hear. So although these two verses describe how we should be as in individual, it is to be included in the way we look at brotherly love, because all of these aspects foster the ability to think of ones neighbour, and to love ones neighbour more than oneself.

For example, if we are slothful in business, lounging around, and non-productive, not even feeding our mind's, how can we have the

ability to help others in The Holy Faith as described here in verse 13, how can we be given to hospitality, if we don't have the wherewithal to show that welcoming attitude, or are so miserable and downcast all the time, that no one wants to visit to receive our hospitality anyway?

Again the Apostle focusses in on individual mindset to aid a collective benefit in verse 14, where after being on the receiving end of a broadside, it is easy to give as good as you get, perfectly natural in fact, to be defensive, and protect from the hurt administered. It is the way of the world, but not the way of Christ who teaches to reject the natural, and instead *to bless* ... this is not becoming one of those annoying breezy patronising people, some of whom existed in the time of the Apostles who actually believed that martyrdom was the highest form of service to Christ, and actively pursued persecution, instead, this turning the other cheek mentality is not for the benefit of the persecutor – but for our own good. Batting away persecution, whether it be from a brother or sister who has something against us, or whether from the authorities, or a jealous neighbour, batting it away, and not dwelling on the injustice, stops us from getting bitter and building up resentment in our mind. It is necessary for us to just take these things in our stride, and expect resistance, as it will come, because as soon as we make the smallest of stands on principle it affects the consciences of others. However, by blessing the other person, we are in fact refusing to allow ourselves to be a victim, and we are turning the experience into a strength, - in order to help others – so that all of sudden it becomes possible to ... 15 *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, because we can truly empathise, as we know what it feels like. Instead of being so consumed with our own life – oh he persecuted me, I am not going to get over it syndrome, instead of being so wrapped up with ourselves, we are ready and aware of what is going on in other

peoples lives, ready to congratulate, or ready to commiserate – because we care about and love our neighbour more than ourselves.

Verse 16 is interesting, the KJV is good of course, but the NET is useful as well: Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited. This seems to be a reference to the tendency for people, particularly older people, who have seen it all, and done it all, to be dismissive and impatient with the petty problems of the younger, or those deemed less intelligent, or those deemed to always have problems. Oh well, I managed it all right, so I really don't know why they are making such a fuss kind of attitude. This is wrong, and makes us unapproachable, we be wise in our conceits, thinking we have the simple and straightforward answer, and really don't understand why this brother or that sister has such a difficulty in this matter. Just because a solution worked for us, it might make something worse for someone else, and we are all different. We need to be able to listen, and not be judgemental, and just accept we are all at different levels, and speeds and knowledge. Of course, it is easy to forget this, when we look out of the window of our own mindset, and we are losing connection with people – especially when we have been in enforced isolation for so long. In relation to haughtiness and pomposity, the same Apostle advises in 1 Corinthians 3:18 *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*

Brother Terry