

Brotherly Shove: Recovering the Goad in Brotherly Love, Part 2

J. C. Ryle testified that his friends during his early Christian years (young adulthood) were “great helps to me in one way or another; strengthened me in my principles, encouraged me in my practice, solved many of my difficulties, assisted me by their advice, counselled me in many of my perplexities, and cheered me generally by showing me that I was not alone in the world . . . they did me a great deal of good, and mightily helped my soul” (Iain Murray, *Prepared to Stand Alone*, 45).

The New Testament makes it clear that for the Christian man the question demands a resounding _____ answer and that we acknowledge that it is this way by God’s design.

1. Admonitions God gives us in relation to doing good unto all men (Galatians 6:10) and evangelizing the world (Matthew 28:19-20)
2. Frequent repetition of “_____” (100 times in the NT) – encompasses gender, generational, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and geographical lines.
3. Language God uses to describe us in relation to each other. When God places us into His family, we are never alone again.
 - *One* (Ephesians 4:4-6)
 - *Brother / brethren*
 - *philadelphia* (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:7) / *philadelphos* (1 Peter 3:8)

Brief observations:

- *Brotherly love* is rooted in the work of God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:9)
- *Brotherly love* involves our ongoing _____

Justin Martyr wrote, “we used to value above all else money and possessions, now we bring together all that we have and share it with those who are in need. Formerly, we hated and killed one another because of a difference in nationality or custom, we refused to admit strangers within our gates. Now since the coming of Christ, we all live in peace. We pray for our enemies and seek to convert those who hate us” (*Apology* 1.14).

- *Brotherly love* requires family devotedness (Romans 12:9-10)
 - Because people are damaged by sin
 - Because relationships are damaged by sin
- *Brotherly love* is _____ (2 Peter 1:5ff; 1 Peter 1:22)

“Being involved with people is time consuming, messy, and complicated. . . . That means we will have to make time for these kinds of friendships to emerge and grow. We will have to be realistic too. Close relationships make it more likely that you will

sin against someone or that someone will sin against you. There will need to be times of confession and forgiveness. . . . Living in community pushes us to die to ourselves. There will be times when loving others and allowing others to serve and love us will feel like death, but this is the pathway to real life in Christ” (Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp, *How People Change*, 72).

Getting started:

- Remember that God is Immanuel – God is “with us” in Christ
- Answer for yourself, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”
- _____ at home
- Pray for eyes to see and ears to hear
- Prepare to be active
- Lead your _____ in reaching out to those older and younger
- Set some doable goals
 - Using _____ time purposefully (listen attentively to what people say, be sympathetic, envision yourself in their shoes)
 - Using time before and after SS and church services purposefully
 - Handle even church ministry administrative details before coming to church
 - Write one encouraging text or email each week, or make one encouraging phone call (you might even be the recipient of one)
 - Come up with a good list of questions to help you nudge conversations a little deeper

How’s the series in 1 Corinthians hitting you?

What have you seen God do lately?

What do you feel good about right now in the spiritual area of your life?

Where are you having slow-going right now spiritually?

How is your _____ ministry going?

What’s the most meaningful thing that has happened to you since we last talked?

What’s the most important decision facing you in the near future?

Have you read anything recently that has helped you spiritually?

What’s something the Lord has been teaching you lately?

How can I pray for you?

Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church: Participating Fully in the Body of Christ*, 161.