**Growing in Grace – Brotherly Kindness**

*2 Peter 3:18; 1:5-7*

**Introduction**

1. **2 Peter 3:18** – we are commanded to grow in God’s grace.
2. **2 Peter 1:2** – He is seeking to multiply grace to us through the knowledge of Jesus.
   1. Ultimately, that we share in the divine nature **(v. 4).**
   2. This connected with the glory and virtue of Christ that we are called TO **(v. 3).**
   3. Attained through the knowledge of Christ which instructs us in the way of life and godliness **(v. 2).**
   4. Knowledge increased to the bearing of fruit when we supply diligence and add to our faith the list of virtues **(vv. 5-8).**
3. Virtue – the goal of moral excellence like Christ, and the courage to reach that goal.
4. Knowledge – the comprehension and grasp of God’s will for us necessary to achieve the goal of virtue.
5. Self-control – the decisive action to deny the inordinate desires of flesh and submit ourselves to God’s will, practicing the knowledge we have obtained.
6. Perseverance – the constancy of self-control, abiding faithfully under trials and tribulations.
7. Godliness – godward piety which seeks to do what is well pleasing to Him.
8. To godliness we are to add brotherly kindness.
9. Brotherly Kindness – *philadelphia*
10. A compound of *philos* (affection, love) and *adelphos* (brother) – hence, brotherly love – of affection.
11. fraternal affection (STRONG)
12. love of brother/sister (BDAG)
13. (1) love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love; (2) in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren (THAYER)
14. ***“and to brotherly kindness love”*** – these two words are both connected with love, but distinct from one another.
    1. *Agapē* love is something we must have for our brethren but is distinct in that it does not necessitate the affection of *philadelphia*.
    2. In many cases, *philadelphia* is not present where *agapē* is – in love of enemies.
    3. *Agapē* is not the same as *philadelphia* but will be present where *philadelphia* is.
    4. So, *philadelphia* is an added requirement of affection in the Christian relationships.
    5. EX: Someone may say they love another, but do not like them. If this is said of a Christian concerning his/her brother in Christ it is wrong.
       1. Christians are not to simply go along to get along, but they are to be affectionate toward one another.
15. The Nature and Necessity of Brotherly Kindness
16. Springs from a Common Birth
    1. Our obedience to the gospel was unto a brotherly love – **1 Peter 1:22-23**
       1. ***“love of the brethren”*** – *philadelphia*
       2. ***“love”*** (one another) – *agapaō*
       3. ***“in”*** – *eis* – to or into (STRONG)
       4. ***“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren” (ASV)***
       5. ***“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love” (ESV; NASB “for”)***
       6. Reason – “***having been” (v. 23)*** – the purification of our souls through obedience to the truth was a birth from incorruptible seed.
          1. Called obedient children – **1 Peter 1:14** – as a part of a family.
          2. Built up a spiritual house – **1 Peter 2:4-5** – ***“household of God” (Ephesians 2:19*** – not strangers/foreigners, but fellow citizens)
          3. Special people of God – **1 Peter 2:9-10**
          4. These certainly speak to us as individuals, but they are collective nouns – children, house/household/people of God.
          5. As part of a family there is to be a fraternal affection.
    2. This common birth was what Paul used to appeal to Philemon regarding the reception of Onesimus – **Philemon 8-16**
       1. Onesimus was a runaway slave who met Paul and obeyed the gospel.
       2. Philemon was Onesimus’ master and was a Christian.
       3. **(vv. 12, 16)** – Now Philemon and Onesimus had a newfound relationship – brothers in Christ – which required such affection.
    3. Such is seen as well in the hospitality shown to strangers who are brethren – **Hebrews 13:1-2**
       1. The tie that binds those in Christ is stronger than distance, or physical affiliation.
    4. Philadelphia is not used for our love for those in the world for this reason. We are not part of the same family, and we do not hold the same values.
17. Commanded of God
    1. Because the brotherly love of flesh and spirit is so different, one may take more effort than the other.
       1. Not hard to love our physical family.
       2. What about those who we don’t know and have many differences with who come to obey as we do?
    2. Brotherly love is not simply taken for granted, but commanded – 6x in NT, all in the form of commands, or in reference to the command.
    3. Philadelphia among the spiritual family takes work – **1 Peter 2:1** – lay aside such feelings toward each other.
    4. Potential conflict in physical differences:
       1. When Peter played the hypocrite – **Galatians 2:11-13**
       2. Problems with the Galatians – **Galatians 5:13-15, 25-26**
       3. Euodia and Syntyche – **Philippians 4:2-3**
       4. More could be mentioned, but the very idea that there were many different people (culture, family, race, socio-economic, etc.) coming together in Christ requires a change of mind about one another – looking rather to commonality in Christ as a spark of affection than anything physical.
18. Vital to the Unity and Functionality of the Body
    1. All one in Christ – **Galatians 3:26-29**
       1. **(v. 28)** – Such differences must be overcome.
       2. Without Christ, these would not be associating with one another.
       3. In Christ, those differences must be put in their proper place.
    2. The brotherly kindness promoted in the family of God is what made Jew and Gentile able to work together in unity:
       1. **Acts 10:28; Ephesians 2:11** – the rift between Jew and Gentile
       2. Reconciled to God, and together via the cross – **Ephesians 2:14-18**
       3. Unity commanded, and made possible through the mutual spiritual blessings enjoyed which promote a brotherly affection – **Ephesians 4:1-6**
    3. Commanded in context of unity of the body – **Romans 12:10**
       1. **(vv. 3-8)** – Use of gifts in humility for the benefit of the body – ***“members of one another”*** – each individual in consideration.
       2. **(v. 10)** – ***“kindly affectionate”*** – *philostorgos* – fond of natural relatives, i.e. fraternal towards fellow Christian (STRONG)
          1. With Philadelphia – brotherly kindness/affection.
          2. ***“giving preference to one another”*** – a deference to each other’s needs/wants (matches the humility of **v. 3**) (**cf. Philippians 2:1-4** – note the common blessings experienced as a reason for like-mindedness and deference)
       3. **(vv. 15-16**) – the affection of like-mindedness – in the positive and negative times. **(cf. Hebrews 13:1, 3** – those in prison as if chained with them)
    4. The common birth was appealed to for unity in Corinth, and mutual care – **1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 25-26**
19. Developing Brotherly Kindness
20. **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10** – brotherly love is something we know we are to have, but we are to abound more and more in it.
    1. **2 Peter 1:8** – these “things” must be ours and abound.
    2. **Hebrews 13:1** – it must continue.
    3. How are we to further develop brotherly kindness?
21. Value the Spiritual Over the Physical
    1. **Matthew 6:33** – seek the kingdom first (would include all the members as well.)
    2. **Romans 14:17** – the kingdom is not about the physical.
       1. Context of differences – **Romans 14:1-4** – Jew and Gentile eating meats or not.
       2. Actions not to undermine love – **Romans 14:14-16**
       3. Brotherly love will cause the strong to bear with the weak – **Romans 15:1-2** (truly the principle of **Romans 12:10**)
       4. Similar situation – **1 Corinthians 8:8, 9-13** – forgoing liberties for the sake of your brother in Christ.
    3. When we value the physical over the spiritual then we will not be able to have the proper view of those in the church who perhaps differ from us in physical ways.
       1. The fellowship in Christ takes precedence.
22. Associate with the Brethren
    1. Establishment of the church:
       1. Jews from everywhere – **Acts 2:5, 9-11**
       2. 3,000 added to the church – **Acts 2:41**
       3. Continued in spiritual things together – **Acts 2:42** (fellowship)
       4. Shared among each other, continuing daily together – **Acts 2:44-46**
       5. Differences were overcome through unity in Christ, and time spent together in such matters.
       6. Noted in Paul’s activity – **Acts 9:26-28** – ***“coming in and going out”*** – involved in the daily affairs of the brethren/church.
    2. Forsake not the assembly – **Hebrews 10:24-25**
       1. Considering one another is a concept included in philadelphia.
    3. Daily exhortation – **Hebrews 3:13-14**
23. Pray for the Brethren
    1. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** – pray without ceasing.
    2. Fervent prayer on behalf of the brethren following armor of God – **Ephesians 6:18**
    3. Paul’s constancy in prayers for brethren – **Ephesians 1:16; Philemon 4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; etc.**
    4. Confess to, and pray for one another – **James 5:16**
    5. When we are in constant prayer on behalf of one another we will be able to have the proper estimation of each other.

**Conclusion**

1. Those who are mindful of God and seeking to be well pleasing to Him will need to include an affection and care for the rest of His children.
2. Brotherly love/kindness is a must for members of the body.
3. This is an affection which must be nurtured in order to overcome any physical differences that may be possessed.