

MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN: “SHOWING BROTHERLY LOVE”

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection.”

Today’s devotion is about phileo. If you remember, the Greeks had multiple words that translate into the English word “love.” Phileo is one of those words. Phileo is brotherly love, which is different from agape. While agape is for all and unconditional, phileo is more limited. It is the love that you show to your brother and sister, close friends, fellow church members and the like.

In Romans 12:10, the Greek word for “brotherly affection” is not phileo, but adelphois. Adelphois is derived from phileo, but has a special meaning which is “love for fellow Christians.” Literally, then, Romans 12:10 says that the mark of a Christian is to love one another dearly, with genuine affection and be devoted to those who are of, as the Bible says, the household of faith.

“Brotherly” reminds you that you are related to all members of the congregation to which you belong by the blood of Christ. You, as is true for each member, have been adopted by God as His sons and daughters. The word “brotherly” then narrows Paul’s words in Romans 12:10 to loving those who are fellow members of the congregation to which you belong by virtue of your faith in Jesus Christ. This fellowship or brotherhood then expands to all Christians wherever they may live.

Brotherly affection for the household of faith, for your fellow Christians is what motivates your concern for those who undergo natural disasters such as the current needs created by the pandemic, floods, hurricanes and tornados. Brotherly affection moves you to include in your daily prayers fellow believers who are currently experiencing illness or person challenges. This is also why your congregation prays for not only members but also many others by name each week lifting up their needs to the LORD God.

Hebrews 13:1 says, “let brotherly love continue.” St. Paul wrote to the church members at Thessalonica, “Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.” (1 Thessalonians 4:9) Brotherly love, according to 1 Peter 3:8 strives to “have unity of mind, sympathy, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” As a

Christian, your brotherly love for your fellow believers marks you as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, You said, "Beloved let us love one another for love comes from God." Help me to love, especially my brothers and sisters who are fellow believers in you. Amen.

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one;
Love in Christ is true and giving May His will in us be done.

Love is patient and forbearing, Clothed in Christ's humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring, Reaching out to charity.

Love in Christ abides forever, Fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven, shall endure until life's end.
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