

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

LOVE YOUR BROTHER/SISTER

1 John 3:10 "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister."

A commentator states, "One's parentage is either divine or diabolical." He explains that "no person is ever born of the Devil because the Devil neither creates nor begets; he only corrupts, destroys, and kills what is begotten of another." God is the one who has created you. He created you to worship Him and to love your brothers and sisters, that is, all who He has created. Your relationship, conduct, behavior toward your fellow believers ("brothers and sisters") is an indicator of the relationship you have with your God.

"To live for the sake of righteousness" is to live your life in the faith God has given you in His Son and to live in love with your brothers and sisters. (1 John 3:10) Failing to love your brother and sister, John states, is characteristic of and common for those who are not abiding in righteousness. This failing to love is not an occasional act of forgetfulness, done in a moment of anger, it is repeated, intentional and a personal characteristic. It describes a way of life that is directed by the inner heart and being of the non-loving person. In real life those failing to love literally abandon those who God placed into their lives to love.

St. Paul's words parallel those of John, "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." (I'm a bunch of noise) For anyone claiming to be a believer in Jesus, who fails to love their brothers and sisters, that is, their fellow believers in Jesus, their confession of faith is a fraud. St. Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 13:4 -8 to describe what the love of a brother and sister looks like, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." John writes in his next chapter, verse 7, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God

and knows God.” The love you have and show toward your spiritual brothers and sisters indicates you are God’s child.

Prayer: Fill my heart, O Lord, with love for You and for my brothers and sisters in Christ. In His name. Amen.

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one;
Oh, that my God would grant me grace To know and do His will!

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

Love in Christ abides forever, Fainting not where ills attend:
Love, forgiving and forgiven, Shall endure until life’s end.
(LSB 706)