

# Let Brotherly Love Continue

Melinda DeMeester

*Behold, how pleasant and how good That we, one Lord confessing,  
Together dwell in brotherhood, Our unity expressing:  
'Tis like the oil on Aaron s head, The seal of ordination,  
That o'er his robes the sweetness shed Of perfect consecration.*

Who is a brother? Who is a sister? A brother and/or sister is someone who is in the same family as you and has the same parents. More importantly, however, our brothers and sisters are those who have been ingrafted into Christ Jesus as we have been. Therefore we must love them and treat them with love and kindness as Christ Himself has taught us.

Our relationships to our brothers and sisters vary greatly from the time that we are very young to the time that we are married and grown up. When we are young, we think of them as playmates. We see them as those who put some conflict and pain in our lives when we are in grade school and high school. And when we get older, we see them as a help and a friend.

Our brotherly and sisterly relationships must not be taken for granted. Often I think that we do not appreciate our brothers and sisters enough. Many of us can count numerous times that we have gotten mad at each other. How often do we not stomp off in anger because brother "Bob" got to have his way? On the other hand, think of the many enjoyable times that you have had together. Maybe it was on vacation, maybe it was playing basketball, or volleyball, or maybe it was relaxing time spent in the house that brought brother and sister closer together. Just think of the companionship that that sibling was to you! If a brother or sister would be suddenly taken from us or put into the hospital, would we not think about them continually? Then we would definitely understand how much they mean to us. And this we know, that God placed us in covenant families where brother and sister must live in harmony. We must love one another even as Christ, Who is our older Brother, has also loved us.

This love must not be a selfish love. The Bible commands us in Matthew 19:19: ". . . Love thy neighbor as thyself." Our brothers and sisters are also included in our neighbors. We must love them as ourselves and treat them as we wish to be treated. Matthew 7:12 says: "Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." That means that we must not be mean to them if they are angry at us. Put more positively, we must help them and love them so that we may be helped and loved in return.

When I asked a group of young children the question, "Why are your brothers and sisters important to you?" I received quite a few good answers. One that stuck out in my mind was the reply, "My brother is teaching me to play the piano!" This is a great opportunity for brother and sister to work and learn together. Each must learn patience in such a task. We all must have patience with one another. We are called in Scripture to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). This is no small task but is something that we all must learn to do. We must help each other overcome our infirmities and encourage and build each other up.

Another important aspect of the relationship between brother and sister is that of forgiveness. Bearing with one another's infirmities and faults is also asking forgiveness for those things that we do that offend one another. We must be ready and able to forgive our brother. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 18:22, "I say not unto thee until seven times: but, until seventy times seven." Let us always remember that we must forgive our brother, for if we do not forgive our brother how can Christ forgive us? Ephesians 4:32 states, "Be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Let us remember that we must show respect unto our brothers and sisters. They are special people given unto us by the Lord, Who is our Father. We are the brothers and sisters of Christ. Through

the relationships of siblings in our family we learn how we must act toward and love our brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ. May we look to God for guidance in this and may we walk in love with those whom God has granted us to live with on this earth. Therefore, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1).

*Behold, how pleasant and how good  
That we, one Lord confessing,  
Together dwell in brotherhood,  
Our unity expressing:  
Tis like the dew from Hermon fair  
On Zion's hill descending:  
The Lord commands His blessing there  
In life that is unending.*

Psalter #371

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