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# ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR BRETHREN

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Scripture reading: Colossians 1:9-12

## A. LOVE...

1. In John 13:35, Jesus declares that when we love each other we will become a magnet to the world. He says, “By this all men [people]<sup>27</sup> will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus is giving the world the right to examine our credibility. The world can see if we’re for real. If you and I love one another everyone will know that we are Jesus’ disciples.

The word translated “know” (*ginosko*)<sup>29</sup> does not refer to a theoretical knowledge but to a knowledge gained by first-hand, rub-of-the-shoulders observation.<sup>30</sup> How can we reveal to the world that we are Jesus’ disciple?<sup>31</sup> By demonstrating love for fellow believers! When people see this kind of uncommon love exemplified in the Church they are naturally curious.

They begin to wonder if the gospel could be true. They begin to believe that Christ DOES bring transformation. On the flip side, when we fail to show love we invalidate the message of Christ.

People don’t believe there is real transformation in Christ. We make the idea of Christian community very unappealing. People ask, “Why would I want more stress and conflict in my life?” I don’t need Christ or His church!

It is important to notice that there is an “if” (*ei*) involved in 13:35. Believers can violate the love command. Failure to love does not mean I am not a

Christian,<sup>32</sup> but it means the world has the right to make the judgment that I am not a Christian.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, if we expect unbelievers to know that we are Christ's disciples, we must show the mark.<sup>34</sup> The early church displayed the mark. **Tertullian**, a church father who wrote a century after the gospel of John was written said that unbelievers saw Christians loving one another and commented, "Behold, how they love one another."<sup>35</sup> Even today, nothing so astonishes a fractured world as a community in which radical, faithful, genuine love is shared among its members. There are many places you can go and find communities of shared interest. There are many places you can go to find people just like yourself, who live for sports or music or gardening or politics.<sup>36</sup> But true *agape* love is hard to find. Ultimately, it can only be found in the church. *Look for love in the right place.*

2. How can I love? We have been born again that we might love one another fervently - **1 Pet 1:22-23** *"<sup>22</sup> Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever"*

When your brother and sister is need you must give with joy because it is Christ that you are given to. Jesus said I was hungry and you feed me I was thirsty and you gave water to drink...who is talking about? us!

-- If we truly love one another, how can we not work together?

## **B. COOPERATION...Out of need and to solidarity**

1. This involves a willingness to work together, as God intended - **1 Cor 12:21** *"And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you.""*
2. We need to be able not only to work, but to work together!

3. "It marks a big step in a man's development when he comes to realize that other men can be called on to help him do a better job than he can do alone."  
(Andrew Carnegie)

### C. APPRECIATION FOR OTHERS AND THEIR WORK...

1. We need to appreciate what others are doing - e.g., **1 Co 1:14; 1 Thes 5:12,13**
2. True appreciation for others will eliminate destructive criticism, gossip, divisiveness

-- Expressing appreciation is like grease on the gears of a machine...it makes others do their work much better!

### D. SUBMISSIVENESS...

1. We are to submit to one another - **Ep 5:21**
2. And we are to submit to those in positions of leadership (e.g., elders) - **He 13:17** "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"

Too many chiefs, not enough Indians...that is a common problem in many churches today.

### E. PEACEABLENESS...

1. Peace among brethren is something that we should pursue - **Ro 14:19** "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*" *What then are the things which make for peace?"*

There is no greater thing in a church when brethren can enjoy peace amongst themselves. On the contrary, there is nothing worse than when brethren are at ends with one another. We deceive ourselves if we think it does not or cannot happen. It happens all the time.

My obligation towards my brothers and sisters is to desire peace

**1. Seek Peace** - Psalms 34:14, *"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."*

**2. Pursue Peace** - Psalms 34:14, *"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."*

**3. Make Peace** - Matthew 5:9, *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."*

**4. Have Peace** - Mark 9:50, *"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."*

**5. Preach Peace** - Romans 10:15, *"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* Ephesians 2:17, *"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."*

**6. Live Peace** - Romans 12:18, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."* 1 Timothy 2:2, *"For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."*

**7. Follow Peace** - Hebrews 12:14, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"*

2. It is part of walking worthy of our calling - **Ep 4:1-3**

-- The true children of God are those who are peacemakers, and sow their deeds of righteousness

## F. HOSPITALITY...

1. Christians are to be hospitable - **Rom 12:13**

2. This includes both hospitality to strangers and to brethren - cf. **He 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9**

-- A factor in the rapid spread of the church in the first century was the hospitality extended G. WARMTH, FRIENDLINESS, OPENNESS...

1. We see this expressed by those in the church at Jerusalem - **Ac 2:44-47**
2. It continued with the saints in Antioch - **Ac 11:27-30**

#### **H. GENTLENESS, MEEKNESS...**

1. Especially necessary in dealing with the spiritual weak - **Ga 6:1**
2. But also in dealing with those who oppose us - **2 Ti 2:24-26**

#### **I. FORGIVENESS, FORBEARANCE, PATIENCE, LONGSUFFERING...**

1. All of these attitudes overlap, and are very important - **Ep 4:2,32**
2. They help smooth out the bumps and obstacles that Satan will put in our way in his effort to destroy the local church

Edification (Eph4:16)

Learning, teaching and admonishing (Col 3:16, Acts 1:8; Mat 28:19)

Bearing Burdens (Gal 6:2)

Comforting (1 Thes 4:18)

Serving (1 Cor 9:19)

Giving (Mal 3:8-11)

Follow, obey, and Submit (Heb 13:7 and 17)