

Book: 2 Peter
Series: *True Faith vs. False Teaching:
Add To Your Faith, Knowledge*
Lesson 6: *Our Productive Faith, Part 4
(The Trademark of Christlike Character)*
Text: 2 Peter 1:7
Date: Sunday, September 30, 2012

Colonial Hills
ARF
Baptist Church

Key



= Teacher Information



= Discussion Starter

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TEACHING TIP

Consider working through some of the discussion questions with your spouse or a friend in order to select the most effective discussion starters for Sunday and to brainstorm about some practical illustration or applicatoin points.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

2 Peter 1:12-15 – *Our Remembered Faith*

INTRODUCTION

True faith is distinguishable from false teaching, not only in its precepts, but also in its product. This is fundamentally what Peter is seeking to demonstrate in his second epistle. He never actually delineates what is the error of these false teachers, but he does contrast their lifestyle with the production of true faith.

- While true faith produces *excellence*, false teaching rejects Christ's Lordship (2:1, 10).
- While true faith produces *knowledge*, false teaching knows only spiritual ignorance and deception (2:1, 3, 12-13).
- While true faith produces *self-control*, false teaching gives way to unabated self-indulgence (2:2, 13-15, 18-19).
- While true faith produces *endurance*, false teaching undermines perseverance and fails in the face of hardship (2:20-22).
- While true faith produces *godliness*, false teaching deifies man and generates ungodliness in others (2:1, 14, 18).

The choices, pursuits, lifestyle, and worldview of false teachers will shout a rejection of Christ while their teaching may only carefully and confusingly whisper.

In 2 Peter 1:7, Peter continues this contrast and juxtaposes the trademark of these two systems.

- While true faith produces *brotherly kindness*, false teaching is known for its selfishness, arrogance, greed, and hypocrisy (2:3, 10-12, 15, 19).
- While true faith produces *love*, false teaching is reputed for its destruction of peoples' lives (2:3, 14, 18).

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines a trademark as “a symbol, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product.”

Throughout Scripture, there is one characteristic that is “[biblically] registered and established by use” as representing the Creator, Savior King—that is, love. While we would reject the church marketing philosophy for building a church, it is helpful to recognize that God has offered one marketing strategy to His people whereby His reputation would be magnified. And this strategy was not merely entrusted to the founders and leaders of the church; it has been ordered of the entire body.

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Everyone recognizes Nike's swoosh, Target's target, the Nazi's swastika, and Michael Jordan's tongue-hanging-out-of-his-mouth dunk; likewise, a God-empowered, others-focused love glorifies the reputation of the God who is love (1 John 4:8-21). “Men will never believe that God is love unless they see it in the lives of His professed followers.”¹ This is the climax and trademark of faith's excellence—that it loves!

Faith's trademark of love manifests itself in two ways:

- *Brotherly kindness* – “cultivating a God-engendered affection for and service to those in the ‘household of faith’”
- *Love [proper]* – “cultivating a God-imitating mindset that scripturally and sacrificially meets the spiritual needs of others”

These horizontal virtues (man to man—i.e., “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” [Matthew 22:39]) naturally flow out of the previous six vertical virtues (man to God—i.e., “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” [Matthew 22:37]).

1. *Brotherly Kindness*

“Brotherly kindness” (Gk. *phil-adelphia*—*phileo* = to love²; *adelphos* = brother) is used consistently throughout the New Testament to characterize what should be the spirit or atmosphere among believers.³ Besides in our passage, this word (and its masculine counterpart) is used five other times in the New Testament. As we consider these passages and others, we discover what such brotherly kindness does and does not look like; we discover what we must do and must avoid in order to be productive in this area.


a. *Romans 12:10*

Romans 12:10 states, “Be kindly affectionate [Gk. *philostorgos*] to one another with brotherly love [Gk. *philadelphia*], in honor giving preference to one another [or, ‘showing eagerness in honoring one another’ NET]” (NKJV).⁴ From this passage, we learn that **brotherly kindness is affectionate and deferential**.

While the word for “kindly affectionate” is used only here in the New Testament, the translations help us recognize

the emotional element involved—“kindly affectionate” (KJV, NKJV), “devoted” (NET, NASB, NIV). Christians should develop a spirit, at least, of kind affection one for another.

Furthermore, the second phrase can be summarized this way—value others. Christ-centered believers practice putting other ahead of themselves, not just in line, but in value. Therefore, they actively appreciate, compliment, commend, and honor other believers.

 **Application:** How can we develop a spirit and feeling of affection for one another? (1) *we must get to know one another;* (2) *we must minister alongside one another;* (3) *we must pray for one another;* (4) *we must view one another through the eyes of Christ;* (5) *open discussion*

What are some ways in which we can show to others that we value them? (1) *sincere compliments and appreciation;* (2) *encouragement;* (3) *quietly defer to their preferences, opinion, counsel, plan, etc.;* (4) *don't fight for your own rights and rightness;* (5) *open discussion*

What are some specific “slice of life” (home or church life) scenarios in which this kind of affectionate, deferential kindness should be shown? *open discussion*


b. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 reads, “But as touching brotherly love [Gk. *philadelphia*] ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another and indeed ye do it toward all the brethren...but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.” From this verse, we discover that **brotherly kindness is God-taught, non-discriminatory, and increasing.**

Brotherly kindness is not natural, but supernatural (cf. 4:8), and so we must learn from God Himself how to love our neighbor as ourself (cf. John 13:34; 15:12-13; Romans

5:5; Galatians 5:22). Furthermore, since we learn from God that He loves “the world,” we are challenged to love “all” our brothers and sisters without distinction—brotherly kind believers socialize and minister across common interests, preferences, etc. and tolerate no cliques within the local assembly. Finally, we learn from the example of Christ’s unfailing love (John 13:1; Romans 8:35-39) that we can always be growing in this area.

This passage also reiterates the “marketing” potential of love by stating that as we “increase more and more” in brotherly kindness, we will “walk properly before outsiders” (v. 12).

 **Application:** How can we put ourselves in a position to be taught by God to show brotherly kindness? (1) *humble ourselves to learn; make sure we're teachable;* (2) *observe how Christ demonstrated brotherly kindness to his family, disciples, and followers;* (3) *practice the lessons and do the homework;* (4) *open discussion*


What does “increase more and more” demand from you personally in the area of brotherly kindness? *open discussion*

c. Hebrews 13:1

Hebrews 13:1 command, “Let brotherly love [Gk. *philadelphia*] continue.” With the next two verses in mind, we see that **brotherly kindness is hospitable and sympathetic.**

Brotherly kindness “does not neglect hospitality [Gk. *philoxenia*, or ‘love for strangers’]” (NET). It causes a believer to warmly greet “strangers,” get to know them, and make them feel at home. More fundamentally, though, the word refers to entertaining guests in one’s own home (Acts 10:23; 28:7). This the brotherly kind believer is willing to do, as he sacrifices his privacy and personal space to minister to others (cf. also 1 John 3:16-18). Such sacrifices are sometimes wondrously rewarded (“thereby, some have entertained angels unawares”).

Verse 3 also depicts the emotional or affectionate side of brotherly kindness: “Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, and those ill-treated as though you too felt their torment.” The brotherly kind believer sympathizes and empathizes with others, and even does so actively, for he practices Romans 12:15, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”

 **Application:** It’s easy to throw excuses at our need to be hospitable. What are some of those excuses?
open discussion


Many people have been through broken engagements or other similar disappointments. What does sympathy/empathy look like or not look like in those situations? (1) *not a thoughtless comment such as, “well, it’s probably for the best” or “at least it happened now and not later”;* (2) *not an ignoring of the difficult situation;* (3) *not a pious, “well, just keep trusting the Lord, brother”;* (4) *not a cliché “I understand” or an unaccompanied “I’m praying for you”;* (5) *open discussion;* (6) *is a tender response of companionship that simply plods alongside the disheartened friend, at times offering true biblical encouragement and at times simply listening, grieving, and praying with him. Some of us avoid this response because it’s awkward or uncomfortable or seemingly “unnecessary” or because we’re impatient with the individual, and we are thereby neglecting to show brotherly kindness and the excellency of Jesus. We are wise to take these points and apply them to the single mom who’s struggling to raise her children, to the high school teenager who was just uprooted and moved to the area, to the young couple who discovers their baby will be born with some health problems, and to the elderly grandfather who’s adjusting to assisted living.*

c. **1 Peter 1:22**

1 Peter 1:22 – “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren [Gk. *philadelphia*], see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” This verse reminds us that **brotherly kindness is mutual, earnest, and sincere.**

Brotherly kindness doesn’t have an off switch—it’s initiated and then reciprocated, it’s constant and fervent, it’s present both internally and externally.

Furthermore, 1 Peter 2:1 builds off this verse and teaches us that **brotherly kindness repudiates envy and slander and practices honesty.** It delights in people, not their stuff. It enjoys, but doesn’t get enamored by personalities. It refuses to talk trash—either verbally or in writing—whether or not it is deserved.

 **Application:** What is perhaps the greatest enemy to brotherly kindness within the church (cf. James 3:2-18)? *our speech*

d. **1 Peter 3:8**

1 Peter 3:8 – “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren [Gk. *philadelphia*], be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.” Peter again teaches us that **brotherly kindness is unifying and gracious.** It doesn’t react, but rather responds with undeserved blessing, for that was its own experience in salvation (i.e., God granted the blessing of salvation in Christ when judgment was deserved instead). It defaults to humility and gentleness and learns from Jesus to be “moved with compassion” and to be silent before its offenders. Green adds, “Love for the brethren entails bearing one another’s burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ; it means guarding that Spirit-given unity from destruction by gossip, prejudice, narrowness, and the refusal to accept a brother Christian for what he is in Christ.”⁵



Application: In Philippians 2:3-8, what kind of heart will naturally produce a genuine and consistent display of brotherly kindness? *A humble heart*

According to Psalm 133:1, what should be our ultimate motivation and goal for displaying brotherly kindness? *The pleasure and blessing of God*

Having considered some details,⁶ we can at the very least conclude in regards to this virtue that a productive, proof-giving faith cannot co-exist with animosity, bitterness, contempt, or rejection toward another believer. John writes extensively on that point in his first epistle and pointedly summarizes his statements in 4:20—“If a man say, ‘I love God,’ and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” See, if you love God, you will love your brothers and sisters; if you don’t love your brothers and sisters, you don’t really love God.

2. Love

While much has and could be said about this virtue, we’ll keep our comments simple. The word used here is *agape*, which in many passages is virtually synonymous with *philos*. In this verse, *agape* is in addition to and built upon *philos* (or *philadelphia*), so we’ll just notice two simple differences between these terms.

- a. **Whereas brotherly kindness might be considered more of a spirit, love is more of a service.**
- b. **Whereas brotherly kindness focuses on those inside the body of Christ, love extends to those outside the body of Christ.**

Green again provides a helpful commentary on this term:

This agapē might be defined as a deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person’s good. That is what God did for us (John 3:16). That is what He wants us to do (1 John 3:16). That is what He is prepared to achieve in us (Rom. 5:5).⁷

This kind of love is selfless, sacrificial, and serving. It prioritizes others, gives to others, and helps others.⁸ It seeks to bless others and make them better. And because it operates within the worldview of “faith and excellence,” it recognizes that man’s greatest need is reconciliation to God and likeness to Christ. Therefore, it may confront, but graciously; it may resist, but kindly; it may redirect, but blessedly.⁹ It will “[proclaim Christ,] warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28-29). So, it will make much of the Word of God and prayer as it interacts with people.

Like brotherly kindness, however, it’s not natural, and it must be taught and enabled by God. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 that the “love of Christ controls us” and will compel us to “no longer live for [ourselves] but for Him who died and rose again on [our] behalf.” Living for Him is loving for Him (John 13:34; 1 John 3:16, 18; 4:7-11, 21). And we love, because He first loved us (1 John 4:10-11, 19).

Therefore, to love as He loved, we must first immerse ourselves in His love. Study the gospel and see the everlasting love of God on climactic display! Allow it to cast out your own fear that hinders you in loving others (1 John 4:17-18). Study the gospels and watch Jesus turn our paradigm upside down with the extent and activity of His love! Allow it to inform your own daily decisions about how you will relate to people. Study people and discover their true needs; study Scripture and learn how to meet their needs. Pray for the eyes of Christ to see people as He did; pray for the heart of Christ to be concerned for people as He was; pray for the hands of Christ to help people as He did. You are never more Christlike than when you are loving. Yes, believer, you *must* add to your faith, love!



Application: With our understanding of this kind of love in mind, what are some things that love might need to give? To sacrifice? To do? *open discussion*

Think through specific people in your life—generally, how would love view and minister to your spouse? Your children? Your parents? Your boss? Your neighbor? Your teammate? Your classmate? Your co-worker? Your enemy (see endnote 2)? *open discussion*

What specific application does 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 suggest for our love—we demonstrate this love by what? *Being an active and unprejudiced ambassador for Christ, appealing to the unsaved to be reconciled to God through Christ*

How does Jesus' love in Luke 8:26-39 (Mark 5:1-20) confront our own dearth of love? *Jesus, without hesitation, ministered kindly and helpfully to a naked, aggressive, unsocial, maniac. We often either ignore or mock those kinds of people. This must change if we are to be like Christ and add to our faith, love!*

CONCLUSION

“Paul said love is the goal of Christian instruction (1 Tim 1:5). It is the most excellent way (1 Cor 12:31–13:13), the virtue that sums up all other virtues (Col 3:14).”¹⁰ Indeed, God is love, and His people are loving. This is the proof of a Christ-identified life, the trademark of Christlike character.

*When our Lord was speaking to the crowd, a beggar came
Who fell down before Christ and called out His name.
The disciples quickly came, and they turned the man away,
Till they saw the Lord's compassion and they heard the Savior say:*

*“Love as I loved, give as I gave;
These are the people that I came to save.
Love as I loved, and I will shine through.
Let others see My love in you.”*

*Yesterday my time was filled with vain and empty things,
And I was so busy with all that life brings.
People crowded in my way, but I pushed them all away;
They were just a senseless bother, till I heard the Savior say:*

*“Love as I loved, give as I gave;
These are the people that I came to save.
Love as I loved, and I will shine through.
Let others see My love in you.”*

ESSENTIAL VIRTUES

Loving God with My Whole Heart	Loving Neighbors as Myself
<p>THE GROUNDWORK FOR CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v. 5)</p> <p>Saving FAITH</p> <p>Being a “partaker of the divine nature” through the righteousness of Jesus Christ</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pursuing the EXCELLENCE of Christlikeness</p> <p>Cultivating a God-mandated purpose to develop and display the excellencies (character) of Jesus Christ</p> <p>↓</p> <p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-taught understanding of the person, the work, and the ways of Jesus Christ</p>	<p>THE BACKBONE OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v. 6)</p> <p>SELF-CONTROL</p> <p>Cultivating a God-empowered mastery of my internal desires</p> <p>↓</p> <p>ENDURANCE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-sustained faithfulness under external pressure</p> <p>↓</p> <p>GODLINESS</p> <p>Cultivating a God-honoring devotion to Jesus Christ that promotes righteousness and opposes evil</p>
<p>ESSENTIAL VIRTUES</p>	<p>THE TRADEMARK OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER (v. 7)</p> <p>BROTHERLY KINDNESS</p> <p>Cultivating a God-engendered affection for and service to those in the “household of faith”</p> <p>↓</p> <p>LOVE</p> <p>Cultivating a God-imitating mindset that scripturally and sacrificially meets the spiritual needs of others</p>
<p>CORE VALUES</p>	<p>COMMITMENT to Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a wholehearted disciple who chooses the appeals and ideals of Christ and rejects the appeals and ideals of the world.</p> <p>COURAGE for Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a bravehearted disciple who advances Christ and His ways and opposes evil in himself and others regardless of risk to himself.</p> <p>COMPASSION like Christ</p> <p>These traits produce a tenderhearted disciple-maker who seeks the lost and who by his example and effort disciplines others to live a Christ-centered life.</p>

ENDNOTES

¹ Michael Green, vol. 18, 2 *Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 90.

² The word is built on the Greek word for *phileo* meaning “to love” which is from *philos* meaning “loved, dear, friend.” Spiros Zodhiates has a helpful summary of this term (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. [Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000].).

[This word is translated:]

(I) Generally with the acc. of person to have affection for someone (Matt. 10:37; John 5:20; 11:3, 36; 15:19; 16:27; 20:2; 21:15–17; 1 Cor. 16:22; Titus 3:15, with Christian love; Rev. 3:19; Sept.: Gen. 37:4; Prov. 8:17). Of things, to be fond of, to like, with the acc. (Matt. 23:6; Luke 20:46; Rev. 22:15; Sept.: Prov. 29:3). With the idea of overweening fondness (John 12:25; Sept.: Gen. 27:4, 9).

(II) Specifically, to kiss, with the acc. (Matt. 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47; Sept.: Gen. 27:26, 27; Ex. 18:7).

(III) Followed by the inf. meaning to love to do something (Matt. 6:5, they love to pray in public, desire to do it).

Much discussion has arisen concerning the semantic relationship between this word and *agapáō* (25), to love. Of the two, *agapáō* is used predominantly for man’s love toward God while *philéō* is rarely used of it. However, *philéō* occurs when the love of the disciples for Jesus is spoken about (John 16:27; 21:15–17; 1 Cor. 16:22). Furthermore, God’s love to man is spoken of, both *agapáō* and *philéō* are used. It is difficult to find any significance in the pattern of these words’ usages. Some scholars, having drawn hard and fast differences between the words, have imposed these differences upon various texts of Scripture and thereby produced strained and awkward interpretations. Only on occasion do these words bear particular meanings distinct from one another.

Simply stated, to love (*agapáō*) fellow humans means to see or discern what their need is and to meet that need, not according to the object’s concept of need, but that of the one who loves. It is in this concept that the saying of Christ in Matt. 5:44, “love [agapáte] your enemies,” can be understood. For a believer, his enemies are his enemies because they are not believers. What he sees is their need of faith and he must do everything that he can to meet that need in their lives in whatever manner. Believers are never told to love their enemies with the word *philéō* because that would mean to have the same interests as they have.

God calls man his friend (*phílos*), as He did Abraham (James 2:23), when man has adopted God’s interests as his own, just as Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son even as God did His own.

³ “In the NT the terms *φιλᾶδελφία* and *φιλᾶδελφος* (25.35) have acquired highly specialized meanings which restrict the range of reference to fellow believers. In nonbiblical contexts these terms would refer to affection or love for persons belonging to a so-called ‘in-group,’ but in the NT this in-group is defined in terms of Christian faith” (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1996], 292.).

⁴ “Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle” (Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* [Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005], Ro 12:10.).

⁵ He goes on, “Those who have become partakers of the divine nature, or, as he puts it in 1 Peter, those who have been born again (1:23), must show their royal birth in royalty of behaviour towards other children of the King, whatever their differences in culture, class and churchmanship. But this gift has to be worked at....The very importance and the difficulty of achieving this philadelphia is the reason for the considerable stress on it in the pages of the New Testament” (Green, 90).

⁶ We could have added to our study a consideration of the “one another” passages in the New Testament. In *Essential Virtues*, Dr. Jim Berg organizes these admonitions in the following way:

Dispositions to one another – be warm-hearted (Romans 12:10); be others-focused (Romans 12:10); be like-minded (Romans 15:5); be kind (Ephesians 4:31–32); be tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32); be humble (1 Peter 5:5)

Duties to one another – edify others (Romans 14:19); accept others (Romans 15:7); forbear others (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13); obey others in authority (Ephesians 5:21); caution/reprove others (Romans 15:14); forgive others (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13); tell the truth to others (Colossians 3:9); comfort others (1 Thessalonians 4:18); motivate others (Hebrews 10:24); confess sins to others (James 5:16); pray for others (James 5:16); give to others (1 Peter 4:9); love one another (Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11; 3:23; 4:7, 11–12; 2 John 5) [Kindle Locations 2336-2346; 2387-2410].

⁷ Green, 90.

⁸ “The important point to keep in mind is that love is a virtue, not an emotion. Christians are not encouraged to feel warmly about each other or even to like one another [although, I think we can argue from the previous virtue that we should be striving towards this spirit]; they are instructed to act lovingly toward one another. Thus Paul’s description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 speaks about what love does, how it acts, not how it feels” (Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006], 184.).

⁹ Dr. Berg quotes Barclay in his book:

If we seek nothing but a man’s highest good, we may well have to resist a man; we may well have to punish him; we may well have to do the hardest things to him—for the good of his immortal soul....

But the fact remains that whatever we do to that man will never be...vindictive; it will never even be merely retributory; it will always be done in that forgiving love which seeks... his highest good. In other words, agapē means treating men like God treats them—and that does not mean leaving them unchecked to do as they like....

*Love is not sentimental (II Cor. 2:4). Christian love does not shut its eyes to the faults of others. Love is not blind. It will use rebuke and discipline when these are needed. The love which shuts its eyes to all faults, and which evades the unpleasantness of all discipline, is not real love at all, for in the end it does nothing but harm to the loved ones” (William Barclay, *New Testament Words* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964], 143. quoted in Kindle Locations 3424-3433).*

¹⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 37, 1, 2 *Peter, Jude, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 301.