

“Love One Another”
Hebrews 13:1-3

I. Application #1: Love fellow believers (philadelphia)

Romans 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9-10; 1 Pet 1:22; 2 Pet 1:7

Now as to the love of the brethren (philadelphia), you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love (agape) one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more....

—1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Why?

- God is love – 1 John 4:16
- Because we have received love – 1 John 4:9-10
- Primary attribute of followers of Christ – 1 John 4:11, 19-21; John 13:34-35
- Because loving brothers is loving the Lord – Rom. 12:9-11

This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

—1 John 3:23

How? As I have loved you (John 13:34; 15:12)

- Not sappy sentimentality. Not merely words (includes words)
- Real love is sacrificial action
- Practical, tangible expressions of love – 1 John 3:16-18

Sacrificial love has transforming power. Genuine love is volitional rather than emotional. The person who truly loves does so because of a decision to love. This person has made a commitment to be loving whether or not the loving feeling is present. If it is, so much the better; but if it isn't, the commitment to love, the will to love, still stands and is still exercised...True love is not a feeling by which we are overwhelmed. It is a committed, thoughtful decision.

—Dr. M. Scott Peck.

Motion results in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds.

—J. Allan Petersen.

Whoever loves much, does much.
—Thomas a' Kempis.

- Sacrificial – John 15:13 (Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends)
- Undeserved

II. **Application #2: Love believers you don't know (philoxenia)**

“love of strangers”; focus on attitude, not specific action (culturally defined)

Virtue in ancient world

Zeus Xenios – Zeus, god of strangers

The Jews had a saying: “There are six things the fruit of which a man eats in this world and by which his horn is raised in the world to come.” And the list begins: “Hospitality to the stranger and visiting the sick.”

Condition of “inns” in 1st century was deplorable. Fellow believers opened their homes to traveling believers, teachers, refugees of persecution.

Virtue in many cultures even today

Important for the church - qualification for elder; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; demonstrates understanding of your re-identification

Mt. 25:34-40; Lord, when did we see you...

“entertained angels without knowing it.” Abraham, Lot, Manoah, Gideon

Subtle message: Guests are bearers of unexpected blessing. You receive a greater blessing than you give.

III. **Application #3: Love believers suffering for the faith**

The Voice of the Martyrs: www.persecution.com

VOM estimates, “More than 70 million Christians have been martyred for their faith since 33 AD. This year an estimated 160,000 believers will die at the hands of their oppressors and over 200 million will be persecuted, arrested, tortured, beaten or jailed.”

Persecution Worldwide

Afghanistan	Cyprus	Maldives	Sri Lanka
Algeria	Egypt	Mauritania	Sudan
Azerbaijan	Equatorial Guinea	Morocco	Syria
Bangladesh	Ethiopia	Myanmar (Burma)	Tajikistan
Bhutan	India	Nepal	Tibet (China)
Brunei	Indonesia	Nigeria	Tunisia
Chechnya	Iran	North Korea	Turkey
Chiapas	Iraq	Oman	Turkmenistan
China	Kuwait	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
Colombia	Laos	Qatar	Uzbekistan
Comoro Islands	Libya	Saudi Arabia	Vietnam
Cuba	Malaysia	Somalia	Yemen

Examples:

Mrs. Ratna, Mrs. Eti and Dr. Rebekka – Indonesia

Indonesian judges sentenced the women to three years in prison plus a fine for allowing Muslim children to attend a Christian Sunday school program.

Pastor Hamid Pourmand – Iran

Hamid was a former Iranian army colonel. He was arrested September 2004 when security police raided a church conference of more than 80 church leaders that he was attending. He had become a Christian about 25 years ago. During his military career, his superiors had acknowledged that he was a Christian and he had even been excused from observing the Muslim month of fasting. However, it is illegal for a non-Muslim to serve as a military officer; and on February 17, 2005, a Tehran military court sentenced Hamid to three years in jail and ordered his transfer to Evin Prison. Found guilty on charges of deceiving the Iranian armed forces, his sentence automatically discharges him from the army, cuts off his regular income, and eliminates his military pension.