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All Scripture quotations from the Editor are from the New King James Version
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Can You Forgive Your Brother?

By John T. Polk II

Proverbs 18:19: "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle."

Contentious statements that divide brethren are "like the bars of a castle," that is, they defensively fortify brothers from each other. Enemies can be converted and changed more easily than a relative, and it seems the nearer the relationship, the more difficult it is to effect that change! The first brothers, **Cain and Abel**, were separated by Cain's anger that his brother obeyed what was right (**Genesis 4:1-12; Hebrews 11:4**) but Cain was evil (**1 John 3:11-12**).

Jacob and Esau were separated by Esau's profaning his birthright ("inheritance", **Genesis 25:29-34**), Jacob's deception to receive that birthright (**Genesis 27:1-46**), and Esau's bitterness and hatred for his brother. They were separated for years before they could reconcile (**Genesis 33:1-15**), but reconcile they did! *Since the Jews come from Jacob, and the so-called "Palestinians" come from Esau, the modern-day Middle East should read the Bible and reconcile their differences as their progenitors did!*

Brethren in the flesh can be meaner, more violent, and destructive to each other than their enemies who are not related!

Spiritual members in a church of Christ can become as bitter as Cain, and hateful as Esau, toward their brethren. The reason is the same; they have developed "an evil heart of unbelief" and departed from the living

God (**Hebrews 3:12**). Their contentious words become "bars" to keep them inside their castle of ugliness. "Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (**1 John 3:13-15**) This brings eternal damnation upon the contentious brother. No amount of attendances, giving, singing, or prayers can disguise the real intent of wrong brethren.

"We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." (**1 John 4:19-21**)

The message of Jesus Christ, to His churches of Christ, is that of "reconciliation."

"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**) ---jtpll

Free Article: "Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Fight No Evil"

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Salted Speech Colossians 4:6

- ~ Your friend is the man who knows all about you, and still likes you.
~ Elbert Hubbard, c.1908
- ~ There's no one season such delight can bring As summer, autumn, winter, and the spring.
~ William Browne
- ~ Science has proven that a simple hug is one of the most convenient and inexpensive therapies available. Yet we remain touch starved.
~ Leo F. Buscaglia, *Born for Love*, 1992

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AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha

CHRISTIANS SAY, "THEY WILL KNOW
 WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE,"
 BUT HAVE YOU SEEN WHAT SOME
 OF THEM ARE POSTING ON
 SOCIAL MEDIA?



Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Ephesians 4:29



By David Sproule

Greet One Another

There may be certain parts of Scripture that we think only applied to first-century Christians and we just skip over them. But, perhaps we should take a closer look. Consider for a moment the numerous times that Christians were directed to "Greet one another." That still applies today.

First, think about the word, "Greet." The Greek word literally means, "to draw to oneself." It is defined as, "to engage in hospitable recognition of another through word or gesture, welcome, express good wishes, treat with affection." This generally involved embracing or kissing, and the term is used repeatedly in the epistles as an imperative verb, indicating a command of God that is not optional. Do you greet?

Second, think about the object of the action, "Greet one another." The reflexive, reciprocal pronoun "one another" involves all brethren doing this to all other brethren (Rom. 16:16; 2 Cor. 13:12). Just as we are to love one another, encourage one another and serve one another (mutual responsibilities of every Christian for every other Christian), we are to greet one another. Paul says, "Greet all the brethren" (1 Thess. 5:26), and John says, "Greet the friends by name" (3 John 14). Do you greet your brethren regularly?

Third, think about the method, "Greet one another

with a holy kiss." The Lord was not demanding a kiss in all generations and all cultures, but He was taking a common practice of that day and regulating it among the Christians. First-century greetings often included the kiss of friendship, not a passionate kiss. In modern culture, it usually is a handshake or a friendly hug—some kind of gesture that (remember the literal definition) would draw another to oneself in a well-coming, friendly way.

**Agape love
 is to color
 every action of
 a Christian.**

Fourth, think about the regulation of the greeting, "Greet one another with a HOLY kiss." The emphasis in the text is on the word "holy." The Lord took the common greeting of the day and ensured that it was done out of Christian affection. It is to be "holy," meaning "set apart, sincere, unhypocritical." You need to mean it when you greet your brethren and you need to keep it Christ-like. Peter said, "Greet one another with a kiss of love" (1 Pet. 5:14). Agape love is to color every action of a Christian.

Fifth, consider that our holy greetings are to be extended beyond our brethren. Jesus said, "If you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others?" (Matt. 5:47). When you are at a church service, spend time greeting your brethren warmly, but make it a priority to seek out guests and give them a genuine, friendly Christian welcome. Our guests should feel like they are wanted in our family.



**DON'T FAITHLESS
 HAVE LOVELESS
 SPIRITUAL: USELESS**



BEWARE OF IDENTITY THEFT:
 "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (**Galatians 3:26-27**)

