Forgive one another
Love one another
ENCOURAGE one another

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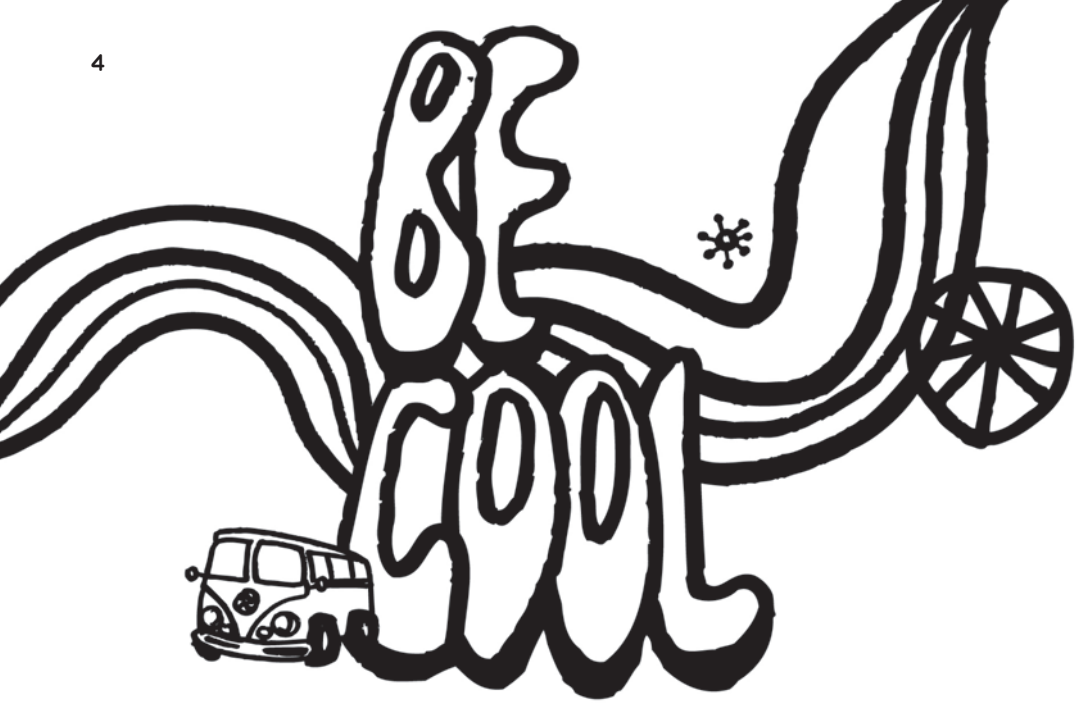

BY BRETT HILLIARD, SENIOR PASTOR

Life is about relationships. It's really pretty simple.

The quality of your life is based on the quality of your relationships.

I can remember standing on a beautiful beach in South Africa, having performed a wedding for some former church members. My wife was unable to make the trip, so I was essentially alone in one of the prettiest spots I had ever seen. And my aloneness made the beauty almost painful. Not having someone to share it with made it almost unbearable.

You see, life is meant to be shared. With family, with friends, with loved ones.

And so maintaining and nourishing strong relationships is not only a high calling for Christ-followers, it is also a way to make your life meaningful and rich. Perhaps that is why Jesus gives us so many practical ways in which to make our relationships better.

The New Testament has over 70 different "one another" passages. In this study, we've chosen 6 of the most prominent ones to serve as a biblical path to improved relationships.

Wouldn't it be cool if the church really took seriously the privilege and access we have to enjoy improved relationships?

Wouldn't it be cool if the onlooking world saw the church and its relationships, and desired to know more about the love of God?

Wouldn't it be cool if you broke free from old patterns and really learned how to forgive and encourage others well?

So….be cool.

Brett

an introduction

"All you need is love, love is all you need" (Lennon & McCartney).

The Sixties was a tumultuous time, an era filled with wars and revolution, social unrest, upheaval and change. Yet in the middle of all the chaos, disorder and hate, one word that would define the generation is "Love". The Sixties was also a time of idealism, and "love" was a great ideal. But there were many movements and philosophies about love, ranging from a love for justice (the US Civil Rights movement) to universalism (as seen in the Beatles song above, or John Lennon's "Imagine"); from love as peace ("Make love not war") to "Free Love" as a rejection of marriage.

So amidst all the many kinds of love – many that are confusing and some that carried on to this day – how was/is one to know what "True Love" is?

The apostle John lived in similar circumstances. Christ's teaching was becoming distorted as it was spread, sometimes intentionally so by false teachers. So John wrote a letter to his flock of believers with the purpose of warning and protecting them against heresy. At the heart of his letter was a simple command for the true followers of Christ: love one another.

warm-up questions

- Name some movies, songs or poems about love or with "love" in the title.
- What is your "love language"? (touch, time, receiving gifts, words of affirmation, being served)
- It's often said that Eskimos have hundreds of words to describe the various kinds of snow, but English has only one word for love. Name as many different kinds of (or aspects of) love as you can, e.g. familial love, romantic love, tough love, etc.
- How has someone made you feel loved recently by something they said or did?

bible study section

Read 1 John 3:1 – 4:21

> *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*
> 1 John 3:1

- What does this verse say about our identity?

- Find all the verses in these chapters where John exhorts believers to show evidence of their Christian identity, i.e. look for verses that say "By this…" or "We know that…"

> *For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.* 1 John 3:11

- From looking at 1 John 3:1-10, who is John writing to? From this, who are the "one anothers" that we are commanded to love in 3:11?

The culture of Asia Minor (present day Turkey) – the context in which John was writing – was a melting pot of Greek and Persian beliefs as well as many local tribal customs and religions. Two common and dangerous teachings were: Syncretism (combining various cultures and beliefs into one) and Gnosticism (a belief that salvation came through secret knowledge, "gnosis" in Greek, that was revealed from a higher being).

- Find examples in 1 John 3 & 4 where John is protecting the believers from wrong practices and false teachings.

> [16]*By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.*[17] *But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?* [18] *Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.* 1 John 3:16-18

- How do we know what "true love" is? (3:16)

- What are some ways that our actions distinguish our love from other kinds of love? (3:16-18)

> *And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.* 1 John 3:23

- What is "His commandment" in 3:23? What are some of the benefits to ourselves in keeping that commandment? (3:19-24)

> *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* 1 John 4:7

- What is the source of our love for one another? (4:7)

Loving non-believers is an important message throughout scripture. These people, who were often Gentiles, are referred to as "neighbours" (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:25-37). But in this letter, John exhorts believers to love their brothers and sisters, to love "one another," i.e. fellow believers.

> *No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.* 1 John 4:12

- Why do you think John is exhorting Christians to love other Christians instead of simply loving all people? (4:12; see also John 13:35 and 17:21-23)

good stuff

When God's love begins to fill our lives, he not only gives us a model of how we should live in our human relationships, but he gives us both the desire and the ability to begin to do it; to reflect his love others. Once again John reminds us of this most practical of all his tests of Christian reality. It is the easiest thing in the world to make a verbal profession of Christian commitment, or to say I love God. But if we do not at the same time love our brother and sister, it is a lie. Love for the unseen Lord is best expressed not just in words, but in deeds of love towards the Lord's people whom we do see.

/ David Jackman, *The Message of John's Letters in the IVP The Bible Speaks Today*

Holiness is not the luxury of the few; it is a simple duty, for you and for me, because Jesus has very clearly stated, "Be ye holy as my father in heaven is holy." So let us pray for each other that we grow in love for each other, and through this love become holy as Jesus wants us to be for he died out of love for us. / Mother Theresa

I spent nine years living and ministering in Vietnam, a country with a high degree of Christian persecution. Some of our work was done in the northern provinces of Vietnam. These provinces were closely watched by the authorities because of the volatile combination of ethnic minority groups, house churches and civil unrest.

I once had an opportunity to have a surprisingly frank discussion with government officials on the subject of religion in these areas. The conversation led to a point where I could ask why the authorities distrusted the churches in these areas and why they felt they had to keep such close watch over them. The official answered, "These groups are often arguing with one another, one leader accusing another leader about "stealing their sheep" and arguing about whose teaching is right and whose is wrong. Sometimes these arguments lead to bigger problems in the community."

personal application

- Are there any "blind spots" in your love for other believers? Is there anyone you are withholding your love from? If so, how does this affect your relationship with God?
- What fears or preconceptions make you more prone to distrusting or disliking others instead of loving them? How can God's perfect love (1 John 4:18) help cast out these fears?
- How can Christ's sacrificial love for us motivate us to love other? What would it "cost" you to love someone else in a similarly sacrificial way? (Can you think of a time when sacrificial love was shown to you?)
- Is there a brother or sister who is in need? How can you help by loving him/her "in deed and in truth"?

scripture memory

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7

Sherman Chau and his family moved back to Hong Kong in 2011 after serving for nine years in Hanoi, Vietnam. He likes swimming, movies and the occasional bowl of pho.

an introduction

The magician Houdini was once tasked to escape from handcuffs that were made extra strong with six locks and nine tumblers, all while in front of a captive audience. On the day of the challenge, 4,000 Londoners came to watch his attempt at the London Hippodrome. Houdini was bound and entered into an empty cabinet that came up to his waist.

As he began, he knelt down, hiding himself from the crowd. For about 20 minutes, Houdini was unseen, until he suddenly popped up and the audience began to applaud. They thought he had freed himself, but the handcuffs were still securely locked. Houdini politely asked the stage-master for more light, and once again knelt back down. Another handful of minutes past while the crowd eagerly watched. When he appeared again, the applause was even louder, but Houdini was still shackled! He was sweating profusely, so he wriggled his hands in front, bent forward past his knees, and stripped his overcoat off in one quick motion. The crowd went wild again.

When Houdini ducked behind the wood this time, he was gone for just a few short minutes. When he came up, his wrists were unfettered. The open handcuffs swung idly from his grasp. He was free! Absolute pandemonium exploded in response. The showman had done it, once again defying all odds to free himself. After the show, Houdini faced the crowd, and everyone was dying to know: “Why did you keep interrupting your escape so often?”

Houdini smiled: “Every time I stood up, the response was so outstanding. I didn’t really need to interrupt my show, but I just wanted to hear the encouragement from the crowd to keep up my enthusiasm!”

warm-up questions

- Can you share a specific time that encouragement kept you going?
- During what situations is encouragement most meaningful for you?
- Would you prefer to receive encouragement for what you do or for who you are?

bible study section

Encouragement is so life-giving. We were created by God to live in community with others and be encouraged. Encouragement was built into the fabric of life by God to keep us renewed and recharged. We all have tough things thrown at us, and we can become discouraged because of tough circumstances. Having good people around us who encourage us is at the heart of why we need places where we feel accepted and can be ourselves.

- Respond to the following statement of one writer: "Few things serve to build Christian community more effectively than encouragement."

We should all be encouragers—helping others live out their lives with strength and integrity, helping others know God's grace, and giving hope for the future. Scripture actually instructs us to be encouragers. To encourage each other is not optional. In Hebrews 3:13, we find these explicit words:

> *Encourage one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'.*

The word 'encourage' translated into Greek is parakaleo, which means "to call urgently." It can also be translated as 'entreat' or 'exhort.' It is in the imperative tense—an urgent directive to believers that is not to be taken lightly. Encouragement is so important to God that we are asked to do it every single day. It should be habitual. The phrase "as long as it is called 'today'" adds a sense of urgency; today will not last forever.

Encouragement is to be done on a continual basis. Followers of Christ are told elsewhere in the Bible to take up the cross of Christ daily, and we are told to be sure to encourage each other along the way. Life is tough, we're gonna need it!

- Think over this past week. Can you remember something that encouraged you each day?

- How have you encouraged others over the past few days? Is there a specific person or time that stands out in your memory?

Hebrews 3:13 goes on to say that we must "encourage one another every day … so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

The give and take of positive encouragement with one another provides a safeguard against heart-hardening sin and spiritual bankruptcy. Encouragement is an indispensible ingredient in faithful living. It is the antidote for hearts that are discouraged and deceived by sin!

- Have you ever thought that encouraging someone else might keep them from being hardened by sin?

- Whose hearts are kept soft through encouragement?

Everyone needs encouragement, and we are to encourage one another daily. However, some people may benefit from encouragement more than others. In fact, in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, we find this instruction given: "We urge you, brothers, warn the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

- How does this verse add to how we understand encouragement within the body of Christ?

There are various ways we can practice encouragement. Most of us are encouraged by hearing an encouraging word and by reading an encouraging message. Both spoken and written words have power to bless. We find both of these in Acts 18:27: "When Apollos wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him." Hearing good words—and maybe even getting a hearty slap on the back—first encouraged the early Christian leader Apollos. Those same friends wrote an encouraging message to others on his behalf.

- What kinds of well-spoken words mean the most to you? Are there certain people whose spoken words carry more weight in your life?

- Do you like getting written notes? In what ways could you be more intentional in including encouragement in your emails, text messages, etc., or even handwritten notes?

There are unlimited actions that can be encouraging to people—sharing a cup of coffee, lending practical help, being polite, smiling, giving gifts, actively listening, prayer with or for someone.

- What kind of actions do you like to receive or give?

A great picture of encouragement is found in Hebrews 10:24-25:

> [24] *Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,* [25] *not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

We are told that we should think over how we can motivate others to have both loving attitudes and spirits, along with good actions. Scripture says to do this by making certain we are meeting together in community. Encouragement cannot take place in isolation. Having the habit of meeting together supports encouragement. The gathering of Christians is meant to be uplifting!

- In what ways are you encouraged on Sundays at church, in your care group, and in other groups you are a part of?

- How hard is it for you to keep up the habit of being in Christian fellowship?

- Where do you find encouragement to face challenges that come your way?

The foundation for encouraging one another is based in the character of God. Being an encourager is an essential part of God's nature. God is the ultimate Encourager. As you conclude this study, take a few minutes to thank God for the ways He has encouraged you. Let Romans 15:5-6 be your guide:

> *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

good stuff

I can live for two months on a good compliment. / Mark Twain

It is said that the giant redwood trees of Western United States have a relatively shallow root system. Their enormous weight is supported by the interlocking of a tree's roots with those of other trees around it. As Christians we need interlocking roots with other believers in the church to withstand the enormous weight of life. We need others spurring us on toward love and good deeds in a world so bent on self-centeredness and self-gratification.

/ George Guthrie, Professor of New Testament at Union University

Sometimes encouragement is not enough. While it's nice to have special attention and kind words, these are often not enough when harsh difficulties come our way. When you face personal opposition, failure, poor health, economic reversal, agonising family problems, the loss of loved ones, or abuse, you can easily go into overload. Problems pile up and hope vanishes under a cloud of pain and despair from the reality of burdens. In these times, you need something stronger than basic encouragement.

When in overload, Galatians 6:2 shows the way for us: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." The word 'burdens' translates to a Greek word that means a heavy load or an oppressive weight, which one must carry for a certain distance even though it's 'unbearable.' When these burdens come upon you, God moves to be present so that you can sense Him. In these times, His Spirit often moves in a way that urges others to be His presence and offer practical assistance.

According to Galatians 6:5, "each one should carry their own load." The Greek word for 'load' is used to refer to a soldier's knapsack or a pilgrim's (student's) backpack; this load is simply a part of life. Imagine that each of us, as we go about our lives from day to day, have a pack of our own. This pack is loaded with what we need to carry. But as we walk through life, there are times when someone else may come along and put extra items into our personal packs. This is fine for a while, but if others keep giving us more to carry, our packs can fill up quickly. Imagine then, that someone or something comes along and drops a 15-pound rock right into your pack! This extra weight means you're now in overload. You need help. You cry out. You ask someone to take the weight off your back, please! "I can't hold it by myself!".

The church is a place where we live out active love and bear one another's burdens when a person is in real overload. We live in authentic community. We have one another.

personal application

- One writer said, "Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul." How is your oxygen flow these days? Are you short of breath and require some encouragement, or are you in great shape and can provide some encouragement this week?
- To whom in the body of Christ are you giving encouragement by your presence, actions or words?
- Are you involved enough with other Christian friends that they know when you need encouragement?
- How can you practice providing more encouragement?
- Make it a goal to encourage someone every single day!

scripture memory

Encourage one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:13

Rick Bates welcomed being an "empty-nester" with Jane, only to find two of their adult children returning to begin a career in HK filling their small flat with a family of five – counting "Lucy," their French bulldog puppy.

an introduction

Believe it or not, waiting on tables is one of the hardest jobs anyone can ever do. Think about it. For very little pay, a waiter gets to take orders from people, run around like crazy, carrying food and drinks for many, many people, all the while receiving little attention or recognition for the service they are providing. It is a thankless and humbling job and it's a service that is sometimes taken for granted. But it's a job that we can learn from. The main role of a waiter (sometimes called a "server") is to serve. Sure, they're paid for it, but in order to do a good job, their duty is to think of others before themselves.

Whether it be at a restaurant, the airport or a store in a mall, we deal with service almost every day. And we have all been on the receiving end of good and bad service. We know what it's like to be enraged by someone who is not doing their job very well... someone who doesn't care about our issue. Someone who should probably be fired for the attitude they have while wearing the uniform of a company who (at least on paper) has high standards. It's a disheartening experience and sometimes makes us crazy.

But, when we receive the service of someone who cares – who really cares – it's like a ray of sunshine. A smile, a soothing voice, or a kind demeanour can go a long way. It calms us. It validates our concerns. It makes us feel heard. It makes us feel special. Those servers have truly learned that the key to good service is thinking of others before themselves.

In the Christian life, service is not just a suggestion, but an imperative. Taught all throughout scripture – and modelled by Christ – we would do well to truly discover the joy of serving.

warm-up questions

- What's your best/worst customer service experience?
- Why is serving so important to Christianity?
- How have you been served by the Christian community?
- How have you served someone in the past? (It's OK to tell the story, you're not boasting.)
- In what ways can you serve at your church? In Hong Kong? Around the world?

bible study section

The Christian life is a pendulum. It can swing wildly back and forth, vacillating between legalism and freedom. As human beings, we like to keep score. We like checklists and making sure we have everything in order. When our life is in order, we will follow rules – and then judge others who don't. But we also see another side of the pendulum. If we're given an inch, we'll take a mile. Sometimes, when we're given one ounce of flexibility, we take it to the extreme. We begin to take liberties with small amounts of freedom.

To explain this pendulum, the Apostle Paul uses the word "slave" in his writing when speaking about the believer. He calls all humans slaves to two things: to the law of sin and to the law of God. Meaning, as believers, we continue to struggle with keeping the law of God (Old Testament) and we, because of our sinful nature, keep the law of sin. In Romans 6 and 7, Paul too wrestles with this battle.

> *[21] So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [22] For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, [23] but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.* Romans 7:21-25

But Paul wants us to know that we now have freedom in Christ – a gift of grace from God. These laws no longer have power to enslave us.

Looking at Galatians 5:13-15

Immediately before this "one another" passage that we are studying, Paul is so angered that the believers in Galatia have been hindered by "one who is troubling (them)" with legalistic teaching. He is stressing as hard as he can that there is freedom from this legalistic lifestyle in Christ. He did not want them do be enslaved to the law or enslaved to sin. He wanted them to know that they have freedom – and to not use it as an "opportunity for the flesh." The best prescription for the Christian life, now that there is freedom, is to serve one another.

> *If his readers insisted on living in slavery, Paul wished they would enslave themselves to love of one another. If they wanted to live under law, let it be the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), impelled by the indwelling Spirit, rather than by an external code. There is no external entity that can enable us to love our neighbours as ourselves, but the Holy Spirit can produce that love within us.* / Dr. Thomas Constable (www.soniclight.com)

Galatians 5:13-15

> *[13] For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. [14] For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." [15] But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.* (ESV)
>
> *[13-15] It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then? (MSG)*

- What freedom is the Apostle Paul speaking of in verse 13?
- Why does Paul feel freedom is so important for believers to understand (read Galatians 5:1-13)
- How would you describe freedom from the law?
- How would you describe freedom from sin?
- How would you describe freedom in Christ?

Christian freedom is not licence, for the simple but tremendous reason that the Christian is not the man who has become free to sin, but the man, who, by the grace of God, has become free not to sin.
William Barclay, Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow

- How are we free not to sin? Why do we still struggle with sin?
- In the Galatians passage, what does “opportunity for the flesh” mean?
- How does Paul say we should serve one another? Why is that important?
  [For further discussion, read 1 Corinthians 13]
- What is the “whole law”?
  [Further reading: Compare Leviticus 19:9-18 to Mark 12:28-34.]
- How would you explain “bite and devour one another” in today’s terms?
- What does “consumed by one another” mean?
- Is service a duty or a desire?

good stuff

Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. / Martin Luther King Jr.

Because Jesus served you in such a radical way, you have a joyful need to serve. It’s a form of praise that doesn’t fully enjoy what it admires until it expresses itself in service. / Tim Keller

...Then [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him...When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (Abbreviated, full passage: John 13:1-17)

Israel is a dusty place. Imagine walking around in sandals every day. Dust from the roads would end up covering the feet of everyone. And because communal meals were enjoyed basically lying down, feet were very much exposed. So, a foot washing would happen before a meal – and it was something a servant would do.

That is why Jesus taking on this role is so shocking. The Teacher, Rabbi and Messiah is washing the feet of His disciples. He turned the servant role on its head completely. A menial task is now taken on by the King of Kings.

Jesus chose this time to do this because the disciples had a completely wrong way of thinking. They were busy arguing, trying to figure out who was the greater disciple. And since there was no servant at this dinner, who was there to wash feet? Surely they wouldn’t do it themselves. But by His action, Jesus reminds the disciples of what He had told them earlier:

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

personal application

- How do you struggle with being “enslaved” to the law of sin and/or the law of God? Do you have a hard time recognising the freedom that we have in the law of Christ?
- How can you live out the freedom we have in Christ?
- Think of ways where freedom can lead to an “opportunity of the flesh.” How can you combat those “opportunities”?
- How do you think God has wired you to serve one another?
- Take some time to look at the Island ECC Membership page. You’ll find a Spiritual Gifts assessment and a SHAPE booklet to help you understand how you can best serve God’s people. (islandecc.hk/connect-grow/membership)
- What’s the first step you can take to serve one another?

scripture memory

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.
1 Peter 4:10

notes

Tim LaTour has been on staff at Island ECC for nearly 10 years and is proud to call Hong Kong home! He and his wife, Cindy, have three wonderful children who keep them busy at all times: Lillian, Violette and Nalin.

an introduction

Don't judge me! Chances are you've heard that phrase, or maybe even said that phrase. Tolerance is a popular idea, and yet in a world that is more "accepting" than ever before, signs of non-acceptance are everywhere: wars, divorce, rebellion, bigotry.

The internet has thrown fuel onto an already hostile world by allowing nasty comments to be posted anonymously. The comment sections in many blogs are littered with cursing and profanity not fit for public consumption. Political viewpoints are polarising and yet the vitriolic rhetoric in most countries is at unprecedented levels. Our 24-hour news cycle means that we are lambasted with a steady stream of political slants. Liberal news outlets get more liberal, causing conservative ones to be more conservative. All of this hostility has made people more timid, lonely and desperate to find trust and acceptance.

As Christians, we have embraced a faith that is exclusive. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." That's pretty judgmental, huh? Jesus is essentially saying that you must believe in Him or you're going to face eternal damnation. Hmmmm. This is not exactly "tolerant," is it? So how does the Christian maintain a solid conviction in his beliefs, and yet interact with others in a way that is gracious and accepting?

warm-up questions

- We're often told that bringing up religion or politics can be a buzzkill for good conversation. What specifically are the most divisive issues of our day?
- Can you remember a time in which you felt "judged"? Share with the group the details of when/where/what?
- Churches have a wide variety of beliefs and have been known to separate over seemingly minor disagreements. What are some of the theological differences that exist among different churches?
- Where would you place your family of origin on the following scale?

  Extremely tolerant / Generally accepting / Disinterested or disengaged / Expectation of conformity / Dogmatic in beliefs

bible study section

Romans 14:1-4

> [1] *Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters.* [2] *One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.* [3] *The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.* [4] *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*

Romans was written to Christians living in the city of Rome. There were two groups of Christians – those who had come out of Jewish backgrounds, and those who had come to faith from paganism. The Jewish faith had strict dietary laws in order to remind them of their Jewish identity, and to serve as a reminder that presence before God required cleansing. The apostle Paul teaches these believers that dietary laws are no longer needed: "in the Lord Jesus, nothing is unclean in itself" (v.14). However, many Jewish Christians couldn't fully abandon their old ways, so disputes arose over this issue. Can we eat the forbidden foods of the Old Testament?

- Which group, according to Paul, has "weak faith"?

- What words give us insight into the relational difficulties between the two groups?

  v. 1?

  v. 3?

  v. 4?

> [10] *You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.* [11] *It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'"* [12] *So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.* Romans 14:10-12

- Why might Paul be asking the rhetorical question in verse 10?

- What is the reason that most people are prone to being judgmental?

- According to v. 11-12, what is the remedy for a judgmental spirit?

> [13] *Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.* [14] *I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.* [15] *If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.* [16] *Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.* [17] *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,* [18] *because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.*
>
> [19] *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.* [20] *Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.* [21] *It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.* Romans 14:13-21

- According to Romans 14:15, how do we demonstrate love?

[22] *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.* [23] *But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.* Romans 14:22-23

- What does Romans 14:22-23 have to say about personal convictions?

Romans 15:1-7

[1] *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.* [2] *Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up.* [3] *For even Christ did not please Himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."* [4] *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

[5] *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,* [6] *so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

[7] *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

- According to Romans 15:1-3:
  What does it mean to "bear with the failings of the weak"?

- What does it mean to "not please ourselves"? Provide modern-day examples of how a Christian may choose to deny himself for the purpose of "bearing with the failings of the weak"? Brainstorm 5 or 6 modern applications.

- How does the life of Christ assist us in "accepting others"? What is the result of accepting one another? (Romans 15:7)

Differences of opinion can exist in a lot of different categories. Note that in Romans 14, Paul speaks about issues of faith, but in Romans 15:2 he says we should "please our neighbours for their good," indicating not just people of faith, but non-believers as well.

- What are the thorny issues that exist between Christians and non-Christians?
  [Consider how you could alter your behaviour for each audience.]

- "Love the sinner, but hate the sin" is a commonly quoted strategy for the Christian in dealing with the world. Is this feasible as a way to deal with those who you disagree with? Discuss the merits and/or weaknesses of this approach.

- How have your values or convictions changed since you've become a Christian? Share how something you now think is wrong, used to be acceptable in your life. What helped you arrive at this new conviction?

good stuff

After serving 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was released on 11 February 1990. He said: "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

Nelson Mandela, chose to accept the very ones who had done him wrong. He extended grace and forgiveness to those who had shown him none.

A soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam called his parents from San Francisco. "Mom and Dad, I'm coming home, but I've a favour to ask. I have friend I'd like to bring with me."

"Sure," they replied, "we'd love to meet him."

"There's something you should know," the son continued, "he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us."

"I'm sorry to hear that, son. May be we can help him find somewhere to live."

"No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us."

"Son," said the father, "you don't know what you're asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can't let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He'll find a way to live on his own."

At the point, the son hung up on the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him. A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide.

The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognised, him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn't know, their son had only one arm and one leg.

The need for acceptance is powerful and life-giving.

personal application

- What are practical ways for you to demonstrate acceptance to others?

- How does your background affect your natural propensity to be accepting? Examine how your own family dynamics, personal failures, educational experience, etc. may affect your tendency toward legalism, dogmatism, or judgmentalism.

- Who among your friends demonstrates great acceptance towards you? How have they shown that to you in the past?

- Many people feel "judged" by Christians even if no judgment has taken place. Who in your life might feel this way, and what can you do to break down this barrier? Brainstorm at least 3 people, and 3 specific actions steps.

  1._____ action: _____

  2._____ action: _____

  3._____ action: _____

scripture memory

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

Brett Hilliard is originally from Texas in the US, and has lived in HK for 13 years. He's got four kids, two dogs, and one wife, all of whom bring him great joy.

an introduction

It was just a normal day on April 20, 1985. Kenneth and his girlfriend Nichola met for homework and studying after a regular school day. There was nothing special, except that they failed to return home later in the evening. The next day, to the horror of a hiker, two brutally beaten bodies were found in Braemar Hill, not too far from the school where Kenneth and Nichola attended.

Kenneth was brutally beaten and suffocated to death. Nichola was tortured, raped, and left to die. The details are simply too horrific to be mentioned. It took the police over 7 months to apprehend the 5 murderers. The youngest murderer, Won Sam-Lung who was 15 years old at that time, was the only one who confessed to the crime.

How would you feel if you were Ken or Nichola's parents?

To everybody's surprise, 19 years later, when Won was released from jail, something unusual was revealed. Without Won knowing it, Kenneth's parents, now residing in Scotland, wrote to the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and asked for leniency on behalf of Won. They had forgiven their son's murderer, though they still felt too much pain to meet him in person.

"I have done such terrible things to them and caused them such trauma. I cannot fathom how they can forgive me," said Won.

warm-up questions

- Have you ever forgiven someone who has hurt you deeply? Or, have you ever received forgiveness from someone you have deeply hurt? Describe how you felt in either instance.
- Do you agree with Kenneth's parents in forgiving Won, his son's murderer? Why or why not?
- What are the common objections of forgiveness?
- How would you define forgiveness?
- Do you think forgiveness should be conditional? Or, what should be the proper conditions upon which you will forgive?

bible study section

In the Book of Genesis starting in chapter 37, we learn of a young man by the name of Joseph. It is obvious that he is the favourite son among the 12 brothers. None of his brothers gets anything close to a coat of many colours (read: very expensive outfit). From his brothers' perspective, he is full of himself. He even tells of his two dreams in which the whole family, including their father Jacob, all bow to him as if he is someone important. Moreover, this Joseph is extremely annoying. He keeps doing what every sibling hates – he gives bad reports about them to their father (37:2). Of course everybody hates Joseph.

One day, while visiting their brothers in the field, the brothers decide to get rid of Joseph once and for all. While refraining from killing Joseph, they sell him into slavery and the new master takes him all the way from Palestine to Egypt.

Here, Joseph the favourite son becomes Joseph the nobody; the Joseph who had been waited on by many servants becomes the Joseph who waits on his own masters. He works very hard, and his master likes him and trusts him. However, his master's wife accuses him of attempted rape and he ends up in jail. Poor Joseph.

- If you were Joseph, how would you feel about your life and your brothers? How would you feel about God?

- Have you ever been treated unfairly? Have you been betrayed by someone you trusted? How did that feel?

- If you were Joseph, and if you were given opportunity, would you want revenge? How would you want revenge?

Let's fast forward many years. Joseph spends some years in jail, but God has been with him all the time. Eventually, because of his competency and God's grace, Joseph rises from being a slave in an unknown land to become the number 2 guy in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. Joseph proves himself to be competent, and he is managing Egypt during 7 years of famine. He also has a wife and his own children. Finally, life seems to be smooth and he is enjoying his success both at home and in his career. Suddenly, however, the unthinkable happens – his brothers appear. The so-called brothers who wanted to kill him but eventually sold him in slavery suddenly show up.

To cut a very long story short, Joseph arranges for a face to face confrontation. Read the following Bible passage:

> [1] *Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.* [2] *And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it.* [3] *And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.*
>
> [4] *So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.* [5] *And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.* [6] *For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest.* [7] *And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.* [8] *So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.* Genesis 45:1-7

- Why does Joseph mention "because you sold me here"? If Joseph had truly forgiven his brothers, why not avoid talking about this? Why is this important in the process of forgiveness?

- Is an apology necessary before we extend forgiveness? Or do you think forgiveness without apology is possible? Does an apology make forgiveness easier to grant?

- Do you agree that when we "forgive" we should also "forget" what happened? If not, how can you "remember" but "forgive"?

- The Greek word for forgiveness is "aphesis" which carries the sense of "letting them go." Read the following statement from Lewis B. Smedes and share whether you agree with him or not.

"When you forgive someone for hurting you, you perform spiritual surgery inside your soul; you cut away the wrong that was done to you so that you can see your "enemy" through the magic eyes that can heal your soul. Detach that person from the hurt and let it go, the way a child opens his hands and lets a trapped butterfly go free." / Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget*

- What was Joseph trying to do when he asked his brothers to "come near" to him?

- Do you think "forgiveness" must include "reconciliation" in the sense of restoring a relationship? Why or why not? What if the offender is no longer living? Or what if the offender has a record of repeating the offense without any sign of genuine repentance? What are the conditions that will make a genuine reconciliation possible?

- Joseph says, "So it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:8). Later, Joseph also says, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good …" (Genesis 50:20). How does Joseph understand God's sovereignty and human evil?

good stuff

In his classical book Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve, the late professor Lewis B. Smedes provides some observations on forgiveness:

- People usually forgive "slowly." It's a long process, and sometimes it may take a long time, depending on how deep and traumatic the offense was.
- Forgiveness involves "a little understanding" of the offender. It does not mean that we find excuses for the offender, but some understanding of the offender will help us see the offender also as a needy person, broken, and in need of God's grace.
- Those who try to forgive are often "in confusion." Forgiveness is never instant and clear cut. Even though we may be willing to let go of the offender, the offense and the hurt may still cause some lingering anger in our hearts.
- Forgiveness happens "a little at a time." Just like peeling an onion – it is little by little, layer after layer, until the whole thing is gone.
- People either forgive "freely, or not at all." You can never demand forgiveness, it must be freely given. A forced forgiveness is never authentic.

Love keeps no record of wrongs / 1 Corinthians 13:5

You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well. / Lewis B. Smedes

personal application

- Who is the most difficult person to forgive in your life? Why?

- Is there anything that I have done that I cannot even forgive myself for? Or, has something happened in the past that makes me angry at God even now?

- Have I offended somebody so badly that I always put aside the thought of asking for forgiveness? Or perhaps it happened so long I don't even know where to start?

- Consider if there is some action I need to take to facilitate forgiveness.

scripture memory

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Albert Ng dreams of travelling across Europe with his wife Elisa and spending time studying in old universities (but without homework assignments)! This will take a miracle to materialise, as they are both busy enjoying their two children at home.

an introduction

In 1985 Dionne Warwick and Friends had a super popular song called “That’s What Friends Are For”. It was completely sentimental and sappy but so much so that you just couldn’t stop singing along with it! One of the most popular TV comedies from the 1990’s in America was called “Friends”. The sitcom was about 6 friends who lived in the same building, hung out at the same coffee shop, and did hilarious and heartwarming things for 10 seasons.

Don’t we all want friendships in life that combine the powers of Warwick’s song and the “Friends” TV show? Christians seem to talk less about friendship and much more about fellowship. Is “fellowship” just a fancy Christian word for “friendship” with other Christians? In Christian fellowship, do Christians just live in the same building, drink coffee together, do hilarious and heartwarming things, while singing sappy songs together FOREVER?! When the Bible talks about “fellowship with one another,” there appears a depth to the concept that goes beyond these things.

What would a Christian be without fellowship with God and other believers? At the core of the Christian faith is the belief that we are not meant to do life or faith alone. We are called by a God, who is three persons in one God, who have always been in fellowship with one another – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – from everlasting to everlasting. We are also called into the fellowship of the body of Christ – to be a witness of Christ’s love to a dying world. Fellowship with one another is not just an important part of the Christian life. Fellowship is at the very core of a Christian’s identity.

warm-up questions

- Why do you think Christians need fellowship with other Christians?
- Do you think a Christian can be a lone ranger Christian – living his/her faith out alone? Why or why not?
- Is Christian fellowship different from regular friendships? If so, how?
- Describe a time in your life when you experienced Christian fellowship. What was so good or bad about it?

bible study section

> [5] *This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.* [6] *If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* [7] *But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* 1 John 1:5-7

- What does the apostle John mean when he says, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (v.5)?

- What comfort and reassurance does it bring you knowing that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"?

[God is] the source and essence of holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth; in Him there is nothing that is unholy or unrighteous, evil or false. / F.F. Bruce, New Testament scholar

- How does this definition add to your understanding of God as light?

- In what ways do we often struggle to believe that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"?

- Take some time to pray and praise God for being "light with no darkness at all".

It was not uncommon in the apostle John's first century world for deity to be described as light in other religions. Certainly it would not be out of place in many world religions today for deity to be considered light. After all, people are drawn to a good god rather than an evil god. People who struggle in believing that the God of the Bible is good, given suffering in this world, also then struggle with believing in the God of the Bible at all. But the very fact that people want to worship God who is light affirms the existence of God.

We believe that the sun is in the sky at midday in summer not because we can clearly see the sun (in fact, we cannot) but because we can see everything else. / C.S. Lewis

The God of the Bible has consistently manifested Himself through light. In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to Moses through a burning bush, and He guided His people away from slavery to the Egyptians through a pillar of fire (Exodus 3:1-6; 13:21-22). King David also sung about "The Lord is my light and salvation" (Psalm 27:1).

- The apostle John tells us that if we have fellowship with God then untruthful living is "walking in darkness" (v.6). What does it mean to "walk in darkness"?

- Why would it be a lie to have "fellowship with God" and also "walk in darkness"?

- What does it mean to "walk in the light" (v.7)?

We know the Bible describes humans as those who are born into this world as "darkness walkers", that is, born into this world as sinners (Romans 3:23). We also know the apostle John says that Christians cannot be perfect in this life, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

- How then can we "walk in the light" instead of "walk in darkness" (hint: see 1 John 1:9)?

All of this discussion has set up for us an understanding of the nature of the God we believe in, how we can be in relationship with this God, and what it means to "walk in the light". In verse 7, the apostle John tells us that if we "walk in the light" then we will have "fellowship with one another".

- Given all that we have discussed so far, what do you think is unique about this Christian fellowship?

- How does v.7 itself, remind us of what binds us together in "fellowship with one another"?

"Walking in the light" then is about genuinely living out our relationship with God. It is about knowing that we are those who have been made right with Him through His sacrifice on the Cross for us. It is about living a life to please God rather than ourselves or others. It is about seeking to represent Jesus in all areas of our life. Not flawlessly but with the humility that comes from knowing that everything we do is only acceptable in God's sight through the blood of Jesus.

"Fellowship with one another" then is not just about being friends with others who also label themselves Christians. It is not just about finding friends who share the same values as you so that you can feel comfortable being yourself. It is about journeying through this broken world with fellow "light walkers" because you know you desperately need those who are on mission with you, who can relate to your love relationship with God, and who understand your daily need for the Gospel (because they need it too!).

good stuff

[God is] the source and essence of holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth; in Him there is nothing that is unholy or unrighteous, evil or false. / F.F. Bruce, New Testament scholar

We believe that the sun is in the sky at midday in summer not because we can clearly see the sun (in fact, we cannot) but because we can see everything else. / C.S. Lewis

The night I became a Christian I was among a group of 17 teenage boys all experiencing the presence and conviction of the Holy Spirit together. My two best friends were sitting next to me. As the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin for the first time and offered the comfort of the Gospel, I resisted this supernatural experience as explainable by some scientific reasoning. The Holy Spirit used the friendship with those guys to push me over the edge into fellowship with Him. As I looked at those friends in that moment, I knew God was real and that His love as displayed on the Cross was all-surpassing. Satan might have been trying to derail me at that critical moment but God used two great friendships with Christian brothers to help me see the light.

I had the privilege of being born again directly into fellowship with other believers. I went from having two great friends to having two great fellow "light walkers". We were blessed in that we already felt like we had no walls between us but the reality was that God tore even more walls down – ones we didn't know we had with each other. Having my two best friends with me from the very beginning of my Christian journey has meant I always had this experience of fellowship in Christ burned on my brain. I have certainly gone through times of not being in much fellowship and times of having an abundance of fellowship. But in times of scarcity I always knew I wanted and needed more fellowship.

Christian fellowship has always been more than being friends with others sharing the same values as me. Fellowship with one another has been about being centred around our relationship with God, pursuing the purpose of God together, allowing God to use us in one another's lives to shape us, confessing sin to one another, offering forgiveness to one another, lifting each other's spirits through the hope of Christ, challenging each other to live for Christ, and so much more. It is the context for so many of the other "one anothers"!

personal application

- Are you “walking in darkness” or are you “walking in the light”?

- What things have kept you from returning to Jesus, either now or in the past?

  If your conscience tells you that you are walking in darkness then take time to confess your darkness to God and ask Him for forgiveness. Know that taking that small step puts you back in the realm of walking in the light and enjoying your fellowship with Jesus!

- How would you describe your current relationship with other Christians? Acquaintances? Friends? Fellow “light walkers”?

- Are you content with the state of your relationship with other Christians?

- If not, what could you do to find or further relationships with other Christians that would reflect “fellowship with one another” described in this passage?

scripture memory

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

Didi has been serving as a pastor at Island ECC for just over a year. When he is not doing ministry, he loves to go hiking in Sai Kung with his wife or wrestle with his three boys!

APPENDIX

"one another" references in the New Testament

1. Matthew 24:10
And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.
2. Mark 9:34
But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.
3. Mark 9:50b
Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.
4. Luke 6:11
But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.
5. Luke 22:23
And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.
6. John 5:44
How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?
7. John 13:14
If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
8. John 13:34
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
9. John 13:35
By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
10. John 15:12
This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
11. John 15:17
These things I command you, so that you will love one another.
12. Acts 4:15
But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another. . .
13. Romans 12:5
. . . so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
14. Romans 12:10
Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honour.
15. Romans 12:16
Live in harmony with one another.
16. Romans 13:8 (NIV)
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.
17. Romans 14:13
Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.
18. Romans 14:19 (NASB)
So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
19. Romans 15:5
May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus. . .
20. Romans 15:7
Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
21. Romans 15:14
I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.
22. Romans 16:16
Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

23. 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV)
I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.
24. 1 Corinthians 4:6
I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favour of one against another.
25. 1 Corinthians 6:1
When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?
26. 1 Corinthians 6:7
To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.
27. 1 Corinthians 11:33
So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. . .
28. 1 Corinthians 12:25
. . . that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.
29. 1 Corinthians 16:20
All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
30. 2 Corinthians 10:12b
But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.
31. 2 Corinthians 13:11b
Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
32. 2 Corinthians 13:12
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
33. Galatians 5:13b
Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
34. Galatians 5:15
But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
35. Galatians 5:26
Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
36. Galatians 6:2
Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
37. Ephesians 4:2
. . . with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. . .
38. Ephesians 4:25
Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.
39. Ephesians 4:32
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
40. Ephesians 5:19
. . . addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. . .
41. Ephesians 5:21
. . . submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
42. Philippians 2:3 (NASB)
Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves. . .
43. Colossians 3:9
Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices. . .
44. Colossians 3:13
. . . bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
45. Colossians 3:16
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
46. 1 Thessalonians 3:12
. . . and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you. . .
47. 1 Thessalonians 4:9
Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. . .
48. 1 Thessalonians 4:18
Therefore encourage one another with these words.
49. 1 Thessalonians 5:11
Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
50. 1 Thessalonians 5:13 (NASB)
. . . and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.
51. 1 Thessalonians 5:15
See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.
52. 2 Thessalonians 1:3
We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.
53. Titus 3:3
For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.
54. Hebrews 3:13
But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
55. Hebrews 10:24
And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. . .
56. Hebrews 10:25
. . . not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
57. James 4:11
Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.
58. James 5:9
Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.
59. James 5:16
Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
60. 1 Peter 1:22
Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. . .
61. 1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)
Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.
62. 1 Peter 4:8
Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.
63. 1 Peter 4:9
Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.
64. 1 Peter 4:10
As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. . .
65. 1 Peter 5:5b
Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
66. 1 Peter 5:14
Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.
67. 1 John 1:7
But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
68. 1 John 3:11
For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.
69. 1 John 3:23
And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us.
70. 1 John 4:7
Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
71. 1 John 4:11
Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
72. 1 John 4:12
No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.
73. 2 John 1:5
And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another.

All the above are taken from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

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