

You And Your Brother

Introduction. Psalm 133 is a short, vivid Psalm written by David. It pictures the unity of brethren as being as precious as the oil of priestly consecration and as refreshing as the early mountain dew.

Jesus told the scribe who came to test Him to love God and his neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40). My first priority is strengthening my relationship to God. My second priority is my relationship with my fellow man, especially my fellow Christian (cp. Romans 12:10). A Christian does not exist in a vacuum. God wants us to enjoy spiritual fellowship. However, that means we will occasionally have problems. Those problems can be solved if we will remember and follow a few important guidelines.

I. Do Not Be A Hindrance To Your Brother

- A. In the matter of eating meats, the apostle commanded us not to cast stumbling blocks in the way of our brethren (Romans 14:13-19; 1 Corinthians 8:8-13).
- B. Jacob offended when he cheated Esau out of his birthright (Genesis 27:36). Joseph's brethren took offense when Joseph told them of his dreams (Genesis 37:5-11, 26-28; 42:6, 9). Barriers resulted in both cases!
- C. Quarreling and bickering can adversely affect other people in a congregation (Galatians 5:15). When there was strife between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen, Abraham yielded (Genesis 13:5-9). Issues between brethren can cause people or even their children to give up their faith (Matthew 18:6).

II. Give Your Brother The Benefit Of The Doubt

- A. God commanded true justice to be administered between a man and his brother (Zechariah 7:8-10).
- B. We are in a rush to believe the worst about others (cp. 1 Corinthians 13:7). We should train ourselves to where our first thought about a brother doing something is skepticism, defending them until proven otherwise (Proverbs 18:13, 17).

III. Be Open To Reconciliation And Forgiveness

- A. It is difficult to undo a wrong done to a brother (Proverbs 18:19). Offenses are easier prevented than removed. It is better to suffer loss than to carry a grudge.
- B. The New Testament commands forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:13-14). Do not delay forgiveness and be generous when forgiving (Matthew 5:23-26; 18:15-17, 21-22; cp. Ephesians 4:3). It is dangerous to refuse to be reconciled!
- C. Three roadblocks to reconciliation and forgiveness:
 1. Hurt feelings — perhaps we are too sensitive.
 2. Avoidance of loss — never want to give in.
 3. Pride — sometimes it is only what I want.

IV. Look For Ways To Restore A Fallen Brother

- A. James said to confess our faults and pray for one another (James 5:16; cp. Exodus 32:11-15, 30). We naturally wish for our brethren to think well of us, and social confession humbles the soul, and makes it watchful.

- B. Restoration has to be done in a good spirit (Galatians 6:1). “Restore” is a metaphor taken from a dislocated limb, brought back by the hand of a skillful and tender surgeon into its place (cp. Isaiah 35:3-4). Show the mercy and feeling you would want to receive from someone else (Matthew 7:1-5, 12).

Conclusion. Charles Spurgeon said, “I am quite sure that the best way to promote union is to promote truth.” The truth of the scriptures is that we are commanded to love one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17). Maintaining good relationships is key to great faithfulness in the Lord.