

Another “One Another” Article

The Sunday auditorium class at Karns on the *One Another Principle* has spawned more than one article. We can see from the “one another” passages how we view and treat one another reflects the true heart of our Christianity. The application of these passages in our lives says who we are better than who we say we are or even who we think we are.

One point made abundantly clear from the study of the “one another” passages is the special and unique relationship that should exist between members of the Lord’s body. There are, depending on the translation, about 19 verses that say we are to love one another in the New Testament alone. Most of those one another verses translate love from the ancient Greek word, *agape*. The precise meaning of *agape* as used in these verses is not easily defined but the word has been generally defined as “active good will” or that which reflects the kind of love that God exhibits toward mankind. The *agape* kind of love we should have for our brethren is not unique, however. We are similarly told to love (*agape*) our neighbor (Gal. 5:14); love (*agape*) our enemies (Matt. 5:44); and we are to love (*agape*) all men (I Thess. 3:12).

We are also told in I Pet. 3:8, “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love (*philia*) as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.” We are to love our brothers and sisters in Christ as we love our brothers and sisters in our earthly families. The Scriptures do not tell us to love (*philia*) our enemies or even (*philia*) our neighbors. Thus we read in the New Testament where members of the Lord’s church are frequently referred to as brethren, brothers, and sisters.

There is still another relationship beyond *agape* and *philia*. In Romans 12:10 we read, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love (*philia*), in honor preferring one another.” The ancient Greek word translated “kindly affectionate” is *philiostorgos*, a combination of *philia* and *storge*. The word *storge* or verb form *stergein*, is used to describe the love parents have for their children or children for their parents. The idea put forth in this verse is we are to cherish our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We see from these few verses the relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ is clearly special. Hopefully we will remember this special relationship before we speak or write something despairingly about one of our brothers and sisters.

For the elders,
Don Denton