



abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on **March 1-2, 2008**

this week's coreverse

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."

2 Peter 1.5-7a NIV

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Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days, you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage from scripture. Other days, you'll be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying and answering questions.

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions acts as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members for more information on ABC Small Groups or go to adabible.org>ministries>small groups.

See adabible.org for abclinks archives.



Part Five of a Seven Part Sermon Series

"Growing in Brotherly Kindness and Love"

I grew up with one brother who was two older than me. Eric and I were constantly playing games and competing against one another. In autumn it was one on one tackle football. In winter it was full contact Nerf basketball in the basement. In spring it was stick ball home run derby. In between these "major" sports were numerous other games we would just make up. Everything was a competition. More often than not the games would end with us in a knock-down-drag-out fight. I must confess there were many days when I would wonder if my big brother really cared about me at all. I still remember the day he got his high school class ring and promptly cracked me on the skull with it. Ah... brotherly love.

When we were in middle school, Eric had a friend named Mike. Mike lived one block away from us. Mike was a jerk. Now being a Jesus follower and writing this, I probably shouldn't say such a thing. But sometimes you've got to call it like you see it. If Mike were to read this, I think he would agree that in eighth grade he was a jerk. Needless to say Mike and I didn't always get along so well. I used to think I didn't like Mike because he was a jerk, but looking back I wonder if it was more of a case that he was stealing time with my brother from me. It always felt like my brother favored Mike over me and that hurt. It made me dislike Mike even more.

There came a day when Eric, Mike and I were outside in our side yard. The years have caused me to forget what started this incident, but something snapped between Mike and I and the two of us came to blows. Next thing I knew I was fully engaged in a good old fashioned brawl. The whole time Mike and I were fighting my brother just stood there. He didn't move. He didn't say a thing. He just stood there and watched Mike and I pound the stuffing out of each other. And there was someone else watching too. Standing at the kitchen sink, my mother looked up in horror to see her youngest son going at it with her other son's best friend. There stood Eric not doing a thing. The fight ended with my mother flying out the front door and separating Mike and I. Mike got on his bike and rode home. My mom "escorted" my brother and me back through the front door into the house. Once in the house, my mom immediately turned on my brother and angrily asked, "Why didn't you do anything to stop it?!" And then came the words I'll never forget and forever treasure. My brother looked back at my mom and said rather matter of fact, "Why should I have stopped it? Kevin was winning." It was at that moment I first thought, "My brother loves me. He chose me over his best friend." It felt tangible. It felt real.

This week we examine two character traits that are closely intertwined: brotherly kindness and love. We'll examine who our brothers and sisters are, what our responsibilities are to them and how we are to love them.



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personal bible studies

This week we continue to look at the actions of faith outlined in 2 Peter 1. Peter lists several actions to be taken by followers of Jesus. This is a good time to be reminded that these actions do not come automatically but rather they require a disciplined and focused effort. As a follower of Jesus these actions are not optional; they are required as part of the Christian journey to becoming more Christ like in our day to day living. They are not easy. However, be reminded that God has given you everything you need to grow in these areas of life. God gives you the power; you need to do the work. This week we will focus on two concepts: brotherly kindness and love. The two are listed separately by Peter, yet they seem to be extensively intertwined.

dayone

You didn't get to choose the family (parents, siblings, etc.) you were born into. Maybe you are incredibly thankful for being born into your family. Maybe you wish at times you had been born into a different family. Maybe you were born into one family and adopted into another. Whatever your circumstances were, chances are pretty good that you didn't have much of a choice when it came to family.

What about your spiritual family? Do you have any choice in that matter?

Read the following:

Romans 8.14-17

Galatians 3.26-4.7

Ephesians 1.1-5

What conclusions do you draw after reading these passages?

If trusting in Jesus makes you a child of God, what does that mean for you in relation to others who trust in Jesus?

Jesus had something to say about who is considered brothers and sisters. ***Read Matthew 12.46-50.***

By choosing to follow Jesus as Lord, you are choosing to be part of his family. Consequently when you make that choice, you then gain a whole new family of brothers and sisters. That seems pretty cool. However, just as you choose to be part of Jesus' family, you don't choose who else is. What are the implications of that?

daytwo

In Day One, we established that choosing to follow Jesus means you become adopted into Jesus' family. Becoming a member of Jesus' family means you have new brothers and sisters who are also part of the family. So... what are your responsibilities to your spiritual family members?

Read 1 John 4.7-21

How many times is "love" mentioned in this passage?

Read verse 21 again. You can choose to be part of God's family by choosing whether or not to follow Jesus. As part of Jesus' family, do you then have the option of choosing whether or not to love your other family members?

What if someone in Jesus' family is someone you don't like? Can you love God and not love his other children?

Contemplate the difference between love as a feeling and love as an action. Do you have a choice in this matter as well?

Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you where you need to grow in this area. Is there someone in your family you find you don't have loving feelings for? Ask God how you can show love to that person in action. Day Three has more to say about this.

daythree

If following Jesus means you're in God's family, and being in God's family means you have brothers and sisters in Christ, and having brothers and sisters in Christ means you have to love them, then how are you to love them? How do you love someone you might not even like? What does this look like and what does this mean for you?

Read the following: *John 21.15-17* *James 2.14-18* *1 John 3.16-17*

Would the suggestions of James and John be best described as feelings or as actions? Is this a choice?

What tangible and active ways can you show love for others in your family? Your church? Your community?

Love will cost you something. What's it going to cost you? What are you willing to sacrifice?

Where do you need to grow in this area of love? How are you going to do that?

Read John 15.9-13. Is it easier to say, "I would die for someone" or "I would live for someone?" What does it look like to live for someone? (other than yourself)

When is the last time you sacrificed something for someone else's benefit? What motivated you to do so?

If you're thinking this is too hard or you don't have the capacity to sacrificially love those around you, be reminded of the source from which you are to draw.

Read 2 Peter 1.3 and 1 John 4.7

Pray: Thank God for giving you everything you need to love others... even those you may dislike. Reflect on the sacrificial love Jesus showed for you. Ask God to fill you with the reality of His love for you. Receive the love of God and set out to give this love away in sacrificial ways.



small group discussion

leanin

Tell about the last time you received really great service from a business.

lookdown

Both Luke and John recorded events that took place at the Last Supper.

Read Luke 22.24-28 aloud.

On the eve of Jesus' crucifixion, what was on the minds of the disciples? What do these guys not understand?

Read John 13.1-17

How do Jesus' actions here contrast with the conversation the disciples were having?

Why would Jesus do such a thing as wash His disciples' feet? Couldn't He just tell them to serve?

Why do you think Peter had such a hard time with this?

lookout

Where do you see people today with "power" or authority serving others?

How does this impact you?

Why would anyone be motivated to serve someone else?

Do you think most acts of service are done out of love or with a desire to get something in return? Does it make a difference?

lookin

At the Last Supper, another dialog takes place with Jesus giving a command to the disciples. **Read John 13.34-35.**

Jesus states the one observable trait that will identify these guys as His followers will be how they love one another.

If the distinguishing mark of a Jesus follower is love for other Jesus followers, what observable behavior of love can be seen in you?

What motivates you to love others?

lookup

Spend some time sharing your prayer requests with one another. What challenges are you facing this week? Is there someone you need to show love to? Share it with the group. Go to God in prayer and acknowledge Him as the source of all love. Ask God to fill you with His love so that you, in turn, may love others.

discover
more

In January, Ada Bible Church introduced TheCommon, a web-based way for our congregation to connect goods and services with people in our church who have needs. TheCommon is a great way for you to show brotherly kindness to fellow Ada Bible Church attenders.

For more information on how to get registered online for TheCommon, stop by the Connecting Point in the Atrium and pick up an information packet.