

# Love to the Brethren

by H.J. Vine

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of love to the brethren as a sign of regeneration and a natural result of being taught by God.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:1

**Topics:** "Christian Love", "Regeneration"

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## Description

H.J. Vine emphasizes the importance of love for the brethren as a sign of regeneration, highlighting that those who lack love are still spiritually dead. He points out that God is love, and to know God is to love one another as Christ loved us. Vine encourages believers to imitate God and walk in love, as it is a transformative expression of true knowledge of God in Christ.

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## Transcript

For anyone to be entirely devoid of "love to the brethren," is a sure sign that he is still unregenerate. "He that loves not his brother abides in death," we are told. There may be proud claims of light and righteousness, of being in advance of others, or of some doctrinal or ecclesiastical advantage, but the Word is emphatic, "He that loves not knows not God; for God is love." On the other hand, it is said, "Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God."

The LORD HIMSELF gave a new commandment. Love is the fullness of the law; and the new commandment says, "Love one another as I have loved you." The Lord Jesus was on His way to suffer and die for us when He said, "as I have loved you." The disciples to whom He said that were about to be scattered and leave Him. One to deny Him. Yet He loved them through all, and said, "Love one another as I have loved you." We cannot love the brethren too much, therefore. We may and do come short of the standard He gave, but to be absolutely without love proves that such an one is still lifeless Godward, though religious, it may be, even as Paul was before he was saved, "being exceedingly zealous," as he said, "and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals" (Gal. 1:14). When, however, God's Son became the joy and rejoicing of his heart, instead of persecuting as formerly, he preached the "faith which works by love" (5:6). And he wrote, "Though I give my body to be burned (i.e., like a fanatic), and have not love it profits me nothing"; also, "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ loved us" (Eph. 5:1, N.Tr.). What a change the true knowledge of God in Christ brings about!

If the entire absence of love to the brethren proves the death state of such, knowledge of the opposite is granted to those who have that love, for we read, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). We may not love all the ways of some; but we love the brethren. Our measure may be very small, but those who are born of God do love the brethren. It is striking that the last but one of the seven assemblies (Rev. 3), "PHILADELPHIA," means "love of the brethren." An "opened door" is granted to them right on until the Lord Jesus Himself comes again. None can shut that door. Attempts would doubtless be made, but it is an opened door, therefore all such efforts fail, thanks be to God.

Another encouraging word of assurance is given: "Everyone that loves Him that begat loves him also that is begotten of Him," and, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments . . . and His commandments are not grievous." As someone has said, "His commandments provide channels for the new nature to flow in."

That we should increase in this is the Holy Spirit's expressed desire for us. "We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more" (1 Thess. 4:10), for "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren." Our LORD JESUS CHRIST loves all and has redeemed us all by His precious blood. All are born of God. All are indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT. All address GOD as "FATHER," and happily they may follow together Him who is "not ashamed" to call them "BRETHREN."

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