

# LOVE (*philio*—Brotherly Love) part 2

## FRIENDSHIP / COMMUNITY / UNITY



...that there be no divisions among you... 1 Corinthians 1:10

**Day 1:** Using a thesaurus or dictionary, do a study on the word *friendship*. Include synonyms / antonyms / definitions. What are qualities of a true confidante? How many close friends do you have? Is there a kindred spirit among them? Are you drawn to these people for different reasons? Have any of your relationships ended badly? What was the cause of the breakup?

**Day 2:** Why is companionship so important? How do the following passages measure friendship?

- Ecclesiastes 4:8-12
- Luke 11:5-8
- Romans 12:10, 15-18
- Ephesians 6:21-22
- Philippians 4:14

**Day 3:** Are *friendship* and *fellowship* synonymous? How do acquaintances become attachments? What camaraderie do you share with your friends? Is it different than what you feel toward family members?

How do these passages show a bond between fellow companions?

- Proverbs 17:17; 27:6, 9, 17
- Mark 5:18-20
- Acts 28:11-15
- Romans 15:32
- 2 Corinthians 7:13-16
- 2 Timothy 1:15-18

**Day 4:** Describe the close comradeship of these people in Act 18:1-3, 18, 24-28 (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19). What admonition did Paul give to the early churches in Corinth concerning Apollos in 1 Corinthians 3:4-11?

**Day 5:** What stands out in these examples of friendship in the Bible?

- 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-6; 2 Samuel 1:17, 25-26
- Job 2:11-13
- Luke 5:17-26
- 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:3-5

**Day 6:** Why do some friendships dissolve? Why do best friends become raging enemies? What types of emotions accompany a breakup in a relationship? Has such an experience ever happened to you? Explain.

Rewrite these verses about rapport gone awry. How would you counsel these individuals? Which passages show reconciliation?

- Job 6:14-17
- Psalm 55:12-14
- Jeremiah 20:7-8, 10, 12
- Acts 15:36-40; Colossians 4:10

**Day 7:** Continue the study of David's and Jonathan's association in 1 Samuel 20:1-42. Why did they part ways? Should friendship cause such pain? Would a similar situation happen today? Has it ever happened to you or someone you know?

**Day 8:** How do you guard against unhealthy attachments? Can an association that was strong in the beginning become destructive in the end? How can you prevent yourself from making questionable connections with others?

What can you add to these Biblical suggestions:

- Job 15:34-35
- Proverbs 20:7, 19, 30
- Proverbs 22:24-25, 29
- Proverbs 24:1-2, 8-9, 28-29

**Day 9:** Consider the story of Absalom in 2 Sam 15:1-14. How did the prince steal the hearts of the townsfolk from his father David? What was the motivation behind his false camaraderie? Why do you draw near to

certain people in your path, your workplace, your daily transactions? Are your motives pure or is there an underlying rationale in your friendliness?

**Day 10:** Where does affection play in friendly relationships? What is an appropriate display of affection in your native culture among business associates, church members, friendly companions, kindred spirits? How do you express your heartfelt fondness to another? If you are not affectionate by nature, how do you portray the depths of your feelings without a touch?

How was affection displayed in these passages? Journal your thoughts.

- Mark 14:43-46 (Luke 22:47-48)
- Acts 20:36-38
- 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, 18; 3:1-2, 6-8

**Day 11:** On a scale of 1-5 (1 = not very cooperative), how do you think fellow workers would rate you on the job? Are you kind to other colleagues at your workplace, in the break room, in meetings? How much of a difference do you make behind a desk, out in the open?

What do you glean from these verses say about working with others? Record your insights.

- Ezra 4:1-5
- John 4:34-38
- Colossians 3:22-4:1
- 2 Timothy 4:10, 14-15
- Hebrews 13:17

**Day 12:** Is it necessary to be friends with others in the group while collaborating to complete a task? What reasons might you cooperate if you had little rapport for other participants? What do these passages have to say about working together?

- Deuteronomy 22:10
- Isaiah 41:6-7
- Mark 9:50
- Philippians 4:2-3

- Colossians 4:5-6

**Day 13:** Give a brief description of a cooperative spirit. How can you cultivate such an attitude? Does cooperation work the same in all areas of life? Are there times when it is necessary to be unwilling to join forces? If yes, cite examples.

Summarize these examples of a willing spirit. Think of ways to put into practice what you learn.

- Exodus 36:1-7
- Ezra 1:5-11
- Luke 11:17
- 1 Peter 3:8-14

**Day 14:** Make a time line of the events in Acts 21:1-35 (2 Corinthians 12:14-15) to show how fellow *believers* aided Paul in his travels, how division was resolved in an early church, and how fellow *countrymen* caused an uprising in Jerusalem. What difference did Godly relationships make in this account?

**Day 15:** Read Psalm 133:1-3. What is community? Why should groups, large or small, strive for unity? What emotions does divisiveness usually incite? How do words, such as *segregation*, *separation*, *partition*, make you feel? Is there ever a time when division is better? If yes, cite examples.

Rephrase these passages about unity.

- Genesis 13:5-9
- Amos 3:3
- Luke 4:16-17, 20-22, 28-30
- Philippians 1:27-28
- 1 Corinthians 11:11-12

**Day 16:** Explain each of the examples of like-mindedness found in Numbers 11:4-35. Determine which is seemly and which is misplaced. Where would you be standing in the camp of the Israelites? Would you find yourself siding with the majority? Why, or why not?

**Day 17:** How far can a believer go when given the opportunity to unite with others? Is there a wrong kind of camaraderie? What is a good measuring rod when considering the moral or ethical intentions of a particular group you favor?

Do you agree or disagree with what you read here? What in these passages might help to model a standard for you?

- Exodus 23:2
- Psalm 119:63
- Proverbs 25:18-19, 27-28
- Luke 6:43-45

**Day 18:** Read about the consequences of sin in Genesis 3:6-13. How many times is the guilt placed elsewhere in this passage? Are you a blame-shifter by nature? Do you watch from a distance and wait for someone to fail so you can proclaim to others, "I told you he was a scoundrel!" How are these actions destructive in a community, on the job, among your peers, in front of your family?

Read these instances of blame placement. Are these accusations legitimate? How difficult is it for you to admit guilt? Do you fear it indicates a weakness?

- Genesis 37:16-24; 42:21-22
- Jonah 1:4-16
- Matthew 9:34
- Mark 3:1-2

**Day 19:** Read Matthew 5:38-42. What does "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" mean? Do you find yourself wishing swift retribution on the guilty party? Are there times when retaliation is acceptable for a follower of Christ? What does Romans 12:17-21 suggest as the best policy for Christian behavior?

Read an account of Samson in Judges 14:1-20 through 15:1-8. How detrimental was his retaliation? What sort of picture does this paint about Samson's character? What does an act of revenge speak to the rest of the community about the vindictive person.

**Day 20:** Is *cooperation* and *harmony* synonymous? Was Jesus's small band of disciples always in harmony? (See Luke 9:46-48.) Were there divisions in the early church? (See Galatians 2:6-16.) Should semantics, rhetoric, or flattery be considered when settling disputes? If yes, in what ways? What does Paul tell Timothy about handling verbal disagreements (2 Timothy 2:23-26)? What advice did he give the early church about controversy (Philippians 3:12-16)?

**Day 21:** Read Deuteronomy 1:15-18. How should fellow believers handle legal matters? Should they be settled out of court? What constitutes an issue serious enough among Christians to warrant the use of a judge?

Summarize additional verses on disputes dealing with the law.

- Matthew 22:35-40
- Luke 12:58-59
- 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

**Day 22:** Read Acts 15:1-29. How was this doctrinal dispute handled? Could this be settled in the same way today? Can you think of other ways to deal with these types of disagreements?

**Day 23:** Write some suggestions on keeping harmony. What should be taken into consideration (i.e., race, religion, sexual orientation, political party, etc.)? Do the following passages aid in constructing your list of guidelines?

- Numbers 11:16-17
- Matthew 5:21-25
- Romans 14:1-12; 15:1-3, 7
- Ephesians 4:1-3
- Philemon 16-21 (See Deuteronomy 23:15-16)

**Day 24:** Are *unanimity* and *unity* synonymous? Can a group of people with individual backgrounds and interests truly be united? Why, or why not?

Read and summarize these verses when Hebrews unified in single-minded purposes.

- Joshua 9:17-21
- 2 Samuel 3:31-38
- Nehemiah 4:1-3, 8:1-6

**Day 25:** How does your native culture gauge unity when following a leader? Does it act corporately (i.e. the whole clan abides by the chieftain's decision), or are individuals expected to make separate decisions? Is it better to keep silent on certain matters or to stir the waters? Explain your answers.

Read these Biblical instances where groups acted unanimously. What was the result of their actions?

- Genesis 11:1-9 people welded together tower of Babel
- Joshua 1:16-18
- 1 Kings 16:21-22
- 2 Chronicles 11:1-4

**Day 26:** What is the difference between *harmony* and *open-mindedness*? Cite areas in your community where harmony is practiced. What are some obvious results of unity? Are there appropriate areas of intolerance? How is a good way to teach children about getting along with others?

Rephrase these scriptures on positive results of cooperation.

- Proverbs 16:7
- Proverbs 30:24-25
- John 17:11-23

**Day 27:** Explain the word picture in Ezekiel 37:15-28. Can it be applied in today's world? How, or how not?

**Day 28:** In your opinion what would constitute a *öbadö* community? Are there places where you would not want to raise your children? When considering a place to live, what criteria are generally on your list of *ömust-havesö*?

Are questionable neighborhoods anything like the ones in the following passages?

- Genesis 18:20-33; 19:24-25
- Isaiah 1:21-23
- Jeremiah 5:1-3

What kind of influence might a believer have on a corrupt or dubious neighborhood? What do these verses say about impacting your community?

- Matthew 5:14-16
- 1 Peter 2:11-17

**Day 29:** List any social assistance your community provides for the less fortunate individuals, such as single parents, the homeless, etc. How do services like these strengthen the populace? Are you involved in any such programs? How would you go about connecting to benevolent organizations?

What arrangements did God make for the widows, the fatherless, the homeless? Read these passages. Are there similar provisions set up in your native culture?

- Exodus 22:22-24
- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Deuteronomy 24:19-22
- Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (Ruth 4:7-10)

**Day 30:** Read these passages concerning Hebrew land requirements. Why was it necessary to put such regulations into place? Do you think such ordinances help or hinder the growth of a community? What do these organized laws reveal the character of God to you?

Permanent landmarks:

- Deuteronomy 19:14 (Proverbs 23:10-11)
- Job 24:2-5

Cities of refuge:

- Exodus 21:13
- Deuteronomy 4:41-42

**Day 31:** Does your native culture have an axiom like the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"? (See Matthew 7:12) How do you want to be treated? Recall a painful experience that happened to you. Would it have turned out differently if the one doing the hurting had shown more consideration and respect?

What does scripture have to say in regard to the treatment of your neighbors, living in your community, dealing with friends and acquaintances? Read these passages and decide where you are weak. What needs to be done to strengthen these areas?

- Proverbs 3:28-30
- Zechariah 7:8-10
- Luke 6:39-42
- Philippians 2:3-4

- 1 Peter 4:8-11

**Day 32:** Read Jesus' words to his disciples in John 13:34-35? What is the mark of a true follower of Christ? Why is love listed first in the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23)? Is expressing love difficult for you? Do all people show it in the same way? How do you personally demonstrate feelings toward another?

Read other exhortation from the Bible. Why do you think directives like these are repeated throughout scripture?

- Ephesians 5:1-2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15
- 1 John 2:9-11