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For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1st John 3:10-15). The disciple whom Jesus loved is frank with his audience. "He who does not love his brother" is the same as "whoever hates his brother". The hater is a child of the devil, not a child of God. The hater is a murderer, no better than Cain. The hater abides in death and has no eternal life in him.

The theme continues in John's epistle, the apostle writing, *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us" (1st John 4:7-12). The primary motivator for brotherly love is that God loved us. Those who have been born again and know God should practice love because of the divine love they have received. Peter echoed the sentiment: *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again" (1st Peter 1:22-23).**

Claiming to love God while hating a fellow Christian proves oneself a liar. *"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1st John 4:20-21). It is impossible to love the invisible God while hating His disciple who is present, tangible, and visible.*

Without belaboring the juxtaposition of brotherly love against hate, consider, positively, what it is, more than what it is not. *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving*

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preference to one another" (Romans 12:10). This quality involves kindness, affection, honor, and preference – all of which must be proven beyond the mere verbal claim that one loves his brother. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1st John 3:18). It is easy for a liar to say, "I love you, brother", but affection? That's difficult to feign. So is preference. Brotherly love, as Peter put it, must be sincere, fervent, and pure (1st Peter 1:22-23).

Genuine brotherly love is manifest in a cheerful expression. Seeing a friend and brother in Christ should brighten a face. *"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). Clenched teeth and steely eyes, however, indicate that one is not feeling friendly or brotherly at all. God has said, "The look on their countenance witnesses against them" (Isaiah 3:9).*

Authentic brotherly love is demonstrated with a warm, personal greeting. First-century Christians greeted one another with holy kissing (2nd Corinthians 13:12), with *"the right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2:9), and with embracing (Acts 20:1) – even falling on each other's necks (37). When a greeting is withheld, it implies the person who is rebuffed is guilty of sin (2nd John 10). It does not make sense otherwise, as Paul said, "Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one" (2nd Corinthians 7:2).*

Real brotherly love is tender, courteous, and compassionate. *"All of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing" (1st Peter 3:8-9). Bitterness does not characterize brotherly love. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).*

"Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Lust imitates love. Pride imitates joy. Sin imitates freedom. Satan imitates God. Don't be deceived by counterfeits."

– Unknown

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

"Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). That's it. The prophet to the Hebrew Christians did not elaborate. He expected his readers to understand what brotherly love is about, so he gave them that stand-alone sentence: "Let brotherly love continue".

Where such love is lacking, dire consequences follow. *"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1st John 2:9-11). One's spiritual status is grave if an apostle describes it as being in darkness, rather than light, even to the point of blindness. Peter said likewise. "He who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins" (2nd Peter 1:9) and "these things" include "brotherly kindness" (7).*

The objection may arise that something less than love may not actually amount to hatred, but the dichotomy is presented by inspiration: love or hate, no in-between. That point is pressed by John again and the severity of the situation is even more plain. *"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*"
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