

“ADD TO YOUR FAITH” (2 PETER 1:5-7) BROTHERLY KINDNESS

Mistreatment of our brethren is a common temptation and source of division. For that reason, the Spirit guides Peter to inform brethren of the need for “brotherly kindness” if we expect to be fruitful as the Lord’s workers (2 Peter 1:8).

A beautiful example of brotherly love may actually be found in the Old Testament. Abram and his nephew, Lot, had journeyed from their homes and just left Egypt on their journey to the “promised land.” Both of them were wealthy and successful (Genesis 13:2,5). Both of them took

their journey together, suggesting a unity of purpose (Genesis 13:1). They even offered worship (13:3-4). Yet, as often occurs, a problem arose among these kinsmen. Unfortunately, the “land was not able to support them” and “there was strife between” their herdsmen (13:6-7). How did these men handle the problem?

They resolved not to allow a mere inconvenience ruin their friendship (13:8). This argument was not a matter of truth and error. It was a difference of opinion. Opinions should not be forced to the point of division.

They recalled their relationship and the attitude such demands (13:8). Abram simply says, “...we are brethren.” Family should not be so petty to allow issues of property lines and possessions tear them apart.

Abram sacrifices his own desires and gives Lot first choice (13:9-12). Abram may have preferred the “well-watered...plain of Jordan.” However, to keep his relationship intact he allows Lot to choose first.

Do you allow opinions to cause division in your spiritual family?

Joshua R. Welch

WHY MY FAMILY NEEDS THE BIBLE EVIDENCE

Recent polls suggest young children are leaving religion behind, including Christianity, at alarming rates. Yet, over the past several years, churches have decided to leave the Bible behind too. Could these two statistics be tied together?

Some preachers are more interested in being storytellers than preaching Bible. Many churches have removed the Bibles from their pews and replaced them with big-screens and loud speakers on their “stage.” So-called “ministers” are more “recreational organizers” than Bible students. To put it bluntly, churches are too interested in drawing big numbers with social and recreational programs and not interested enough in the simple mission of preaching “the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The result of this focus on “the social gospel” in the past generation has been devastating.

Why? The answer is simple—by studying the Bible less church-goers are less aware of the evidence that exists for God and His plan to save mankind through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The reason we have Scripture is to elicit belief. John wrote his eyewitness account about Jesus Christ, “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31). True faith is the “conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). True convictions must be based on evidence! The evidence about Jesus Christ is based on the “eyewitness” testimony of those who lived among Him during His life, death and even after His resurrection (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3). Paul verified many of the witnesses of Jesus Christ to provide proof (1 Cor. 15:5-7).

If our families are ever to be convinced in the truth of Jesus Christ, as written in the Bible, we must provide them with evidence.

Most children are not willing to accept it on the basis of “inherited religion.” How much do we underestimate the next generation by thinking we can manipulate them into being Christians by ignoring the evidence which can convict their minds and trying to sucker them into the church by offering them fun, frolic and festivities? Jesus condemned such insincere seekers (John 6:26-27).

Instead of being interested in churches for their entertainment value let’s turn to the church for its evidential value. Does your family know of the hundreds of prophecies Jesus fulfilled? Do they know of the miracles Jesus performed or the proof of His resurrection? Or, do they merely see the church as a social outlet and an entertainment venue? *JRW*



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