

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Lesson Seven

BROTHERS AND SISTERS (4): FORGIVING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Burden to Impart:

Because God desires us to love one another, we experience His blessing and goodness when we are at peace with one another (Psa. 133:1). Although by nature we do love our brothers and sisters, yet, because we live so close together it is impossible not to have friction and offenses with one another. *If we do not confess our offenses to one another and forgive one another our love will dry up and can even turn into hatred. As God's children we must love one another and forgive one another (John 13:34; Matt. 6:12; 18:21-35).*

Memory Verse: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as also God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

Facts to Teach:

1. God desires us to love one another (1 John 4:7). Because God so loved each one of us He gave His beloved Son to die for our sins. If God so loved each one of us we also ought to love one another.
2. When we love one another and live in harmony and oneness with our brothers and sisters we feel "how good it is to dwell together in oneness" (Psa. 133:1)! God commands His precious blessing on such oneness. When we are one with our brothers God is happy and so are we.
3. However, no matter how hard we try to avoid differences and conflicts with our brothers and sisters we cannot avoid problems and offenses for very long. This is because sin is in our nature. This is what causes us to be selfish and mean, to get angry, to hurt others, to say bad words, etc. Also, the closer we are to someone, like our brothers and sisters with whom we even live, the easier it is to have friction and problems with one another. We all have our differences and peculiarities and sooner or later we either offend our sisters and brothers or they offend us.
4. When we become offended or angry at our brother our love begins to dry up and die. If we harbor a grudge in our heart against our brother our love may even turn into hatred, which God considers to be the same as murder (1 John 2:15).
5. We learn from the Lord's answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" that we must forgive our brothers and sisters every time that they offend us. Because God forgave us so much we must be willing to forgive our brothers and sisters, for in comparison to how much God has forgiven us their wrongdoing toward us is very small (Matt. 18:21-35).
6. Joseph's forgiving heart is a great example to all of us (Gen. 45:1-15). Although his brothers hated him and cruelly sold him as a slave, Joseph did not hate them back or return them any evil for their evil deeds. He forgave their sins and loved them.