

Christians are called to live at peace with others in society (see Rom. 12:18). But despite the church's desire to contribute to society and live at peace, persecution continues. Rarely do emperors or dictators grasp the fact that Christians will be their very best citizens. Tragically, rulers often see totalitarianism as preferable to grace and its effects.  
--Sinclair Ferguson

### BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

*(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

Q. 87. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his. (1 Cor. 10:10; James 5:9; Gal. 5:26; Col. 3:5)

Q. 88. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily breaks them in thought, word, and deed. (Eccles. 7:20; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; 1 John 1:8; James 3:8; James 3:2; Rom. 3:23)

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM— In Richwood

#### Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

# THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

## THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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### BROTHERLY LOVE

*Let brotherly love continue. Hebrews 13:1*

The writer of Hebrews, like many other of the Gospel writers, adds words encouraging his audience in the applications of truths learned. Certainly, there is no greater truth than that of the love of God in Christ for His people and the necessity of that love in them. It is an invalid claim to the love of God that shows no evidence of it witnessed in the life of the claimant. Perhaps it is in warning of such a possibility that the writer issues this word of exhortation.

There are many important directives given here, but this one heads the list. Nothing is to be assumed in this matter, or any Gospel expectation, as to it occurring without thought or intent in the renewed heart. So, knowing its value to one addressed and to those who would benefit from such actions the writer urges attentiveness to this Spiritual attribute. The implication is that we should continue in realizing the divine design, in experiencing that which is given in us, and the expression of it in our interactions with the brethren.

It is enough that we have the commandment Christ gave to the Apostles, realizing that they were the examples going forward. We are sweetly reminded of His words: *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John 13:34.* Several things appear to us in this passage, not the least of which is, it is given as a commandment. From the first words in the chapter we understand that action was implied: *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was*

*come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. John 13:1.* This followed the washing of their feet with the lesson in humility they needed. What He commanded in verse 34 was more than a mere expression; it was to imitate what he had done for them and that would be further displayed shortly in the ultimate expression of His love – the cross.

It is understood that the word for love used in the commandment is not the same as that used in the text above. Christ displayed sacrificial love and clearly placed infinite value on those for whom He died. The writer here would assume that this kind of love would undergird the expression of brotherly love which is the term used here. It is the Philadelphian love and expresses delight in its objects. This second could not exist if the first had not been manifested.

The love of the brethren expressed has many valuable benefits. We see one of them as we continue in John 13: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35.* Again, this is love expressed in such a way that others, even the unregenerate may see it and react to it. A witness is provided even where no words are spoken to the observer. But, even more valuable is the witness that we experience. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1 John 3:14.* The

validation of regeneration finds sweet expression in this way.

There is personal edification enjoyed as we find ourselves in the way of brotherly love. Such spills over into expressions to those other than the brethren. The next verse suggests that the experience and expression “runs over” in us and affects those about us. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2.* So, we are found to be at peace within and assured in the presence and example of our Lord.

Clearly, we understand that this is not something to be self-generated or turned into a performance. The idea of continuing tells us that this is something that already exists. The idea is rather that we cultivate it in thought and deed. That being said, it is a matter for teaching. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. 1 Thessalonians 4:9.* Two things we would note here. The first is that Paul saw no need to teach in such a manner as to generate it. The second is that they had been taught of God and such teaching has attachment to the teacher. Along with their (our) consciousness of God comes the living truth He teaches. Peter refers to the purifying effect of brotherly love and exhorts to the sacrificial love of Christ’s commandment. He sees both as the result of the New Birth (1 Peter 1:22). In Peter’s second epistle his directive is to “Add to your

faith virtue” and continues to the sixth and seventh items which are brotherly kindness and charity (love). Thus, we are participants in the expression of both.

Brotherly love is a matter of comfort and joy to ministers of the Gospel. From John we read: *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 2 John 1:4.* A little later in the epistle he reminds of that special love. To the Philippians Paul wrote: *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Philippians 2:2.* It is the expression of maturity in Gospel precepts as Paul further wrote: *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Colossians 3:14.*

How easy it is in the fast-paced society in which we live to lose sight of some of the basics of life in the economy of grace. The joy we find in the love of the brethren is worthy of cultivation and the expression of it is a wonderful evidence of the love of our Lord for us. There is greater and greater delight to be found in the simple overtures of love and kindness displayed toward others and especially the brethren. Shall we not love those whom Jesus loves and say so? Such enhances the consciousness of grace in our lives and seeks to honor our Lord in the process. *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Proverbs 25:11. bhs*

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There is a foundational truth in preaching that must undergird every message—namely, that God is sovereign over all things. With all Spirit-empowered exposition, God must be proclaimed as the Supreme Ruler over all the affairs of human history. He must be declared as presiding over all events and circumstances in this world. Further, Scripture proclaims that God directs every human life, determining every eternal destiny. Consequently, God’s sovereignty must be a dominant note in preaching that handles the Scriptures faithfully.

Nowhere is this kind of preaching more essential than in matters pertaining to salvation. Before man ever fell into sin, God had already foreordained the way by which

He would restore their broken relationship. Before sin corrupted the entire human race, God had already predestined the plan of salvation. Before the world became polluted by man's depravity, He had already predetermined the redemption by which He would restore ruined sinners to Himself. More importantly, God even chose His elect upon whom He would freely bestow His unmerited grace.

--Steven Lawson *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses*

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## The Soul's Final Feast

- Devotional by John Piper

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)

God is not unresponsive to the contrite longing of the soul. He comes and lifts the load of sin and fills our heart with gladness and gratitude. "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!" (Psalm 30:11-12).

But our joy does not just rise from the backward glance in gratitude. It also rises from the forward glance in hope: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God" (Psalm 42:5-6).

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope" (Psalm 130:5).

In the end, the heart longs not for any of God's good gifts, but for God himself. To see him and know him and be in his presence is the soul's final feast. Beyond this there is no quest. Words fail. We call it pleasure, joy, delight. But these are weak pointers to the unspeakable experience:

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

"In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

"Delight yourself in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4).

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Tried believer — has He ever failed you? Has His yoke been too grievous? Have your tears been unalleviated — your sorrows unsolaced — your temptations above that which you were able to bear? Ah! rather can you not testify, "I cast my burden upon Him — and He sustained me!" How have seeming difficulties melted away! How has the yoke lost its heaviness, and the cross its bitterness, in the thought of who you were bearing it for! There is a promised rest in the very carrying of the yoke; and a better rest remains for the weary and toil-worn when the appointed work is finished; for thus says "that same Jesus," "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me — and you shall find REST unto your souls!" —John McDuff