

Built By the Lord

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Chapter 15

Siblings: Friends and Brothers (or Sisters)

I. Our Darkest Day

- A. The author refers to the time of the Civil War as our nation's "Darkest Day."
 - 1. Lincoln referred to Matt. 12:25. "A house divided... cannot stand."
 - 2. Psalm 35:14 – David treated his enemies as they were his friend or brother.
 - 3. Sadly, far too many treat their brothers as enemies.
- B. 1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Peter 3:8
- C. Acts 7:26 – "Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?"
- D. We have many Biblical examples of how siblings treated each other.
 - 1. Sadly, many of these were dreadful examples.
 - 2. We can learn from them, both the good and the bad.
- E. Genesis 4:8 – The first murder in the Bible was committed between brothers.
- F. Jacob and Esau had a dreadful relationship.
 - 1. Genesis 25:27-34 – While Esau certainly despised his birthright, Jacob took advantage of his brother to gain it.
 - 2. In Genesis 27 Jacob conspired with his mother to deceive Isaac and steal Esau's birthright. No wonder Esau wanted to kill his brother, Genesis 27:41.
 - 3. On a positive note, after spending 20 years apart, both of them apparently grew. Genesis 32:13-21; 33:9
- G. Rachel and Leah were sisters. Due to Laban's treachery, Jacob married both.
 - 1. Sadly, Jacob treated Rachel with favoritism that developed a competition between the sisters, Genesis 29-30.
 - 2. This may be the reason that later, under the Law of Moses, God made it illegal for one man to marry sisters, Leviticus 18:18.
- H. Joseph and his brothers
 - 1. The rivalry between Leah and Rachel surely paved the way for the terrible rivalry between Joseph and his brothers.
 - 2. Joseph's eagerness to tell his dreams of greatness to his brothers did not help, Genesis 37:5-11.
 - 3. Further, Jacob's favoritism of Rachel among his wives led to favoritism of her son, Joseph, above these brothers.
 - 4. All of this led to jealousy and enough hatred that the brothers conspired together at first to kill, but then to sell Joseph into slavery, Genesis 37:18-36.
- I. We don't know much about Joseph's feelings about his brothers during his years of slavery and imprisonment; Genesis 42-45, Genesis 50:19-21.
- J. Moses and his sister Miriam, Exodus 2:4; Numbers 12:9-15.
- K. Job's sons, Job 1:4-5 – The brothers → protectors and providers for their sisters.
- L. In Jesus' apostles, we see two sets of brothers: James and John, and Simon

Peter and Andrew, Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:29; John 1:40-41.

M. These stories of brothers and sisters fill the Bible. They were not all pleasant, but each of them provides great lessons for us among our brothers and sisters.

II. The Golden Rule

- A. Jesus' Golden Rule applies nowhere more than between brothers and sisters.
- B. Matthew 7:12 – This should be the theme of your relationship with your siblings.
- C. Proverbs 18:19

III. Some Dos and Don'ts for Siblings

- A. Remember some of the principles of relationships in general.
- B. The relationships between the Israelites and then between Christians were often based on the understanding of how siblings were to treat one another.
- C. 1 Peter 3:8-9 – Seek for harmony with your siblings. Work to get along.
- D. Proverbs 17:17 – Brothers and sisters should be there for each other in times of trouble, not to kick siblings while they are down but to lift them up.
- E. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – Two are better than one.
- F. Matthew 7:1-5 – Rather than fixating on your brother's and sister's faults, we need to look to ourselves first.
- G. Zechariah 7:9 – "...kindness and compassion each to his own brother."
- H. Matthew 18:21-22 – Siblings → need mercy, compassion, and forgiveness
- I. Matthew 5:23-25 – Go to your sibling quickly to resolve the matter. Don't be immature and wait for them to come to you.
- J. Deuteronomy 22:1-3 – Your translation may say "countryman" but the word used is "brother." Brothers need to respect each other's property.
- K. Psalm 50 – God rebukes against the wicked as he lists some of their sins. Note v. 20. Don't bad-mouth your siblings. Matthew 5:22 – name calling among brothers and sisters is not tolerated by God.
- L. Nehemiah 5 – Nehemiah heard an outcry from the poor people. The poor had turned to their brethren for help. Instead of helping them, their brethren took advantage of them. They loaned them money at exorbitant interest rates. When they couldn't pay, they were enslaved.
- M. Obadiah 1:12 – God spoke out against the nation of Edom. Remember that the Edomites were descendants of the Esau, Jacob's brother. God warned Edom not to gloat over your brother's misfortune. When bad things happen to our siblings, we should be sympathetic and helpful.
- N. Luke 12:13-15 – Dividing the family inheritance is sometimes necessary. The family relationship is far more important than the stuff you desire to own.
- O. Deuteronomy 13:6-8 – We must not let siblings come between us and God.
- P. Brothers and sisters should be the best of friends.

IV. Today's Response

- A. Siblings, ask each other what you can do to help each other and grow closer to one another this week.
- B. How do you want your brothers and sisters to treat you. Consider it and write it down. Then work to treat them in the same way.