

Lesson 62

TEXT 2 Kings 4:8-17

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that brotherly kindness is evidenced by preferring your brother—showing him love.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. — Romans 12:10

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. — John 13:35

**ANSWER
TITLE: A Change of Mind**

**SEARCH
TITLE: Brotherly Kindness**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Brotherly kindness is the love and caring of fellow Christians toward one another, all being children of the same heavenly Father. The New Testament occasionally uses the word *brother* to refer simply to another human being, whether Christian or not, or to a fellow countryman. However, it is usually used to signify a fellow believer in Christ. This is the case wherever the concept of brotherly kindness or brotherly love appears. This kindness is to be extended to all our brothers and sisters in Christ. There is no virtue in being kind only to those you expect will return the favor. Rather, spend the effort on those who can do nothing for you, with your eye on the heavenly reward. How often Jesus advised us to keep our eyes on Heaven.

Jesus talked a great deal about the plain, old-fashioned, everyday habit of common kindness. He put so much

stress on kindness that He, in effect, tells us that we cannot be friends of His and at the same time be indifferent to the suffering of others. How much more we should be aware of, and willing to help with, the needs of those within our own “family!”

Elisha was anointed to be the successor to Elijah as a prophet of God. He requested and was granted a double portion of the Spirit that rested upon Elijah. His ministry was of long duration, lasting through the reigns of four kings of Israel: Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash. Elisha’s prophetic insight and wise counsel made him a valuable, though not always appreciated, adviser to the kings. Elisha fell sick and died during the reign of Joash. Such power had rested upon the man that when a man was hastily buried in Elisha’s tomb, the dead man revived. See 2 Kings 13:21.

YOUR OPENER

Brotherly Kindness

TEXT: 2 Kings 4:8-17

KEY VERSE: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
— John 13:35

RESPONSES

1. She fed him when he passed by; later she and her husband built and furnished a special room for him. Discuss how action was a part of the kindness she showed. Your students should recognize that brotherly kindness is more than kind words.

2. They refused to take payment from Elisha, even though he wanted to give something in return for the kindness shown to him. When he discovered they had no children, Elisha promised the woman that she would have a son, and within a year the baby was born. Brotherly kindness is always compensated—not necessarily with material gain, but with unity, peace of mind, and love.

3. Allow time for students' responses. Their answers may include the following thoughts.
Aaron and Hur: Gave Moses support in his time of physical weakness or need.
Jonathan: Made a covenant of friendship with David, giving him his sword, bow, and royal apparel.
David: Provided for Jonathan's son's comfort and well-being, treating him as his own son.
Paul: Appealed to Philemon to show love to Onesimus, encouraging Philemon to treat Onesimus as he would Paul himself.
Discuss with your students the variety of ways they can show brotherly love in actions. See Matthew 25:35-40.

4. As your students discuss this, they should realize that just as they nourish, comfort, soothe when injured, and build up their physical bodies, they must show the same concern for their brothers. Refer to 1 Corinthians 12:26.

Brotherly kindness is most often referred to in the Bible as brotherly love. Brotherly love cannot be exemplified in isolation. The hallmark of the Body of Christ is not the number of members, or the size of the edifice for worship, or the finely tuned administration of the organization. It is the strong attachment between members of Christ's flock.

1. The Bible is a great source of examples of brotherly kindness. One is given in the account of Elisha and the Shunammite woman found in our text. Describe what this woman did to show brotherly kindness to the prophet.

2. Though the Shunammite couple were not looking to be repaid for their kindness, what blessing did they receive from God? Is our kindness toward our brothers and sisters in Christ ever compensated? If so, how?

3. Listed below are several other examples of people in the Bible who exemplified brotherly kindness. Tell in your own words the circumstances under which their love was shown.

Aaron and Hur: Exodus 17:12

Jonathan: 1 Samuel 18:3,4

David: 2 Samuel 9:6,7

Paul: Philemon 12,15,16

4. Compare your feeling and consideration for a brother in Christ to the consideration shown to your own body.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. Read the following Scriptures and write what instruction you find in each which shows how we can exemplify brotherly kindness.

Romans 15:1

Galatians 6:2

Ephesians 4:32

Hebrews 10:24

1 Peter 4:8

6. When is it the responsibility of the individual to show brotherly kindness? When is it the responsibility of the church?

7. In some cases, when a need presents itself, it may seem that another is more qualified or better able to assist or take care of the situation. Explain how this could be used as an excuse by one not wishing to get involved.

8. Present an everyday situation in which brotherly kindness can be shown to the following.

A newcomer to the church

The elderly of the church

Someone who is sick

Widows and widowers

Your pastor

A new convert

9. What are some of the positive results we might expect to see when brotherly kindness is practiced?

5. As your students discuss what they have discovered in each verse, talk about ways these actions can be employed in their lives today. As a follow-up, encourage students to cite specific examples from their own knowledge when positive results stemmed from such actions.

6. Encourage students to cite specific examples of occasions when they should show care for others individually, and then as a unit. Broaden your discussion by asking students to cite specific ways this can be done.

7. Allow students time to develop this question. They should arrive at the conclusion that it is necessary for a person to examine his motives in each situation. In other words, one should not use "preferring my brother" as an excuse for avoiding responsibilities.

8. The point of this exercise is to help the students see actual circumstances exhibiting brotherly love in action. Discussion should increase class awareness of the various needs which can be met through practicing brotherly kindness.

9. Your students' discussion of this question should bring out a number of results. Their list may include: increased fellowship and love between members, a growth in spiritual grace of the body of believers, a lessening of possible sources of friction or disunity. Extend your discussion to include the positive benefits they will receive in their own lives when they practice brotherly kindness.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is brotherly kindness? What is it for? Who is it for?

What are some other examples of brotherly kindness in the Bible?

How can we show brotherly kindness?

Can brotherly kindness be exemplified in isolation? Explain.

In our Bible text, how did the woman of Shunem show kindness?

Explain how brotherly kindness can be a measuring tool of godliness.

Can you name some incidents in Elisha's life where he showed kindness to others? What reward is there for those who do a kind deed in the expectation of some benefit in return?

What kindness was shown to you this week? at home? at school? elsewhere?

In the ANSWER story, what changed Mr. Johnson's attitude toward Debbie and Bill?

THINGS TO DO

After a discussion of what brotherly kindness is, tell your class that this week they are all going to have a chance to practice this together. Arrange a project in which your class can participate to help someone in the church: do yard work, clean a garage, wash windows, or whatever. Afterward provide refreshments or a small treat for your group.

Prepare a strip of paper about 3" wide and a yard long. Make a loop, turning one end of the strip around 360 degrees and attaching the ends so the loop is twisted. Tell your class this loop represents Christians. Cut through

the strip lengthwise. (This will create two loops that are linked together.) God made us to love each other and Him. We have strong bonds. We depend upon each other for encouragement, fellowship, help, prayer, etc. As you explain this, continue cutting the new strips lengthwise; they will all stay intertwined.

"Plant" some people in your class to perform an act of brotherly kindness at the beginning of class time (open door for someone, place a chair, etc.).

Answers for ANSWER

Love Your Brother

Brotherly kindness is preferring others and choosing to do good for others. It is showing real love. Complete the sentences and answer the question below.

I think "Love" means . . . _____

To show kindness to someone I . . . _____

An example of an unkind action is . . . _____

I know I am loved when . . . _____

Why should I love my enemy? _____

