

Brotherly Love

A TINY PLAQUE HUNG FROM THE WALL OF MY CHILDHOOD BEDROOM for all the years that room was mine. The inexpensive plaster ornament bore just three words: God is Love. Just three words, quoting the apostle John. Simple to say, simple to remember. Simple to forget.

It is easy to sing about the love of God. It is easy to recite the familiar John 3:16. It is an easy concept to grasp, even for the young. But as with so many aspects of our God and His ways, we humans more often than not skim lightly across the thin veneer of those three words, failing to dig down into the thick, tempered oak lying beneath.



Just about every family has its inconvenient members. Maybe it's crazy old Uncle Max, who takes his teeth out in public. Maybe it's Cousin Sylvia, who loudly slurps her soup in restaurants. Or maybe it's Granddad, who had little formal schooling and betrays his lack of book-learning every time he opens his mouth. Maybe it's brother Jim, the black sheep of the family, the lazy one perpetually on the dole who has never taken responsibility for his life.

And whenever these kinfolk behave in the way they too often do, we cringe, we blush, we suddenly remember a pressing engagement elsewhere. They embarrass us, they shame us, and whenever possible we avoid them like the plague.

We are ashamed to be seen with them.



How unlike us God is. He is love. God *is* love. God *loves*.

Every believer is part of a family—an admittedly huge family, yet one in which every child is intimately close to the family's Father and firstborn Son. Because believers are still human, still on this side of glory, it is easy to take for granted this remarkable relationship. Over time it is easy to lose sight of the lengths to which God is—and always has been—willing to go for those in His family.

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect

the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren...

Hebrews 2:10-11

Believers have the same Father as Jesus. This makes Jesus our brother; we are of the same family. And as if that were not sufficiently amazing, the writer of Hebrews follows with the truly incredible statement that because Jesus and believers have the same Father, are of the same family, *Jesus is not ashamed to be associated with us.*



Do you have a family member you're ashamed of? Are you embarrassed by them, wish they belonged to some other family? Do you have a family member you'd rather not be seen with—or don't like to be around?

Jesus doesn't.

Even worse, have you ever been “ashamed” of your relationship with Jesus—reticent to stand for Him, or even mention His name when around those who reject Him? Have you ever failed to defend Him when others deride Him, profane His name, or ridicule the faith that has His name?

Jesus never does that with *you*.

Look deep inside your own heart; page through all the darkness there, the bad choices you've made, the hidden sins known only by God, the failures, the transgressions, the wrong paths you have intentionally trod—all the legitimate reasons Jesus could have to not be seen in your company. And in spite of all that, the Lord Jesus Christ is not embarrassed to be known as your Brother.

The mind reels.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed

the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1 John 4:15-16

What can we do with love like that—incredible, other-worldly, eternal love?

We can love Him back.

And abide in Him.